TIMON OF ATHENS
ITS RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLAYS
OF THE SHAKESPEARE CANON

A study of the play with special reference to themes related to Judaic-Christian thought and expressed through the plot, characterization and imagery of the drama.

by

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ABSTRACT

Timon of Athens has been the subject of conflicting interpretations and evaluations. Those who have found it somewhat unsatisfactory have outnumbered those who have approved it. To explain its more troubling features critics have advanced two theories: first, that the play is written by Shakespeare in collaboration with another author; and second, that the play is all Shakespeare's but lacks final revision. This thesis reviews the critical history of the play, supporting the current general tendency to reject the theory of dual authorship and seeing design in the form of the play and consistency in the development of character and plot.

The writer investigates the themes presented in the play, noting relationships to themes in other plays of the canon. The marked similarities in ideas, imagery, and diction between Timon of Athens and other Shakespearian dramas supports the view of those who regard the play as entirely Shakespeare's. In particular, the treatment given the themes of justice, mercy, grace, and regeneration and the manner in which death is shown to affect character demonstrates that the play is a link between the tragedies and the final tragi-comedies.
The writer believes that the play is satisfactory and understandable if it is regarded as depicting the movement of the soul from the finite to the infinite conception of being. Timon is accordingly viewed as a type of Everyman. Biblical imagery and echoes are noted, particularly those lines recalling passages (in both the Old and New Testaments) dealing with atonement. The principal characters of the play, other than the soldier Alcibiades and the faithful steward, exemplify various phases of worldliness and material-mindedness. Alcibiades stands in a special relationship to Timon in that he remains loyal to him, punishes Timon's enemies, purges the state, and finally restores order. However, Alcibiades is not above criticism for his actions involve the evils of civil war and disease. The steward, also, remains loyal to Timon. Through his pure love he is able to touch Timon and thus penetrate his misanthropy. As Timon grows towards death there are hints of his moving into a state in which sin is absolved and all faults forgiven.

Some attention has been given to the stage history of Timon of Athens, in particular to the 1965 Royal Shakespeare Company production which proved theatrically successful. The treatment of themes similar to those of
Timon in other plays is discussed from a theatrical point of view in an attempt to explain the greater popularity with theatre audiences of plays such as King Lear.
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CHAPTER I
THE PROBLEM OF TIMON OF ATHENS

Timon of Athens is like Coriolanus and All's Well That Ends Well in that we have no evidence of its having been either produced or printed in Shakespeare's lifetime. Critics have found it a difficult play, with the result that both characters and theme have been subjected to many conflicting interpretations. Undue emphasis has been given textual features such as the shortness of the play (Timon of Athens is one of the shorter plays although, it should be noted, Macbeth, The Tempest, and A Midsummer Night's Dream are shorter); the lack of development in the subplot (the Alcibiades theme is regarded by some as negligible when compared to subplots in other Shakespearian works); and the absence of any love story. Further textual problems arise from the fact that the play is written in both prose and verse; some of the former appearing, in the 1623 Folio, where one might expect verse, as in Cupid's introduction of the masque (I.ii.118-123)^1, and some of the latter being so difficult that the meaning is not always plain.

^1 H.J. Oliver ed., "New Arden" Timon of Athens (revised), (London, 1963) -- hereafter cited as Oliver". (All quotations from Timon of Athens and references to the play are from this text)
Discussing *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Measure for Measure*, *Hamlet*, and *Troilus and Cressida* in his *Shakespeare and his Predecessors* F. S. Boas says:

All these dramas introduce us into highly artificial societies, whose civilization is ripe unto rottenness. Amidst such media abnormal conditions of brain and of emotion are generated, and intricate cases of conscience demand a solution by unprecedented methods. Thus throughout these plays we move along dim untrodden paths, and at the close our feeling is neither of simple joy nor pain; we are excited, fascinated, perplexed, for the issues raised preclude a completely satisfactory outcome, even when, as in *All's Well* and *Measure for Measure*, the complications are outwardly adjusted in the fifth act. In *Troilus and Cressida* and *Hamlet* no such partial settlement of difficulties takes place, and we are left to interpret their enigmas as best we may. Dramas so singular in theme and temper cannot be strictly called comedies or tragedies. We therefore borrow a convenient phrase from the theatre of today and class them together as Shakespeare's problem-plays.2

It would seem that *Timon of Athens*, too, might well be classified as a problem-play. Timon is as immoderate in his hatred for society as he has been foolish in his love for his worthless friends. Does their treatment of him justify Timon's misanthropy? Does Timon differ in kind from Apemantus? Is Alcibiades a better and wiser man than Timon? Shakespeare forces us to weigh our arguments. A sampling of critical opinion suggests

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that the answers do not come easily. W.M. Merchant believes that the play may be about ideal charity and its betrayal, with Timon suggesting a Christ character.\(^3\)

Harold C. Goddard speaks of the Timon of the first half of the play as being foolish and deluded. However, Mr. Goddard regards Timon (in spite of his unwise actions) as a "lover of truth and sincerity -- a begetter of peace" and he sees Alcibiades as the recipient of this spirit of Timon.\(^4\) In *The Shakespeare First Folio* W.W. Greg maintains that the relationship between Timon and Alcibiades is not clear. Caroline Spurgeon speaks of the effect of the images of the play as being "as confusing and unsatisfactory as that of the play as a whole."\(^5\) E.A.J. Honigmann states "... it is one of the ironies of the play that we remain perplexed about the borders between Timon's nobility and his stupidity."\(^6\) In 1961 when Peter Ure wrote his *Shakespeare: The Problem Plays*, he included *Timon* as one of the four plays discussed.\(^7\)

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Attempts to see *Timon of Athens* in relation to the other plays of the canon have stimulated conjecture. Because *Timon* presents a misanthropic hero sickened by the corrupt society about him, certain critics have been quick to class *Timon* with such plays as *Hamlet* and *Troilus and Cressida* as evidence of a period of severe personal crisis for Shakespeare. (In 1934, C.J. Sisson undercut the arguments of this school with his essay "The Mythical Sorrows of Shakespeare").

Because Shakespeare's principal source for his plot appears to have been Sir Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans* which was published first in 1579 and again in 1595, the play is associated with *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Coriolanus*, three plays derived largely from North. W.W. Lawrence would claim that the *Timon* material was what Shakespeare had left over after he had used the "pure ore" in the Roman plays.

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9 Lawrence, p.223.
Dover Wilson, no doubt thinking of the story of unwise generosity, ingratitude and betrayal, followed by misanthropy, has described Timon as "the stillborn twin of Lear." Some, like R.H. Goldsmith, regard Timon as a foreshadowing of Lear. Peter Ure is inclined to agree with Goldsmith. However, others, like H.L. Oliver and J.C. Maxwell, regard Timon as a later exploration of a theme similar to that of Lear.

Oliver believes the play was written about 1607-8. Goldsmith, who thinks that Shakespeare's play is in some way related to the academic comedy of Timon, would place the writing of Shakespeare's play much earlier. No internal evidence has yet been discovered which pinpoints Timon's date although G.R. Waggoner regards the Alcibiades subplot as reflecting the reaction to King James's attempts to outlaw duelling and Herbert Howarth sees in the ruined Timon a literary representation of the unfortunate Raleigh. Oliver does not exclude the


13 Oliver, pp. xli-xlii.

suggestion that Shakespeare may have worked on the play from time to time over a period of years.

What does seem clear is that the play belongs to the new century, to the period in Shakespeare's career when, his craft perfected, he was able to use his talents to explore questions concerning the human condition. The contemporary American poet, William Meredith, discussing the writing of one of his own poems which he believes is standing the test of time says,

... I had a kind of impulse that I feel the Muse approves. I was exploring, mostly for myself, a puzzle about which I had a glimmering. Maybe that is the likeliest prescription for a work of art: a puzzle about which one has a glimmering.

Now the difference between a poet's approach to his glimmering and that of a practical man is like the difference between art and propaganda. Art makes the error, in practical terms, of recognizing alternatives.18

15 Goldsmith, p.38
Perhaps it is just this spirit of exploration which makes the plays of the middle period so stimulating and at the same time so puzzling. There are no pat answers to the human predicaments with which they deal. What Honigmann terms "The vagueness of his [Timon's] characterization" which "serves a purpose in the analysis of unwise magnanimity"\textsuperscript{19} may be, instead, a meticulous objectivity which invites us to examine Timon, searching for the meaning in his experience even as the author has done before us.

Criticism of \textit{Timon of Athens} suffered for many years from the theory that the play was a collaborative creation and therefore did not deserve serious attention as a work by Shakespeare. In 1838 Charles Knight proposed the idea of dual authorship, and for roughly one hundred years scholars vied with each other in suggesting collaborating authors and in assigning specific lines to them. Those who believed that Shakespeare had revised a play written by someone else proposed Wilkins, Chapman, Day, or Middleton as the original author; those who believed that Shakespeare wrote the first version of the play named variously,

\textsuperscript{19} Honigmann, p.16.
as possible revisers Heywood, Chapman, Middleton, or Tourneur. Nor was there any agreement as to which lines were "clearly" Shakespeare's. The controversy may be followed in *The Transactions of the Shakespeare Society* during the latter half of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. E.H. Wright and J.M. Robertson are among those who wrote books on the subject. Finally the whole idea became suspect when its champions failed to establish any substantial ground of common agreement.

Early in the twentieth century, E.K. Chambers expressed his agreement with Ulrici's theory that Timon was an unfinished Shakespearian work rather than the work of two authors. Chambers states:

*There is much mislineation in the text. Lines are irregularly divided; prose speeches are printed as verse, and verse speeches as prose. The passages affected are mostly short. Many lines are split, and the splitting is often not explicable as due to consideration of space or a desire to indicate major pauses. It is very likely that there were frequent marginal insertions in the copy.*

20 Oliver, p.xxii.
23 Oliver, p.xxv.
And there are several scenes in which the verse at least cannot be the complete and jointed work of Shakespeare. This is particularly noticeable in the longer speeches. These contain Shakespearean ideas, sometimes inchoate, and scattered Shakespearean phrases. But they are not constructed as articulated paragraphs at all. They consist of juxtaposed sentences, now in blank verse, now in rhyme, now in wording which can most easily be read as prose . . . . It must be added that the structure of Timon as a whole is incoherent.24

Through her studies in imagery, Caroline Spurgeon, also, has been tempted to question the dual authorship theory. In her Shakespeare's Imagery and what it tells us, published first in 1935, she states:

... my evidence leads me to assign to Shakespeare a much larger part of this incoherent and unsatisfactory play than has hitherto generally been attributed to him.25

In the Review of English Studies for 1942, Una Ellis-Fermor makes a strong case for single authorship. She comments on the broken speeches:

A characteristic of these passages wherever they occur is that prosodic units are . . . simultaneously units of thought or imagery, complete in themselves even when imperfectly related to their neighbours and to the whole speech.26

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25 Spurgeon, p.344.
She regards sentences such as "My lords, then, under favour pardon me" (III.V.41) as "jottings" made in the course of writing a draft which must be revised at some later date. She sees the play as "half-worked":

... if we believe that we have here a unique case in the Shakespeare canon, a play abandoned when only half-worked, and read it through scene by scene in the light of this assumption, we find little which does not seem to be explained thereby.27

Miss Ellis-Fermor believes the play is "unfinished even in its conception -- the character of Timon does not convince us."28 Oliver, after a careful consideration of the evidence put forth by those on both sides of the dual-author controversy, rejects the idea of divided authorship: "I should like to add that certain repetitions of imagery and idea in Timon argue strongly for a single author".29

In his review of the "New Cambridge" Timon (1957) edited by J.C. Maxwell, Oliver states:

27 Ellis-Fermor, p.271.
28 Ellis-Fermor, p.283.
29 Oliver, p.xxiv.
he [Maxwell] says nothing, for example, of the patterns of imagery which, occurring both in scenes generally agreed to be Shakespeare's and in those often attributed to others, may be shown to destroy the case for collaboration or revision by another.30

The theory of dual authorship has not died quickly. As late as 1959 Winifred M.T. Nowottny expressed her belief in it.31 However most scholars are now satisfied that the text is the work of Shakespeare.

Those first to adopt the single author point of view were inclined to look upon the play as "unsatisfactory" and probably unfinished as is indicated above. However this deprecatory attitude is gradually yielding before the combined efforts of those who seek to understand what Shakespeare has written in Timon of Athens rather than to explain his "lack of any sustained intellectual concept", his "broken verse", or his unsatisfactory characterization. Oliver points out that the free versification suggests the plays of Shakespeare's last period. He quotes an


interesting remark of Michael Redgrave in which the actor classifies *Timon* with the romances when he speaks of them as plays in which "it becomes almost impossible except for someone with an exceptionally strong photographic memory to memorize the lines in the shape in which they were written."\(^{32}\) What B.I. Evans terms the "fragmented blank verse" of *The Winter's Tale* and what Kermode calls "tough late Shakespearian verse" may not be very different from what Chambers has referred to as dramatic writing in *Timon* which is not "complete and jointed". It is interesting that an increasing number of critics speak with approval of and even enthusiasm for the verse in *Timon of Athens*. Goddard finds the "highly aphoristic" style of *Timon* and the music of the lines typically Shakespearian.\(^{33}\) C.H. Hobday, in a study of the image clusters in *Timon*, shows how Shakespeare has compressed clusters used in earlier plays.\(^{34}\)

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32 Oliver, p. xli.

33 Goddard, p.174.

G. Wilson Knight has taken a position which is just the opposite of that of Chambers. He says, "In no other play is a more forceful, a more irresistible mastery of technique -- almost crude in its massive architectural effects -- employed." To say that the play is all Shakespeare is not to say that the play is finished or that it is completely satisfactory. However, recent scholarship would seem to indicate that the play makes more sense and is better written than was once thought. The play has champions other than Knight. Honigmann speaks of Miss Ellis-Fermor's "brilliant and damaging critique" of Timon when he notes:

Stylistic and textual peculiarities have been overstressed while the vital fact that Timon appears to be an almost finished play has escaped the attention it deserves.36

Goddard observes the symmetrical pattern of the plot which creates a "parabolic" effect.37 Indeed the careful plotting of the action indicates a play complete or nearly so in its conception. The second

37 Goddard, p.177.
act, for example, which falls between the depiction of the magnanimous Timon and the misanthropic Timon, not only marks the main symmetry of the play but is itself symmetrical. In it we see Timon's first awareness of his predicament and then his resolution to go to his friends for help. Between these two stages of his thinking is the scene in which Apemantus and the fool jest about usury and prostitution, using beast imagery. The characters who appear in the first act reappear after the second act in situations which balance the former action. In Act I Timon frees a friend from prison by paying his debts; in Act IV his friends refuse to free him from the creditors besieging his house. Apemantus's misanthropy is contrasted with Timon's magnanimity in Act I; in Act IV it is contrasted with Timon's misanthropy. The bandits in Act IV balance the sycophantic friends in Act I who give Timon gifts in order to obtain greater gifts in return. A later symmetrical pattern is found first in the Senate's refusal of mercy to Timon and to Alcibiades and then in the suit, later, of the senators to each of the wronged men.

The hand of a master playwright is evident elsewhere in the design of the play. The three scenes in which Lucullus, Lucius and Sempronius, each in his
turn, refuse to aid Timon are expert in their pattern, variety, and economy. Not only does Shakespeare differentiate the characters of the three men, but he uses the differences to determine variety in the dramatic pace. The first scene of Act III is somewhat prolonged, creating suspense and ending with Lucullus's ambiguous response to Timon's request for money. The second scene is more to the point and ends in Lucius's definite but polite refusal of help. The third scene is abrupt, coming quickly to the unhappy conclusion which we expect from Sempronius's opening line; "Must he needs trouble me in 't? Humh! (III.iii.1) Planning is evident also in the preparation of the audience for important events in the play: for example, the stage is carefully set for Timon's first appearance; and, in the last act, the short scene in which the senators learn of Timon's support of Alcibiades (V.ii) serves also to explain, in the next scene, the soldier's discovery of Timon's tomb.

Criticism that the Alcibiades subplot is tied only loosely into the play is justified only if we ignore the thematic significance of Alcibiades's presence. The argument that the small part for the clown in *Timon of Athens* suggests a subplot intended
but not realized is even less impressive than the comments concerning Alcibiades's relationship to the rest of the play. Oliver, himself, mentions the similar brief appearance of the clown in *Othello*. The inconsistency in values attributed to the Attic talent suggest to some that the play is unfinished—Timon's gifts of five talents to Ventidius (I.i.98) and of three talents to his servant (I.i.144) are presented as very great sums; yet, later, Timon requests fifty talents from Lucillus, Lucius and Sempronius (II.ii.197) and sends to the senate for one thousand talents (II.ii.203). However this untidiness hardly justifies Oliver's statement, "... his work had not reached the stage of completion; it could not have been handed to the acting company in this state."38

If it were possible to point to a source in which we could trace the plot substantially as Shakespeare presents it, we might more easily admit *Timon of Athens* to be a hurried and incomplete adaptation. However, an examination of the classical sources reveals the extent to which Shakespeare reworked his material. The Plutarch passages are only

38 Oliver, p.xxwii.
suggestive of the story. Lucian's dialogue *Timon the Misanthrope* presents Timon only after his fall. As for the MS *Timon* (I am inclined to agree with Goldsmith\(^39\) that the MS *Timon* and Shakespeare's play are more closely related than is generally held), the main plot of the MS play and of Shakespeare's *Timon* have much in common, but the mood, emphasis, characterization, and subplots in the two plays are entirely different. The integration expressed in the dramatic design would seem, then, to be Shakespeare's.

Dissatisfaction with the *Timon* text rests mainly on three characteristics of the *First Folio* printing: the variant spellings in the proper names (e.g., "Aper-mantus" on Gg2, but "Apemantus" elsewhere); vagueness concerning the steward's name (Is Flavius the steward?); and the irregular pagination of the *Timon* section. Those who have accepted either the "dual-author" theory or the "unfinished play" theory believe that these characteristics support their thesis. Although the foliation and pagination of the *Folio* indicates clearly that the editors, Heminge and Condell, intended having *Troilus and Cressida* rather than *Timon of Athens* follow *Romeo and Juliet*,\(^40\) we have no right to jump to the conclusion that,

\(^39\) Goldsmith, pp.31-38.
\(^40\) See Appendix I, p.177.
had their original plans not required revision, Timon would not have been published in some other position. That is to say, we have no reason to believe that anyone in 1623 regarded Timon as an incomplete play, or as a play not entirely Shakespeare's. If Bowers and Greg are correct in assuming that the compositor had to use foul papers as his copy text, we must admit at least one argument for the view that the play was not performed and was perhaps unfinished, although the loss of a prompt copy is not an impossibility. Dr. Charlton Hinman believes that the variant spellings result from the nature of the copy which he thinks was in two hands. He says, "I do not propose to debate here whether these hands are scribal or (as for various reasons seems to me much more likely) authorial."\(^{41}\)

However, in spite of the interesting and impressive facts the scientific bibliographers have accumulated, they cannot, yet, give us a conclusive evaluation of the Timon text.

In spite of the difficulties arising from the First Folio Timon, the textual problems of the student of this play are relatively simple for the Folio is his only authority. There are no quartos, good or bad, of Timon, no pirated printings. In his study of the Folger First Folios made with his collating machine, Hinman discovered that only

six variants (apart from those of proper names) occur in Timon, all of them easily explained and none of them rendering the meaning ambiguous. No emendation of the text (and many have accumulated through the years, being passed on from editor to editor) can, therefore, enjoy any authority although very good cases can be made for some of the suggested changes.

In the last decade there have been four new editions of Timon of Athens. In 1956, Penguin Books published their Timon edited by G.B. Harrison which was received without critical enthusiasm. In 1957, J.C. Maxwell's edition in the New Shakespeare Series (Cambridge) was taken more seriously in scholarly circles being reviewed in The Shakespeare Quarterly, Shakespeare Notes, Shakespeare Journal, and Notes and Queries. However, O.J. Oliver's edition for the New Arden Shakespeare in 1958 seems to be accepted as the most useful volume. Mr. Oliver has based his edition on the First Folio giving variant readings in convenient notes and noting his own emendations generally but not invariably, especially in the case of stage directions. He has made use of recent bibliographical scholarship (in his preface he acknowledges the help which he had from Mr. Bowers and from Mr. Hinman while the latter's study was still only in manuscript) and the 1963 reprint is corrected in response to Mr. Oliver's critics. No attempt
is made to force the versification where the Folio prints prose. One of the most attractive features of Mr. Oliver's volume is the introduction and appendices giving the critical and theatrical history of the play. It is the New Arden Shakespeare upon which I shall base this study.

We have, then, in Timon of Athens a play about which there is still a great deal of disagreement. It is my purpose in this paper to examine the play, in an attempt to discover, with the help of recent scholarly writings, that "sustained intellectual concept" which V.K. Whitaker said he was unable to find.42 Careful attention will be given to the plot and to the characters in their relation to it as well as their relationship to each other in the drama. Especial attention will be given to the imagery in an attempt to discern Shakespeare's intention in individual scenes as well as his intentions in the drama as a whole, to discover the significance of the "temporal course of the action" and, at the same time, the "imaginative, timeless background"43 of the drama.

42 V.K. Whitaker, Shakespeare's Use of Learning (San Marino, 1953), p.319.

As I examine the various themes treated in *Timon*
I hope to touch upon Shakespeare's treatment of similar
themes in other plays. From this comparison we may see
*Timon* in relation to other plays of the canon and thus
have a clue to its place in the development of
Shakespeare's thought and of his dramatic art. Finally,
I shall attempt to assess the dramatic effectiveness of
the play as it stands.
CHAPTER II

THE SETTING OF THE PLAY

In Act IV, when Alcibiades asks

What is thy name? Is man so hateful
to thee
That art thyself a man? (IV.iii.52-53)

Timon replies

I am Misanthropos, and hate mankind. (IV.iii.54)

To the Elizabethans the name Timon was synonymous with misanthrope. They were familiar with, at least, the bare facts of Timon's history. In addition to sundry literary references, one play on the subject besides Shakespeare's has come down to us, the MS Timon referred to above which Dyce, dated at about 1600. This play is inferior to its Shakespearian counterpart — "a poor academic piece" as one critic termed it, lacking the psychological subtlety and realism of Shakespeare's play. Although most scholars, with the exception of Goldsmith, and more recently Miss Bradbrook reject the idea of there being any connection between the two plays, we may well find a comparison of the treatment of plot, character, and theme in the two useful in discovering Shakespeare's dramatic intent.

1 Wright, p.12.
Both plays portray Timon's lavish prodigality. He pays the debts of one friend, the fine of another and furnishes the means which enable a poor servant to act the propertied suitor to the woman he loves. Each play contains a false feast: in the MS Timon stones are painted to look like artichokes; in Shakespeare the covered dishes contain warm water, but stones are on hand to hurl at the astonished guests. In the MS, Timon loses his wealth because of a storm at sea. In Shakespeare's play, he loses his fortune as a direct result of his prodigality. In both plays, Timon is driven to misanthropy when he discovers that friends "feast-won" are "fast-lost" (II.ii.75). In each play the friends return when Timon finds gold as he grubs in the earth, but in each Timon rejects them.

