

How does theme help structure julius caesar

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- How does theme help structure the play? Julius Caesar The structure of the tragedy is chronological, in the sense that the different situations that take place are in order, despite the fact that Shakespeare, in some cases, cuts the time between an event and the other so as to be able to cover from the time the conspiracy is planned until the death of Brutus. However, the different themes of the play contribute to its structuring, in various ways. According to Marvin Speavock and other critics on Shakespeare, the play presents a "two-peak action", meaning that the play is divided in two different parts: the first three acts on one side, and the last two on the others. This division makes sense, specially when considering how the tragedy unfolds. The first part of the play is structured so as the reader to sense the build-up of tension taking place before the death of Caesar, reaching its climax with the assassination of Caesar and, later, when the angry mob attacks Cinna the poet, in Act III Scene III. This increasing tension is deeply related with one of the main themes of the play, "Fate versus Free Will", because, all along with the different omens that are revealed by different characters in the course of the play, it contributes to the idea that some things are sort of pre-established, like if there was a superior power deciding the destiny of the characters. The play seems to support a philosophy in which fate and freedom maintain a delicate coexistence. Portia and Calpurnia, representing Women, are an important part of this theme since, in the beginning of the play; they are the ones that are more frightened about what may happen to their husbands. Portia fears something terrible would be taking place because of the strange behaviour her husband was having at the time. Calpurnia, on the other hand, is a character in deep relation with this theme,

due to the dreams she has foreseeing the death of her husband: " Caesar, I never stood on ceremonies, Yet now they fright me. There is one within, Besides the things that we have heard and seen, Recounts most horrid sights seen by the watch. A lioness hath whelped in the streets, And graves have yawned and yielded up their dead. " The second part of the play consists mainly on " the increasing political and military unrest [...] the growing isolation of Brutus, the swift ascent and yet almost programmed decline of Antony against [...] Octavius, the climatic battles [...] and the final submission of Brutus". This part is pretty bloody, given that during this last scenes both Cassius and Brutus commit suicide after losing the battle of Philippi, and because of the battle itself. The theme of " Ambition and Power" becomes extremely important due to the new political situation Rome is facing: On one side we have Antony, that might be considered an ambitious person, and on the other we have Brutus and Cassius, the defenders of the Republic system of government, banished from Rome and leaders of a rebel army. It could be argued that Antony's desire to revenge Caesar's death was only an scene, set up in order to gain power at his expense. Either way, and despite the motive, the fact that Antony became one of the most powerful men in Rome is undeniable. Brutus and Cassius, in contrast, seem to care only to do what's best for Rome, although this can be rejected by many in the case of Cassius, who appears to be a pretty jealous person at the beginning of the play. If we consider the theme " Private self versus Public self" we can also find that it is deeply in contact with the structure. In Julius Caesar, we could say that there is some sort of balance between the number of scenes dealing with public issues or in a public atmosphere and those

dealing with private issues or in a private atmosphere. In this dramatic piece, the most important scenes are those that are private, particularly those dialogs between Cassius and Brutus, where they assert “ their personal, almost domestic claims on each other and yet public in their issues [...]”. Their subject is always self and society, not by turns but simultaneously”

Rhetoric, the use and manipulation of language to achieve, for instance, persuasion of people (mobs), and the use of language have a very important influence on structure. Some scenes of the play are completely dedicated to speeches, in which the speaker is usually trying to persuade someone, like when Antony successfully turns the people against the conspirators, or when Cassius manages to convince Brutus to be part of the conspiracy. These speeches not only alter the structure but are extremely important regarding the plot, and how action unfolds in the play: the speeches of Julius Caesar have the power to turn the situation upside down. Faith and destiny, previously mentioned, have a similar influence on the text. Omens and portents, and their wrong interpretation, tend to change the direction of the story, and we can see scenes that are dedicated almost exclusively to show how they are related to the story, and also to anticipate what’s about to happen. As a conclusion to this essay we can say that, taking in account that theme and structure are deeply in contact one with the other, all the themes previously described contributes to the structuring of the play, specially “ Public Self vs. Private Self”.