Julius Caesar By Shakespeare Essay, Research Paper

Antony s Speech at the Forum

Act III, Scene 2

In Act III, Scene 2, Antony begins his speech right after Brutus at the forum. In the beginning, he is booed by the people of Rome, but his manipulative words soon capture the minds of the Romans and bring them to attention. Antony s speech is wholly directed upon persuading the Roman plebeians that Caesar has been wronged when murdred. He wishes to turn the audience away from the conspirators and to become enraged to riot and mutiny. Antony s purpose was to bring chaos to Rome,so that he may bring power under his control.

During the speech, Antony overthrows Brutus s expectation completely. Brutus has always considered Antony as a .thoughtless jock, x but that stereotype is proven wrong through Antony s speech at the Forum. Antony thoroughly displays his insight into human nature by manipulating the crowd with his skillful use of language. Antony, in contrast to Brutus, knows that the crowd is incapable of acting reasonably, and he relies specifically on that very inability as he manipulates their emotions, concentrating increasingly on their mounting passion. In the beginning, Antony was barely heard for the crowd was cheering so loud in appreciation of Brutus. Antony realizes that Brutus has the upperhand during the specific time phase, so he begins humbly, acknowledging that he speaks with Brutus s permission. But with his shrewd skill, he slyly disqualifies Brutus s claim of Caesar s excessive ambition with the innocuous sounding speech, .if it were so x(line 81). Then with the obscure introduction of Antony s real purpose of his speech, Antony begins to directly attack Brutus s argument that Caesar was ambitions. He first refers to Caesar s generosity in sharing the spoils of war with the citizens of Rome and by pointing out that Caesar aways showed compassion for the poor. He knew that the crowd was very emotional, and easily swept off by passion, and his statement that .ambition should be made of sterner stuff x(line 94) was an effort to make bridge for the minds of the individuals to make connection to a Caesar who wasn t ashamed to display his emotions publicly. He then moves on with the story of Caesar, when he have thrice refused the crown when offered by Antony three times. Antony was attempting to make Caesar seem not so ambitious, and he eventually succeeds. And Antony accuses the crowd of having lost its reason in its refusal to mourn Caesar, while intentionally leading them away from a rational consideration of the Brutus s explanation. Antony is employing a variety of speech devices to bring the crowd to act as he desires. He would pretend to turn them away from .mutiny and rage x(line124), while in fact he is methodically leading them to riot. Also, in greater effort to bring the crowd to make better ties with Caesar, Antony makes direct appeal to greed by informing that each of them stands to profit from Caesar s legacies now that he is dead. This appeal also brought each individual into personal association with Caesar s death and the response that Antony has worked and hoped for, the crowd abandons its relatively calm mournings and praise to clamor furiously to hear the contents of Caesar s will. From the moment that the crowd first shout for the will, Antony even more deliberately manipulates their emotions, bringing them repeatedly to the point of angry outbreak by mentioning .the honourable men/Whose daggers have stabb d Caesar, x(lines 153-154). He toys with the crowd, treating them with sarcasm and contempt as he repeatedly calls the conspirators as .honorable men x in a mocking manner. And that repetition works to the desired effect, making the crowd to grow more and more uneasy about .honorable x Brutus s argument. Lastly, he once again .humbles x himself before the crowd, making him seem even more honorable and noble, and praises the name of Caesar. Antony had called upon every emotion possible into play before he releases the crowd.

Antony s speech took on the very desired effect. By the time Antony was done, there was no longer a crowd; they have become a mob, enraged to riot. He succeeds in bringing the crowd to its highly emotional state, and then releases the mob to seek out the conspirators and to destroy whatever order that remained in Rome.