At this point the plays diverge in plot. In the MS, Timon undergoes an abrupt change. As he returns, presumably with his new-found gold, to the city he says:

I now am left alone; this rascall route
Hath left my side; What's this? I feele throughout
A sodeine change; my fury doth abate,
My hearte growes milde, and laies aside its hate.
Ile not affecte newe titles in my minde,
Or yet bee call'd the hater of mankinde:
Timon doffs Timon, and with bended knee
Thus craues a fauour,— if our comedie
And merry scene deserue a plaudite,
Let louing hands, Loude sounding in the ayre,
Cause Timon to the citty to repaire.2

2 MS Timon, p.95
In the Shakespearian text also a change occurs, but it is more gradual and quite different in its results: Timon does not take the gold for his personal use and, when he leaves his cave, it is to die. He says:

My long sickness
Of health and living now begins to mend,
And nothing brings me all things. (V.i.185-187)

and . . . 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. (V.i.213-217)

Upon hearing that Timon is dead and "entomb'd upon the very hem o' the sea!", (V.iv.66), Alcibiades comments,

yet rich conceit
Taught thee to make vast Neptune weep for aye
On thy low grave, on faults forgiven. Dead
Is noble Timon, of whose memory
Hereafter more. (V.iv.77-81)

The seriousness of Shakespeare's play in comparison with the MS Timon is illustrated also in the handling of the subplot. In the MS we are distracted from Timon's woes by the comic story of the gull, Gelasimus, being persuaded to give all his fortune for a Pegasus which is to bear him to Antipodes. In Timon of Athens, the subplot, which tells of Alcibiades' banishment and his revenge, serves to validate Timon's case against the Athenians.

Next to the marked difference in artistic intent and achievement in the two plays, perhaps the most noticeable contrast is in the settings. The MS is classical
in its locale, its allusions, and its phraseology. Its characters have Greek names and are the stock characters of classical comedy, as for example, "Eutrapelus, a dissolute young man ... Pseudocheus, a lying trauailor ... Philargurus, a couetous churlish ould man ... Liolio, a countrey clowne." The setting of Shakespeare's play, on the other hand, is really contemporary England (as I shall show below) and the phraseology and allusions more often Biblical than classical: the faithful servant in the MS is called Laches and referred to as a slave; whereas, in Timon of Athens the word "steward" a word common in Biblical parlance, is used and if he is given any name (here we are dealing with one of bibliographical ambiguities mentioned above), it is the Roman name "Flavius". The ungrateful friends -- Lucius, Lucullus, and Sempronius -- also have Roman names. When we remember that Latin was still the language of scholars and diplomats in Shakespeare's day and associated by many with the church, we realize that such names would sound much less foreign to his audience than would Greek ones. Shakespeare gives no name at all to some of the minor characters, designating them by type only -- Merchant,

3 MS Timon, p.2.
Painter, Poet. Again, the effect is to evoke an early seventeenth-century English setting for these are the kind of people one might have met among the hangers-on in the great houses: poets whose only hope of financial reward was the patronage of the aristocrat who would accept the dedication of a poem, entrepreneurs whose numbers increased with the development of industry at home and trade abroad, painters who appeared as English architecture and decoration began to show the influence of the Italian Renaissance.  

Speaking of the great social changes which occurred during the Tudor period, G.R. Elton says:

... it is still possible to speak of a revolution, a great and often violent change in the fortunes and standing of individuals, and in the methods by which men earned their living.

Individuals in any society may know the vicissitudes of fortune, but it would appear that in Shakespeare's England numerous people were effected by the upward and downward movements in social standing. Many commoners were able to rise into the gentry and some even into the aristocracy -- men who were able to profit by the new industries, by expanding domestic and foreign trade, by the more scientific agriculture and more intensive use of land

(hence the "plough-torn leas" — IV.iii.195). The trend of the sixteenth century accelerated in the seventeenth century. Between the years 1603 and 1629 the English peerage was doubled by the elevation of seventy-two commoners, forty-six by James I and twenty-six by Charles I. Speaking of the rise of the gentry from 1558 to 1640, R.H. Tawney says:

It was this upper layer of commoners [landed proprietors, professional men, wealthier merchants], heterogeneous, but compact, whose rapid rise in wealth and power most impressed contemporaries.

Timon of Athens contains a scene depicting a family beginning to rise in society, "climbing its happiness" (I.i.78). An old Athenian appears before Timon to complain of the servant Lucilius's courtship of his daughter (I.i.112-149). The Athenian says:

I am a man That from my first have been inclin'd to thrift, And my estate deserves an heir more rais'd Than one which holds a trencher. (I.i.120-123)

The Athenian and his daughter are fortunate for Timon presents Lucilius with the money which makes him a desirable groom.

Tawney speaks of English society as one in which "lines of social stratification were drawn, not, as in most parts of the continent, by birth and legal privilege, but by graduations of wealth." In such a society where the great price rise (prices in 1600 were about five and a half times what they had been in 1500) had diminished wealth based merely on the possession of land and, yet, where to move with the great and thus be "in" meant one must "bear the port, charge and countenance of a gentleman", gold and other symbols of wealth became extremely important. When Timon says,

'Tis thou [gold] that rigg' st the bark and plough' st the foam

he could have been speaking of the capitalization of the East India Company or the financing of Raleigh's voyages to America. In his bitterness, Timon speaks of the uglier aspects of the metal's power on the domestic scene:

This yellow slave
Will knit and break religions, bless th' accurs'd,
Make the hoar leprosy ador'd, place thieves,
And give them title, knee and approbation
With senators on the bench. This is it
That makes the wappen'd widow wed again. (IV.iii.34-39)

8 Tawney, p. 3.
9 Elton, pp. 224-225.
In the earlier part of the play Timon can see only good in riches. Wealth enables a man to show his love in the giving of money and expensive presents. Timon's friends love him for his gifts. When Lucullus sees Timon's servant approaching he says:

A gift, I warrant. Why, this hits right: I dreamt of a silver basin and ewer to-night. (III.i.4-6)

Timon's friends praise him when he is wealthy:

A most incomparable man, breath'd, as it were, To an untirable and continuate goodness. (I.i.10-11)

Lucullus asks:

And how does that honourable, complete, free-hearted gentleman of Athens, thy very bountiful good lord and master? (III.i.8-10)

A few minutes later, when he hears that Timon wants money, Lucullus's attitude is typically that of a man who believes that social status depends upon affluence and who knows that affluence can be sustained only by thrift. Lucullus says:

Alas, good lord; a noble gentleman 'tis, if he would not keep so good a house. Many a time and often I ha' din'd with him, and told him on 't, and come again to supper to him of purpose to have spend less; and yet he would embrace no counsel, take no warning by my coming. Every man has his fault, and honesty [liberality] is his. (III.i.21-28)
The impression of a society dominated by the thought of gold is achieved partly by the mere repetition of the word itself. Bartlett lists thirty instances of the use of "gold" in *Timon*, far more than in any other Shakespearian play. (*Coriolanus* comes next with a count of twelve.) Wilson Knight regards "gold-symbolism" as dominant throughout the play.\(^{11}\) Caroline Spurgeon believes Knight has overstated his case but she herself lists ten images "of which gold is the subject" (for example, "They have all been touched and found base metal" -- III.iii.7) and one "from gold" ("Plutus, the god of gold, / Is but his steward" -- I.i.275-276).\(^{12}\) A.L. Rowse is so impressed with the recurring talk of gold that he bases his conjecture concerning that the play was written in 1608 on the fact that "there was a sudden gold-craze in Virginia" in that year.\(^{13}\)

Historians have found the decline of many of the families of Tudor and Stuart England as remarkable as the rise of others. Tawney believes the new gentry rose at the expense in wealth and power of the aristocracy\(^{14}\) whereas


\(^{12}\) Spurgeon, p.345.

Trevor-Roper sees the phenomenon as the impoverishment of country gentry and aristocracy and the enrichment of court gentry and aristocracy. However, both agree that the unrest which finally erupted in the Civil War had its roots in the impoverishment of those who were excluded from office and its financial advantages in the latter part of the sixteenth century and the first part of the seventeenth. (Trevor-Roper regards the Essex rebellion, the Bye Plot (1603), and the Gunpowder Plot (1605) as desperate attempts of the declining aristocracy and impoverished gentry to re-establish themselves.) It is interesting to note that Lawrence Stone gives as two of the causes for the downfall of some aristocrats and some gentry the intense pressure for excessive consumption and the high interest rate. (Of the nineteen instances, listed by Bartlett, of the uses of "usurer," "usuring" or "usury" in the canon, seven occur in Timon of Athens.) Shakespeare's audience would understand the servant who says:

14 Tawney, pp.1-41.
16 Trevor-Roper, p.32.
Such a house broke?
So noble a master fall'n, all gone, and not
One friend to take his fortune by the arm,
And go along with him. (IV.ii.5-8)

In the band of servants dispersed in penury they would see the kind of men who were swelling the growing numbers of masterless men.

Because wealth was often dependent upon office, the loss of royal favour could mean a spectacular loss of both riches and position. The precariousness of status is illustrated by the poet in his allegory of Fortune enthroned on her hill, her favorite near at hand. The poet explains:

. . . The base o' th' mount
Is rank'd with all deserts, all kind of natures
That labour on the bosom of this sphere
To propagate their states. (I.i.66-69)

This throne, this Fortune, and this hill, methinks,
With one man beckon'd from the rest below,
Bowing his head against the steepy mount
To climb his happiness, would be well express'd
In our condition. (i.i.75-79)

Some better than his value, on the moment
Follow his strides, his lobbies fill with tendance,
Rain sacrificial whisperings in his ear,
Make sacred even his stirrup, and through him
Drink the free air. (I.i.81-84)

When fortune in her shift and change of mood
Spurns down her late beloved, all his dependants
Which labour'd after him to the mountain's top
Even on their knees and hands, let him sit down,
Not one accompanying his declining foot. (I.i.86-90)
Shakespeare's society was not lacking in men whose experience might well have provoked the theme of this play. In discussing *Measure for Measure*, Herbert Howarth says:

... if it was the play's [MFM] intention to plead for Raleigh, it failed. Raleigh stayed in prison a good many years, and in the course of them suffered that despoiling which shocked the nation and which was perhaps in Shakespeare's mind, old scores quite forgotten under the pressure of events, when he wrote *Timon of Athens*. 18

Whether or not he had Raleigh in mind, Shakespeare, in *Timon*, is presenting situations and emotions which have as much to do with Jacobean England as they do with ancient Athens.

The emotional impetus for the play may even have its roots in Shakespeare's own childhood. A brief examination of the family fortunes indicates that the dramatist's father experienced both the rise and the decline in his fortunes already remarked upon as common to the period. 19

In 1557 John Shakespeare, the dramatist's father, married Mary Arden who had land and money from her father's estate. In the same year he became ale-taster of the borough, thus receiving the first of his civic offices; in 1558 he was made a burgess on the town council, in 1559 one of Stratford's four constables; in 1565, the year after William Shakespeare's birth, he was elected alderman, a

18 Howarth, p.36.
19 Rowse, pp.31-56.
position which afforded him the title of Master Shakespeare. In 1569, he became Bailiff, the town's chief officer who presided as Justice of the Peace at the Court of Record. He received instructions from the Privy Council and, at least on one occasion, travelled to London on civic business. The importance of his position would hardly be lost on an intelligent boy of five, especially as the Bailiff participated in such ceremonies as going to church in his robes of office, being escorted thither by the lesser officials who had come to his house for that purpose.

John Shakespeare's fortunes appear to have advanced until 1575 when he bought two more houses. However, in 1576 we see a sudden reversal of his prosperity. The application for the coat of arms made to the Herald's College in 1575-76 was unsuccessful. After 1576 he attended only one council meeting, although it was 1586 before an alderman was elected in his place. His absence from church for an extended period of time in spite of the law requiring attendance may be explained by the fact that a public appearance would have forced town officials to prosecute him for indebtedness. ("Who cannot keep his wealth must keep his house" -- (III.iii.43) It would seem that in attending to the town's business in that service the Tudor monarchs were so skillful in extracting from their
subjects, that he had neglected his own affairs. No doubt, too, John Shakespeare, a man of public spirit and of human sympathy, had found many opportunities for spending while in office. (It is recorded that on one occasion he paid the debt of a friend.) The reversal in his father's fortune came when William was a boy of twelve or thirteen and he must have felt keenly the family's changed status in the community, especially if it entailed the curtailment of his formal education. In addition to the public aspect of the experience, there would be the experience of living in the household of a father suddenly stripped of honours very dear to him, denied an outlet for his ability to render civic service, and harassed by financial worries.

Our first view of Timon's Athens is all glitter. The great house hums with coming and going, entertainment is lavish. Timon, the friend of Senators, an exemplary citizen, is a patron of the arts -- poetry, painting, music and drama. Before the masque, Cupid addresses him:

Hail to thee, worthy Timon, and all that of his bounties taste! The five best senses acknowledge thee their patron, and come freely to gratulate thy plentiful bosom. 
There, taste, touch, all, pleas'd from thy table rise; They only now come but to feast thine eyes.  
(I.ii.118-123)

It is a sensuous world but not a sensual one. There is no hint of impropriety, for example, in the entertainment of
the women of the masque. The feasting in *Timon of Athens*, where social intercourse heightens the mental faculties, is in contrast to that in *Antony and Cleopatra* where Pompey says:

But all the charms of love,
Salt Cleopatra, soften thy waned lip!
Let witchcraft join the beauty, lust with both!
Tie up the libertine in a field of feasts,
Keep his brain fuming. Epicurean cooks
Sharpen with cloyless sauce his appetite
That sleep and feeding may prorogue his honor
Even till a Lethed dullness!  

In spite of the high moral tone of affairs in

Timon's household we are not allowed any feeling of security.

Even as the masque begins, the cynical Apemantus remarks:

What a sweep of vanity comes this way.
They dance? They are madwomen.
Like madness is the glory of this life,
As this pomp shows to a little oil and root.

The poet has already made clear that Timon's prestige is based on material wealth rather than character. He says:

... his large fortune,
Upon his good and gracious nature hanging,
Subdues and properties to his love and tendance
All sorts of hearts;

You see how all conditions, how all minds,
As well of glib and slipp'ry creatures as
Of grave and austere quality, tender down
Their services to Lord Timon.

Instability is implied in the use of the words "glib and slippery." The linking of Timon with the man of the allegory suggests the insecurity of his reputation:

Amongst them all,
Whose eyes are on this sovereign lady fix'd,
One do I personate of Lord Timon's frame,
Whom Fortune with her ivory hand wafts to her,
Whose present grace to present slaves and servants
Translates his rivals. (I. i. 69-74)

An attitude of uncertainty is cultivated by the recurring use of water imagery in the early play: Timon "passes" (I. i. 11); the Jeweller says of his gem "Here is a water, look ye" (I. i. 18); the Poet speaks of his work, "A thing slipp'd idly from me" (I. i. 20) and his poetic inspiration "like the current flies / Each bound it chases" (I. i. 24-25); the Poet talks of "this confluence, this great flood of visitors" (I. i. 41): Referring again to his work, the Poet says:

My free drift
Halts not particularly, but moves itself
In a wide sea of wax: (I. i. 45-47)

In the second scene we find this interchange:

Timon. . . . let the health go round.
Second Lord. Let it flow this way, my good lord.
Apem. Flow this way? A brave fellow. He keeps his tides well (I. ii. 53-56)

In the second act, when the truth of Timon's situation is being revealed, the water imagery is resumed. The Senator says:
Still in motion
Of raging waste? It cannot hold, it will not. (II.i.3-4)

It cannot hold; no reason
Can sound his state in safety. (II.i.12-13)

The Steward complains that Timon will not "cease his flow of riot" (II.ii.3). He reminds Timon of the times

When I have
Prompted you in the ebb of your estate
And your great flow of debts. (II.ii.144-146)

Once Timon's wealth is gone, the glitter disappears abruptly and we see an ugliness which has been there all the time, unremarked by anyone but Apemantus who constantly sees man in the animal aspects of his nature. To the cynic, women are whores and men are whoremasters, bastards, rogues, knaves, fools. He calls Caphis and the servants who have come to collect their masters' debts from Timon "Poor rogues, and / usurer's men, bawds between gold and want!" (II.ii.63-64) The Fool shares his opinion of mankind. When: Varro's servant asks him what a whoremaster is, he answers:

A fool in good clothes, and something like thee.
'Tis a spirit; sometimes 't appears like a lord, sometime like a lawyer, sometime like a philosopher, with two stones moe than's artificial one. He is very often like a knight; and generally in all shapes that man goes up and down in, from fourscore to thirteen, this spirit walks in. (II.ii.112-118)
At first Timon will not believe that his friends may fail him. However, when he beholds ingratitude replacing flattery, in revulsion he takes an attitude somewhat akin to that of Apemantus. He says:

These old fellows
Have their ingratitude in them hereditary;
'Tis lack of kindly warmth they are not kind;
And nature, as it grows again toward earth,
Is fashion'd for the journey, dull and heavy. (II.ii.218-223)

At the false feast Timon curses his "mouth-friends":

Live loath'd, and long,
Most smiling, smooth, detested parasites,
Courteous destroyers, affable wolves, meek bears,
You fools of fortune, trencher-friends, time's flies,
Cap-and knee slaves, vapours, and minute-jacks!
Of man and beast the infinite malady
Crust you quite o'er! (III.vi.89-95)

If we are tempted to question the judgement of Timon and Apemantus, we find the Athenians condemned out of their own mouths. In the first act one of the lords says:

Might we but have that happiness, my lord,
that you would once use our hearts, whereby we might express some part of our zeals, we should think ourselves for ever perfect. (I.ii.82-85)

But when the test comes the general attitude is summed up in the Senator's remark:

. . . I love and honour him,
But must not break my back to heal his finger. (II.i.23-24)
The subplot repeats the theme of greed and ingratitude. The Senate's gratitude towards Alcibiades changes to anger when he dares to fight for the life of a friend who he believes is being unfairly treated. Alcibiades, condemned to banishment storms:

I'm worse than mad: I have kept back their foes,
While they have told their money, and let out
Their coin upon large interest; I myself
Rich only in large hurts. All those, for this?
Is this the balsam that the usuring Senate
Pours into captains' wounds? Banishment!

(III.v.107-112)

Even strangers condemn the selfishness and ingratitude of this society:

I protest,
For his right noble mind, illustrious virtue,
And honourable carriage,
Had his necessity made use of me,
I would have put my wealth into donation,
And the best half should have return'd to him,
So much I love his heart. But I perceive
Men must learn now with pity to dispense,
For policy sits above conscience.

(III.ii.81-89)

Society in general is condemned. The individual characters are like puppets dancing to the same tune. All men follow Timon until his misfortune. Then follows a rapid consolidation of opinion against him. Lucius says:

'Toe, as you said, Timon is shrunk indeed;
And he that's once denied will hardly speed.

(III.ii.62-63)

The stranger responds:

this is the world's soul,
And just of the same piece
Is every flatterer's sport.

(III.ii.66-68)
Flaminius, after Lucullus has refused his aid to Timon, says:

Is't possible the world should so much differ,
And we alive that lived? (III.i.46-47)

The Steward reports to Timon his friends' response:

They answer in a joint and corporate voice
That now they are at fall, want treasure, cannot
Do what they would, are sorry; you are honourable,
But yet they could have wish'd -- they know not;
Something hath been amiss -- a noble nature
May catch a wrench -- would all were well -- 'Tis pity --
And so, intending other serious matters,
After distasteful looks, and these hard fractions,
With certain half-caps, and cold-moving nods,
They froze me into silence. (II.ii.208-217)

Even the Poet and the Painter, who aspire to a
certain objectivity, are a part of the society upon which
they comment. Their discussion of aesthetics in the
opening scene is typical of self-conscious artists of
every age. They would see their work as bigger than
nature; The Poet says of the artist's painting:

It tutors nature; artificial strife
lives in these touches, livelier than life.
(I.i.37-38)

They take themselves very seriously as social critics. The
Painter says:

... you do well
To show Lord Timon that mean eyes have seen
The foot above the head. (I.i.93-95)

Both are certain that they are above the self-interest
that sways the rest of humanity. Smugly the Poet eschews
corrupt artistic practices:
When we for recompense have prais'd the wild,
It stains the glory in that happy verse
Which aptly sings the good. (I.i.15-17)

His own work is objective. He says:

    no level'd malice
Infests one comma in the course I hold. (I.i.47-48)

But he is not so disinterested as he would have us think, for when the Painter asks him when his book comes forth he replies:

    Upon the heels of my presentment, sir. (I.i.27)

Later, when the Poet and Painter hear that Timon has found gold and is therefore rich once again they are frankly and cynically self-seeking:

Poet. Then this breaking of his has been but a try for his friends.

Pain. Nothing else. You shall see him a palm in Athens again . . . Therefore 'tis not amiss we tender our loves to him, in this suppos'd distress of his: it will show honestly in us, and is very likely to load our purposes with what they travail for . . .

Pain. . . . Promising is the very air o' th' time; it opens the eyes of expectation. Performance is ever the duller for his act; and, but in the plainer and simpler kind of people, the deed of saying is quite out of use. To promise is most courtly and fashionable; performance is a kind of will or testament which argues a great sickness in his judgment that makes it. (V.i.9-29)
Timon like Hamlet, suffers isolation in a corrupt society. W.I.D. Scott says: "It is useful to compare Timon's state of mind with that of Hamlet, of whom Coleridge considered Timon to be an 'after-vibration, written directly afterwards'". 21 A comparison of the two plays may be profitable even if one does not wish to accept Mr. Scott's view that Timon is suffering from advanced syphilis. 22 As in Timon's Athens, so in Hamlet's Denmark "Something is rotten" (Ham. I,iv.90). Fortune makes friends:

The great man down, you mark his favorite flies,  
The poor advanced makes friends of enemies.  
And hitherto doth love on fortune tend,  
For who not needs shall never lack a friend,  
And who in want a hollow friend doth try  
Directly seasons him his enemy.  

(Ham.III.ii.214-219)

Hamlet has observed with disgust the prevalence of flattery in his society for when he wishes to assure Horatio of the sincerity of his affection he says:

Nay, do not think I flatter,  
For what advancement may I hope from thee,  
That no revenue has but thy good spirits to feed and clothe thee? Why should the poor be flattered?  
No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp  
And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee  
Where thrift may follow fawning.  

(Ham.III.ii.61-67)


22 Scott, p.126.
Timon, at first, is unaware of the flattery about him. When he does understand the worthlessness of the attention he has received he realizes that it is flattery which has victimized him — he has been "stuck and spangled" with "flatteries" (III.vi.87). It is interesting to note that, when Timon turns on Apemantus telling him that his misanthropy is unjustified because men have never flattered the cynic we find the association of words which suggest fawning dogs licking sweets that occurs in the passage from Hamlet quoted above -- Apemantus has been "bred a dog"; if he had known the "sweet degree that this brief world affords" he would have "melted down" his youth and followed "the sugar'd game" before him; Timon himself has had the world as his "confectionary" and "the mouths, the tongues, the eyes and hearts of men / At duty" (IV.iii.251-278). (Caroline Spurgeon regards the image of dogs licking sweets as "central" to Timon of Athens) 23. Timon is a man apart even before he actually withdraws from society. All men flatter him, but he does not flatter others. Others give to receive more in return; Timon refuses Ventidius's repayment of the fine, saying:

I gave it freely ever, and there's none
Can truly say he gives, if he receives.

(I.ii.10-11)

23 Spurgeon, pp.198-199.
Timon, like Hamlet, has values which are different from
the world in which he finds himself.

Both Timon and Hamlet express a distaste for sexual
love. Timon rails against Timandra:

Be a whore still. They love thee not that use thee.
Give them diseases, leaving with thee their lust.
Make use of thy salt hours; season the slaves
For tubs and baths; bring down rose-cheek'd youth
To the tub-fast and the diet. (IV.iii.84-88)

His attitude is part of his misanthropy. In the early
scenes of the play his behavior towards the women of the
masque is that of a courteous host. He says, "They're
welcome all; let them have kind admittance" (I.ii.124).
(Those, like Scott, who would find sexual improprieties
in the early play have no textual justification for their
opinion.) Timon's abhorrence of Timandra and Phrynia is
not associated with any personal experience with love.

Hamlet's reaction, on the other hand, is intensely
personal. He is sickened by the thought of his mother's
wedding so soon after his father's death. He says:

That it should come to this!
But two month dead!
Why, she would hang on him
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on. And yet within a month --
Let me not think on't. -- Frailty, thy name is woman--
... Oh, most wicked speed, to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!
It is not, no it cannot, come to good.
But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue!

