

Julius caesar literary analysis

[History](#), [Ancient History](#)



In William Shakespeare's tragic play Julius Caesar, the contrast between honor and power in a leadership position is presented as many individuals work to better Rome with their own ideals of national glory. Brutus and his followers pursue the idea that Julius Caesar was not an honorable ruler for Rome, leading them to kill him as a benefit to their country. Marc Antony opposes Brutus, being a strong advocate for Caesar's rule, in order to bring justice to his deceased acquaintance and improve the lives of the citizens of Rome. Both men give speeches of their views on Caesar's rule, but Antony's more powerful message pits Roman citizens against Brutus and the conspirators. Shakespeare first uses paralipsis in Caesar's rule by demonstrating Antony's subtle mockery of the conspirators. Antony later uses repetition of Brutus being an honorable man as well as rhetorical questioning in order to cunningly place the blame on Brutus without directly saying so. Shakespeare utilizes various forms of altruistic, yet deceptive diction to portray Antony's speech as superior to Brutus' because he relates to the sympathies of Roman citizens rather than their nationalism.

Brutus has some hesitance when granting Antony permission to speak in reference to Caesar's death. Brutus solely asks that Antony not speak badly of the conspirators, leading Antony to cunningly work around his oratory limitations. Antony first exclaims that he "come[s] to bury Caesar, not to praise him" in order to peacefully present his connection to Caesar and to honor him ceremoniously (III. ii. 73). Despite Antony's supposed cordiality, his motives lie in revenge, and he continues to praise Caesar regardless. The author utilizes paralipsis within Antony's deceptive diction in order to subtly turn attention towards Caesar's beneficial rule. By initially portraying himself

as adhering to Brutus' limits, Antony feigns loyalty in order to better his speech, and inspire the citizens towards his rightful ideals. The author utilizes Antony's underhanded diction to enhance ethos, thus creating an emotional response within the citizens who sympathize with Antony's loss. Rather than promoting patriotism for Rome like Brutus, Antony's speech hones in on the sentiment of the individual, inspiring the crowds towards Caesar's ideals. Shakespeare later supports Antony's focus on Roman emotions when he sneakily announces that he "speak[s] not to disprove what Brutus spoke, but...to speak what [he does] know" (III. ii99-100). Shakespeare utilizes paralipsis once more in order to distract from Antony's continuous opposition to Brutus' methods. The author's use of logos when speaking of Caesar's rule over Brutus is used to sway both the minds and hearts of the citizens because they are more willing to follow someone who gives back to them. The author portrays Antony's diction as being both benevolent and deceitful because his morals lie in bettering Rome, but his motives are to go against Brutus' rule and avenge the death of his beloved Caesar. Antony's ability to sneak around Brutus' restrictions helps relate to the needs of the citizens because there is a central focus around Caesar's past accomplishments. Antony later puts focus on Brutus' supposed honor in order to show the contrast between Caesar, a proper ruler, and Brutus, a misguided one.

Antony puts emphasis on Brutus' supposed honor in order to backhandedly mock Brutus' morals that differ from Caesars. Antony repeatedly exclaims that "Brutus is an honorable man" in order to feign loyalty to the conspirators (III. ii. 82). The author uses Antony's repetitive diction to prove

the opposite of its connotation. By portraying Brutus as consistently honorable, and then following his alleged successes with his detriments to society, Antony is cunningly putting the blame on Brutus while simultaneously complimenting him. Shakespeare utilizes the contrast between Brutus' honor and his malicious actions to sway the public towards the more evident evil of murder. Where Brutus provides ideals of nationalism, Antony provides emotional and physical benefit to the public. Shakespeare uses ethos when Antony appeals to the public because even though they see Brutus as clearly honorable, they see Caesar as giving because they feel connection to his loss and they desire the materialistic possessions Caesar's will administered posthumously. In addition to Brutus' honor, Antony repeatedly claims that Caesar "was [his] friend, faithful and just to [him], but Brutus says he was ambitious", thus providing a clear opposition between Caesar's benevolent rule and Brutus' sudden murder (III. ii. 84-85). Shakespeare utilizes the comparison of Caesar to Brutus in order to place the "ambitious" characteristic instead on Brutus because he was the one that physically enacted evil. By backhandedly praising Brutus, the listeners soon sway from believing any accusations of Caesar's rule because Antony continually disproves Brutus' reasons for killing. By praising the conspirators, but praising Caesar more, Shakespeare is proving Antony's speech as stronger because his benevolent diction uses ethos to make an emotional connection to each individual rather than to the whole. The citizens commiserate the death of Caesar by turning against the conspirators. Antony's wisely worded speech then becomes stronger because he inflicts a physical reaction, all while speaking with peaceful

diction. Antony's final strategy in his speech plays with rhetorical questioning in order to make the public think and alter their thoughts towards avenging Caesar rather than celebrating his death.

Even though Antony emits a cordial semblance during his speech, his inner motives lie in persuading the crowd from their original beliefs in order to avenge Caesar. When Antony states, "[Caesar] hath brought many captives home to Rome whose ransoms did the general coffers fill: Did this in Caesar seem ambitious?", he is forcing the crowd to focus on the benefits of Caesar's rule (III. ii. 87-89). Shakespeare utilizes Antony's heartfelt diction in order to turn the crowd's motives towards revenge because it is easy for the public to relate to a king who benefits his fellow man. The author uses Antony's double-meaning questions to enhance logos because even though Antony is internally rebelling against the conspirators, his statements of Caesar's public influences are true. Antony utilizes the emotions of the public in his speech in order to amass a larger following. Brutus' argument was that Romans should rebel against unjust ruling, which is certainly a worthy cause. However, Antony relates to each citizen by illustrating Caesar's values that care for people and gives back to the public. Antony uses the rhetorical questioning of Caesar's ambition to show the error in Brutus' killing, thus pitting Rome against the conspirators who oppose Caesar's benevolence. Antony then finalizes his speech with an inspirational question that says, "you all did love [Caesar] once, not without cause. What cause withholds you then to mourn for him?" (III. ii. 101-102). Shakespeare uses Antony's sincere diction in order to demonstrate his suffering, which in turn effects the Roman public as they join in his sadness. By forcing the public to mourn with him,

Antony's rhetorical questioning makes the public think more about their connections to Caesar, which ultimately influences rebellion. The author uses Antony's altruistic and deceptive diction to show both a connection to an old friend and to avenge the killing of Caesar. Antony's speech relates to the public on a more personal level because he forces them to decipher their conflicted emotions. Brutus was seeking justice for a whole country, which cannot be achieved without hard work. However, Shakespeare provides an easy opportunity for citizens to sympathize with Antony by using rhetorical questioning within Antony's kind-hearted diction. Antony's speech is ultimately superior because his genuine diction enhances ethos to spawn an emotional connection between a beneficial ruler and his subjects. The powerful quality of Antony's views is capable of influencing change, which is why the public so instantly fights against the conspirators in an attempt to avenge the much-adored Julius Caesar.

In the tragedy Julius Caesar, Shakespeare uses multiple forms of benevolent, yet deceiving diction to display the superiority in Antony's speech because he connects to the emotions of Roman citizens rather than to their nationalism. The author initially uses paralipsis to display Antony's subtle mockery of Brutus and his fellow conspirators. Antony later utilizes repetition of Brutus' supposed honor as well as rhetorical questioning to backhandedly place the blame on Brutus. Julius Caesar explores the capabilities of man in a leadership position. Even though Antony was right in defending Caesar's values, Brutus' morals showed a commitment to country and public responsibility that could ultimately be more important to Rome.