

WOLLSTONECRAFT AND FRIEDAN'S THEORIES HIGHLIGHT THE WOMEN STRUGGLES IN *JULIUS CAESAR*

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***Abstract:** For centuries, women have been struggling to establish their place in the society and fight for their rights as becoming an equal to men. This article, presents an analysis on the female characters - Portia and Calpurnia of Rome, in Julius Caesar. The play was written by William Shakespeare who based his story on the historical events of Ancient Rome. Making use of Wollstonecraft and Friedan's theories, this article aims at examining to what extent the struggles of women are reflected and presented in the play. The struggles of the female characters are intrinsically concerned with the play and extrinsically relates to the condition of women in Ancient Rome. Upon analyzing, it becomes clear that Roman women had less rights and privileges than men and were considered inferior to men. Women in Roman were seen as weak, feeble and unworthy. Although feminism is not even heard of in Shakespeare's time, through studying Wollstonecraft and Friedan's theories, Portia and Calpurnia's struggle can be considered as the springing of feminist's actions.*

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INTRODUCTION

Drama is a well-known product of literature which consists of vast genre, for instance tragedy. In the book of *Aristotle Poetics*, Aristotle provides us with a definition of tragedy as, “the imitation of an action that is serious and also, as having magnitude, complete in itself” (Aristotle 1962:32). One of the famous dramas of tragedy is *Julius Caesar*, which was written exquisitely by the most gratifying writer known in history, William Shakespeare, who is the father of English literature because he wrote many plays or dramas which were based on several historical figures.

The well-known play, *Julius Caesar* is based on the Roman Empire. It is based on the historical events which took place around 44 BC, in ancient Rome. According to Roma Gill (2010:xxv), Shakespeare wrote these plays chronically from the works of historians who documented the events of history. One of the primary sources of these historical plays written by Shakespeare was Plutarch, the writer of *Plutarch's Lives*. Its original title was *Parallel Lives of Famous Greeks and Romans*, in which he presented the lives of the Greeks in contrast with the Romans. Plutarch's study were on the general, statesmen and public figures including Alexander the Great, Solon, Pyrrhus, Julius Caesar, and Marc Antony which gave a view of the life of the Romans and the Greeks up to Plutarch's life.

The female characters of Shakespearean plays, particularly in *Julius Caesar* gives an outline of the Roman values. It provides a contrast with the male characters, as

according to the play, Rome is a masculine society. The female characters in *Julius Caesar*, Portia and Calpurnia, are the wives of two powerful men of the Roman society, Brutus and Caesar, respectively. Being wives of leaders, Portia's and Calpurnia's conversations and actions are worth to analyze. Therefore, the roles, positions and struggles of the female characters painted by Shakespeare, with the support of Wollstonecraft and Friedan's feminism perspectives becomes the main focus of this article.

Mary Wollstonecraft and Betty Friedan are feminists who theorized liberal feminism. They believed that women and men are equal and have similar capacity. Therefore, women should be given the same rights and opportunities as men. Liberal feminism also stressed on the importance of individual rights. Rosemarie Tong states in *'Feminist Thoughts'* that,

What Wollstonecraft most wanted for women is personhood. She claimed that a woman should not be reduced to the "toy of man, his rattle," which "must jingle in his ears whenever, dismissing reason, he chooses to be amused (2009:16).

Thus, the liberal feminism approach is used simply in the insistence of women's equality with men and with which it disagrees with patriarchy.

SHAKESPEARE'S WORKS

William Shakespeare was an English playwright and a poet of the late 1500's and the early 1600's, who wrote numerous varieties of plays and different sonnets. He is acknowledged and admired by many scholars and common people who have liked his works. Shakespeare wrote about

tragedies, comedies, romance and histories. Shakespeare's works made people feel different emotions through the plays about myths, beliefs, heroes, queens and kings. The works of Shakespeare were also appreciated in the Elizabethans era, where they were performed in the theatre; especially in *The Globe Theatre*.

The Elizabethans era was an intriguing period in the History of England. It was forenamed after the Greatest Queen; Queen Elizabeth I. The era is often regarded as a golden age in the English history. It was the time where renaissance was at height and it was where the English poetry and theatre flourished. In that period, the Globe Theatre was a great success and the source of entertainment. Shakespeare also became an actor in some of his play performances. However, there were no actresses, as it was considered inappropriate for women to perform in the Theatre. Women were said to be forbidden to perform by law in the Elizabethan era. Thus, the roles of the women were carried out by young boys, whose voice were high and the body muscles were not fully grown.