(Ham.I.ii.137-159)
After he has learned from the ghost that his father has been murdered he says to the gentle Ophelia:

Get thee to a nunnery. Why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? (Ham.III.i.122-123)

Even the marriage of the pure must be evil because it results in the conception of "arrant knaves." Hamlet believes all men are evil because of the evil he finds within himself:

I am myself indifferent honest,
but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me. (Ham.III.i.123-125)

Timon condemns men because of what he sees in others, Hamlet for what he sees in his own mind and heart. Timon reacts, at first without self-awareness, to the behaviour of society in general; Hamlet reacts because certain individuals have brought dishonour and death to his father and thus bared a latent ugliness in his own nature.

Terrible as Hamlet's isolation is, it is never as absolute as that of Timon. Hamlet is repelled by Gertrude's behaviour, but he cannot forget that she is his mother. In fact the ghost advises him:

Taint not thy mind, not let thy soul contrive Against thy mother aught. (Ham.I.v.85-86)

Hamlet and Ophelia are torn apart by the circumstances of their social status and of Hamlet's need to avenge his father; but, even here, Hamlet's situation is very different from that of Timon who loves no woman nor has any woman's love. In Hamlet, Horatio fulfills much the same
role as does the faithful steward in Timon, but, again, in Hamlet the relationship is a much warmer, more personal one. Hamlet is closely bound even to his enemies for Hamlet's mother is married to his father's murderer and the murderer king has both political and personal reasons for, at least, appearing to be on good terms with Hamlet. So real and human is the presentation of Hamlet's thoughts and feelings that we forget that we have here only a literary creation. We think of Hamlet as a living person. We ask, "What should Hamlet have done?" Because Timon has no indissoluble ties with other characters in the play -- he has no blood relatives, for example -- we observe him in a much more impersonal way. We see him as a man, almost any man, in society. The effect of this impersonal treatment is to generalize the theme. (An examination of the use of the words "man", "men", and "mankind" in the canon supports the idea of Timon of Athens being about man in general.24) With regard to Timon we are inclined to ask, "If men are as they appear to be in society, then how should a man behave?"

Shakespeare keeps the focus on this somewhat dehumanized protagonist by consolidating most of the other characters of the play into a group whose attention is

focused on Timon. First, they are all flattering sycophants, then selfish realists unwilling "to break their backs to heal his finger". We are never shown the effects of Timon's prodigality on others. In contrast, in Richard II, which treats the subject of a king brought down by a prodigality encouraged by flattering subjects, the emphasis is on the suffering which the king's extravagance inflicts on England. The country is overtaxed to pay for Irish wars. Our sympathy is aroused for banished Bolingbroke in particular, whose fortune has been confiscated to fill the royal treasury. We are ready, almost, to justify the deposition of God's anointed king. Seldom do we see Richard in the presence of his flatterers. Usually he must share the scene with some very effective opponent. Even in death Timon manages to keep the focus. His tomb prepared by himself, visited by the soldier, reported to Alcibiades, and commented upon has more substance than all of Athens. We experience peace in the play's end because we feel that Timon has found peace not because Athens is purged. In the history play, our interest is with the living partly because Richard's interest is there. He regrets the life which is slipping from him. He says:

I wasted time, and now doth time waste me.  
(Rich.II,V.v.49)
We are reconciled to him in the end because of the valiant fight he makes against his executioners.

An examination of Timon in comparison with Hamlet and Richard II reveals a consistency which cannot be accidental, in the differences of treatment relevant to each play. There is more than enough deliberate craftmanship to refute modern derogatory descriptions of Timon as "still-born", "unfinished," "a play which did not jell." The question then arises, "What is Shakespeare's intention in the drama?" I believe the clue is to be found in the third line of the play when the poet asks, "How goes the world?" (I.i.3) Timon repeats this question when his creditors' servants would interrupt his dinner. (II.ii.41) Commenting upon the indifference of Timon's former friends the First Stranger says:

Why, this is the world's soul,  
And just of the same piece  
Is every flatterer's sport.  

"The world is but a word" (II.ii.156) says the steward. The Poet says:

I have in this rough work shap'd out a man,  
Whom this beneath world doth embrace and hug  
With amplest entertainment.  

The "beneath world", all that is below the sphere of the moon, for the Elizabethan was synonymous with this world as opposed to heaven. In King Henry VIII, the king says of Wolsey:
If we did think
His contemplation were above the earth,
And fixed on spiritual object, he should still
Dwell in his musings. But I am afraid
His thoughts are below the moon, not worth
His serious considering. (Hen.VIII,III.ii.130-134)

Timon of Athens is about man in this world.

In the "beneath world" all is subject to change. The world "wears . . . as it grows" (I.i.4), says the Painter.

To the water imagery mentioned above, we find added imagery related to the heavenly bodies and to the seasons. When Timon wishes to curse the earth he says:

O blessed breeding sun, draw from the earth
Rotten humidity; below thy sister's orb
Infest the air! (IV.iii.1-3)

To Alcibiades's question,

How came the noble Timon to this change? (IV.iii.67)

Timon replies:

As the moon does, by wanting light to give.
But then renew I could not like the moon;
There were no suns to borrow of. (IV.iii.68-70)

At the false feast a lord declares:

The swallow follows not summer more willing than we your lordship. (III.vi.28-29)

And Timon replies:

Nor more willingly leaves winter; such summer birds are men. (III.vi.30-31)
Lucius's servant describes Timon's misfortune thus:

Ay, but the days are wax'd shorter with him:
You must consider that a prodigal course
Is like the sun's,
But not, like his, recoverable. I fear
'Tis deepest winter in Lord Timon's purse;
That is, one may reach deep enough, and yet
Find little. (III.iv.11-17)

If this world is transitory, what, then are we to think of man's life? The question is essentially religious. That Shakespeare intends a drama about religious matters is indicated in the diction, in the imagery, and in the stylistic features of Timon of Athens. Religious rituals are common: graces (I.ii.62-71), (III.vi.69-81), prayers (IV.iii.1-23), invocations (IV.iii.153-166, 179-198, 384-395), a benediction (I.ii.230-231), an epitaph (V.iv.70-73), and most of all curses which we may think of as a kind of inverted prayer (I.1.247), (III.v.105-106), (III.vi.89-101), (IV.i.1-41), (IV.iii.50, 64, 167-168, 447-452), (V.i.187-189). Man is spoken of as a worshipper. Timon says, "I am no idle votarist". (IV.iii.27). Here, men do not merely like gold, they worship it. "Traffic is the merchant's god (I.1.238). Flaminius throws Lucullus's coin back to him with:

Fly, damned baseness,
To him that worships thee! (III.i.47-48)
In an aside during his final encounter with the Poet and the Painter, Timon says:

What a god's gold,
That he is worshipp'd in a baser temple
Than where swine feed?

To thee be worship; and thy saints for aye
Be crown'd with plagues, that thee alone obey!

(V.i.46-52)

The feeling that Shakespeare is concerned with earth as opposed to heaven, the corruptible (mortal) as opposed to the incorruptible, is reinforced by the abundance of Biblical imagery, Biblical echoes, and Biblical vocabulary. The word "steward" has already been mentioned. Alcibiades, like "a shepherd," will cull the flock (V.iv.42); the senator proposes a "tithed" death (V.iv.31) rather than general execution; Timon must repay gifts "seven-fold" (I.i.276); the page outruns "grace" (II.ii.91); the painting is almost the "natural man" (I.i.160); Timon is "prodigal" (II.ii.169). Sometimes a whole Bible story is recalled in a few lines as when Timon prays to the sun:

Twinn'd brothers of one womb,
Whose procreation, residence and birth
Scarce is dividant -- touch them with several fortunes,
The greater scorns the lesser. (IV.iii.3-6)

Here the whole story of Jacob and Esau floods into memory, the twin brothers separated by hate for years because of greed and cupidity. In the same speech Timon asks:
Who dares, who dares,
In purity of manhood stand upright,
And say this man's a flatterer? If one be,
So are they all. (IV.iii.13-16)

We are reminded of the story of the woman taken in adultery. When the accusers brought the woman before Jesus he said:

Let hym that is among you without sinne, caste the first stone

(John VIII.7)

The story continues:

And when they hearde this, beyng accused of their owne consciences, they went out one by one, begynnyng at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, (the woman standyng in the myddes.)

(John VIII.9)

In the Bible story the accusers are silenced by their own sense of guilt. Timon, in his soliloquy, is saying that no man is pure enough to accuse another of being a flatterer because every man is guilty of that sin.

There are at least three more verses in the eighth chapter of the Gospel of John which are significant with respect to Timon of Athens, Jesus says:

11 Neither do I condemned thee: Go, and sinne no more

15 Ye judge after the fleshe, I judge no man.

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25 Bishops' Bible (1568) -- all biblical quotations are from this edition.
23 Ye are from beneath, I am from above: Ye are of this world, I am not of this world.

We find the condemnation of the sin rather than the sinner (Verse III) in Alcibiades' reply to the Senators who have just banished him. He says:

Banish me?
Banish your dotage, banish usury,
That makes the Senate ugly! (III.v.98-100)

There is a good deal about judging in the play: Timon and his friends judge after the flesh — after material values in the early play; Alcibiades appears before the Senate seeking righteous judgement (III.v.); the final lines of the play are a final evaluation of Timon. Verse 23 refers to the dichotomy of the "beneath" world as opposed to the ideal world, the latter being identified as Christ's dwelling place. (Christ imagery, so prevalent in the play, will be discussed in Chapter III). We noted above the concept of the "beneath" world in Timon of Athens.

In the thirteenth chapter of the Ecclesiasticus in the Apocrypha, as in several other sections of the Bible which we will discuss below, we find an association of ideas similar to that in Timon of Athens, ideas which one would not necessarily think of in conjunction with each other. Oliver notes a quibble in the play based on Ecclesiasticus (XIII.1).26 The play reads:

26 Oliver, p.33.
Tim.

Alcibiades,
Thou art a soldier, therefore seldom rich;
It comes in charity to thee: for all thy living
Is 'monst the dead, and all the lands thou hast
Lie in a pitch'd field.

Alcib. Ay, defil'd land, my lord.

(I.ii.220-225)

Ecclesiasticus reads:

1 Who so toucheth pytch, shalbe defiled withall:
and he that is familier with the proude, shall
cloth him selfe with pryde

In the same chapter we find the following:

2 ... Kepe no familiarite with one that is
richer then thy selfe.

4 If thou be for his profite, he bleth [sic] thee; but
if thou haue nothing, he shall forsake thee

9 Beware that thou be not disceaued and brought
downe in thy simplenesse . . .

17 All fleshe will resort to their like, and
every man wil kepe companie with such
as he is him selfe

The selfishness of superficial friendship, the need for
critical discernment rather than foolish simplicity, the
tendency for those of a kind to seek each others company
are all here.

The Painter, upon hearing the substance of the
Poet's allegory says that his story "would be well
express'd in our condition". (I.i.78-79). When Timon tells
Phrynia to spare her oaths, he says,"I'll trust to your
conditions." Whores can be trusted to be whores. It is
their condition. And the condition of whores may well be the condition of all mankind when "dishonour traffics with man's nature" (I.i.161). Above all else Timon of Athens is concerned with man's condition, man in relationship to mankind rather than to individual men and women. When Timon loves, he loves all mankind, even the churlish Apemantus. Later his hate is as universal for he says:

    Henceforth hated be
    Of Timon, man and all humanity. (III.vi.100-101)

Apemantus is "opposite to humanity" (I.i.272). Of Timon, the merchant says:

    he speaks the common tongue,
    Which all men speak with him. (I.i.176-177)

The here and now of the plays which pretends to be Athens is, on one level, Shakespeare's England; but on another level it is the timeless here and now of mortal existence. In this human condition, Timon becomes something of an Everyman.
CHAPTER III

THE CHARACTER OF TIMON

In an article entitled "Excessive Goodness a Tragic Fault", Ruth L. Anderson states:

Timon of Athens deals primarily with the danger that lies in excessive goodness; with the need for practical wisdom which gives man penetrating judgement against such evils as flattery and permits him to dissemble.¹

John W. Draper had already referred to Shakespeare's making Timon "a hero too noble for this world".² Perhaps such a view of Timon as the quotations above would suggest is the response of the critics to the Christ imagery and Bible echoes which W.M. Merchant noted in his article, "Timon and the Conceit of Art", in which he says:

... the scriptural source of his ideal conduct and reiteration of the Judas reference invite the supposition that Timon is a Christlike figure betrayed in a like manner ... ³

Merchant, however, finds "an apparent ambiguity in Shakespeare's treatment of character."⁴ Through his investigation of the significance of the Poet and Painter to the theme of the play he comes to the conclusion that:

⁴ loc.cit.
... Timon is involved in the second theme, in the same condemnation as his treacherous friends; that, even though it be in a lesser degree, he too is but "out-side", appearance not fulfilling the ideal which he professes...  

A careful investigation of the use of Biblical imagery brings us to much the same point of view.

A distinct comparison of Timon to Christ at the Last Supper occurs in the first banquetting scene when Apemantus remarks:

... What number of men eats Timon, and he sees 'em not!  
It grieves me to see so many dip their meat in one man's blood;  
and all the madness is, he cheers them up too.  
I wonder men dare trust themselves with men.  
... the fellow that sits next him, now parts bread with him, pledges the breath of him in a divided draught, is the readiest man to kill him. 'T'as been proved. (I.i.39-49)

We have the suggestion of the partaking of the body and blood of Christ, the breaking of bread, and the sharing of the common cup, as well as the traitor presence of Judas. In the third act, the strangers, while discussing the refusal of Timon's friends to be of help, evoke the same image:

First Stranger.

Who can call him his friend  
That dips in the same dish? For in my knowing  
Timon has been this lord's father,  
And kept his credit with his purse;  
Supported his estate; nay, Timon's money

5 Merchant, p.253.
Has paid his men their wages. He ne'er drinks
But Timon's silver treads upon his lip;
And yet -- O see the monstrousness of man,
When he looks out in ungrateful shape! --
He does deny him, in respect of his,
What charitable men afford to beggars.

Second Stranger.
Religion groans at it.

First Stranger.
For mine own part,
I never tasted Timon in my life. (III.ii.67-79)

There is a suggestion of the communion supper also in the
line "Thou weep'st to make them drink", (I.ii.106)
although it is to Timon's tears rather than his blood
that Apemantus refers. Just before this remark Timon has
become excessively emotional regarding "so many like
brothers commanding one another's fortunes". Suddenly
the image is switched from the last supper figure to an
image which brings to mind the birth of Jesus. Within the
following four lines we have both images:

Apem. Thou weep'st to make them drink, Timon.

Sec. Lord. Joy had the like conception in our eyes,
And at that instant like a babe sprung up.

Apem. Ho, ho: I laugh to think that babe a bastard. (I.ii.106-109)

Apemantus is referring to the "joy" of the lords present
and perhaps to Timon's joy in his friends -- a joy which
is soon to prove itself false. However, the image used in conjunction with the Christ image suggests the question "Is this the true Christ?" --"Is Timon truly a prototype of Jesus?"

There is little doubt that the Timon of the first part of the play aspires to being Christlike. He says, "We are born to do benefits" (I.ii.99). Giving expensive presents, paying his friends' debts and fines, supplying a marriage dowry are his idea of doing benefits. However Timon's giving goes beyond his ability to make good his promises. His wise and faithful steward says:

His promises fly so beyond his state
That what he speaks is all in debt; he owes
for ev'ry word:
He is so kind that he now pays interest for 't.

(I.ii.195-197)

The faithful Laches of the MS Timon counsels his extravagant master:

Who beares a princelie mynd needes princelie wealth

 Master, thou art noe kinge, noe prince

Shakespeare's Timon needs more than princely wealth to satisfy his generous impulses. He says:

. . . 'tis not enough to give:
Methinks I could deal kingdoms to my friends,
And ne'er be weary. (I.ii.218-220)

6 Appendix III, p.185.

7 MS Timon, p.3.
Timon's friends recognize him as a man of unusual bounty. The First Lord asks:

Come, shall we in
And taste Lord Timon's bounty? He out-goes
The very heart of kindness.

The noblest mind he carries
That ever govern'd man. (I.i.272-280)

Even the steward, who is the first to be critical of Timon's spending, recognized a certain nobility of intention in his master's acts when he says:

Poor honest lord, brought low by his own heart,
Undone by goodness; strange, unusual blood,
When man's worst sin is he does too much good!
(IV.ii.37-39)

The Poet speaks of Timon's large fortune "Upon his good and gracious nature hanging" (I.i.57). Timon regards himself free of all selfish considerations. He justifies his generous acts by referring to the moral worthiness of the recipients. He pays the debt which frees Ventidius simply because he knows him "A gentleman that well deserves a help" (1,1.105) and Timon further proves his disinterestedness by refusing to be reimbursed.

True giving has no relationship with getting in Timon's mind:

... there's none
Can truly say he gives, if he receives.
(I.ii.10-11)
He matches the dowry of the old Athenian for his daughter because his servant has served faithfully and long and because the young people are truly in love.

Timon is identified in act and word with freedom. He frees Ventidius, who speaks of being bound in gratitude to Timon's "free heart" (I.ii.6). Timon tells the old Athenian to "speak freely" (I.i.113). Even the somewhat cynical Poet catches this aspiration after freedom for he speaks of the companions of the allegorical man who

Follow his strides, his lobbies fill with tendance.
Drink the free air.

(I.i.82-85)

However Timon's sense of freedom is not merely moral freedom, or freedom from personal selfishness. Timon would be free of all material limitation and yet he wishes to express that freedom through material gifts and sensuous entertainments. "The five best senses acknowledge thee / their patron" (I.ii.119-120), Cupid says to Timon. Timon's idea of what constitutes freedom is very different from that of Hamlet who says:

Oh, God, I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space were it not that I have bad dreams.

(Ham.II.ii.260-262)
Hamlet thinks of freedom as a condition of the mind which may be achieved regardless of material circumstances. Timon's sense of freedom is doomed to disillusionment because man can never be free of material considerations in this life. "To Lacedaemon did my land extend" (II,ii.155) says Timon when he realized all his wealth is gone. Timon has played the prodigal because he has refused to recognize that even very great material wealth is finite. His steward says: "bounty, that makes gods, do still mar men" (IV.ii.41). Of Timon's prodigality, the Steward says:

No care, no stop; so senseless of expense, 
That he will neither know how to maintain it, 
Nor cease his flow of riot. Takes no account 
How things go from him, nor resumes no care 
Of what is to continue. Never mind 
Was to be so unwise, to be so kind. 
(II.ii.1-6)

Timon, like Lear is unwise in his kindness. However there is an important difference between them. Lear is fooled by the flattery of his wicked daughters and is petulant in his reaction to the plain speech of Cordelia and Kent, but he is no prodigal. He has divided his kingdom into three parts and his remarks indicate that he has some idea of the relative values of the portions. He can indicate each portion on a map (Lear.I.i.38). He knows the retinue he intends to keep and he makes clear to Goneril and Regan at the time of partition what their responsibilities to him will be:
I do invest you jointly with my power,
Pre-eminence, and all the large effects
That troop with majesty. Ourself, by monthly
course,
With reservation of a hundred knights
By you to be sustained, shall our abode
Make with you by due turns. (Lear I.i.132-137)

When Lear is unable to maintain himself as he has intended
it is because Goneril and Regan have not honoured their
obligation. A clear definition of responsibilities and
property such as that outlined by Lear is quite unknown
to Timon who says:

O what a precious
comfort 'tis to have so many like brothers command­
ing one another's fortunes.
(I.ii.101-103)

Timon's friends are more welcome to his fortune than his
fortunes are to him (I.ii.19-20). Timon would not know
the state of his affairs. His steward tells him:

... I did endure
Not seldom, nor so slight checks, when I have
prompted you in the ebb of your estate
And your great flow of debts. (II.i.143-146)

Timon's friends have no illusions about finiteness
of their possessions. The Senator, when he hears the first
rumours of Timon's bankruptcy, says he will not break his
back to heal Timon's finger (II.i.24).
The Senator realizes that he is powerless to stem the
receding tide of Timon's fortune. He criticizes Timon's
prodigality:
... No porter at his gate,
But rather one that smiles and still invites
All that pass by. (II.i.10-12)

Luculus tells how he has tried to persuade Timon to spend
less (III.i.21-29). However Timon's friends have been
ever ready to take advantage of his bounty. Of himself
Timon says:

No villanous bounty yet hath pass'd my heart;
Unwisely, not ignobly, have I given. (II.ii.177-178)

Although Timon's friends are wiser than he, they are less
noble.

Timon is not greatly upset by the word that his
fortune is gone. He is sure that his friends will rally
to his aid. He says:

And in some sort these wants of mine are crown'd,
That I account them blessings; for by these
Shall I try friends. (II.ii.185-187)

and

Ne'er speak or think
That Timon's fortunes 'mong his friends can sink. (II.ii.234-235)

The shock comes when he learns that he cannot count on
those friends. His reaction is anything but Christlike.
There is no turning of the other cheek or loving his
enemies. He hates. The violence of Timon's reaction
suggests that he has been more dependent than he would
have admitted upon the flattery of his admirers. The
The hero of the MS Timon states candidly:

... Timons greate name
In the gods eares resounds, to his greate fame.
This I heare willinglie; and 'tis farre sweeter
Then sound of harpe, or any pleasant meetre:
I, magnified by the peoples crye,
Shall mount in glorye to the heauens high. 8

In Shakespeare's Timon, too, it would appear that the conviction we are born to do benefits is mixed with a desire for adulation. Shakespeare's characterization, however, is a much more subtle for in the early part of the play neither the audience nor Timon himself fully understands Timon's psychological need for praise that makes him the easy target of flatterers. His ears are "To counsel deaf, but not to flattery" (I.ii.250-251). He encourages those who praise him because like Richard II, he "needs friends" (Rich.II,III.ii.176), and he mistakingly equates the attention of flatterers for evidence of sincere friendship.

Because Apemantus is ever ready to see the ugly side of human nature he discerns that Timon and his associates are not as noble as they believe themselves to be. He says:

He that loves to be flattered is worth o' the flatterer

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8 MS Timon, p.5.
He sees that the Merchant makes a god of "traffic" and that the Poet praises Timon because he hopes for his patronage. Apemantus says to the Poet:

... he[Timon] is worthy of thee, and to pay thee for thy labour. (I.i.224-225)

Like the Poet, Apemantus sees his role as that of the guardian of the behaviour of important men. He says to Timon:

... if I should be brib'd too, there would be none left to rail upon thee, and then thou wouldst sin the faster. Thou giv'st so long, Timon, I fear me thou wilt give away thyself in paper shortly. What needs these feasts, pomps, and vain-glories? (I.ii.240-244)

However Apemantus is not so wise concerning himself. The Poet understands that Apemantus attends Timon for the same reasons as do other Athenians. He says:

... from the glass-fac'd flatterer

To Apemantus
... even he drops down
The knee before him, and returns in peace
Most rich in Timon's nod. (I.1.56-64)

No character in this play is quite what he thinks himself to be or what he intends to be. The "natural" man (as opposed to the spiritual man our Biblical echo suggests) is like a painting, mere "outside". After viewing the painter's work Timon says:
The painting is almost the natural man:
For since dishonour traffics with man's nature,
He is but out-side; these pencill'd figures are
Even such as they give out. (I.i.160-163)

A man is often guilty of the very things he would accuse
others of. Lear expresses this idea in his raving:

Thou rascal beadle, hold thy bloody hand!
Why dost thou lash that whore? Strip thine own back.
Thou hotly lust'st to use her in that kind
For which thou whip'st her. (Lear IV.vi.164-167)

The Poet and Apemantus may be able to see what is amiss, but
they are of little help in mending matters because they,
like Job's comforters, are themselves guilty of those very
things they condemn in others. When Timon has become
wiser concerning the ways of men he says to the Poet and
Painter:

Wilt thou whip thine own faults in other men? (V.i.37-38)

Timon, like Lear and Gloucester, is a man who is
being forced to consider more deeply than he has ever done
the meaning of human existence. Like them he has lived by
certain principles which up to this time have seemed to be
excellent. As with them, the circumstances of his life
have hid from him the inadequacies of his ideas and his
character. It is only when Lear is stripped of his
wealth and power that he feels the terrible effects of his
own rashness and petulance. It is only when Timon loses
his riches that he learns what a poor thing is the kind of love his friends have borne him. Gloucester is blinded by the appearance of things --Edmund to his mind is as generous and his shape as true as honest madam's issue (Lear I.ii.8-9). Only when Gloucester loses his eyes does he begin to understand reality. He says, "I stumbled when I saw" (Lear IV.i.21). With Timon, too wisdom begins in material loss. When his "trencher friends" prove faithless, Timon realizes that their fine words have been worthless. Hence he is forced to reassess his own character. If he is not the fine lord his friends have pretended that he is, what is he?

