

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Julius Caesar (100BC – 44BC) was a Roman military leader and a great politician at his time, and was well known for his slogan “Veni, vidi, vici (I came, I saw, I conquered)” (McManus). He really was successful in his political career, partly for his being ambitious and the rest because of the fact that “throughout his life he has known as an eloquent speaker” (McManus); he was able to captivate people with his words and he made a good use of it to put himself on the top position. Born “into the prestigious Julian clan” (“Julius Caesar (100BC-44BC)”), he set his ambition to reach the top of Roman political system, and progressed himself through it (“Julius Caesar (100BC-44BC)”). He was a victorious general and had conquered a lot of countries to be put into Roman Empire “...conquer[ed] most of what is now central Europe,However, much of the conquest was an act of aggression prompted by personal ambition (McManus).”

Throughout his campaign, Caesar practiced—and widely publicized—his policy of clemency (he would put no one to death and confiscate no property)” (McManus) although some critics said that Caesar practiced his clemency only to win people’s heart, as said in the introduction of the play: “the real Caesar could be savage, for all his vaunted ‘clemency’ (Shaw xxxii).” His great power and ambition made some traitors decided to kill him before he became more powerful. His death had led Roman Empire into civil war and ended up in the traitors’ loss. Being a military leader, he was said to have no humour. According to Mommsen, a 19th-century German historian, “Caesar had a normal Roman’s unpoetic temperament”, and “Mommsen’s description of him mentions no trace of humour,” said Shaw (xxxii).

Since Julius Caesar was a very great figure in history, many authors wrote about him. Some tried to capture the Julius Caesar known by most people, some tried to picture the different sides of him; G. B. Shaw was one of the authors who tried to portray the different sides of Julius Caesar. George Bernard Shaw (1856 – 1950) dedicated himself to art, including literature, and wrote 63 plays in total. “He would not write a line purely for idle entertainment,…” (Rockman 8). He used his literary works to express his own thoughts, and he used them smartly. He had received critiques but he stuck to the style and continued making more great plays against the era of melodrama. In the late 19th century, people were used to plays staged merely for entertainment; Shaw, who was a drama critic at that time, felt quite disappointed with that condition and decided to follow the path of fellow dramatists like Ibsen and Chekhov to break a new ground, by “challenging their audiences with serious ideas bravely faced. . . .” (Shaw xxiii)

Among the plays Shaw had written throughout his life, there is one entitled *Caesar and Cleopatra*. Although it is not his most famous play, it is still a very interesting play. It portrays Julius Caesar differently from what I have read in other sources, thus I will analyse Julius

Caesar's characteristics in this play. Although the play does not thoroughly fit the historical facts, it still has several corresponding details in the story. In this play, I can see how Shaw creates an interesting story by using a different style than most playwrights at his time to portray people; giving his Julius Caesar in this play some poetic and humorous traits which contradict the common image of the Roman General and carrying the storyline not typically like in most too-dramatic plays in the era.

In this thesis, I would like to discuss the portrayal of the protagonist, Julius Caesar. Portrayal is "the act of showing or describing somebody/something in a picture, play, book, etc.; a particular way in which this is done" ("Portrayal"). I am going to identify his characteristics and figure out the purpose of the author in creating the protagonist with certain portrayal.

Statement of the Problem

After reading the play, there are some things I would like to discuss:

1. How is the protagonist portrayed in the play?
2. What is the purpose of the author by creating such a character?

Purpose of the Study

The purposes of writing this thesis are:

1. To see how the protagonist is portrayed in the play.
2. To understand the purpose of the author by creating such a character.

Method of Research

The method I use is library research. I start by reading the play, *Caesar and Cleopatra*. Then I analyse the novel by using formalism. I take some references and resources from the Internet and books to support the analysis and assist me to write the thesis. Finally, I draw a conclusion from my analysis.

Organization of the Thesis

I divide the thesis into three chapters. In the first chapter, I present the Introduction, which contains the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, the Method of Research, and the Organization of the Thesis. The second chapter is the Portrayal of the Protagonist in George Bernard Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra*. The third chapter is the Conclusion. The thesis ends with the Bibliography and the Appendices, which include the Synopsis of the Play and the Biography of the Author.