The master-pieces of Shakespeare's have been converted into hundreds of languages throughout the world and are heartily performed as a rich work of literature. The outstanding works of Shakespeare have inspired and motivated many writers and artists. Hinton, an artistic director of an English theatre expresses his views on Shakespeare's work as follows,

Shakespeare moves us with the courage of heroes, foolishness of clowns, the aching of lovers. He seems to know about everything. He writes with music, with a soaring imagination, with tenderness, with passion and with humor. He is inside us al (cited in Sparksnote 2006:1).

Some of the famous works of Shakespeare, which have moved and captured many minds of people, are *Merchant of Venice*, *As you like it*, *Twelfth Night*, *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. All of these plays from Shakespeare have something in common, i.e. the females of these plays have strong and outspoken characters. They yield towards the male power but are also firm and cunning to sometimes outwit the male characters. However, in this article, only the female characters of *Julius Caesar* and the society it concerns, i.e., Rome, is discussed.

THE ANCIENT ROMAN SOCIETY

According to history, the Ancient Rome followed the monarchy system before gaining its republic in 509 B.C. The Romans formed a republic, a government in which the Roman citizens elected council to rule on their behalf. Being a Republic, every citizen was expected to play an active role in governing the state. The wealthy class (aristocracy) dominated the Roman Republic, who was known as the patricians in the Roman society (Hope 2011).

The Roman society was furnished with the wealth, power and means of an emperor existing alongside the poverty and degradation of a slave. Valerie Hope in her article, *Social Pecking Order in the Roman World* states that,

At the end of the first century AD, the Roman administrator, poet and writer Pliny the Younger (today known particularly for his letters) attended a dinner party. He noted that the food and wine on offer differed in quality. The guests were not being treated equally. Instead the host was mirroring status distinctions in the standard of the food and beverages he presented to his guests (2011:¶2).

Through this observation, it can be said that status and power matter in the Roman society.

The social arrangement of the society was based on heredity, property, wealth, citizenship and freedom. The patricians of the Roman society were mainly nobles and wealthy people, who were also lawmakers and the patron. The Roman society had the scheme of patronage, where the patricians offered the protection to the plebeians. Plebeians were the common people or peasants who worked for the patricians to acquire legal help, food and money. However, some plebeians were free slaves. Slavery was also one of the parts of Roman society where they were the possession of their masters and to whom their power of life and death was.

Roman society had its social factor which could avoid strict legal divisions. One of which was wealth, as money and fortune could buy status symbol, even though, the person possessing wealth might be a freed slave. However, the status was evaluated as it marked the boundaries in the life of Romans to know whether the person was a senator or a slave (Hope, 2011:¶12). Roman citizens, slaves and ex-slaves mingled quite freely on the streets, showing few observable symbols of their status. In the routine of life distinctions based on gender, age, occupation and wealth may have been of importance than status alone. The Roman could gain status from several roles of their life like a father or a husband, and their identities could have influenced on how they act and interact with others (Hope, 2011).

ROLES OF WOMAN IN THE ROMAN SOCIETY

In the Roman society, women were not given much power. Politics was the sphere of men. The Roman women

were kept out of political issues and were never encouraged to be the senators, governors, lawyers, judges or any of the other official positions that involved in running Rome. According to Richard A. Bauman "the only exception was priesthoods, to which they were admitted as Vestal Virgins and in a few other cases." (2003:2). Henceforth, Roman society's law did not look upon women as equal to men. Women received only a basic education, if any at all, they were under the authority of man. Customarily, they were authorized by their father before marriage. Later, the power switched to their husband, who possessed the legal rights over the children. Being a patriarchy society, Rome considered women unequal to men.

Nevertheless, the Roman women enjoyed certain degree of freedom, which largely depended on their wealth and social status. These women could possess property but yet they were not allowed to vote. They had no formal role in the society. In the Roman society women were supposed to play the traditional role in the household (Santarpia 2011:¶2).