One of the first marks of Timon's changed status is his loss of freedom. His servant remarks:

Doors that were ne'er acquainted with their wards
Many a bounteous year, must be employ'd
Now to guard sure their master.
And this is all a liberal course allows:
Who cannot keep his wealth must keep his house.

(III.iii.39-43)

Timon's fine house becomes a prison. When Timon leaves his chamber it is only to be set upon by the importunate collectors. Timon cries:

What, are my doors oppos'd against my passage?
Have I been ever free, and must my house
Be my retentive enemy, my gaol?
The place which I have feasted, does it now,
Like all mankind, show me an iron heart?

(III.iv.78-82)
Just a moment before, Varro's servant has excused the Steward's criticism of his master by saying:

No matter what; he's poor, and that's revenge enough. Who can speak broader than he that has no house to put his head in? Such may rail against great buildings. (III.iv.62-65)

In the image we have the first hint of the new kind of freedom growing out of poverty which is to replace the false sense of freedom which Timon formerly enjoyed. Nothing will bring Timon all things.

Timon decides that he will not remain a prisoner cowering from his enemies. He commands that a feast be given. One of the Lords, seeing the array of covered dishes and listening to Timon's apparently gracious welcome, says:

This is the old man still (III.vi.60)

How wrong he is! The impoverished Timon will never again be fooled by the flatteries of his "trencher-friends!" He has taken the first step of putting "off the old man with his deeds." (Colossians.III.9) Timon calls the guests to the table and then offers a grace (III.vi.69-81) which includes sincere supplications such as:

You great benefactors, sprinkle our society with thankfulness... what is amiss in them, you gods, make suitable for destruction,
along with such bitter condemnation of men in society as

Let no assembly of twenty be without a score of villains.

The dishes are uncovered to reveal only warm water.

Next follows a speech which I believe contains the central image of the play. Timon says:

May you a better feast never behold,
You knot of mouth-friends! Smoke and lukewarm water
Is your perfection. This is Timon's last;
Who, stuck and spangled with your flatteries,
Washes it off, and sprinkles in your faces
Your reeking villainy. (III.vi.84-89)

Here the ceremony of atonement is recalled, that ancient religious observance outlined in the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus in which the high priest once a year purged himself of all the sins of the flesh through washing, sacrificing and sprinkling of blood and then purified the congregation by sprinkling blood on them. The words "smoke," "water," and "perfection" recall the washing, the burnt sacrifice, and the purpose of the ceremony. The atonement is described in the ninth chapter of Hebrews with its Christian significance in which Jesus is designated as the lamb of God through whose sacrifice redemption is obtained for us. The words "blood," "purified," "perfect," "sprynkled," "justifiynges," "purification of the flesshe," recur in the passage. The old Hebrew service included the taking of two
animals and, by lot, choosing one (the Lord's) which was killed, "stuck", and its blood sprinkled on the priest's garments and about the altar. Thus the priest was "spangled" ("speckled" is a meaning of "spangled" given in the Universal Oxford Dictionary). The priest then washed himself and changed his garments. The apostle Peter speaks of the "sprinklyng of y blood of Jesus Christ." (I Peter I.2) The second animal, the scapegoat, was ceremoniously laden with the sins of the congregation. Then it was driven into the wilderness far from the haunts of man.

Shakespeare, of course, is not using the figure in any conventional or narrowly doctrinal fashion. However he does employ the rich meaning with which religious tradition has imbued the symbols. Timon is the high priest offering prayer and performing the purification of himself and the people -- he prays, he rebukes sin, he washes off the blood as does the high priest, and he speaks of sprinkling the congregation. Timon, at the same time, sees himself as the sacrificial animal -- "stuck and spangled" with his guests' flatteries. Here we have the association, through the Lord's animal, with the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, and hence a repetition of the suggestion that Timon is a Christ-like figure. Finally, Timon acts out the role of the scapegoat driven
from the hants of man to live in the wilderness.

Coming at the centre of the play as it does, marking the point when Timon leaves his old life and begins the new, the image suggests very strongly that the whole play is about the atonement, about man's coming into harmony with the principle of all being, God, about man's finding "true felicitie" (Ecclesiastes I). The problem of the atonement, of course, is "How can the imperfect become part of perfection?" How does a mortal, material being become one with spirit? How does the "natural man", the physical man, "put off mortality and put on immortality"? How does "this corruptible put on incorruption"?

Up to this point in the play Timon has lived a sensuous life in which he has sought an earthly paradise. His has not been an evil life. It has, in fact, in many ways been an ideal life, as G. Wilson Knight points out in his essay on the play.

He says:

Timon himself is the flower of human aspiration. His generosity lacks wisdom, but is itself noble; his riches reflect the inborn aristocracy of his heart; his pleasure, like his love of friends, are in themselves excellent, the consummations of natural desire and in harmony with the very spirit of man's upward endeavour towards the reality of art, the joys of civilization, and love universal.9

9 Wilson Knight, p.566.
Timon has been like the preacher of Ecclesiastes who writes:

I gathered together silver and gold, and the chief treasures of kings and lands: I have provided me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men. \(\text{(Ecclesiastes LIILI.8)}\)

However, like the preacher he is learning that "all was but vanity and vexation of mynde, and nothing of any value under the sunne" \(\text{(Ecclesiastes LIILI.11)}\) and that:

All thynges in this worlde are full of vanity and of none indurance. All mans wisdome is but follie and griefe \(\text{(Ecclesiastes LIII.2)}\)

Timon is learning the lesson summarized in the introductory note to Ecclesiastes:

... true and eternall felicite consisteth not in any worldly wisdome or aboundaunce of riches, or in carnall pleasure, which all be but vayne and transitorie: but ... true felicite consisteth in a whole ioynynge our selues to God by pure religion.

In the words of the New Testament, Timon must

... Lay downe, ... the olde man, which is corrupt, according to the lustes of error ... be renued in the spirite of his mynde and ... put on that newe man, which after god is shapen, in righteouynesse \(\text{(Ephesians IV.22-24)}\)

Timon's first reaction to his disillusionment is to see only foulness and corruption where formerly he saw only goodness and beauty. He says:
all's obliquy;
There's nothing level in our cursed natures
But direct villainy. Therefore be abhorr'd
All feasts, societies, and throngs of men!
His semblable, yea himself, Timon disdains.

(IV.iii.18-23)

He has loved indiscriminately. Now he hates all mankind
including himself. In his curse he would have all
order, custom, law and natural affection overthrown and
in their place find disease and filthiness. He says:

O thou wall
That girdles in those wolves, dive in the earth
And fence not Athens! Matrons, turn incontinent!
Obedience fail in children! Slaves and fools,
Pluck the grave wrinkled senate from the bench,
And minister in their steads! To general filths
Covert, o' th' instant, green virginity!
Do 't in your parents' eyes! Bankrupts, hold fast;
Rather than render back, out with your knives,
And cut your trusters' throats! Bound servants, steal!
Large-handed robbers your grave master's are,
And pill by law. Maid, to thy master's bed;
Thy mistress is o' th' brothel! Son of sixteen,
Pluck the lin'd crutch from thy old limping sire;
With it beat out his brains! Piety and fear,
Religion to the gods, peace, justice, truth,
Domestic awe, night-rest and neighbourhood,
Instruction, manners, mysteries and trades,
Degrees, observances, customs and laws,
Decline to your confounding contraries;
And yet confusion live! Plagues incident to men,
Your potent and infectious fevers heap
On Athens ripe for stroke! . . . cold sciatica
. . . lust and liberty. Creep in the minds and marrows
of our youth . . . riot, itches, blains, leprosy
. . . Nothing I'll bear from thee
But nakedness . . .

(IV.i.1-33)
Athens has become the symbol of organized society, of all human institutions. Timon decides he will take himself off to the woods, that refuge for so many of Shakespeare's people:

Timon will to the woods, where he shall find Th' unkindest beast more kinder than mankind.

And grant, as Timon grows, his hate may grow To the whole race of mankind, high and low! Amen.

(IV.i.35-41)

There is none of the sunshine nor gaiety of Arden about Timon's wood. Yet even here we are beyond the corrupting influence of society: Apemantus says, "Here is no use for gold" (IV.iii.292). As one who dies can take nothing from this world, so Timon takes nothing from Athens but his nakedness (IV.i.32-33).

In spite of his state of mind Timon finds that his body yet craves food, that body which links man to the animal. The earth feeds man as she does the animals. Timon says:

That nature, being sick of man's unkindness, Should yet be hungry! Common mother, thou Whose womb unmeasurable and infinite breast Teems and feeds all; whose self-same mettle, Whereof thy proud dild, arrogant man, is puff'd, Engenders the black toad and adder blue, The gilded newt and eyeless venom'd worm, With all th' abhorred births below crisp heaven Whereon Hyperion's quick'ning fire doth shine: Yield him, who all the human sons do hate, From forth thy plenteous bosom, one poor root.  

(IV.iii.178-188)
He asks food of the earth, simple food — a root. Man cannot take more than the bare necessities from the earth without corrupting his mind. Timon says:

\[\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldo
Thou visible god,
That sold'rest close impossibilities,
And mak'st them kiss; that speak'st with every tongue,
To every purpose!                              (IV.iii.384-392)

The only use Timon can find for gold is as an agent of destruction:

Come, damn'd earth,
Thou common whore of mankind, that puts odds
Among the rout of nations, I will make thee
Do thy right nature.                              (IV.iii.42-45)

He offers Alcibiades gold for his army which is about to attack Athens. He offers gold to the whores Timandra and Phrynia with the instructions:

Be whores still;
And he whose pious breath seeks to convert you,
Be strong in whore, allure him, burn him up;

Consumptions sow
In hollow bones of man; strike their sharp shins,
And mar men's spurring. Crack the lawyer's voice,

Hear the flamen,
That scolds against the quality of flesh,
And not believes himself. Down with the nose,

Make curl'd-pate ruffians bald,
Plague all.                                        (IV.iii.141-164)

The fact that Timon is not tempted to return to Athens after he has discovered the gold shows how shallow is Apemantus's judgement of Timon's behaviour. Apemantus thinks that Timon is merely imitating his own manners (IV.iii.201); and that Timon is suffering from "A poor unmanly melancholy sprung / From change of future" (IV.iii.205-206). He tells Timon, "Thou 'dst courtier be
again/ Wert thou not beggar" (IV.iii.243-244). Apemantus boasts that his attitude is quite superior to that of Timon for he has learned to be content with his humble status. He says:

    Best state, contentless,
    Hath a distracted and most wretched being,
    Worse than the worst, content. (IV.iii.247-249)

In a scathing rebuttal Timon makes clear the great difference between the two men. He says:

    Thou art a slave, whom Fortune's tender arm
    With favour never clasp'd, but bred a dog.
    Hadst thou like us from our first swath proceeded
    The sweet degrees that his brief world affords
    To such as may the passive drugs of it
    Freely command, thou wouldst have plung'd thyself
    In general riot, melted down thy youth
    In different beds of lust, and never learn'd
    The sugar'd game before thee. But myself --
    Who had the world as my confectionary,
    . . . hearts of men . . .
    That numberless upon me stuck, as leaves
    Do on the oak, have with one winter's brush
    Fell from their boughs and left me open, bare,
    . . .
    Thy nature did commence in sufferance, time
    Hath made thee hard in't. Why shouldst thou hate men?
    They never flatter'd thee. What hast thou given?
    If thou wilt curse, thy father (that poor rag)
    Must be thy subject, who in spite put stuff
    To some she-beggar and compounded thee
    Poor rogue hereditary. (IV.iii.252-276)

Apemantus's origin is in animality, his abstinence a necessity, and his hatred of men without reason. "What hast thou given?" Timon asks implying the inherent selfishness of Apemantus. He is inferior to knaves and flatterers.
Apemantus is touched by the rebuke for when Timon takes up a root to eat, he is moved to offer him food (IV.iii.284).

When Timon asks Apemantus what he would do with the world if it lay in his power he replies:

Give it to the beasts, to be rid of men. (IV.iii.324)

When Timon asks:

Wouldst thou have thyself fall in the confusion of men, and remain a beast with the beasts? (IV.iii.325-326)

to which Apemantus replies "Ay, Timon". Timon declares that Apemantus's ambition is "beastly" and then follows a speech in which Timon points out the dreadfulness of an animal's existence for each animal must fear its natural enemies. Timon finishes:

All thy safety were remotion, and thy defence absence. What beast should thou be that were not subject to a beast? And what a beast art thou already, that seest not thy loss in transformation! (IV.iii.343-347)

Apemantus is mere animal-man, physical in origin and without spiritual aspiration. He is content to think of himself as a beast because he admits only the animal aspect of humanity. Now we see why his early speeches are full of animal images and bawdiness. He says:

... The strain of man's bred out
Into baboon and monkey. (I.i.249-250)
The servants of Timon's creditors are "bawds between gold and want" (II.ii.64) and to the page for whom he has just read the addresses on the letters he says:

Go, thou wast born a bastard, and thou'lt die a bawd.  

(II.ii.87-88)

Apemantus is incapable of understanding Timon's aspiration or the meaning of his soul's torment because Apemantus's view of life is sensual. He feeds where his stomach finds meat (IV.iii.296). He is like Barnardine in *Measure for Measure* to whom the Duke says:

thou art said to have a stubborn soul  
that apprehends no further than this world,  
and squarest thy life according  

(MFM V.i.485-487)

Barnardine is declared unfit to live or die (MFM IV.iii.68). Apemantus is a slave (IV.iii.252), a rogue (IV.iii.276). A vision limited to immediate physical needs and to this world only is characteristics, indeed, of all those Shakespearian characters who are mistaken, foolish, or even downright wicked. Macbeth, for example, in deciding whether or not to murder Duncan is concerned only with the effect of his act here and now. He'll "jump the life to come" (Macb.I.vii.7). Claudius, in *Hamlet*, acknowledges that his offense is rank and that "It hath the primal eldest curse upon't" (Ham.III.iii.37), but he cannot repent of his deed because of the present advantages it has
brought him. Gloucester foolishly approves his bastard son Edmund because he is attractive, his mother was fair to look upon, and "there was good sport at his making" (Lear I.i.23), never guessing that "the dark and vicious place" (Lear V.iii.172) where he has got Edmund will cost him his eyes. In Troilus and Cressida, the foolish Ajax "wears his wit in his / belly and his guts in his head" (T&C II.i.79-80). Troilus makes his disastrous decision to wed Cressida because his will is enkindled by his eyes and ears (T&C II.ii.63). In Antony and Cleopatra, Pompey would see the libertine Antony tied up "in a field of feasts", his brain fuming, "sleep and feeding" proroguing his honor "Even till a Lethed dullness" (A&C II.i.23-27). Apemantus does not himself act the libertine (probably as Timon says because he has never had the means) but he sees all others as indulging in animality. His own mind is filled with nothing more noble than the contemplation of sensuality in others. In the words of Wilson Knight, "His mind functions in terms of the foul, bestial, and stupid attributes of man.  

10 Wilson Knight, p.550.
Shakespeare often gives characters whom we learn to hate or to disdain qualities which at first recommend them to us, such as beauty in the case of Cleopatra, intelligence and candour as in the case of Richard III, or audacity and wit, as in the case of Falstaff. So Apemantus, in his first appearances, seems to be more clear-sighted than Timon. He sees through the trencher friends and recognized the opportunism in the Poet and the Painter. However, unlike most of those characters who share to some degree his view of life, he does not engage our emotions. Because he has no influence upon others we have no reason to hate or fear him. Because we have never loved him we cannot feel for him the pity we feel for one of the tragic heroes or for Falstaff, for that matter, when the newly crowned Henry dismisses him. Apemantus is like Bernardine in that we feel no emotional involvement. In both characters Shakespeare seems to be addressing our minds rather than our hearts. Apemantus, too, is unfit for life or death.

Earlier we noted that Apemantus is moved by the "new" Timon to offer food. (IV.iii.284) A few minutes later Apemantus gives Timon a medlar, that fruit which is edible only when it is soft with rottenness.
In the medlar we have a symbol which is used with bawdy significance in Measure for Measure (IV.iii.184), As You Like It (III.ii.125), and Romeo and Juliet (II.i.134) in each instance to suggest that woman is ripe for physical love only when she becomes soft and perhaps a little corrupt. In Timon the medlar may be a symbol implying that only as the "old man" corrupt in his ways is about to die can man truly become useful or good, just as a grain of corn falling into the ground can put forth the new blade only after decaying. Apemantus admits an admiration for Timon in the wilderness which he had never felt for the Timon who had graciously invited him to his feasts (IV.iii.235).

The increased stature of Timon stripped of his illusions is even plainer if we contrast his experience among his friends in Athens with that among bandits in the woods. Timon's indulgence, in his balmy days, of his flatterers has the effect of making them more and more greedy. They calculate the value of his friendship. The Senator says:

If I want gold, steal but a beggar's dog
And give it Timon — why, the dog coins gold.

As soon as Luculus sees Flaminius he wishes to know what Timon has sent him (III.i.4-6). They are not, as Timon
thinks, like brothers commanding one another's fortunes for when Timon sends to them for aid, they will give him nothing. What a different effect the new Timon has on the bandits who come to rob him. It should be noted that Timon recognizes them immediately to be thieves although they are pretending to be soldiers. We have the following conversation:

Tim. Now thieves?
All. Soldiers, not thieves.
Tim. Both too; and women's sons.
All. We are not thieves, but men that much do want.
Tim. Your greatest want is, you want much of meat. (IV.iii.416-419)

Timon declares they are mortals, men born of women. When they protest that they are men in great need, Timon, by changing the position of the word "much", tells them that their greatest difficulty is that they want too much. He goes on to explain how nature is offering them the necessities of life:

Why should you want? Behold the earth hath roots; Within this mile break forth a hundred springs; The oaks bear mast, the briers scarlet hips; The bounteous housewife nature on each bush Lays her full mess before you. Want? Why want? (IV.iii.420-424)

However the First Bandit objects:

We cannot live on grass, on berries, water, As beasts and birds and fishes. (IV.iii.425-426)

Unlike Apemantus he refuses to identify man with the animals.
Then follows a speech in which Timon maintains that thievery is the general condition in the natural world — "there is boundless theft / In limited professions" (IV.iii.430-431). Even the sun, the moon, and the earth thrive by stealing. Timon gives the thieves gold (thus preventing them from stealing from him) and urges them to carry on their trade in Athens. The speech finishes with an "Amen". Its effect is that of an exorcism of evil because the Second and Third Bandit are ready to give up stealing. The Third Bandit says:

H'as almost charm'd me from my profes­sion, by persuading me to it. (IV.iii.453-544)

The First Bandit is not so easily convinced that he must mend his ways. When the Second Bandit says he is ready to give over his trade, the First Bandit replies:

Let us first see peace in Athens. There is no time so miserable but a man may be true. (IV.iii.459-560)

Surely the first sentence means "Let us not be in any hurry." In spite of Oliver's note on this passage, I believe the thief then goes on to say "Things can't be so bad that we must stop being true to our trade or to our "mystery". An ironic interpretation puts the remark in harmony with the tone of the First Bandit's words as few lines above:
'Tis in the malice of mankind that he [Timon] thus advises us; not to have us thrive in our mystery. (IV.iii.455-456)

Even the First Bandit has felt the effect of the new Timon whose understanding of himself and man in general is deepening.

Timon is becoming, in spite of his intentions, a purging influence in the world. He is like Hamlet, who in spite of the abortiveness of his attempts to revenge his father's murder, becomes the agent of justice in that Claudius, driven by the fear his nephew has aroused, takes those rash steps which result in Gertrude's death and his own. "Leave her to heaven", the ghost advises Hamlet with respect to his mother. Man is most effective when he does not presume upon heaven's authority. Merely by being true to his own vision — "To thine own self be true" (Ham.Iii.78) — a man may influence others profoundly. Cordelia, for example, by being herself and refusing to indulge in the extravagant and insincere declarations of love which her sisters have made, precipitates the action which exposes to Lear his own weaknesses and the evil in his daughters. In Measure for Measure, Isabella's purity excites and exposes Angelo's latent carnality (MFM II.ii.167-169).
Not all those who come to visit Timon are capable of growing under the therapy of his insight. The Poet and Painter reappear, ready still to create satires "against the softness of prosperity" (V.i.34), but now their self-interest is unmasked. They have learned that Timon has gold and they have come as the Painter says "to load our purposes with what they travail for" (V.i.15). They think that Timon will not realize that they know of the gold and that he will believe they wish only to honour him. Tendering their love to Timon in his "suppos'd distress," the Painter feels, will show "honesty" in them (V.i.14). Whether we take "honesty" in the sense of "liberality" or in the sense of "truthfulness", the words and acts of these self-appointed protectors of social values reveal their fundamental insincerity. The irony of their own declarations is underlined by Timon's sarcastic use of the words "honest" and "honesty" eight times in thirty lines (V.i.55-85). (We find here an interesting parallel with the usage of "honest" and "honesty" in Othello, many of Empson's remarks about the latter play being applicable to this passage of Timon.\(^{11}\)) So gross in mind are they that they cannot even guess at the great transformation which Timon has undergone nor can they even comprehend his condemnation of them:
Tim. There's never a one of you but trusts a knave, 
That mightily deceives you.

Both. Do we, my lord?

Tim. Ay, and you hear him cog, see him dissemble, 
Know his gross patchery, love him, feed him, 
Keep in your bosom; yet remain assur'd 
That he's a made-up villain.

Pain. I know none such, my lord.

Poet. Nor I.

Both. Name them, my lord; let's know them.

Tim. Each man apart, all single and alone, 
Yet an arch-villain keeps him company. 

(V.i.92-107)

They do not understand him until he actually throws stones at them. What a scathing criticism this passage of the play is of those would-be artists who, unaware of their own ignorance, would presume to advise and teach others through their art, attempting like Spenser "to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline" by means of a delivery "clowdily enwrapped in Allegoricall deuises". 12 Self-knowledge, sincerity, honesty are the first essentials for any real understanding of life and are the basis not only of individual growth but of creative works of genuine value.


In contrast to the Poet and Painter the two senators who seek out Timon show that they and their fellow Athenians have seen the evil of their treatment of Timon and are truly sorry even if their repentance is pricked on by their fear of Alcibiades. The second senator says:

They [the Athenians] confess
Towards thee forgetfulness too general gross;
Which now the public body, which doth seldom
Play the recanter, feeling in itself
A lack of Timon's aid, hath sense withal
Of its own fall, restraining aid to Timon,
And send forth us, to make their sorrowed render
Together with a recompense more fruitful
Than their offence can weigh down by the dram --
Ay, even such heaps and sums of love and wealth
As shall to thee blot out what wrongs were theirs,
And write in thee the figures of their love,
Ever to read them thine. (V.i.143-154)

The senate is not only repentant but willing to demonstrate that repentance with treasure. They appear to know nothing of Timon's gold. They have come for his help. The first senator says:

Therefore so please thee to return with us,
And of our Athens, thine and ours, to take
The captainship, thou shalt be met with thanks,
Allowed with absolute power, and thy good name
Live with authority. So soon we shall drive back
Of Alcibiades the approaches wild,
Who like a boar too savage doth root up
His country's peace. (V.i.158-165)

Certainly here we have justification for Wilson Knight's view of Timon as the humanist ideal. Timon has enjoyed a reputation for his ability as well as his wealth.
His earlier claim to having rendered his state considerable service is justified. However, the request to return and save his city is the subtlest flattery, and Timon, recognizing it as such, refuses. Neither this request nor the gold he has discovered can tempt him to return to the worldliness he has forsaken. He will no longer concern himself with this world's conflicts. He says:

... Timon cares not. But if he Alcibiades sack fair Athens,

Giving our holy virgins to the stain
Of contumelious, beastly, mad-brain'd war,

I cannot choose but tell him, that I care not.

