

Marcus antony's speech analysis



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Julius Caesar was probably one of the most prominent figures in Roman history, known for his strong willed nature and commanding presence. In 44 BCE, Caesar was voted in to be Dictator perpetuo (often mistranslated as dictator for life). Worried that Caesar was becoming too powerful, several Roman senators including Brutus (a close friend of Caesar's) assassinated Caesar while Caesar himself was by tradition, unarmed and defenseless.

Following the assassination Brutus convinces the Roman citizens that Caesar was evil and overly ambitious. This places Marc Antony, a close friend of Caesar with a large burden to counteract Brutus's arguments. Convincing his fellow Romans to change sides is no small feat; this makes the use of reverse psychology and irony a necessary task enabling Antony to give a eulogy that instills an idea of a nobler Caesar in the Roman people, subtly sowing the seeds of rebellion within the populace.

Gaining the support of the people is no easy task for any one man, be it politician, speaker, or intellectual, and Antony recognizes this and compensates for it through clever phrasing. Considering himself as being as "no orator like Brutus," Antony asserts and implies that he is a modest person and that such modesty contrasts with the dishonesty of Brutus's actions and words. By doing this, Antony puts himself in a better light, setting up a position of authority that is complemented with an assurance that all that he says is of the truth.

He also uses irony to convey his message. Throughout his speech he frequently addresses Brutus and his fellow conspirators to be "honorable men." The repetition of this phrase soon becomes a sort of subtle

derogatory statement towards Brutus and the other conspirators, bringing down the credibility of Brutus's speech and the conspirators as whole. After establishing a firm position by gaining the attention of the crowd, Marc Antony begins to attack the idea that proclaims that Caesar was ambitious.

According to Antony, Caesar in all instances brought back the spoils of war for the good of the people by making such "ransoms" to be filled in "general coffers," exhibiting Caesar's natural generosity and overall selflessness. To emphasize this point, he asks "Did this in Caesar seem ambitious?" which makes the crowd question Brutus's main argument on Caesar's inherent ambition. With the previous statement still having yet to set in, Antony continues to further his argument by presenting Caesar as a compassionate man who "When the poor have cried" he would've "wept" as well.

Once again, Antony uses rhetoric to enhance his argument, suggesting that Caesar's compassion is not of ambition and that such ambition "should be made of sterner stuff;" which conveys that Caesar's compassion drove him to provide for the Roman citizens through various activities. To finalize his argument on Caesar's supposed "ambition," Antony uses a personal example of his in which he and others "thrice presented him a kingly crown" that Caesar "thrice refus[ed]."

This statement pulls a huge blow to Caesar's "ambition," as in reality he was a humble individual, who had no intention of seizing power without the consent of the people. Concluding the argument, Antony asks "Was this ambition?" and goes on to say "Yet Brutus said he was ambitious" and as

such “ hits two birds with one stone” by disproving Brutus’s claim that Caesar was “ ambitious” and proving Brutus’s dishonesty. However convincing, mere words are not enough to convince a clearly dissatisfied crowd. Marc Antony’s emotional and theatrical displays overcome these challenges all of which exemplifies his rhetorical expertise.

The first of several theatrical feats is when he remarks that his “ heart is in the coffin there with Caesar” and starts to weep. Used simultaneously as a way to provoke and use the empathy of the crowd and to express his own emotions Antony makes the Roman citizens see from his point of view. Through this emotional conduit, all that Brutus had said previously said never seemed to more contrived and fabricated. The sight of their former leader, Caesar dead on the floor, and Antony’s emotional turmoil prompts the crowd to make a decision: to join Antony or go against him.

Ultimately, Antony wins the support of the crowd by convincing his goals and motives have more purpose and justification than that of Brutus’s as his emotional theatrics make it seem that he’s personally affected whereas Brutus addresses the assassination and his ultimate betrayal of Caesar with a sense of detachment. Due to Antony’s relatable nature compared to Brutus’s nonchalant and aloofness towards the crowd, the Roman citizenry start to believe in Antony and thus going in his favor.

Later on, Antony brings out a scroll from his garment and proclaims that it is Caesar’s will, promptly putting it away saying that the crowd can only see it once they truly knew “ how Caesar loved” them. Desperation is felt by the crowd and they all beg to know the contents of Caesar’s will. Eventually

Antony, feeling that it's the right time, points at Caesar's cloak and begins to reminisce about the first time Caesar had put it on. The first time Caesar put it on was in Antony's words on a "summer's evening," from this one can imagine Caesar being embellished with sunlight, beholding his power and influence.

These vivid depictions of such nobility are soaked in by the crowd making them feel greater empathy for the demise of such a great leader. Since the crowd at this point is incredibly disgruntled by the startling revelations that have been just pronounced, Antony uses this opportunity to finally unveil Caesar's will, and reveals that Caesar had left each Roman citizen seventy-five drachmas and his private arbors and orchards. Such generosity by the late Caesar makes the crowd feel closer to the deceased man and yearn to avenge his death, enacting the final stages before total rebellion.

Marc Antony is a strong character in which his speech only serves to exemplify that fact. Using various techniques, he manages to turn the tide and go against the impossible odds set upon him by Brutus's convincing rendition on Caesar's character. Antony and Brutus are both good speakers; however Antony clearly has the upper edge in experience, charisma, and sheer talent that Brutus in all obviousness lacks. This sets the tone throughout the scene in which Antony, not Brutus wins the support of the majority of the Roman populace.