Women in the Roman society lived by the same regulations as in many other ancient civilizations. Their lives revolved around their families, social class and status. Women fulfilled their roles as daughters, wives and mothers. They were basically confined to their household affairs. Though they had freedom of mingling in the society, going to markets and going to baths with their slaves, yet they were considered inferior to men. They had to follow their husband's order, who is the master of the house (Santarpia 2011:¶5).

The role of a wife was to manage the household and educate her children. All chores were done by slaves, although the ideal wife was still expected to spin and weave like her ancient ancestors. The women of the upper classes, in reality

were free from work. Women in the Roman society could also inherit after their husband or father.

The role of women differs from noble women to plebeians, as noble women belong to the aristocratic families where a male child was to be born as the heir to carry the name and lineage of the family. Therefore, these women were perpetually pregnant and infertility was the actual ground for divorce (Santarpia 2011:¶6).

WOLLSTONECRAFT AND FRIEDAN'S FEMINISM OPINIONS

Since the feminism approach regards and compares the roles and the struggles of the female characters in the play, the liberal feminism of the first and second wave of the feminism approach which gives the idea of women should be 'equal to men' is applied in analyzing the women's role and behavior in *Julius Caesar*. According to Rosemarie Tong, who cites Susan Wendell in her book, *Feminist Thought*, "liberal feminism is equality of opportunity" (2009:13). Tong has provided a vast knowledge on feminism in her book, such as Liberal feminism, Radical feminism, Socialist and Marxist feminism and so forth. Tong's description on liberal feminism can be applied to analyze the female characters in the Shakespearean play. From Tong's book, the first-wave feminist, Mary Wollstonecraft's theories also provide a clear perspective about the females portrayed in the play.

In Wollstonecraft's reading, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, it is inferred that women lacked liberty and did not have the freedom to make their own decisions. They were bound in the boundaries of their homes, husband and children (1996:173). It is Wollstonecraft, who presents a sight of women,

being strong in body and mind, where she is not a captive in the domestic sphere. In support to Wollestonecraft's idea - John Stuart Mill's and Harriet Taylor, who are first-wave feminists insisted that a society could attain gender equality, by providing women the same political and economic rights as men enjoys (cited in Tong 2009:16).

Mill points out that the society's double standards are hurtful for women and states that it does not justify to prohibit women to try something, just because they are not capable of doing it similar to men. Mill specifies,

...what women by nature cannot do, it is quite superfluous to forbid them from doing. What they can do, but not as well as the men who are their competitors, competition suffices to exclude them from (cited in Tong, 2009:19).

Meanwhile, Tong also conveys that liberal feminism is about women being equal to men. She mentions that the overall effort of liberal feminism is about "a just and compassionate society in which freedom flourishes" (2009:13) where women and men can prosper equally.

WOMEN IN JULIUS CAESAR

Julius Caesar is considered as a masculine play displaying politics of the Ancient Rome. As politics was a notion prohibited for women, Shakespeare inserted only two female characters in the play for a limited period. It seems that these females were used only to show some light on their respective husbands. Their devotion and loyalty towards their husbands are meant to show the power of men in society. Yet, when making a closer reading of how the women behaved, there is something different that can be gained apart from

politics, conspiracy, betrayal, hate and war. Portia, the wife of the honorable Brutus, and likewise Calpurnia, the wife of the most powerful man in Rome, Julius Caesar are strong female characters, who continually shows devotion and concern towards her husband. In a feminist perspective, this behavior is not merely a sign of being weak but can be a sign of their strength. How has the Roman Empire build up women's condition? The following argumentation explains.

1. Romanian Social Background

Rome has been constructed as a masculine society in *Julius Caesar*, ie. women's importance in society were positioned beneath men. They were considered weak and feeble. They grew up under the conditions of the society that made them inferior to men, such as being dependent, passive, and incapable of making decisions. In concern towards her husband's health and safety, Portia also admits twice to the idea that women are feeble and weak through her inglorious declaration, "Ay me, how weak a thing / The heart of woman is!"(Gill 2010:42) and "...Think you I am no stronger than my sex" (Gill 2010:32), which meant women in general are seemed as weak and unworthy.

Men had such great power on women that as a young girl, Portia was governed by her father and after marriage controlled by her husband. Women were considered so weak that

...a little knowledge of human weakness, justly termed cunning, softness of temper, outward obedience, and scrupulous attention to a puerile kind of propriety, will obtain for them the protection of man (Wollestonecraft 1996:18).