(V.i.170-176)

The malice he felt when he offered gold to Alcibiades and the whores is passing into indifference. He says to the senators:

Go, live still;
Be Alcibiades your plague, you his,
And last so long enough.

(V.i.187-189)

The only help he has to offer those who would escape their afflictions is the use of his tree for hanging themselves -- in fact, no help. The senators must return to make their peace with Alcibiades unable to buy their salvation or gain it through the virtue of another.

While he is speaking with the senators Timon
introduces the subject of his own death. He has been writing his epitaph "which will be seen to-morrow" (V.i.185). He expects to die shortly. Before they leave he instructs them:

      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. (V.i.213-217)

He bids them come to his tomb and let his grave-stones be their oracle (V.i.218) for "Graves only be men's work and death their gain" (V.i.221). Not only are wealth and fame transitory, but life itself is fleeting. Every man and woman must, in the end, face death -- a theme which Shakespeare develops elaborately in the graveyard scene of Hamlet (Ham.V.i.) in which the flesh of lawyers, generals, beautiful women, and beloved jesters alike turns to dust. As the disguised Duke reminds Claudio in Measure for Measure, even a rich man is like an ass with his back bowed under ingots for he bears his heavy riches but a journey and death unloads him. (MFM, III.1.25-28)

The Duke says:

    Thou art death's fool,
   For him thou labor'st by thy flight to shun,
    And yet runn'st towards him still. (MFM, III.1.11-13)
Wilson Knight regards the death-theme as paramount in the second half of Timon of Athens. He says: "The death-theme in Timon is thus of the greatest importance, the crowning majesty of the play's movement". However, here Shakespeare is not belaboring the inevitability of death. What he gives a whole scene to in Hamlet, he expresses in a line in Timon—"Graves only be men's work and death their gain". Moreover, in Timon death is not portrayed with dread or regret. Timon says:

My long sickness
Of health and living now begins to mend,
And nothing brings me all things. (V.i.185-187)

Living is itself a sickness for which death is the cure. In fact, life may be a punishment. When Alcibiades wishes to curse the Senate he says:

Now the gods keep you old enough, that you may live
Only in bone, that none may look on you!
(III.v.105-106)

In cursing his trencher-friends at the false banquet, Timon cries, "Live loath'd, and long" (III.vi.89). Almost the last words which Apemantus flings at Timon are "Live, and love thy misery" (IV.iii.398). Timon replies, "Long live so, and so die!" (IV.iii.399)

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13 Wilson Knight, p.566.
Timon's remark to the two senators implies the same idea:

Go, live still;
Be Alcibiades your plague, you his,
And last so long enough.  

(V.i.187-189)

Although Timon welcomes death, there is no basis for concluding as do Draper and Honigmann that he commits suicide. He offers his tree to all Athenians who wish to hang themselves upon it and thus escape.

their griefs,
Their fears of hostile strokes, their aches, losses,
Their pangs of love, with other incidents throes
That nature's fragile vessel doth sustain
In life's uncertain voyage.  

(V.i.197-201)

He says that his own use of the tree invites him to cut it down (V.i.205). In other words, he has no intention of hanging himself upon the tree. No other method of suicide is hinted anywhere. Instead of finding a suggestion that Timon has died before his time as did Lady Macbeth, we find references to Timon having lived his span. He himself says, "Sun, hide thy beams, Timon hath his reign" (V.i.222) and the soldier reads "Timon is dead, who hath outstretched his span" (V.iii.3).

When Hamlet broods upon the incestuous relationship between his mother and his uncle he expresses the desire to escape his fleshly existence, but is restrained by canon law. He says:

14 Draper, p.521.
15 Honigmann, p.17.
Oh, that this too too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!
Or that the Everlasting had not fixed
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter!

(Ham. I.ii.129-132)

Timon says:

I am sick of this false world, and will love nought
But even the mere necessities upon't.
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.

(IV.iii.378-383)

Timon, like Hamlet, is sickened by the world and, like
Hamlet, has no dread of dying. However, whereas Hamlet
expresses the wish that the "Everlasting" would allow
suicide, Timon speaks of loving the "necessities" in the
world. Surely these necessities are those things which
keep man alive such as the roots he eats. This is
hardly the speech of a suicide. As Timon sees death as
the end of man's griefs, fears, losses in this life, so
Hamlet sees death as the possible end of heartache and
"the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to"
(Ham.III.i.62-63). However the fear of what comes after
death causes Hamlet to mistrust death as the solution
of human problems. He says:

... Who would fardels bear,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscovered country from whose bourn
No traveler returns, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?

(Ham.III.i.70-82)
At no time does Timon express any fear with regard to the hereafter, but neither does he ever suggest that death itself is the gateway to eternal bliss. Others in the play do fear death. The Athenians beg for their lives. They say to Alcibiades:

like a shepherd,
Approach the fold and cull the infected forth,
But kill not all together. (V.iv 42-44)

Timon expects his tomb to be a warning to others "That death in me at others' lives may laugh" (IV.iii.383).

Timon differs from other characters in the play in that he has already undergone a kind of death. Already he has been parted from his friends and his possessions and, worst of all, he has lost his illusions. His reaction to this living death is violent, his revulsion absolute. After the suffering he has endured, the second death has no dread for him. Wilson Knight oversimplifies the later part of the play when he sees it as only a great movement towards death. It is rather a study of death fractured into its elements -- the personal losses, the forced evaluation of one's life, and the separation of the spiritual and the physical in man.

Timon grows in character in his wilderness. We see changes apart from his being wiser concerning the
the characters of others. The tears of the loving steward force Timon to yield somewhat in his hate and to "proclaim one honest man." He says:

How fain would I have hated all mankind,
And thou redeem'st thyself. But all, save thee,
I fell with curses. (IV.iii.503-505)

His indifference to the gold and his refusal of political power and prestige show how profoundly his values have changed. He hates the falsity of the world and he will not feed upon that which he hates (IV.iii.307). In Biblical language, he has overcome and will not be hurt by the second death. (Revelation II.11)

However, Timon has still to put on immortality. Timon "ripen's" towards the shedding of the flesh. He grows towards earth and he wears as he grows (III.i.345). Like the medlar he is ready at that point when all growth and development have ceased and decay is about to set in. In Lear, the association of death and decay, the second often preceeding the first is even more explicitly expressed. Lear says of his servant Caius, "He's dead and rotten" (Lear V.iii.285). Kent assures Lear that he has been with him from his "first of difference and decay" (Lear V.iii.288). Albany in promising Lear his help says, "What comfort to this great decay may come / Shall be applied" (V.iii.297-298). There, too, the view is
presented that life is to be endured until man's time comes. Gloucester, after the unsuccessful suicide which his afflictions have driven him to attempt, says:

Henceforth I'll bear Affliction till it do cry out itself "Enough, enough," and die.  

(Lear IV.vi.75-77)

When man has undergone the preparation for death he does not find dying hard. To those who would rush in attendance on the dying Lear, Kent says:

Vex not his ghost. Oh, let him pass! He hates him That would upon the rack of this tough world Stretch him out longer.  

(Lear, V.iii.313-315)

Earlier Edgar has said:

Men must endure Their going hence, even as their coming hither. Ripeness is all.  

(Lear, V.ii.9-11)

In discussing Timon's inevitable and willing movement towards death Wilson Knight incorrectly uses the words "the void of Death, darkness -- the Shakespearean 'nothing'!, "the dark sea", "the wide sea of eternal darkness", "this ineffable darkness". There is no talk of darkness in Shakespeare's play. The nearest we come to darkness is in Timon's line "Sun, hide thy beams, Timon hath done his reign" (V.i.222). Timon speaking to himself says:

Then, Timon, presently prepare thy grave; Lie where the light foam of the sea may beat Thy grave-stone daily.  

(IV.iii.380-382)
To the two senators he says:

    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.  

(V.i.213-217)

The image is the foaming sea, the surface where water and air mingle, not the black depths. Nor is the picture presented of a body being placed in an earthy pit there to molder in the darkness. In the above quotations we find the word "day" or "daily" not "night" or "nightly". In Antony and Cleopatra, Iras, sensing the doom which is upon them says:

    Finish, good lady. The bright day is done,  
    And we are for the dark.  

(A&C V.ii.193-194)

Here the image of the darkness before them is appropriate to the story of the pagan court of Cleopatra and the sensuous love which must end in death. Reunion in death is meaningless for Antony and Cleopatra for in death the flesh is cold and lips do not kiss; they rot -- Cleopatra's talk of reunion with Antony notwithstanding (A&C V.ii.303-306). Ancient Athens may have been pagan, but Timon's aspirations are not. For him death is not synonymous with darkness. There is no hint in the play of a belief in some eternal torment awaiting the soul as we find in Measure for Measure when Claudio says:
Death is a fearful thing.

Aye, but to die, and go we know not where,
To lie in cold obstruction and to rot,
This sensible warm motion to become
A kneaded clod and the delighted spirit
To bathe in fiery floods,
'tis too horrible!
The weariest and most loathed worldly life
That age, ache, penury, and imprisonment
Can lay on nature is a paradise
To what we fear of death. (MFM, III.i.116-132)

Timon who expects his woes to end with the
dissolution of the flesh, looking as he does for an end
to his "sickness of the living" in death, reminds us of
the maddened Lear who seems to equate the heavenly with
the mind and heart of man, with thought and feeling
independent of the flesh, and Hell with mere physicality.

Of women Lear says:

Down from the waist they are Centaurs,
Though women all above.
But to the girdle do the gods inherit,
Beneath is all the fiends'.
There's Hell, there's darkness, there's the
sulphurous pit,
Burning, scalding, stench, consumption, fie, fie, fie!
(Lear IV.vi.126-131)

His hand is filthy because it is fleshly. When
Gloucester asks to kiss it, Lear replies, "Let me wipe it
first, it smells of mortality". (Lear IV.vi.136).

If we fail to find a conventional belief in Hell as
a locality for doomed souls after death in Timon of Athens,
we must admit, also that there is no hint of the kind of the Heaven to which we have become accustomed in Christian literature. In Henry VIII Buckingham, Wolsey and Queen Katherine all have experiences not unlike that of Timon. Each, in dying, speaks words which we might expect from devout Christians. Buckingham says:

All good people,
Pray for me! I must now forsake ye. The last hour
Of my long weary life is come upon me.
Farewell!
And when you would say something that is sad,
Speak how I fell. I have done, and God forgive me!  

(Hen.VIII II.i.131-136)

The repentant Wolsey finds peace in the knowledge that he is properly prepared for death. When Cromwell asks,

"How does your Grace?", he replies:

Why, well.
Never so truly happy, my good Cromwell.
I know myself now, and I feel within me
A peace above all earthly dignities,
A still and quiet conscience.

(Hen.VIII III.ii.376-380)

Queen Katherine, acknowledging her forgiveness of Wolsey, says to her man, Griffith:

Whom I most hated living, thou hast made me,
With thy religious truth and modesty,
Now in his ashes honor.

... Cause the musicians play me that sad note
I named my knell, whilst I sit meditating
On that celestial harmony I go to.

(Hen.VIII IV,ii.69-80)
In *Lear*, where references to Christian teaching is usually oblique, we find Kent expressing a conventionally Christian attitude towards his own death. He says:

> I have a journey, sir, shortly to go.  
> My master calls me, I must not say no.  

(*Lear* V.iii.321-322)

The lines remind us of the trite inscription often found on tombstones:

George Rogers  
Called Home  
Sept.19, 1921

In *Timon of Athens* there is no explicit statement of similar sentiments.

Although Timon neither expects nor wishes for a state of existence beyond death in which he will live some ideal version of his earthly life, yet he does not think of himself as being a nonentity after he has died. He expects his grave-stone to be an "oracle" (*V.i.218*). Twice he speaks of preparing his epitaph (*IV.iii.382*, *V.i.184*), which he expects to be "seen to-morrow"(*V.i.185*). Through him, death will comment on the lives of others (*IV.iii.383*). Other characters in the play respond to the monumental quality of Timon's life and death. A scene is devoted to the soldier's discovery of the tomb and his taking the wax impression of the epitaph. In the final speech of the play, Alcibiades interprets the
the incription, comments on the location of the tomb, and declares:

Dead
Is noble Timon, of whose memory
Hereafter more. (V.iv.79-81)

Earlier the steward has referred to Timon as a "Monument/
And wonder of good deeds evilly bestowed" (IV.iii.463-464). Discussing Timon's death Wilson Knight says:

. . . though impelled to its inevitable death-climax, the tragic movement of this play leaves us with no sense of the termination of the essential Timon: its impact on the imagination is rather that of a continuation, circling within and beyond the mysterious nothing of dissolution, in a new dimension congruous with the power and the passion which have forced him towards death.16

If "the essential Timon" lives on (and I believe he does), what, then, is the nature of this essence? It must be something apart from those things which Timon as been forced to surrender in life and those which he willingly surrenders in death. Descartes, writing of the nature of the soul, says:

. . . there is nothing in us which we ought to attribute to our soul except our thoughts, . . .

I knew that I was a substance the whole essence or nature of which is to think, and that for its existence there is no need of any place, nor does it depend on any material thing, so that this "me", that is to say, the soul by which I am what I am, is entirely distinct from the body, and is even more easy to know than is the latter; and even if this body were not, the soul would not cease to be what it is.17

16 Wilson Knight, p.565.
Timon's soul does not cease to be what it is because certain things have happened to him; nor does that soul need any "place" in which to be, not even Mr. Knight's "new dimension." The tomb and epitaph are the symbol, not of men's regard for Timon's memory, but for the continuing existence of the essential Timon.

The impact upon the imagination which impels us to a belief in Timon's immortality is achieved through imagery. Timon speaks of making "his everlasting mansion / Upon the beached verge of the salt flood", thus combining the idea of a heavenly dwelling -- Jesus said "In my fathers house, are many dwellyng places" ("mansions" in the A.V.) when he was discussing mortal life and immortal being with his disciples (John XIV.2) -- with the image of the limitless ocean and its timeless movements. The tomb is associated from its first mention with the sea. Timon will prepare his grave where "the light foam of the sea may beat" his grave-stone daily (IV.iii.380-381). The soldier reports that the dead Timon is "entomb'd upon the the very hem o' th' sea"(V.iv.66). Alcibiades talks of the "rich conceit" implied in having "vast Neptune weep

for aye" on Timon's low grave (V.iv.77-79). These images pick up an image used earlier in the play when the servant comments upon the dispersal of Timon's household: He compares his fate and that of his fellows to that of sailors "on a dying deck" who must depart "into this sea of air" (IV.ii.20-22). Both death and the merging with the infinite and eternal are suggested.

Our imaginations are affected by more than the imagery directly associated with the tomb. T.S.Eliot speaks of impressions, in an appreciative mind, accumulating "not as a mass" but forming "themselves as a structure"18 (Ker.p.185). It can be said too, that a writer presenting impressions must present them as a structure, not as a mass. As in every building there are features which have relevance only for specific rooms and there are features upon which the whole structure depends, so, in the impressions which an author wishes to impart in a play, there are some which have their chief relevance in the scene in which they occur and there are others which are more important for what they tell us of

the play as a whole. Images in this latter class belong to the "pattern below the level of plot and character", to use the phrase which W.H.Clemen borrows from Mr. Eliot. 19 I believe that there are two such images in Timon which are important to the theme of immortality.

The first image occurs early in the play, juxtaposed to the conversation in which the water imagery has induced the impression of transience. The poet in the first scene explains his artistic intention thus:

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My free drift
Halts not particularly, but moves itself
In a wide sea of wax: no levell'd malice
Infests one comma in the course I hold,
But flies an eagle flight, bold, and forth on,
Leaving no tract behind.  (I.i.45-50)
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The conceit is disproportionate to the character or to the achievement of the poet as we later come to know him. While the lines may well express Shakespeare's attitude to his craft, it is hardly likely that he would feel the necessity of inserting this justification of himself in Timon. We find in the conceit a combination of sea imagery -- "the vast sea of wax" -- and the image of the sky in which the eagle takes flight "leaving no tract behind."

The combination is the same one used by the servant in Act IV and in the last scenes reiterated with respect to Timon's tomb. At the very time when we are being made to  

19 Clemen, p.16.
feel the instability of Timon's world, Shakespeare presents us with this picture of a great bird flying forth, "bold" and on into infinite space, leaving no physical trace of his path.

The second image which I wish to discuss occurs in Act II. A senator says:

   I do fear,
   When every feather sticks in his own wing,
   Lord Timon will be left a naked gull,
   Which flashes now a phoenix.  (II.i.29-32)

The comparison of Timon to the phoenix is most appropriate. We have seen him in his splendour, but the dazzling life which he leads is like the flash of the fire which destroys the phoenix. Timon is being consumed by his own prodigality. He is being the "gull" (victim) of flatterers and is at the same time becoming a "gull" (a drab bird) rather than the fine phoenix. However, the most important feature of the legend of the phoenix is the fact that, although destroyed, it rises from its ashes. Thus the image addresses our imagination thus: "This fine Timon is destroying himself, he is about to become ashes (or earth), but he will rise again."

Timon faces death without fear. His long sickness of health and living will be ended. Nothing will bring him all things. Timon goes on, not into the void, the nothingness of dissolution, but into the somethingness
of infinity with "faults forgiven" (V.iv.79), his union with primeval being prefigured by the tomb set in the place where the elements of earth, air, and water meet, losing their definition. The "nothing" which brings Timon all things is the loss of what has no real value -- a false sense of the substantial, false friends, and finally, corporality all of which belong to mortality and are finite. Only as these pass is man able to find his oneness with the infinite.

If we can accept the above interpretation of the play, perhaps we can find some meaning in the epitaph, that most difficult part of the play. Alcibiades interprets the ancient script thus:

Here lies a wretched corse, of wretched soul bereft:
Seek not my name. A plague consume you, wicked caitiffs left!
Here lie I, Timon, who, alive, all living men did hate.
Pass by and curse thy fill, but pass and stay not here thy gait. . . . (V.iv.70-72)

The first couplet concerns itself with the decaying body, nameless because its identity is lost in disintegration. Timon's wretchedness and hatred are associated with that body and if we think only about that aspect of him we find nothing but misanthrope. The second couplet names Timon. In life, Timon is more than a corporeal being, about to become merely "a wretched corse!". He is noble, generous, of no mean ability, a patron of the arts. He
experiences a terrible hatred for humanity while he lives. However, we need not "stay our gate" (Keep our thought fixed on the misanthrope), but can pass on to a sense of Timon liberated from his hatred. The epitaph emphasizes that "alive" Timon hated all living men. It seems fair to assume that the second couplet implies that death has meant the end of that hatred.

Both couplets are from North's "life of Marcus Antonius" where they are presented separately. Bibliographers have generally considered an inclusion of both couplets in juxtaposition as a sign of completion in the working of the play. It is indeed dangerous to try to give meaning to a textual flaw unintended by Shakespeare, but may it not be equally dangerous to look for a textual flaw whenever we have difficulty understanding an author? I find myself inclining toward the opinion of the deliberate use of both couplets in one epitaph. In the face of overwhelming numbers of scholars who regard the inclusion of both couplets as a textual flaw I take some comfort in H.C. Goddard's tendency to accept the four-line epitaph as deliberately Shakespearian although his interpretation of it is quite different from mine. 

20 Oliver, p.142.
21 Goddard, p.182.
In discussing Timon's aspiration after an earthly paradise, Wilson Knight says:

If this transcendent love can be bodied into shapes and forms which are finite; if the world of actuality and sense does not play Timon false -- then humanism can thrive without religion, and an earthly paradise is not deceiving dream.22

However, Shakespeare's treatment of his subject is not religious after the manner of theology. Nor does he beat a drum for any particular church or even for a collectively "Christian" point of view. His treatment of his subject is that of the artist, not the preacher. He takes for granted that man's being has its religious aspects; that there are elements in man's nature which intellectuality, wealth, and society will not satisfy; and that man's realization of his eternal self, although associated with the process of death, is much more profound than the momentary experience of expiration. Shakespeare draws liberally upon Biblical language and Biblical imagery because of the power of such language and imagery to evoke concepts which transcend the physical and even the intellectual.

22 Wilson Knight, pp.549-550.
CHAPTER IV

ALCIBIADES AND THE FAITHFUL STEWARD: AGENTS OF RESTORATION

There are two characters in *Timon of Athens* whose regard for Timon is unaffected by the change in Timon's fortunes. They are the soldier Alcibiades and the faithful steward. The first punishes Timon's enemies, bringing health and peace to the state at the end of the play as do Fortinbras, Albany, and Malcolm each in their turn. The second, ready always to acknowledge what is good and to discount what is bad, administers that loving care which comforts and heals, thus rendering an office most often performed by those characters of the canon whose purpose is to serve, such as Edgar and Kent in *Lear*, Griffith in *Henry VIII*, Horatio in *Hamlet*, or Gonzalo in *The Tempest*.

A similarity between the Alcibiades theme and the play *Coriolanus* has been remarked upon by both Goddard and Honigmann. The former compares the banishment of both Timon and Alcibiades with that of Coriolanus (self-banishment in the case of each protagonist) and points out that "Athens' strongest man, like Rome's, swears vengeance on his native city". Honigmann sees both Alcibiades and Coriolanus as professional soldiers who

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2 Goddard, p.176
excel in war and find their main interest there. Even as he sits at Timon's table Alcibiades's thoughts are elsewhere. We find the following conversation:

Tim. Captain Alcibiades, your heart's in the field now.
Alcib. My heart is ever at your service, my lord.
Tim. You had rather be at a breakfast of enemies than a dinner of friends.
Alcib. So they were heeding new, my lord, there's no meat like 'em; I could wish my best friend at such a feast. (I.i.73-79)

Alcibiades accepts the austerity of military life.

Timon says to him:

Alcibiades,
Thou art a soldier, therefore seldom rich;
It comes in charity to thee: for all thy living
Is 'mongst the dead, and all the lands thou hast
Lie in a pitch'd field. (I.i.220-224)

Alcibiades confirms Timon's judgement with his reply,

Ay, defil'd land, my lord.

His remark suggests files of soldiers or, perhaps, land defiled by death. (There are important overtones in this conversation which I shall remark upon below.) Because Alcibiades's values are not merely material, his regard for Timon is independent of Timon's fortune. He hungers for Timon's company, not his gifts. He says:

3 Honigmann, p.7.
Sir, you have sav'd my longing, and I feed
Most hungerly on your sight. (I.i.251-252)

Later, when Alcibiades finds Timon outside his wilderness
cave, before he has learned that Timon has gold, he offers
him money although he himself is so desperately short of
funds that his troops threaten to mutiny. He says:

I have but little gold of late, brave Timon,
The want whereof doth daily make revolt
In my penurious band. I have heard and griev'd
How cursed Athens, mindless of they worth,
Forgetting thy great deeds, when neighbour states,
But for thy sword and fortune, trod upon them --

Here is some gold for thee. (IV.iii.91-101)

Neither Timon's poverty nor his misanthropy can cause
Alcibiades to forget Timon's innate nobility. He is still
"noble Timon" (IV.iii.67) and "dear Timon" (IV.iii.98).
Alcibiades asks Timandra to pardon the misanthrope
(IV.iii.89-90); he promises to visit Timon again pointing
out that Timon has no reason to hate him because he has
never done him harm (IV.iii.174). The Stoic soldier has
the insight to find in Timon an essence independent of
fortune, an essence which completely escapes the gross
"friends", the cynical Apemantus, and the pretentious Poet
and Painter.

Alcibiadest sense of values comes out clearly in his
confrontation with the Senate when he pleads on behalf of
his unnamed friend. His courage proves equal to his
loyalty as he risks banishment rather than yield on a matter of principle. He argues that his friend has engaged in the duel in defence of his honour:

He is a man, setting his fate aside,
Of comely virtues;
Nor did he soil the fact with cowardice
(An honour in him which buys out his fault)
But with a noble fury and fair spirit,
Seeing his reputation touch'd to death,
He did oppose his foe.  (III.v.14-20)

Anger and murder are wrong, Alcibiades admits, but he pleads their justification under certain circumstances:

To kill, I grant, is sin's extremest gust,
But in defence, by mercy, 'tis most just.
To be in anger is impiety;
But who is man that is not angry?

(III.v.55-58)

As Hamlet would say:

. . . Rightly to be great
Is not to stir without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
When honor's at the stake.  (Ham.IV.iv.53-56)

Alcibiades reminds the Senate of his friend's service to the state in battle where only his own right arm has saved his life (III.v.76-79) and he begs that his own "deserts" may be added to his friend's balance, recalling for the senators the wounds he has incurred in their defence. When it is clear that his friend must die, Alcibiades asks that he be allowed to die in battle so that his honour may remain unsullied:
If by this crime he owes the law his life,  
Why, let the war receive 't in valiant gore,  
For law is strict, and war is nothing more.  

(III.v.84-86)

Although the play is set in Athens, it is the Roman virtues so admired by the Elizabethans and Jacobean which Alcibiades exemplifies. G.R. Waggoner, in his essay which relates Alcibiades's defense of his friend with the popular reaction to James's anti-duelling legislation, says that Alcibiades is "a gentleman, man of honour, and military hero in the Jacobean pattern."4 He would put honour before life itself as does Hector who says:

Mine honor keeps the weather of my fate.  
Life every man holds dear, but the dear man  
Holds honor far more precious—dear than life.  

(T&C V.iii.26-28)

He upholds those virtues which Antony, in submitting to the voluptuous Cleopatra, abrogates.

In Timon of Athens, it is the citizens of Athens who have chosen self-indulgence. They value wealth, ease, and security. Alcibiades says to the Senate "I know your reverend ages love / security" (III.v.81-82). When they threaten him with banishment he tells the senators:

Banish your dotage, banish usury,  
That makes the Senate ugly!  

(III.v.99-100)

4 Waggoner, p.306.
He declares:

I'm worse than mad: I have kept back their foes,
While they have told their money, and let out
Their coin upon large interest; I myself
Rich only in large hurts. All those, for this?
Is this the balsam that the usuring Senate
Pours into captains' wounds? (III.v.107-112)

Athens is a "coward and lascivious town" (V.iv.1).
Alcibiades sees the senators' claim that they must uphold morality as hypocrisy: they would condemn a man for defending his honour in a duel but they justify bloodshed in war when their own lives and property are endangered. Only fear of destruction at the hands of Alcibiades causes them to repent of their injustice to Timon and later to admit the fault of at least some of their citizens with respect to Alcibiades.

The debate in the Senate introduces the relationship between justice and mercy. We are reminded of Portia's defence in the Merchant of Venice, and indeed, of Measure for Measure, a play which deals with a similar theme. The senators are "for law" (III.v.87), for a strict legal morality. "Nothing emboldens sin so much as mercy", says the first senator. (III.v.3). Alcibiades argues:

. . . pity is the virtue of the law,
And none but tyrants use it cruelly.
(III.v.8-9)
He pleads, "As you are great, be pitifully good" (III.v.53). Later, when Alcibiades besieges Athens, the senators argue that not all have been guilty of the abuses he has suffered, that some of those who were have died of chagrin. They beg him to consider the public good above his private wrong, and if he must punish, to take only each tenth man. Thus do they plead:

Sec.Sen. We were not all unkind, nor all deserve The common stroke of war.

First Sen. These walls of ours Were not erected by their hands from whom You have receiv'd your grief; nor are they such That these great tow'rs, trophies, and school should fall For private faults in them.

Sec.Sen. Nor are they living Who were the motives that you first went out; Shame, that they wanted cunning in excess, Hath broke their hearts.

... By decimation and a tithed death, If thy revenges hunger for that food Which nature loathes, take thou the destin'd tenth.

(V.iv.21-33)

The first senator invites him:

like a shepherd, Approach the fold and cull th' infected forth, But kill not all together.

(V.iv.42-44)

Only as justice is exercised with mercy can war be used as a "redress" for wrongs. Alcibiades throws down his glove as a token of his mercy. He says:
Then there's my glove.
Descend, and open your uncharged ports.
Those enemies of Timon's and mine own
Whom you yourselves shall set out for reproof
Fall, and no more; and, to atone your fears
With my more noble meaning, not a man
Shall pass his quarter or offend the stream
Of regular justice in your city's bounds
But shall be remedied to your public laws
At heaviest answer.

(V.iv.54-63)

He commands:

Bring me into your city,
And I will use the olive with my sword,
Make war breed peace, make peace stint war, make each
Prescribe to other, as each other's leech.

(V.iv.81-84)

Thus Alcibiades becomes the restorer of social order. He is
to be compared to a doctor applying a leech or to a
shepherd culling the flock.

Why, we might well ask, does Shakespeare place this
shepherd, this restorer of order, this agent of divine
justice in the company of the courtesans Timandra and
Phrynia? One effect of the association is to dull the
brilliance of Alcibiades and prevent him from becoming the
hero of the play. The company of the whores serves the
dramatist as a shadow might serve the painter who reserves
his highlights for those figures he wishes to emphasize.
But Shakespeare is a consummulate artist when it comes to
the matter of integrating the dramatic requirements with
the thematic elements of the play. By associating the
soldier with the prostitutes, Shakespeare reminds us of 
the destructive nature of both war and lechery, one 
ravaging from without, the other from within. Timon tells 
Timandra:

   Be a whore still. They love thee not that use thee. 
   Give them diseases, leaving with thee their lust. 
   Make use of thy salt hours; season the slaves 
   For tubs and baths; bring down rose-cheek'd youth 
   To the tub-fast and the diet. 

   (IV.iii.84-88)

To Alcibiades Timon says:

   This fell whore of thine 
   Hath in her more destruction than thy sword, 
   For all her cherubin look. 

   (IV.iii.62-64)

When he hears that Alcibiades is marching against Athens, 
Timon says, "The gods confound them all in thy conquest" 
(IV.iii.105) and he gives Alcibiades gold for his soldiers 
with the request that they "make large confusion" 
(IV.iii.129). He tells Alcibiades:

   Be as a planetary plague, when Jove 
   Will o'er some high-vic'd city hang his poison 
   In the sick air. Let not thy sword skip one. 

   (IV.iii.110-112)

The association of war and lechery recalls that much 
fuller treatment given this theme in Troilus and Cressida, 
the story of a young man's affair with a faithless woman 
acted out against the background of a tedious and unheroic 
war which has been provoked by the adulterous love of 
Paris and Helen.
The pictures which Shakespeare paints of the effects of war and of sexual disease which accompany it are terrible. Alcibiades' soldiers will kill old men, matrons, young women, and babes, but Timon justifies this slaughter because of the evil inherent in man. He says:

Pity not honour'd age for his white beard:
He is an usurer. Strike me the counterfeit matron:
It is her habit only that is honest,
Herself's a bawd. Let not the virgin's cheek
Make soft thy trenchant sword: for those milk-paps,
That through the window-bars bore at men's eyes,
Are not within the leaf of pity writ,
But set them down horrible traitors. Spare not the babe
Whose dimpled smiles from fools exhaust their mercy:
Think it a bastard, whom the oracle
Hath doubtfully pronounc'd the throat shall cut,
And mince it sans remorse. Swear against objects.
Put armour on thine ears and on thine eyes
Whose proof nor yells of mothers, maids, nor babes,
Nor sight of priests in holy vestments bleeding
Shall pierce a jot. (IV.iii.113-128)

To the courtesans Timon says:

Consumptions sow
In hollow bones of man; strike their sharp shins,
And mar men's spurring. Crack the lawyer's voice,
That he may never more false title plead,
Nor sound his quillets shrilly. Hoar the flamen,
That scolds against the quality of flesh,
And not believes himself. Down with the nose,
Down with it flat, take the bridge quite away
Of him that, his particular to foresee,
Smells from the general weal. May curl'd-pate ruffians bald,
And let the unscarr'd braggarts of the war
Derive some pain from you. (IV.iii.153-164)
It is man's own sin, the evil within him, that makes him the victim of venereal disease: the hypocrisy of the priest, the infidelity of the lawyer, the corruption of the rapacious. Timon says to the women:

Plague all,
That your activity may defeat and quell
The source of all erection.  

(IV.iii.164-166)

Evil begets the disease which in its turn will destroy the cause of the evil just as injustice begets war which destroys those that instigated the injustice. This idea underlies all Timon's denunciations. Athens' destruction he would find first in the neglect of its most precious institutions -- the faithfulness of wives, the reverence for aged wisdom, the chastity of its maidens, religion, justice, truth . . . instruction, customs and laws, manners, mysteries and trades (IV.i.1-21). Disease will follow in the train of moral decline, Timon curses:

Plagues incident to men,
Your potent and infectious fevers heap
On Athens ripe for stroke!  

(IV.i.21-23)

Thus disease and the suffering it brings become agents in the purifying of mankind just as war, the "planetary plague" sent by Jove, punishes the "high-vic'd city" and re-establishes justice.
Timon prays:

O blessed breeding sun, draw from the earth
Rotten humidity; below thy sister's orb
Infect the air!

(IV.iii.1-3)

What is earthly is subject to corruption.

There's nothing level in our cursed natures
But direct villainy.  

(IV.iii.19-20)

Timon prays the sun to purify the earth by drawing from it its evil which will then, as it becomes apparent, fill the air. If things be evil let them appear so. This uncovering of evil is a step in its destruction. Timon's misanthropy is a stage in his doffing "the old man" -- doffing Timon. As if in answer to his prayer, Timon draws from the earth gold, the agent which lays bare the worst in man. In giving the gold to Timandra and Alcibiades to aid them in their mission of destruction, Timon is indeed rendering unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's.

Although the Athenians invite war and disease because they are greedy, ungrateful, unjust and lascivious and so deserve their fate, those persons who effect the redress of wrongs enjoy rather an ambiguous status. They, too, have heaven's curse upon them (IV.iii.133). It is a case of "Wo unto the worlde, because of offences ...."
wo to that man, by whom the offence commeth" (Matt.XVIII.7).

Timon tells Alcibiades:

The gods confound them all in thy conquest,
And thee after, when thou has conquer'd!

(IV.iii.105-106)

There's gold to pay thy soldiers,
Make large confusion; and, thy fury spent,
Confounded be thyself.

(IV.iii.128-130)

To Timandra and Phrynia he says:

There's more gold.
Do you damn others, and let this damn you,
And ditches grave you all!

(IV.iii.166-168)

Alcibiades discounts Timon's remarks as the utterance of one whose "wits are drown'd and lost in his calamities" and, because his own nobility enables him to recognize nobility in Timon still, he forgives him. But, ironically, Alcibiades is unable to discern the great truth which Timon speaks. Alcibiades is still completely of this world; Timon has begun his journey into the next. Because Timon no longer has any interest in this world he does not care about the fate of the Athenians in "contumelious, beastly, madbrained war" (V.i.167-183). He is satisfied to leave his countrymen to "the protection of the prosperous gods" (V.i.182) -- the vain gods that they have worshipped in their prosperity, the gods which are no gods.
He says to the senators:

Go, live still;
Be Alcibiades your plague, you his,
And last so long enough.  

(V.i.187-189)

The scene between Alcibiades and Timon is as complicated in its ironies as that scene in As You Like It in which Rosalind, disguised as Ganymede, persuades Orlando to address her as his beloved (AYLI,III.ii). As the audience of the latter play has been well prepared to enjoy the fun, so the audience of Timon has been given its clue, early in the play, for understanding Alcibiades's relationship to the theme of the atonement, the perfecting of man. Above we noted the conversation in the First Act in which Timon says:

all thy living
Is 'monst the dead, all the lands thou hast
Lie in a pitch'd field

and Alcibiades replies:

Ay, defil'd land, my lord.  

(I.ii.220-225)

Alcibiades, as a soldier, deals in death and he is, himself, therefore defiled by mortality just as a man who "toucheth pitch shall be defiled" (Ecclesiasticus XIII.1). Within the framework of mortality Alcibiades is admirable, championing justice, scourging greed and hypocrisy. The Athenians may refer to him as "a boar too savage that
doth root up / His country's peace" (V.i.164-165) but, compared with other Shakespearian rebels, he is more a Bolingbroke than a Coriolanus because his insurgency is justifiable on public rather than personal grounds. It is interesting to note that in 1793 Steevens regarded the image of the boar as a reference to the eightieth psalm in which the Israelites pray to God to save them from the ills brought on by one of their spells of backsliding. The psalm reads in part:

3. Turne us agayne O Lorde: shewe the light of Thy countenaunce, and we shalbe saued.

4. O God, Lorde of hoastes: howe long wylt thou "be angry at the prayer of thy people:

12. Why hast thou then broken downe her hedge:

13. The wylde bore out of the wood rooteth it up:

16. Let thy hande be upon the man of thy right hande: and upon the sonne of man whom thou hast fortified for thyne owne selfe.

17. And so we wyl not go backe from thee . . ." 

Alcibiades is like the man of God's right hand, made strong for his purposes, whom the repentent Israelites are asking God to restrain.

5 Oliver, p.129.
Alcibiades does not make Angelo's mistake of pretending to an absolute understanding of right and wrong and of, therefore, trying to administer justice without charity. Yet, in spite of his human rectitude, he is defiled, subject to the same curse as those he must punish. Alcibiades can and does serve mankind in this world but he cannot usher man into perfection.

As far as the themes of justice and mercy are concerned, Timon of Athens fits into the Shakespearian development and presages what is to come in the final plays. In Titus Andronicus revenge is associated with Hell. Timora, disguised, says:

I am Revenge, sent from below
To join with him [Titus] and right his heinous wrongs.  
(Tit.And.V.ii.3-4)

When order is once again restored to the state, Lucius prays:

May I govern so,
To heal Rome's harms and wipe away her woe!  
(Tit.And.V.iii.147-148)

Then he turns to sentencing Aaron who has been responsible for the woe. He says:

Set him breast-deep in earth and famish him.
There let him stand and rave and cry for food.
If anyone relieves or pities him,
For the offense he dies.  
(Tit.And.V.iii.179-182)

Thus is "justice done on Aaron, that damned Moor"
(Tit.And.V.iii.201). Regarding the dead Tamora he orders:
As for that heinous tiger, Tamora,
No funeral rite, nor man in mourning weeds,
No mournful bell shall ring her burial;
But throw her forth to beasts and birds of prey.
Her life was beastly and devoid of pity,
And being so, shall have like want of pity.

(Tit. And. V. iii. 195-200)

Justice, here, is savage.

In the tragedies much of the savagry is gone but death remains the resolution. Othello commits his crime believing himself to be administering justice. He says:

An honorable murderer, if you will,
For naught did I in hate, but all in honour.

(Othello V. ii. 294-295)

Although the sentencing of Iago to "any cunning cruelty/that can torment him much and hold him long" (Othello V. ii. 333–334) reminds us of the fate of Aaron, the play remains a condemnation of a too carelessly conceived and hastily executed sense of justice. In Hamlet we find the hero torn by conflicting motives: the revenge he owes his father, the necessity to withhold vengeance upon his mother, and the need he feels for knowing what is just. The histories show the ambiguity surrounding justice. Bolingbroke justifiably rebels against the injustice done him and against a kind of administration which is disastrous for England, but in dethroning God's anointed king he commits a sin which curses his house. Ulysses speaks of "right and wrong / Between whose endless jar
justice resides" (T&C.I.iii.116-117). It is easy for man to lose this delicate balance and thus be sent towards destruction. If "degree" is neglected, then

Force should be right, or rather, right and wrong, Between whose endless jar justice resides, Should lose their names, and so should justice too. Then everything includes itself in power, Power into will, will into appetite, And appetite, a universal wolf, So doubly seconded with will and power, Must make perforce a universal prey, And last eat up himself. (T&C.I.iii.116-124)

In Timon of Athens, Shakespeare elaborates upon the theme that human justice is not the absolute good — "Religious canons, civil laws are cruel" (IV.iii.61). Thus Timon becomes a link with the last plays in which the emphasis is on restoration and regeneration rather than punishment. Characters like Leontes, for example, find happiness in spite of past wickedness. The plays end in general forgiveness, the earthly counterpart of that heavenly condition to which Prospero refers when he speaks of prayer

Which pierces so that it assaults
Mercy itself, and frees all faults. (Temp.Epilogue.16-18)

There is one character in Timon of Athens who serves the cause of regeneration and restoration without feeling any need to punish. He is Timon's faithful steward. The steward is not blind to the faults of Timon or his
friends. At a time when others are encouraging Timon's lavish hospitality, he protests:

What will this come to?
He commands us to provide, and give great gifts,
And all out of an empty coffer;
Nor will he know his purse, or yield me this,
To show him what a beggar his heart is,
Being of no power to make his wishes good.

(I.ii.189-194)

The steward knows that Timon is foolish in his kindness, that the friends are worthless -- they are "such that do e'en enemies exceed" (I.ii.201), and that Timon will not listen to reason. "There is no crossing him in's humour" (I.ii.156), says the steward. When he tries to cope with Timon's bills he says:

No care, no stop; so senseless of expense,
That he will neither know how to maintain it,
Nor cease his flow of riot. Takes no accompt
How things go from him, nor resumes no care
Of what is to continue. Never mind
Was to be so unwise, to be so kind.
What shall be done? He will not hear, till feel.

(II.ii.1-7)

However, although the steward condemns "Timon's prodigality, he at the same time recognizes the nobility of his master for after Timon's ruin he says:

Poor honest lord, brought low by his own heart,
Undone by goodness; strange, unusual blood,
When man's worst sin is he does too much good!

(IV.ii.37-39)
Thus he is ready to serve the impoverished Timon. He says:

I'll ever serve his mind, with my best will;
Whilst I have gold I'll be his steward still.
(IV.ii.50-51)

In spite of the steward's efforts to hold the importunate creditors at bay, the collectors force themselves upon Timon who begins to "feel" his condition.

(Timon learns through feeling as does Lear who speaks of learning pity by feeling "as wretches feel" -- Lear III. iv.34) Timon's first reaction is to accuse his steward of not keeping him informed about his property. He says:

You make me marvel wherefore ere this time
Had you not fully laid my state before me,
That I might so have rated my expense
As I had leave of means.
(II.ii.128-131)

The steward explains his vain attempts to inform Timon. He says:

O my good lord,
At many times I brought in my accompts,
Laid them before you; you would throw them off,
And say you found them in mine honesty.
(II.ii.136-139)

The steward meets Timon's accusations of carelessness in the performance of his duties with the same patience and gentle refutation which he uses later in the woods when Timon suggests that all who have served him have been dishonest (IV.iii.481). Timon, at last, is ready to listen to the steward who says:
My lov'd lord,
Though you hear now, too late, yet now's a time.

(II.ii.146-147)

Although he knows that Timon's fortune cannot be saved — the greatest of Timon's "having lacks a half" to pay his present debts (II.ii.148-149) — the steward believes that what he might have said must still be said. When Timon thinks of the vastness of his former possessions — "To Lacedaemon did my land extend" (II.ii.155) — the steward replies:

O my good lord, the world is but a word:
Were it all yours, to give it in a breath,
How quickly were it gone!  

(II.ii.156-158)

He condemns Timon's prodigality — the indulgence of "riotous feeders", "the drunken spilth of wine", the blaze of lights, the rooms that "bray'd with minstrelsly" (II.ii.161-165). He tells Timon that he has been entertaining a worthless lot of flatterers — "slaves and peasants" (II.ii.169) — whose praise will last only so long as Timon's wealth. He says:

Who is not Timon's?
What heart, head, sword, force, means, but is Lord Timon's,
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 show'rs,
These flies are couch'd.

(II.ii.170-176)
But steward has gone too far. Timon has not yet "felt" his friends' worthlessness. He asks:

    Canst thou the conscience lack,
    To think I shall lack friends?  (II.ii.179-180)

He tells the steward,

    Come, sermon me no further.  (II.ii.176)

That is just what the steward has been doing. He has been addressing himself to Timon's soul (having admitted that it is too late to save Timon's fortune) for his real purpose is to be found in the following statements:

    I'll ever serve his mind, with my best will  (IV.ii.50)

    That which I show, heaven knows, is merely love,
    Duty and zeal to your [Timon's] unmatched mind .  
    (IV.iii.519-520)

The steward's remark "the world is but a word"(II.ii.156) recalls the opening chapter of St. John's gospel -- "In the begynnyng was the worde, the worde was with God: and the worde was God . . . All thynges were made by it: and without it, was made nothying that was made"  (John I.1-3). The steward's righteous disapproval of the great feasts is unmistakable in such evocative words as "bray'd" and "flies". The feeling that we are listening to a preacher recurs in the steward's soliloquy after the parting of the servants. His denunciation of worldly wealth and society's acclaim reminds us again of
Ecclesiastes. The steward says:

O the fierce wretchedness that glory brings us!
Who would not wish to be from wealth exempt,
Since riches point to misery and contempt?
Who would be so mock'd with glory, or to live
But in a dream of friendship,
To have his pomp and all what state compounds
But only painted like his varnish'd friends?
Poor honest lord, brought low by his own heart,
Undone by goodness; strange, unusual blood,
When man's worst sin is he does too much good!
Who then dares to be half so kind again?
For bounty, that makes gods, do still mar men.
My dearest lord, bless'd to be most accurs'd,
Rich only to be wretched — thy great fortunes
Are made thy chief afflictions. Alas, kind lord,
He's flung in rage from this ingrateful seat
Of monstrous friends.

(IV.ii.30-46)

In other words, the world is finite and its treasures not what they seem. When man expects to find heavenly felicity in the world, he is doomed to disappointment. We do not find the heavenly in the materialistic life. The steward's soliloquy as he approaches Timon's cave reiterates the thought that the ways of the world are far from the Christian ideal of loving even enemies. He says:

What wilder thing upon the earth than friends
Who can bring noblest minds to basest ends!
How rarely does it meet with this time's guise,
When man was wish'd to love his enemies!

(IV.iii.466-469)

The steward condemns society's values and criticizes Timon's lack of judgement — Timon "in whose breast /
Doubt and suspect, alas, are plac'd too late!" (IV.iii. 515-516) but he does not reject Timon himself. In spite
of his faults, Timon is ever "My lov'd lord" (II.ii.146), "My dearest lord" (IV.ii.42), "kind lord" (IV.ii.44), "my most worthy master" (IV.iii.515), "My most honour'd lord" (IV.iii.522). The fault is to be condemned, not the person. The real evil in society is human wickedness, not human beings. Wickedness must be got rid of, not people. In Measure for Measure, the zealous Angelo believes that he can only defend chastity by having Claudio put to death. He says:

Those many had not dared to do that evil
If the first that did the edict infringe
Had answered for his deed. (MFM II.ii.91-93)

He must condemn the actor of the fault (MFM II.ii.37).

Shortly he reveals the carnality in his own character which impels him to propose an immoral act. In the end, it is the Duke, with his compassionate mercy, who truly upholds chastity and brings a moral solution for each character of the play. Hamlet is torn by the need he feels to separate evil from personalities. His love and respect for his father impels him to act against the evil that is rampant in Denmark, but an equally natural and proper love for his mother makes it difficult for him to act. Gertrude has been a party to the evil, but he cannot regard her as his enemy. When he does act, the result, ironically, is not to kill Claudius, but rather Polonius,
the father of his sweetheart. In *Timon of Athens*, Alcibiades acts against human beings, but as we have shown above, Shakespeare does not condone without reservation his behaviour. The steward opposes evil uncompromisingly, but he takes no action to destroy people.