In the men powered society, where women seek protection of *masculine men*, men felt insulted and humiliated when compared to women. Any display of weakness in the masculine domain of politics and warfare were considered 'sissies' or better known as 'cowards'. This instance can be seen in act I scene II, where Cassius compares Caesar as a "sick girl" (Gill 2010:8) to Brutus. He describes how Caesar became sick, had a seizure, and whimpered 'for some drink' in Spain as an implication that Caesar is weak and not fit to be a crowned, which brands Brutus's mind in thoughts against Caesar and in favor of the conspiracy. Yet again in act I scene III, Cassius insults Caesar and tells Casca:

Let it be who it is. For Romans now
Have thews and limbs like to their ancestors,
But—woe the while!—our fathers' minds are dead,
And we are governed with our mothers' spirits.
Our yoke and sufferance show us womanish (Gill
2010:18).

Thus, Cassius claim is that the Roman men have powerful bodies of their ancestors, but not their manliness. Their tolerance and patient endurance of the oppression shows them as weak, like women.

Upon this fact, Friedan states, in *The Feminine Mystique*, that Freud considered women being "strange, inferior and less-than-human species" (1997:108). Wollstonecraft agrees that, "Nature has given woman a weaker frame than man" (1996:28), but does it make woman any less-than-man or less-than-human? Does this mean that woman should be the means of insults and humiliation? The answer is no. Yet, Roman men who were considered animals are better in position than women. Wollstonecraft tries to understand this by explaining

that women have been illustrated by most societies as “artificial, weak characters and useless members of society” (Wollstonecraft 1996:56). Whether the Roman men imply animals for good or bad purpose, they considered *women* as a disgrace.

Samples of men considered as animals can be found in act IV, scene I, when Antony compares Lepidus to a horse when Octavius mentions Lepidus being “a tried and valiant soldier” (Gill 2010:70). Secondly, is in scene II, when Brutus expresses his concerns to his fellow man as follows: “But hollow men, like horses hot at hand/ Make gallant show and promise of their mettle” (Gill 2010:72). Thirdly, in scene III, Brutus relates himself to a lamb and informs, “O Cassius, you are yokèd with a lamb” (Gill 2010:78). Here, ‘yoked with a lamb’ means allied with a lamb. Defensively, Friedan contributes the idea that women must somehow prove themselves much better than an animal to achieve recognition from a manly society:

...to prove that woman was not a passive, empty mirror, not a frilly, useless decoration, not a mindless animal, not a thing to be disposed of by others, incapable of a voice in her own existence, before they could even begin to fight for the rights women needed to become the human equals of men (1997:81).

Unfortunately, after the death of Caesar, Calpurnia’s husband, when Mark Antony reads out Caesar’s will, in front of the citizens, it is noticed that there is no mentioning of Calpurnia’s name in the will. Antony states that Caesar has left all his gardens, private summer-houses and newly planted orchards for public pleasures. And also he gives every Roman citizen seventy-five silver coins (Gill 2010:64). Along with not being

mentioned in the will, Calpurnia also suffers greatly as she was neglected by Octavius, the adoptive son of her dead husband. Likewise, Calpurnia was also ignored by the Roman men, who came to take Caesar to the Capitol on the day of his assassination. They all greeted Caesar with praises and yet ignored Calpurnia as if she was not present throughout the scene. Further, the adoptive son, Octavius, enters in the middle of the play and directly gets involved with the war and revenge. There is no indication of Calpurnia getting anything from Caesar's will or Octavius providing for Calpurnia. The worst of all is there is no reference of Calpurnia after the assassination of Caesar, till the end of the play. It is a mystery whether she lived or died, whether she was provided for or left on her own and whether she was acknowledged by the citizens or not.

This proves that in Rome, women have often suffered the crisis of identity. They are mostly known as 'the wife of' or 'the mother of'. Does this mean that they do not have their own identity? Confined to the domestic sphere, Friedan states that, "a woman could only exist by pleasing man. She was wholly dependent on his protection in the world that she had no share in making: man's world" (1997:81). In the play, Calpurnia's presence was not as important as her husband who was seen in flesh and blood, that her own death became an 'unseen' or 'unmentioned' death of Calpurnia, the wife. The question here arises with what reason was Calpurnia not important enough to be mentioned in the play? Did she not have an identity apart from being the wife of Caesar? Was not she supposed to be treated kindly and considerably after the murder of her husband? Was she a useless member of the *manly* society? Calpurnia's role seems to be so easily forgotten!