Wilson Knight speaks of the religious overtones in the parting scene of Timon's servants. He says:

After . . . Timon's retirement to the woods, they meet, not as servants to the same lord, but rather as disciples to a loved and world-crucified master.6

The first servant would have the evil rumours confirmed or denied. He asks the steward:

Where's our master?
Are we undone, cast off, nothing remaining?

(IV.ii.1-2)

The steward assures him that he himself is as poor as any servant. The first servant resumes:

Such a house broke?
So noble a master fall'n.

(IV.ii.5-6)

The servants deplore the attitude of Timon's friends. The second servant says:

As we do turn our backs
From our companion thrown into his grave,
So his familiars to his buried fortunes
Slink all away, leave their false vows with him,
Like empty purses pick'd; and his poor self,
A dedicated beggar to the air,
With his disease of all-shunn'd poverty,
Walks like contempt, alone.

(IV.ii.8-15)

6 Wilson Knight, pp.556-557.
The imagery evokes the thought of death, of the solitariness of man and his poverty in death, and suggests the release of the soul although the passage is ostensibly about the behaviour of those Athenians who had frequented Timon's house. The steward repeats the fact that they all suffer in Timon's fall. He says:

All broken implements of a ruin'd house.

(IV.ii.16)

The third servant picks up this theme but adds also the declaration of the faithfulness of the household. He says:

Yet do our hearts wear Timon's livery,
That see I by our faces; we are fellows still,
Serving alike in sorrow. Leak'd is our bark,
And we, poor mates, stand on the dying deck,
Hearing the surges threat; we must all part
Into this sea of air.

(IV.ii.17-22)

Although the servant is speaking of their departure from the house where they have served, there is the suggestion of an experience common to mankind in which all the material things upon which a man has depended begin to fail him and he must prepare for an existence in which they have no part -- in the "sea of air." The steward shares with the servants the last of his wealth and they part "rich in sorrow".

It is easy to see in the steward and the band of faithful servants the suggestion of a religious community, each humble, loving, and self-sacrificing. The steward,
when he sees Timon the dupe of his false friends, says:

I bleed inwardly for my lord. (I.ii.202)

When he finds Timon in the wilderness he says:

I will present
My honest grief unto him; and, as my lord,
Still serve him with my life. (IV.iii.472-474)

The steward ministers to Timon's physical needs without a thought of reward or thanks. It is enough that Timon has need of him. He protects him, as long as he is able, from the importunate creditors and later he is a conciliatory influence between Timon and the senators in the woods. One might even regard the steward in more abstract terms, as religion itself, or perhaps God, and see the servants as his agents. Timon, in his prosperity, pays no heed. When his foolishness brings disaster, his first instinct is to blame God, but he does finally listen. As he begins to see the odiousness of evil, he suffers a revulsion which finds its expression in misanthropy. However, the love of God is ever with him and as it makes itself felt, the old man is put off and the new man is put on. However, I suggest that Shakespeare, rather than using man to symbolize the church, religion, or God, is saying instead that man, imbued with selfless love, transcends the human and becomes the agent of the divine. Lear speaks of shaking the "superflux" to wretches
and thus showing "the Heavens more just" (Lear III.iv. 34-36). Human kindness is the realization in terms understandable to man, of divine love.

Timon says of the steward:

Surely this man
Was born of woman.  

(IV.iii.497-498)

This remark is not a tribute to the nobility of women as Sisson believed, but an echo of the verse from the book of Job, "Man that is borne of woman, hath but a short time to lyue, and is full of miserie. He commeth vp, and is cut downe like a floure . . ." (Job XIV. 1.2). The steward is a mortal, like Timon himself, like other men. Yet he is good, honest, compassionate. His tears move Timon to say:

Had I a steward
So true, so just, and now so comfortable?
It almost turns my dangerous nature mild.
Let me behold thy face. Surely this man
Was born of woman.
Forgive my general and exceptless rashness,
You perpetual-sober gods! I do proclaim
One honest man, mistake me not, but one.
No more, I pray -- and he's a steward.
How fain would I have hated all mankind,
And thou redeem'est thyself.  

(IV.iii.494-504)

The steward, through his pure affection, has begun to heal Timon's misanthropy.

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7 Sisson, p.23.
Although Timon proves incapable of throwing off his hatred of humanity before he dies, his attitude undergoes a change. When he first leaves Athens, Timon curses the city wishing that every form of evil, moral and physical, may befall it. He says:

The gods confound . . .
Th' Athenians both within and out that wall;
And grant, as Timon grows, his hate may grow
To the whole race of mankind, high and low!

(IV.i.37-40)

As he digs for roots he says, "Destruction fang mankind!"
(IV.iii.23) It is at this point, while his emotion is raw, that Alcibiades appears and Timon gives him gold for the destruction of Athens. In the final scene before his death he says to the senators:

If Alcibiades kill my countrymen,
Let Alcibiades know this of Timon,
That Timon cares not.

(V.i.168-170)

A few lines later he repeats that he cares not. Hatred is moving towards indifference. Finally Timon cries:

What is amiss, plague and infection mend!

(V.i.220)

He is asking now, not that plague and infection destroy Athens, but that plague and infection mend what is amiss, what is wrong. The difference is one that can and should be pointed in stage production. In each succeeding confrontation in the last part of the play Timon becomes more
communicative, more ready to converse with his visitors: for example, he does little more than curse Alcibiades and the whores, but he argues with Apemantus, and, when the Poet and Painter arrive, he indulges in a game of words with them. Timon's attitude in the scene with the senators has an ambivalence which can be exploited with dramatic effect. He plays the senators, one moment leading them to think he is about to do something for them and the next moment dashing their hopes. Now, it is possible to present this scene in such a way as to suggest that Timon, himself, is almost wooed at times from his hatred of Athens and his suspicion of men. He is almost persuaded to a friendly attitude only to be overwelmed once more by old fears, as a frightened animal might be or a child who has learned to mistrust adults. Such tentative advances and withdrawals would give this scene a suspense which it otherwise lacks. Certainly, if instead of developing the change in Timon's spirit, a producer presents the last part of the play as an unrelieved fulmination of hatred, the drama becomes hopeless theatrically. I cannot believe that Shakespeare would have written two acts with such ineptitude.

I have already mentioned that the epitaph suggests that Timon's hatred is part of him only in this "beneath world" of mortal existence -- "Here lie I, Timon, who,
alive, all living men did hate" (V.iv.72). There is more than a suggestion of release from that hatred in Alcibiades' lines:

yet rich conceit
Taught thee to make vast Neptune weep for aye
On thy low grave, on faults forgiven.

(V.iv.77-79)

Alcibiades has previously shown his personal capacity for forgiveness in the scene outside Timon's cave (IV.iii. 89-90). In the earlier scene, Alcibiades excuses Timon because he is willing to overlook Timon's faults. He explains to Timandra that Timon's rudeness is the result of his misfortunes affecting his mind. In the final speech, the image of the limitless sea weeping on the grave suggests a general forgiveness. The low grave symbolizes Timon's new humility and the washing of the sea, ablution, the cleansing from sin. Forgiveness here is akin to the "mercy" in the epilogue of The Tempest, which "frees all faults." In the final scene Alcibiades is speaking, not of overlooking Timon's faults, but of the disappearance of those faults. Timon is forgiven and, because hatred is washed away, we can say Timon forgives.

In Measure for Measure, Isabella expresses the Christian doctrine of atonement in her plea for Angelo's mercy. She says:
Why, all the souls that were were forfeit once,  
And He that might the vantage best have took  
Found out the remedy.  

(MFM II.i.73-75)

In Timon of Athens there is no suggestion that man is redeemed merely through the sacrifice of another, even the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. In fact, there seems to be the suggestion that man, individually, must answer for his own actions and that men, collectively, must face responsibility for their corporate acts. Even if Timon's friends had been willing to help him, none of them could have paid the debts his senseless prodigality incurred. Timon's refusal to concern himself for Athens in the last scenes of the play could very well indicate the realization that no one but the Athenians themselves could save them from the effects of their city's injustice, inhumanity, and greed. In the end, the senators do make their own peace with Alcibiades. It is a case of working out their own salvation (Philippians II.12).

To say that a man must accept responsibility for his own actions is not to say that man is a solitary being, a law unto himself. In Timon of Athens both individual man and mankind are subject to inexorable laws through which sin begets its own penalty and the suffering resulting from the penalty drives the offender to forsake the offence. Timon's false sense of values with respect
to both people and property lead him to spend until he is bankrupt. Bankruptcy reveals the meaninglessness of his former life. The old values gone, he begins to discover a concept of life which is independent of circumstance. Similarly, the Athenians, through the insurrection which their injustice has provoked, are forced to reconsider their treatment of Timon and Alcibiades and to make amends for the evil that they have committed. In *Timon of Athens*, Shakespeare suggests that the calamities which men invite by their evil deeds come from some superhuman source. Timon tells Alcibiades:

> Be as a planetary plague, when Jove
> Will o'er some high-vic'd city hang his poison
> In the sick air.  

(IV.iii.110-112)

Timon prays to the sun to "draw from the earth / Rotten humidity" (IV.iii.1-2) when he wants humanity to suffer for its evil ways. As he prepares to meet the delegation from the Senate he prays:

> Thou sun, that comforts, burn! Speak and be hang'd;
> For each true word, a blister; and each false
> Be as a cauterizing to the root o' th' tongue,
> Consuming it with speaking!  

(V.i.130-133)

The same power that can comfort, must at times burn; in this case the truth will hurt "blister" because it is unpleasant but lies will invite destruction. The integration of imagery relating to gods and to the solar system implies that the power which reforms man is not so
much supernatural as it is supremely natural.

Although Timon deserves his troubles -- in the words of Apemantus, "He that loves to be flattered is worthy o' th' flatterer" (I.1.225-226) -- he is not left comfortless in his misery. The faithful steward goes to the wood to minister to his wants and acts as an intermediary between Timon and his visitors. We noted above that Timon is touched by the steward's love. We are not shown any act of Timon's in the play which would earn him this love. The steward seems to symbolize a grace which comes into man's life: acknowledging what is noble in man's nature, serving and strengthening that nobility, being the sun that comforts (strengthens). The steward, unlike the Duke in Measure for Measure, does not enter as some deus ex machina, adjusting events and setting aside certain acts of men. He is more like Elihu's messenger, "one among a thousande, sent for to speake unto man, and to shew him the right way," who delivers man "that he fall not downe to the graue" but be reconciled to God (Job XXXIII.23,24). Man's own foolishness and wickedness bring troubles upon him, but the saving grace of love regenerates and restores.

Timon's regeneration is hinted and his reconciliation with the infinite suggested. His restoration, however, it must be admitted, has no meaning with respect to life in
this world. In the play, the theme of restoration is more satisfactorily realized in dramatic terms in the case of Athens than in that of Timon because, by the very nature of the plot, the restoration of the city has physical meaning.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

My investigation of Timon of Athens leads me to the conclusion that Timon of Athens is not only entirely Shakespeare's but that also it is a finished play, complete in its conception and consistent in its treatment of theme and character. Verbal echoes, image clusters, thematic treatments all relate the play to the canon. One feature of recent scholarly comment on Timon is the discovery of patterns relating to theme or form used consistently throughout the drama. W.M. Merchant demonstrates how the whole play is integrated with the theme of appearance and reality discussed by the Poet and Painter.\(^1\) A.S. Collins finds in Timon a play using the morality play as its basis.\(^2\) Wilson Knight shows how the themes relating to humanism and death influence the form of the play.\(^3\) Muriel Bradbrook relates the form and imagery to the seasonal masque and to Zodiacal beliefs.\(^4\) Willard Farnham discusses parallels between the themes of Lear and Timon, while R.H. Goldsmith indicates the verbal similarities to be found in the two plays.\(^6\) A play imperfectly conceived


would hardly lend itself to the searching analysis to which these scholars have subjected *Timon of Athens*. My own discoveries of Biblical diction, imagery, and themes bring me to the point of view of Honigmann and Bradbrook that *Timon* is "simply a different kind of play and not an incomplete draft."\(^7\)

Honigmann believes *Timon* to be a play prepared for and shown to some private audience much as *Troilus and Cressida* was prepared for the Inns of Court.\(^8\) Certainly the theme is one that would not be uncongenial for an audience nurtured on Elizabethan literature with its preoccupation with death and mutability, an audience interested in both philosophical generalities and also in the particular instances of a society dominated by a court which "glowed and shone like rotten wood."\(^9\) Shakespeare, in *Timon of Athens*, has said much the same thing dramatically that Raleigh said explicitly when, under sentence of death, he wrote to his wife:

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7 Bradbrook, p.36.

8 Honigmann, pp.14-15.

Oh God! I cannot live to think how I am derided, the scorns, the cruel words of lawyers, the infamous taunts and despites, to be made a wonder and a spectacle! Oh death, destroy the memory of these and lay me up in dark forgetfulness.  

Love God and begin betimes to repose yourself on Him; therein shall you find true and lasting riches and endless comfort. For the rest, when you have travailed and wearied your thoughts on all sorts of worldly cogitations, you shall sit down by Sorrow in the end . . . 

If you can live free from want, then care for no more; for the rest is but vanity.  

Even the Poet's allegory has its counterpart in a letter which Raleigh wrote to Cecil. He says:

men are but the spoils of Time . . . wherewith childish Fortune useth to play, kiss them today and break them tomorrow -- and therefore I can lament in myself only a common destiny. [Raleigh's] past happiness had found too much too little.

In Shakespeare's play the hero is forced to discover the self which is independent of friends or fortune and finds its being in its relationship to the eternal essence of which it is a part. Within a few years a similar theme was to find a philosophical expression in the writings of Descartes who says:

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12 Irwin, pp.210-211.
All creatures are united to God alone in an immediate union. They depend essentially and directly upon Him. Seeing all alike equally impotent, they cannot be in reciprocal dependence upon one another.¹³

Timon of Athens presents a view of man as a solitary being. Not only does the hero live in isolation, but each of the characters seems to be cut off from his fellows. For all the speaking in "corporate voice" and acting in consort there are none of the basic human relationships developed -- family relationships, viable business and political associations, true friendship (the Timon-Alcibiades and Timon-Steward relationships come nearest to this, but even they are not ordinary friendships). Timon does not begin to grow in understanding until he breaks away from society, and little can be done to help him.

Muriel Bradbrook, like Irwin Smith and J.M.Noseworthy, is inclined to see in Timon a play affected by the tendency to write dramas for the indoor stage of the Blackfriars instead of the outdoor stage of the Globe.¹⁴ Miss Bradbrook bases her opinion on a consideration of the kind of staging which the text indicates. She advances the theory that the MS Timon is a play written to parody Shakespeare's play -- an imaginative idea and not out of harmony with the


¹⁴ Bradbrook, pp.31-36.
findings of Goldsmith regarding verbal parallels between the MS and Shakespeare's Timon and Lear. It is possible that Timon of Athens may prove one of the plays to benefit most from the current interest in drama as theatre rather than merely literature.

In Oliver's brief history of Timon of Athens on the English stage, he points out that the play was known only in adaptation until 1816 when Edmund Kean undertook to present the play after the manner intended by Shakespeare. Kean's presentation, as well as the subsequent one of Phelps in 1851, appears to have met with public approval. When F.R. Benson directed a special version for the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre at Stratford-upon-Avon in 1892 his production seems to have been "regarded rather as an interesting curiosity than as a great drama in its own right." This attitude apparently has prevailed even to the Old Vic Production in 1956 in which Sir Ralph Richardson played Timon.15

However, the play has never been without its champions. In our times, G. Wilson Knight is among its most enthusiastic defenders. Significantly, Mr. Knight is a scholar with a practical knowledge of the theatre. He has produced Timon at Hart House, Toronto (February - March, 1940), at Leeds University (December, 1948),

15 Oliver, pp.151-155.
the Leeds production being repeated at the N.U.S. Arts Festival (January, 1949) and at the Royal Hall, Harrogate (June, 1949) for the British Drama League. He has himself acted the part of Timon. 16

The most important recent production of Timon of Athens is that directed by John Schlesinger in 1965 for the Royal Shakespeare Company, in which Paul Scofield acted Timon. Harold Hobson of The Christian Science Monitor (9 July 1965) terms the Schlesinger production as "the most important and satisfying production that the Royal Shakespeare Company has given at Stratford-on-Avon this season" although Hobson regards the play itself as minor.

J.C. Trewin in his review in The Birmingham Post (3 July 1965) of the Royal Shakespeare Company play discusses other performances of recent times -- those of Morell, Phillips, Colicos. (Trewin admits that probably no "Timon" has "overthrown" him"quite" as yet but he states that he "must always find Timon an excitement." He advises: "Listen closely to Timon of Athens, and it is then that it will open before you." Bernard Devin of the Daily Mail (2 July 1965) is more enthusiastic than Trewin about the Schlesinger production. He writes: "Not since the famous Brook-Olivier Titus Adronicus has a long-under-rated play

"revealed such unsuspected depth." The most enthusiastic champion of *Timon* among the critics of the 1965 production is Robert Speaight. Writing in *Tablet* (17 July 1965), he says:

> Whenever it is acted -- which is not very often -- *Timon* proves its power; and Mr. John Schlesigner's masterly production at Stratford reduces to nonsense second-hand catchwords about "lack of artistic control."

Penelope Gilliatt, after seeing the same production writes:

> Someone once called this play the stillborn twin of "Lear." It is a rather terrifying foetus, dramatically scarcely formed at all but with a horribly world-weary gaze.

*(The Observer, 4 July 1965)*

The critical comments on the play's verse, especially as it is spoken by Paul Scofield, are enlightening.

Robert Speaight says:

> The sweet discords of Mr. Scofield's resonant voice, with his compelling personality and presence, lend themselves to the surfaces of the character as well as to its depths. He avoids the perils of monotonous invective with extraordinary skill; the phrasing is musical and precise; and he is now no longer afraid to throw discretion to the winds when the moment for discretion has gone by . . . Here is a performance richly and variously satisfying to the mind and ear and eye . . .

*(Tablet, 17 July 1965)*

The writer of the review in *The Times* (2 July 1965) speaks of Mr. Scofield's "inconsolable broken phrasing, the unresolved cadences, the sweetness of his top register."
For him, Mr. Scofield's "way of handling verse often suggests a man struggling to lift a heavy weight, or being carried along by its momentum." Bernard Levin, in the Daily Mail, makes the following comment:

Indeed, without Mr. Schlesinger's programme-note, it [the production] would be acceptable as a lucid and imaginative reading of the straightforward parable of the man who is driven to hate all mankind by the betrayal of his friends.

But admirable it is; clear, fresh, quick, when it should be, yet with emphasis and weight where they are needed . . . . I doubt, though, whether it could have been done without Mr. Paul Scofield as Timon. This is a classic performance, strong, eloquent, bright golden in the first half, black in the second.

(Daily Mail, 9 July 1965)

Penelope Gilliatt says:

Paul Scofield's flinty voice has a discordant sweetness in it that is used here more skillfully and strictly than I have ever heard it; the scene [IV.iii] makes stupendous demands, and the way they are met here has that rare degree of technical grace which can be as moving in the theatre as anything that is actually said.

(The Observer, 4 July 1965)

Even Harold Hobson is moved, in spite of his opinion of the play. He says:

The play dies in a whimper of ineffectual resentment. Yet the broken rhythms of Mr. Scofield's voice, to which some people respond as to a trumpet, continue to stir the heart even to the very end.

(The Christian Science Monitor, 9 July 1965)
From these notices it would appear that what William Empson calls "incomplete verbal fusion", and the verse form which Chambers and others have criticized so harshly and regarded as evidence of dual authorship or unfinished work, have their raison d'être in dramatic necessity. Timon of Athens is first class theatre when brought to life by Paul Scofield, an actor equal to its demands. J.C. Trewin sees the reason for Ralph Richardson's "botching" of Timon in the 1956 Old Vic production in Mr. Richardson's "failure to respond to the verse, to the terrible beauty... of the last scenes" (Birmingham Post, 3 July 1965).

That the dramatic effectiveness is written into the play is further born out by Dame Edith Sitwell's phrase, "the turgid magnificence of Timon of Athens." Dame Edith brings a poet's judgement to this matter. Henri Fluchère shares Dame Edith's admiration of Timon. He says:

... Timon has rarely been given the place that it deserves, among the very highest. To say that 'the dramatic value of the play is as slight as its poetic value' is to my mind a serious mistake. The major themes to which Shakespeare gave poetic life in the preceding plays marked by the same spirit are here developed with the same abundance of images, the same imperious rhythms, the same tone of grave, profound conviction. The diptych of good and evil, the multiple significance of

gold, the themes of death and ingratitude, the cosmic symbols of the stars, the tempest and the sea, stand out here with amazing prominence.⁰⁹

Even when we are most ready to acknowledge the great qualities of Timon of Athens we cannot help being uncomfortably aware of the fact that the play fails in capturing the interest and in evoking a dramatic response from many who are enthusiastic about most of Shakespeare's dramas. Even among those who approved the Schlesinger production, many would agree with Harold Hobson when he says that Timon is "only a little, minor play, elementary in structure, but containing here and there a glorious burst of sound" (The Christian Science Monitor, 9 July, 1965).

It is possible that the subject matter of this "earnest" play lacks universal appeal. To be predisposed to its theme one must know a little of the "glory of this life" and, at the same time know the taste of disillusionment. (On this point, perhaps Timon of Athens is more meaningful to modern audiences who have experienced the affluent society and found its materialistic values wanting than it was for audiences conditioned by a scarcity economy or the economic maladjustment of the thirties.)

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Unless one acknowledges the drama of the soul, the drama in which the conflict is that between the corporeal and the incorporeal aspects of being, the plot of Timon of Athens seems too slight, the play formless.

In Timon, the dramatist is faced with the problem of creating a sense of identification between his worldly audience and the eternal incorporeal aspect of being which is quite apart from worldliness. Identification with Timon is difficult partly because of Timon's isolation. If we could see Timon as a father like Lear, as a son and husband like Coriolanus, or as a lover like Antony we could more easily find a similarity between his experience and our own. Timon is more likely to strike people, at first, as superhuman and then as inhuman rather than as being merely human.

Not only does Shakespeare face the difficulty of realizing the spiritual "self" but also of indicating the infinite, immortal, incorruptible perfection which is the soul's destiny. Of all the literary art forms, the drama is the most concrete, not being fully realized until the words have been fleshed out in the bodies of the actors. How can the dramatist portray incorporeality by means of the corporeal? How is he to portray the essence of being, if that essence is completely mental, through the material
objects and personalities when that very materiality is just what hides the truth about life? If the dramatist uses fantasy he is in danger of creating the duality of a "here" and a "there", of a "now" and a "then". I believe that in *Timon of Athens* Shakespeare is determined to avoid this separation. The "world of being" is ever with us even if we think and act only in the "world of becoming". The latter is our imperfect realization of the former rather than a separate state of being.

A dramatist may resort to symbolism to suggest what he cannot portray directly. I believe Shakespeare uses religious imagery and symbolism to this end. However, especially for a modern audience, we find two difficulties: first, Biblical imagery is virtually meaningless to a people unfamiliar with the Bible; and, second, religious symbolism when recognized is apt to evoke a response conditioned by religious education and therefore often stereotyped. *Timon* suffers particularly from the prevalent ignorance of the Bible.

*Timon of Athens* is a play in which Shakespeare projects the action of the drama beyond death, into

The undiscovered country from whose bourne
No traveller returns

(*Ham.* III.i.79-80)
In *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth* the death of the protagonist leaves us with a sense of peace because the long struggle with evil is over and the virtue of the protagonist is vindicated or his sin expiated and good once more is transcendent in society. In *Timon of Athens* order is re-established by Alcibiades but it is an uneasy order, a precarious balance between peace and war maintained by the wisdom and power of Alcibiades who will make war breed peace, make peace stint war, make each
Prescribe to other, as each other's leech (V.iv.83-84)

Timon himself has found eternal peace -- his long sickness of health and living is mended, nothing has brought him all things (V.i.185-187) and vast Neptune can weep "for aye on faults forgiven" (V.iv.78-79). Shakespeare seems to suggest that evil, in this world, will never be absolutely destroyed. Like the Blatant Beast, it must be faced, overcome, and chained periodically by those who are valiant, wise, and good if society is to enjoy any order whatever. However, although society is not perfectible, individual man is. Through suffering, of which death is the extreme form, man is purified.

In *Lear* Shakespeare has taken themes very similar to those in *Timon* and fleshed them out more fully. Not only does Lear put off the garments of civilization, but so does
Edgar in the person of Tom o' Bedlam; Gloucester, too, undergoes the loss of family, friends, and estates and even acts out a suicide; the mental blindness of Lear and Gloucester is symbolized in the physical blindness of Gloucester; ingratitude is intensified because it is made to include an unnatural neglect of parents; selfless love is given varied and interesting forms in the persons of the loyal and upright Kent, the tender and forgiving Edgar, the jester, and the lovely Cordelia; Lear finds his identification with the elemental in the storm right at the centre of the play rather than at the very end as does Timon. The large and interesting cast of Lear and the varied scenes give the drama a colour which Timon lacks and offers the audience a play which may be enjoyed on a purely literal level by those who do not find the probing of philosophical concepts entertaining. Lear is better theatre. The fact that in Lear Shakespeare manages to give more substance to his principal themes than he does in Timon inclines me to the opinion that the writing of Timon preceeded that of Lear.

However, whatever the chronological relationship between Lear and Timon, it is clear that together they form a transition between the tragedies and final tragi-comedies in each of which the effect of a mock death or symbolic death is exploited: in Pericles, Thaisa is believed dead and
committed to the sea, and Marina is reported dead; in Cymbeline, Imogen is believed to be dead from the potion, her lost brothers as good as dead, Posthumus's very name suggestive of death and its aftermath; in The Winter's Tale, Hermione is believed to be dead for sixteen years and Perdita lost and killed; in The Tempest Prospero and Miranda have been considered dead by the rulers and citizens of Milan and Naples, and later Ferdinand is believed to be dead by his father. When Shakespeare uses the mock death in the earlier plays, Much Ado About Nothing and Romeo and Juliet, it is without the integration with character and theme which we find in the last plays. The supposed deaths of Hero and Juliet are tricks to facilitate the plot: one expedites a happy resolution, the other disaster.

Fluchère, in speaking of the relative security of life in Jacobean England after the Tudor period, says, "The drama of life had turned to tragi-comedy in which men skirted death without being caught up by it." In the late Shakespearean plays men do in the end escape death, but not before enduring it as if it were a reality and often a reality of which they are guilty. Leontes, for example, refers to Hermione as "She I killed!" (WT V.i.17).

Fluchère, p.63.
By this time Leontes' jealousy is gone; only remorse remains. Death effects changes in the attitudes and characters of the bereaved. Pericles says:

For death remembered should be like a mirror
Who tells us life's but breath, to trust is error.

(Pericles I.i.45-46)

Even a good man like Gonzalo is not spared the awfulness of an experience which skirts death. Gonzalo cries:

All torment, trouble, wonder, and amazement
Inhabits here. Some heavenly power guide us
Out of this fearful country!

(Temp. V.i.104-106)

However, later, he admits that "in one voyage" good has come to each person

In a poor isle, and all of us ourselves
When no man was his own.  

(Temp. V.i.212-23)

In most cases the change comes in those bereaved, for the one who seems to die is usually innocent. However, in The Tempest, if we think of Prospero's banishment to his desert isle as a kind of death, we find that in his exile he has learned to use his wisdom and power to govern. His firm control of Ariel and Caliban as well as of those who come to the island in the storm betokens a very different man from him who let the Dukedom of Milan slip from his hands. Timon, too, grows in control of himself and of others, but unlike Prospero, Timon does not return to society.
Just as we have noted that themes developed in the history plays and in the tragedies are echoed in *Timon of Athens*, so we find that the last plays often repeat or suggest themes fully developed in *Timon*. Pericles, in his suffering, like Timon, withdraws from society and will feed only upon necessities. He is

A man who for this three months hath not spoken  
To any one, nor taken sustenance  
But to prorogue his grief. *(Pericles V.i.24-26)*

Posthumus, when he believes that Imogen has been unfaithful, reminds us of Timon in his bitter response to a false society. Posthumus says, "We are all bastards" *(Cymb.II. v.2)*. Belarius's condemnation of London could be read for Alcibiades's judgement on Athens. Belarius says:

Did you but know the city's usuries,  
And felt them knowingly; the art o' the Court,  
As hard to leave as keep, whose top to climb  
Is certain falling, or so slippery that  
The fear's as bad as falling; the toil o' the war,  
A pain that only seems to seek out danger  
I' the name of fame and honor, which dies i' the search,  
And hath as oft a slanderous epitaph  
As record of fair act, nay, many times  
Doth ill deserve by doing well; what's worse,  
Must curtsy at the censure.  

*(Cymb. III.iii.45-55)*

Throughout *Cymbeline* gold is the corrupter. A wager provokes Iachimo's vicious attack on Imogen's chastity and then on the mutual love she and Posthumus have for each other. Cloten speaks of the power of gold to make
men and women false (Cymb. II.iii.72-78). Arviragus says:

All gold and silver rather turn to dirt!
As 'tis no better reckoned, but of those
Who worship dirty gods. (Cymb. III.vi.54-56)

Often in the last plays no motivation is given for
the emotion which impels the action of the wicked
characters. In The Winter's Tale, for example, Leontes
has no reason to suspect his wife of infidelity even in
thought. In Pericles, Marina does nothing to provoke
Dionyza's hatred and jealousy. Evil is presented as a
latent presence ready, almost without warning, to flare
into disastrous proportions. Often evil develops
because the good are too trusting. Pericles trusts
Cleon and Dionyza, never suspecting that they will plot
the girl's murder. Prospero, "neglecting worldly ends,
all dedicated / To closeness and the bettering of his
mind" (Temp. I.ii.89-90), "waked and evil nature" in
his brother. Like Timon, he has been unwise but not
ignoble.

As in Lear, the turbulence caused by evil is
symbolized in these later plays by the tempest. Marina
says:

This world to me is like a lasting storm,
Whirring me from my friends. (Pericles IV.i.20-21)
She thinks of herself as a "Poor maid, / Born in a tempest when her mother died" (Pericles IV.i.18-19). Leontes speaks of "this stage, / Where we offenders now appear soul-vexed." (WT V.i.58-59) We must admit that Timon's expression of his soul's vexation through the curses he hurls at Athens and its citizens is not as effective theatre as Prospero's tempest or Lear's storm.

In the midst of the storm, the sea is often the agency for good. Ferdinand says, "Though the seas threaten they are merciful" (Temp. V.i.178). Prospero says,

By foul play, as thou say'st, were we heaved thence,  
But blessedly holp hither.  
(Temp.I.ii.62-63)

Pericles, Thaisa, and Marina are separated by the sea, but later brought together by the sea. The great wave carries Thaisa's coffin to land, just as the sea "belches up" Alonso, Sebastian, and Antonio on Prospero's island. When Cymbeline wishes to suggest the power of grace in our lives he couches his remark in sea imagery. He says, "Fortune brings in some boats that are not steered" (Cymb. IV.iii.46). In the last plays the sea becomes the agency which shapes the ends of the characters: it separates, but it also reunites. Sea imagery recurs in Timon of Athens suggesting the infinitude in which man exists after death,
but in *Timon* the sea does not become an agent of grace. There is nothing in the play to match the bold simplicity of the sea carrying Thaisa's coffin to a friendly haven or the baby Perdita to a country where she will be nurtured with love. Grace, presented through the steward in *Timon of Athens*, is much less dramatic although, at the same time, more natural and believable. However, where Timon's response to grace is implied, the response of characters in the last plays is explicit. Leontes, after the expiation of his sin in suffering is able to accept Cleomenes advice:

Sir, you have done enough, and have performed
A saintlike sorrow. No fault could you make
Which you have not redeemed, indeed paid down
More penitence than done trespass. At the last,
Do as the Heavens have done, forget your evil,
With them forgive yourself. *(WT V.i.1-6)*

When Alonso (reminding us of Lear kneeling before Cordelia) says:

But oh, how oddly will it sound that I
Must ask my child forgiveness!

Prospero replies,

There, sir, stop.
Let us not burden our remembrances with
A heaviness that's gone. *(Temp.V.i.197-200)*

In the tragi-comedies, repentance, reformation and forgiveness are followed by restoration. Marina's music
and Perdita's flowers symbolize the return to harmony and beauty and bring warmth and interest to the final scenes of the plays in which they occur. In contrast, *Timon of Athens* suffers from the drabness of the stage during its final acts. But more than in anything else in the last plays, the theme of restoration and recovered innocence is symbolized by children or by chaste young people whose marriage promises new beginnings. Camillo speaks of the young Mamillius as "a gallant child, one that indeed physics the subject, makes old hearts fresh" (*WT* I, i.42-43). Polixenes speaks of the joy he finds in his own son who

> with his varying childness cures in me
> Thoughts that would thick my blood.

(*WT* I.ii.170-171)

When Miranda exclaims what a trouble she must have been to her father in his banishment, Prospero replies,

> Oh, a cherubin
> Thou wast that did preserve me.

(*Temp.* I.ii.152-153)

Timon lacks these associations with human youthfulness which make restoration meaningful in human terms.

It is easy to understand why *Timon of Athens* proves a disappointing play to a person who goes to the theatre to see interesting characters in human predicaments with which he may readily identify. For the producer catering to an audience expecting merely to be entertained, the play is a problem. It is not without justification that Hazlitt
designates *Timon of Athens* as one of the few plays in which Shakespeare "seems to be in earnest throughout, never to trifle nor go out of his way."\(^{21}\) The play's appeal is in its seriousness as the remarks of those who approve the drama indicate. It may be that the importance of *Timon of Athens* in the canon rests mainly on the themes which Shakespeare develops in its text. Winifred Nowottny senses that *Timon* may help us understand the relationship between the tragedies and the tragi-comedies. She writes:

I do not fully understand this closing speech [Alcibiades's remarks regarding Timon's death], but I think that if I did, I should find that I understood the relation between Shakespeare's tragedies and his last plays, for, in a sense surely important for our understanding of the last phase of Shakespeare's art, Timon's words, "Lippes, let soure [sic] words go by, and language end," must precede discovery of the richness of that conceit whereby, over his submerged tomb, vast Neptune is to "weep for aye ... on faults forgiven."\(^{22}\)

It is possible that the conflicting opinions regarding *Timon of Athens* have not been the result of its bibliographical peculiarities, nor its difficult verse, nor unsatisfactory characterization and slight plot, but rather the result of the depth of its theme. Man's relationship with the infinite and the eternal is the great mystery which has engaged the thoughts of philosophers,

\(^{21}\) Collins, p.96.  
theologians, artists, and, at times, scientists throughout the history of mankind. The question is an important one for every man because his behaviour in society and the direction which the development of his own character takes may be coloured by what he thinks in this regard. The question is almost more important for the dramatist who has a whole gallery of characters whose behaviour depends on his ideas. If Timon of Athens is the statement of Shakespeare's ideas regarding the relationship of the finite and the infinite, the physical and the spiritual, the mortal and the eternal; (and I believe it is) then, in the philosophical ideas expressed in the play, we find the framework within which all the characters of the canon must move. In Timon of Athens, Shakespeare shows us a hero who discovers the inadequacies of worldly perfection and is forced to grow toward a spiritual perfection. Shakespeare's concept of his Everyman is large enough to transcend doctrinal or cultural differences. All men, not just declared Christians, must work out their own salvation. However, in expressing his philosophical ideas, Shakespeare has found the writings of the Old and New Testaments with regard to atonement a rich source of diction and imagery.
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<td>&quot;Timon of Athens and its Dramatic Descendants,&quot; REL, II. iv, 9018.</td>
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<td>Kocher, Paul H.</td>
<td>&quot;Timon of Athens Act V Sc. 3&quot;, SAB, XIV (1939) 239-242.</td>
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<td>Lawrence, William Witherle</td>
<td>Shakespeare's Problem Comedies.</td>
<td>New York, 1960</td>
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<td>Maura, Sister.</td>
<td>Shakespeare's Catholicism.</td>
<td>Cambridge, 1924</td>
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<td>Neale, J.E.</td>
<td>Queen Elizabeth I.</td>
<td>Edinburgh, 1960</td>
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<td>&quot;King Lear and the Prodigal Son&quot;, SQ, XII (1966), 361-369.</td>
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<td>Spencer, Terence</td>
<td>&quot;Shakespeare Learns the Value of Money: the Dramatist at Work on Timon of Athens,&quot; SS, VI (1953), 75-78.</td>
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<td>Tidwell, James N.</td>
<td>&quot;Shakespeare's 'Wappen'd Widow'&quot;, NQ, CXCV (1950), 139-140.</td>
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APPENDIX I

The foliation of Timon of Athens in the First Folio arouses the interest of even the novice in bibliography. The histories come to an end on the verso of x4 with the conclusion of Henry VIII. Next follows Troilus and Cressida on fifteen leaves, only some of which are signed and then with anomalous signatures. There is no pagination except for the second leaf which bears the number "79" on the recto and "80" on the verso. The Tragedy of Coriolanus begins on the first leaf of the gathering signed "aa" which is paginated "1" on the recto. Signatures and pagination continue regular through Coriolanus, Titus Andronicus and Romeo and Juliet to gg2v (page 76) which is the second from the last page of Romeo and Juliet. The final page of that play is printed on the recto of a leaf signed "Gg", the first of a gathering of six. This page is numbered "79" not "77" as one would expect. The Life of Timon of Athens begins on Ggv and continues to hh5v, where it is completed. Hh6 contains a list of personae -- an unusual practice in the Folio -- and hh6v is one of only five blank pages to be found in the body of the Folio. The first three pages of Timon are numbered "80, 81,82". The fourth page is numbered "81" and from there on pagination is regular to page 98. It appears that a mistake in
pagination was made in the last page of *Romeo and Juliet* or in one of the first three pages of *Timon of Athens* and then the other three pages wrongly numbered because of their relationship with the first page numbered. There is no pagination for hh6 or for hh6v, which is followed by the first page of *Julius Caesar* on kk paginated "109." There is no ii gathering although the pagination indicates that it was the original intention of the printer to include such a gathering.

Bibliographers are agreed that these irregularities indicate that it was the original plan of the editors to have *Troilus and Cressida* follow *Romeo and Juliet*. When the discussions with Henry Walley concerning the copyright for *Troilus and Cressida* became protracted, it was decided to go ahead with the printing of *Julius Caesar* leaving room for the other play.¹ When *Julius Caesar* had been completed, the disagreement still not settled, the compositor was set to work on *Troilus* in the expectancy that the differences would soon be smoothed out. The first page of *Troilus and Cressida* was printed on the verso of the last page of *Romeo and Juliet*. However, when no agreement was forthcoming the printer decided that he must cancel

the gg3, printing the last page of *Romeo and Juliet* on the recto of Gg and beginning *Timon* on the verso. *Folio no. 4* in the Folger Library contains the cancelled gg3. When an agreement was finally made with Walley, *Troilus and Cressida* was printed on the anomalous gatherings and inserted between the histories and the tragedies.
APPENDIX II

In his book, *The Language of Shakespeare's Plays*, B. Ivor Evans says:

Ultimately, the greatness of the tragedies is that each has a language, individual and proper to itself, gathering its theme, the atmosphere of the time in which the action is set and its values, along with the spiritual idea in which the tragic conception centres, into a single, unified poetic image.

The imagery of the play *Timon of Athens* is fully discussed in the text of this paper. However, an examination of the vocabulary employed is interesting in that its results tend to support opinions arrived at in a somewhat more subjective fashion.

A table showing the frequency with which the words "man", "men", and "mankind" are used in the various plays of the canon.

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Table 2

A table showing the incidence in *Timon of Athens* of words which have been the subject of comment with respect to this play, "gold", "hate", or "ingratitude", for example, having been proposed as the principal theme of the play by various writers. (Information concerning the usage in other plays have sometimes been given to afford some perspective to the use in *Timon*.)

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See Table 1

JC 44, TG 37, Lear 28

Rich.III 51, Cor. 50

Cymb. 12

Rich.III 18, Cor. 10

R&J 8

Rich.III 69, R&J 50

Rich.III 9, R&J 121

Rich.III 18, R&J 12

Cor. 17

LLL 4, AYLI 3
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APPENDIX III

Timon of Athens affords us an interesting illustration of the way in which a writer's imagery modifies and thus clarifies the symbols which embody his conception.

Imagery relative to the Last Supper occurs in Apemantus's remarks concerning Timon and his guests:

What a number of men eats Timon, and he sees 'em not! It grieves me to see so many dip their meat in one man's blood; and all the madness is, he cheers them up too. I wonder men dare trust themselves with men. Methinks they should invite them without knives: Good for their meat, and safer for their lives. There's much example for't; the fellow that sits next him, now parts bread with him, pledges the breath of him in a divided draught, is the readiest man to kill him. 'T'as been proved. (I.ii.39-49)

We have the picture of Jesus passing the cup of wine which he refers to as his blood and we are reminded of the presence at his side of the traitor Judas, already guilty of betrayal but pretending friendship as he shares the meal. The suggestion is that the guests are traitors, false friends to Timon even as Judas is to Jesus. Is Apemantus implying that Timon is a Christlike figure? The question occurs to W.M. Merchant, but he comes to the conclusion that the friends are to be compared to Judas, but Timon is not to be identified with Christ. He illustrates his point with a comparison to Shakespeare's method of writing in Measure for Measure. ¹ Ruth Anderson, on the
other hand, seems to accept the comparison to Christ for she sees Timon as the victim of his "excessive goodness".²

Within a hundred lines of the above speech, Shakespeare gives us the clue for the answer to the question which I believe he deliberately poses. (We are meant to wonder if this man is truly good — this man who is praised by his friends, who means to be good and who, indeed, makes noble gestures.) Timon is so moved by the thought of the love which binds his friends to him that he weeps and his tears are commented upon by Apemantus:

Tim. . . . Mine eyes cannot hold out water, methinks. To forget their faults, I drink to you.

Apem. Thou weep'st to make them [the friends] drink, Timon.

Second Lord. Joy had the like conception in our eyes, And at that instant like a babe sprung up.

Apem. Ho, ho: I laugh to think that babe a bastard. (I.ii.104-109)

The comparison of the false love of the guests to a bastard, a false son, one without the name and inheritance of the true or lawful son, is obvious. However, at the same time we have the earlier speech recalled and commented upon. The ceremony of the shared cup is recalled, again with the suggestion that the guests are drinking part of Timon, although this time it is his tears rather than his blood.

1 Merchant, p.254.
2 Anderson, p.95.
Again there is the suggestion that those partaking in the ceremony lack the sincerity of the one initiating the rite. We recall the comparisons with Judas and Christ. And suddenly Apemantus says "I laugh to think that babe a bastard". Apemantus's remark becomes the answer to the question in our mind, "Is Timon truly Christlike?" No, his goodness is a false Christliness, a false sense of goodness.

How does imagery work upon us? In this process, which is the magic of a work of art, our mind is assailed — emotions, memories, associations are stirred so that we, in our turn, conceive that complex of symbols which was the artist's response to his original experience. Apprehension, being essentially subjective and coming as it does in a totality, is as hard to break into its parts as is the original creative process. I know that while I was still wondering how I should think about Timon the remark of Apemantus burst upon me as the answer. The subsequent events of the drama justify the conclusion that Timon is not truly Christlike: the intuitive response is corroborated by the further investigation of the drama.

Apemantus's remark has a third level of meaning by which it helps to characterize the cynic. On the surface
we see him as a man who is not taken in by the false declarations of friendship which he hears. However, in making this statement about the babe being a bastard he is answering the most important question that can be asked with regard to the Christian religion, "If Jesus was not the son of Joseph, who was he?" The question is not asked here, but if it were Apemantus would have answered even as he has spoken. If this multiple interpretation appears to give too much importance to this sentence I argue that the sentence is already outstanding because of its ugliness and because its tone and meaning are in contrast to the remarks of other characters at this point. In speaking as he does Apemantus shows the ugliness of his character and his inability to apprehend anything of a spiritual nature.

In this third interpretation the remark may be compared with a speech in Antony and Cleopatra. The soothsayer is telling Charmian's fortune. Her attitude is flippant. She says:

Good now, some excellent fortune! Let me be married to three Kings in a forenoon, and widow them all. Let me have a child at fifty, to whom Herod of Jewry may do homage. Find me to marry me with Octavius Caesar, and companion me with my mistress.

(A&C I.ii.25-30)
Charmian is suggesting fortunes impossible to her, -- three royal weddings in a morning, motherhood after she is past the age of childbearing, equality with her mistress, an alliance with the Roman Octavius. There are two accounts in the Bible of children conceived by mothers beyond the age of childbearing -- Sarah conceived Isaac when "it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women" (A.V.Gen. XVIII.11) and Elizabeth conceived John who became the Baptist "in her old age", "For with God nothing shall be impossible" (A.V.Luke I.36,37). Isaac's birth was foretold by the three men who appeared before Abraham's tent in the heat of the day and to whom he did homage. John the Baptist met his death at the dissolute court of Herod where the king, reluctant to execute him, was tricked by the queen into ordering his beheading. Charmian, by suggesting that Sarah's life and Elizabeth's life would be absurd for her, helps to make it clear that the values of Cleopatra's court are diametrically opposed to those upheld by the Judaic-Christian tradition. The speech holds the suggestion that the court we are beholding is to be indentified with the corrupt court of Herod.

Imagery, working by suggestion, activates the mind of the reader. However, it would be wrong to think that its use is always deliberated and its effect calculated. The conception of imagery is so integrated with the symbol
building process in the creation of a work of art that it may dominate expression, influencing diction even where the reader could not be expected to recognize the underlying image. I believe we find an example of diction influenced by an underlying conception in the lines in which the Merchant speaks of Timon:

A most incomparable man, breath'd, as it were,  
To an untirable and continuate goodness.  
(I.i.10-11)

The word "breath'd" is not likely at this point to have a special significance for the reader, but later, when Timon in his prosperity is dubbed "the old man" (III.vi.60), we catch the association with Adam (the old man which must be put off, for as in Adam all die even so in Christ shall all be made alive). Miss Bradbrook also finds Adam symbolized in Timon delving in the earth with his spade. When Shakespeare used the word "breath'd" he may well have been thinking of Adam's creation for Adam became a living soul when the Lord God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" (A.V.Gen.II.7).

3 Bradbrook, p.33.
In conclusion, let us look at a re-working of an image already discussed. The first stranger in speaking of the refusal of Timon's ungrateful friends to help the stricken man, says:

Who can call him his friend
That dips in the same dish? For in my knowing
Timon has been this lord's father,
And kept his credit with his purse;
Supported his estate; nay, Timon's money
Has paid his men their wages. He never drinks
But Timon's silver treads upon his lip;
(III.ii.67-73)

Again the false friend is compared with Judas, dipping in the same dish. There the comparison is open and plain. However, the suggestion of Judas does not stop at this point for the few facts that we know concerning the traitorous disciple are recalled in the diction of the following lines: Judas kept the bag or purse of the company of disciples, he betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, and he designated Jesus for the soldiers by kissing him. The words "purse", "money", "silver" and "lip" echo these facts. Isolated, such words have little significance, but taken as we find them integrated with and associated with an unmistakable image, we see them as contributing to the unity, coherence, and clarity of the drama.