This is, unfortunately, familiar with Portia's condition. On hearing about the death of Portia, Brutus, her husband was

told to not shed any tears, though he grieves for her silently. Brutus being the *manly man* of the *manly society* pursues his stoic philosophy of patient endurance of Portia's death. He even quiets the people who speak of her by saying, "Speak no more of her" (Gill 2010:81) and eagerly drowns himself in wine and makes amends with Cassius.

Yet again when Messala, a friend of Brutus, tells him that his wife is dead; Brutus utters, "Why, farewell, Portia. We must die, Messala" (Gill 2010:82), thereby entailing that Portia's death is not as important as any other manly businesses. On the other hand, when Cassius dies, Brutus grieves differently. He praises Cassius and bids him farewell. Brutus also states that,

Are yet two Romans living such as these?
The last of all the Romans, fare thee well!
It is impossible that ever Rome should breed thy
fellow friends, I owe no tears
To this dead man than you shall see me pay.
I shall find time, Cassius, I shall find time (Gill
2010:98).

This means that Brutus is ready to shed tears for Cassius- his worthy Roman- but not for his wife. Why does not he forget his belief on the stoic philosophy of endurance which he applied on the death of Portia? Portia deserved a better final farewell from Brutus because she was a lovely and devoted wife. Therefore, it seems that women were just supposed to provide fulfillment as a wife and should not expect a lot from men.

2. Portia and Calpurnia's Struggles

Roman women were enslaved by the men of the society, particularly, by their father, brother and husband. As illustrated

in the play, although being a wife of the soon to be crowned emperor, Calpurnia was not in a better position.

Caesar had every authority on Calpurnia, for she was his wife, to show the greatness of Calpurnia in being his trustee. Yet, Calpurnia's loving devotion by always answering Caesar's call with "Here, my lord" (Gill 2010:4), makes it seem that men were of greater importance than women even though they are husband and wife. Instead of showing the great loving relationship she has for Caesar, the Roman society sees it just like Wollstonecraft who states women's sex, "as the weakest as well as the most oppressed" (1996:34).

In act I scene II, on the feast of Lupercal that was celebrated in a public place, Caesar, in front of 'a great crowd' asks Calpurnia to stand directly in the way of Antony's running course. The Feast of Lupercal calls for a holy race to be run by the young men, touching the women with their leather thongs. Caesar tells Antony,

Forget not in your speed, Antonius,
To touch Calpurnia, for our elders say
The barren, touchèd in this holy chase,
Shake off their sterile curse (Gill 2010:4).

Caesar states in front of everyone that Calpurnia is "barren", which means unable to have children. This clearly shows that Caesar was concerned that he lacks an heir and was ready to make a spectacle of his wife in public. This unfortunately, shows how inconsiderate Caesar was towards Calpurnia, his wife.

It seems that Roman husbands considered, "the wife...who is faithful to her husband, and neither suckles nor educates her children, scarcely deserves the name of a wife,

and has no right to that of a citizen” (Wollstonecraft 1996:150-151) if unable to produce children, and thus does not deserve the name of a wife and has no right to that of a citizen. Friedan correctly mentions the fact that most men saw women “as childlike dolls that existed in terms only of man’s love, to love man, and serve his needs” (1997:108). Thereby, women were regarded unimportant.

The Roman women seems wholly submitted to the patriarchal rules that bonded them to the private or domestic sphere or lives, which denies them access to the public or political field. They were kept away from the political discussions and assemblies. Shakespeare exposed it well in *Julius Caesar*, where Brutus’s wife Portia has a powerful conversation with her husband, that right after that the conspirators leaves Brutus’s house at the early hours of dawn. As a devoted wife to her husband, she shows distress by his anxieties and inquires by questioning him. When Brutus refuses to confide in her, she urges him to reveal his troubles, as she deserves to know them, as his wife. She even kneels before Brutus to listen to her plea, yet Brutus does not confide. However, Portia continues,

I should not need if you were gentle, Brutus.
Within the bond of marriage, tell me, Brutus,
Is it excepted I should know no secrets
That appertain to you? Am I yourself
But, as it were, in sort or limitation,
To keep with you at meals, comfort your bed,
And talk to you sometimes?
Dwell I but in the suburbs
Of your good pleasure? If it be no more,
Portia is Brutus' harlot, not his wife. (Gill 2010:32)

Indicatively, Portia attempts to tell Brutus how she feels being excluded from her husband's life and how his secret makes her feel. She feels as Wollstonecraft rightly puts, women as "considered as only the wanton solace" (1996:151). Thus, Portia feels that she is only 'Brutus' harlot, not his wife', so she desires to be close to Brutus as a wife should be which is reasonable. However, Brutus still does not reveal his secrets and efforts to console Portia. To this, Portia utters to Brutus,

If this were true, then should I know this secret
I grant I am a woman, but withal
A woman that Lord Brutus took to wife.
I grant I am a woman, but withal
A woman well-reputed, Cato's daughter.
Think you I am no stronger than my sex,
Being so fathered and so husbanded?
Tell me your counsels. I will not disclose 'em.
I have made strong proof of my constancy,
Giving myself a voluntary wound
Here in the thigh. Can I bear that with patience,
And not my husband's secrets? (Gill 2010:32).

Confined to a masculine society, where women were thought as weak and frail, they themselves had to prove that they are better. Portia had to remind Brutus that, although she is a woman, she is the daughter of the well reputed Cato. In addition, to prove that she is not weak as women are considered to be, she stabs herself on the thigh without wincing or flinching and demands her husband to trust her with his secrets. Nonetheless, Brutus keeps her isolated from the political issues or the conspiracy against Caesar and takes the advantage of the moment, as he hears a knock. Though, he assures her, with flowery words, that he will notify her about his concerns in the future, he never does tell her about the conspiracy. This becomes reason for Wollstonecraft to say that men like Brutus

usually just persuade women “by working on their feelings, to stay at home and fulfill their duties” (Wollstonecraft 1996:64).

Roman women actually struggled under the rule and power of their husbands because their devotion and love were not valued enough to make them equals of their husbands. Calpurnia also struggled under Caesar - her husband’s standard and order. In act II scene II, Calpurnia tries to break her ‘adjustment of the feminine role’ and shows boldness in stating her mind, by saying that Caesar will not leave the house. However, Caesar put Calpurnia in ‘her place’ by telling her that “Caesar shall forth” (Gill 2010:34).

Actually, Calpurnia wanted her husband to be at home that day because she dreamt Caesar being murdered. It was not only Calpurnia who feared for Caesar; Caesar himself feared too, as he also sent a servant to the priest to perform a sacrifice, before Calpurnia entered. Instead of showing his thanks for his wife’s concern, he exaggerates by claiming that the threatening things will vanish once they face him and announced that it seems strange to him that “men should fear” (Gill 2010:35). When Caesar listens to no reasoning for staying home that day and claim’s that “Danger knows full well that Caesar is more dangerous than he:” (Gill 2010:36), Calpurnia voices out,

Alas, my lord,
Your wisdom is consumed in confidence.
Do not go forth today. Call it my fear
That keeps you in the house, and not your own.
We’ll send Mark Antony to the senate house,
And he shall say you are not well today.
(*kneels*) Let me, upon my knee, prevail in this.
(Gill 2010:36).

In the Roman society, it is quiet awful to hear Caesar’s agreement to stay home instantly, on the cost of Calpurnia’s

kneeling and begging in front of him and also calling it only 'her' fear, not 'his'. This is why, he taunts Calpurnia by adding, "Mark Antony shall say I am not well, and for thy humour I will stay at home" (Gill 2010:36). Wollstonecraft has well mentioned that men assume, "the rights of humanity have been thus confined to male line from Adam downwards" (2010:89), therefore to quickly surrender under a women's request is a sign of unmanliness.

The scenario changes, however, when Decius and other conspirators come, and coax Caesar with flattery to come to the assembly. Although at first, Caesar thrusts his power by telling he will not come - when Calpurnia tells them by saying Caesar is sick, Caesar embarrasses her by saying, "Shall Caesar send a lie?" (Gill 2010:37). Caesar was actually the one who suggested "Mark Antony shall say I am not well" (Gill 2010:36) but he made Calpurnia seem as a liar and a fool, in front of his subjects or so-called friends. He continues humiliating Calpurnia by telling them, "...on her knee hath begg'd that I will stay at home today" (Gill 2010:37). This action was chosen because Caesar knows it was shameful to have ones husband bragging about his wife begging him, on her knees, in public. Calpurnia was not the only person who feared for Caesar's safety, Caesar himself was a bit uneasy about it too. If he were brave like what he boasted, he "would not need any other's weakness to prove his own masculinity" (Friedan 1997:377). Caesar's disrespect towards Calpurnia still does not come to an end, however, as at the end he taunts her before leaving by emitting,

How foolish do your fears seem now, Calpurnia!
I am ashamed I did yield to them.
Give me my robe, for I will go. (Gill 2010:38).

In the play, unfortunately, Calpurnia's dream and her concern did come true, as Caesar was assassinated on the same day by those people, whom Caesar had humiliated Calpurnia in front of. Men assumed that only they could "decide for themselves in the eyes of their God the problems of right and wrong" (Friedan 1997:82).

Likewise, Portia was yet another woman struggling in the world of men, where women were considered as 'not strong'. Portia's death or suicide could make women seem strong by feminists. In the play, Portia's death took place because of Brutus's lack of attention and in the state of anxiousness about Brutus's safety. She feared that Octavius and Antony had become so powerful that it will bring harm to Brutus, as Brutus has been part of the conspiracy against Caesar.

Brutus's secrets about the assassination also distressed Portia and she overcame with the concern and fear for her husband. Brutus himself tells Cassius about Portia's death by describing as follows,

Impatient of my absence,
And grief that young Octavius with Mark Antony
Have made themselves so strong for with her death
That tidings came with this she fell distract
And, her attendants absent, swallowed fire.(Gill
2010:80).

With the anxiety and uncertainty of her husband who trusts on her, Portia decides then to take her own life. This painful and agonizing way to die, to feminists would show that even while dying she has strength. Portia considered herself as a strong person, although her husband thought otherwise.

CONCLUSION

From the analysis of the female characters and their society in the play: *Julius Caesar*, it is understood that Rome was a strict, uptight, masculine society which gave women less rights and value. Thus, it can be inferred that Rome was strictly 'men' society because women were considered as weak, unworthy and kept bounded only in household affairs and were restricted from getting involved in war and politics. Calpurnia and Portia were confined under the powers of their husbands. Evenso, the struggles of Calpurnia and Portia who tried to prove their worth to men and the society, can be understood as feminist behavior. In the play, Calpurnia and Portia struggle with their husbands in order to become their 'equal' instead of being inferior. Although in achieving recognition, they had to portray being devoted, caring and loving housewives, who live to please their husbands. They even had to kneel and beg in front of their husbands' to get some consideration to their pleas, that is, if their husbands desire to grant them. Friedan expresses that,

...it is only a sick society, unwilling to face its own problems and unable to conceive of goals and purposes equal to the ability and knowledge of its members, that chooses to ignore the strength of women. Perhaps it is only a sick or immature society that chooses to make women "housewives," not people (1997: 232).

As seen in *Julius Caesar*, Calpurnia and Portia, have struggled to get their rights and respect. It gives the impression that women have started early on to fight for their rights, and thus, feminism were born long back in history, even before the first feminism movement started. Because Calpurnia's and Portia's struggles were limited to their husbands', this makes

the kind of feminism struggle they did was a mild feminism in comparisons to the ideas and theories of Wollstonecraft and Friedan. However, the efforts that Calpurnia and Portia did can encourage and inspire other women to fight for their rights, whether it is within or out of their household. Wollstonecraft wisely declares that,

Would men but generously snap our chains, and be content with rational fellowship instead of slavish obedience, they would find us more observant daughters, more affectionate sisters, more faithful wives, more reasonable mothers-in a word, better citizens (1996:154).

With this said, it entails that when women should have been given the respect and rights they deserved for being an important part of the society. If women are acknowledged as an equal of men instead of being considered as inferior, there would be a great fusion of respect and understanding between both men and women, which would form a tremendous society.

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