Rhetoric in William Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*

**Introduction**

In this chapter I shall attempt to describe the rhetorical process by pointing out its pedagogical value with an analysis of a theatrical segment from Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*. My aim here is to present a detailed examination that will show in sharp relief the rhetorical process as a multilayered accumulation of rhetorical motives by looking at the political confrontation that unfolds in this literary work. There are, indeed, major political motives which presuppose the fulfilment of a fundamental communicative act. Such an act always appears during the exercise of political rivalry; even though political confrontation usually takes place by engaging in disputes that, depending on the circumstances, are reduced either to the formation of persuasion (of course, under favourable conditions), or to the dissemination of discursive mystification. The fundamental communicative act in this segment happens to be the two speeches made by Brutus and Marc Antony. Therefore, I will outline those points that include the language elements of exhortative discourse that form the main perspective of the rhetorical process. Within this perspective, we shall see the structures of rhetorical schemes, tropes, arguments, stylistic features, speech acts, the types of rhetoric, the semiotic terrain, etc.

To preoccupy ourselves with a literary text offers the opportunity to derive universal elements that are chiefly distanced from us. Nevertheless, they are palpable – and mainly exemplary – elements of communicative acts phrased in a masterly way that in the end reproduce the social imaginary. As far as the social imaginary is concerned, it is in principle a phenomenon that instils in the members of a community an institutionalizing intuition, given that it emanates from symbolic prototypes that prevail in the socio-political life-world (e.g. of ancient Rome) as dominant ideologies: such as, for example, the rhetorical or social vision concerning the Republic as specifically depicted in this theatrical work; or the traditional rallying round a populist leader; or even the talk (i.e. presumption) of conspiracy that lies in wait to threaten the moral integrity of the community, etc.

As we shall see, this work constitutes a comprehensive, but also pulsating, form portraying (i.e. by enacting) the rhetorical process either as a grand or as a
debased outcome (the “splendour” and “misery” of rhetoric as Todorov calls it).¹ Shakespeare’s tragedy predisposes us to become aware of the epoch making actions of prominent political personalities who clash among themselves over the highly cherished possession of power. The symbolic acts of the characters are put on public display through the force of their rhetoric (e.g. Brutus’s and Antony’s): a rhetoric that stirs up political strife as well as the passions of the citizens/plebeians. Along with the coordinated motives of the protagonists (e.g. self-interest, identification, division/discord, conspiracy, assassination, overthrow, etc.), we shall see how rhetoric – even in a fictional version of an historical event – foments conflict and rebellion to extreme ends.

The aim of our analytic approach consists of a categorization of rhetorical features that constitutes a hierarchical principle framing the socio-political structure of the text. Focusing on specific rhetorical elements, we shall be able to discover patterns of rhetorical composition and the emphatic expressions of the protagonists, which function as an effective cohesion of communicative acts; namely, acts that are determinatively connected with the macro-structures of the text. It is noteworthy how Shakespeare created such a comprehensive form of dramatic set-pieces (i.e. public orations) in which they continue to highlight the rhetorical tradition, especially the conventions and norms of the type of public rhetoric that was prevalent in ancient times. In other words, using the two orations for a close examination of the communicative acts, we shall see the overall reflection of the basic elements of the rhetorical process (diachronically and synchronically) within the flow of this archetypal theatrical discourse.

The Theory of Dramatism

As far as the notion of the hierarchical principle is concerned, I shall adopt Kenneth Burke’s theory of dramatism.² According to Burke, the hierarchy is initially detected within the socio-political motive of order that emerges due to social differentiation and stratification. A common factor of this condition is the division of

labour and the corresponding distinctions regarding, especially in modern times, the possession of property (distinctions, as Burke says, that take place with the ‘symbolism’ of the social contract along with the negative injunction of the Law). What we find here is the motive of climbing the social ladder, or the social pyramid, including the interest in the ‘higher’ as an element of organization – in connection always with the consolidation of social position. In other words, the rhetoric of advantage is carried out to extremes.3

However, in Burke’s theory the notion of the negative reduces reason and morality (viz. conscience) to language, pure and simple (viz. symbolic use). In this way it opens the path towards the rational and moral life of mankind that Burke names ‘language analysis.’ Burke believes that the things we normally consider products of reason and of conscience are products of language, because without language reason wouldn’t exist; and without language and reason morality wouldn’t exist. As Burke says: “Eliminate language from nature, then there can be no moral disobedience.”4 With language and because of language, mankind transcends ‘its animal state,’ for language can give cause for the moral drama of mankind’s relations to take place. According to Burke, this drama consists of seven interlinked frames, since the total drama is caused, either directly or indirectly, by language and the negative injunction. The dominant moments (i.e. frames) of the drama are The Negative, Hierarchy, Guilt, Mortification, Victimization, Catharsis and Redemption. The seven moments are interrelated in the following manner: The whole drama is realized due to language in which it initiates the negative in human relations. With language and the negative mankind creates different kinds of ways for upholding the hierarchical order where there are hundreds of “No,” “It’s forbidden to,” “Thou shall not,” etc. Hierarchy is experienced by humans as a type of covenant, but no person is able to uphold all of the terms of the ‘contract’ with the result that he or she will fail or will become disobedient. Failure and disobedience – “The Fall,” as Burke calls it – creates guilt, which in its turn mobilizes the necessary mechanism of catharsis. The two main vehicles of purification are mortification and victimization; and the final outcome of the two is redemption, which is the relief from guilt.

The two archetype-keys of the drama are the *negative injunction* and *hierarchy*, for initially they are the main factors that induce *guilt*. Generally, *hierarchy* constitutes a kind of order; but more specifically it is the structure – i.e., fortified with principles – in which things, words, people, events, and ideas are ranked. Any type of *hierarchy* is simultaneously both unifying and divisive since it regulates the whole, ranking it according to some system of principles; and provided its categorization it comprises a division into different orders of being. Hence, any hierarchy can generate – for those who participate in that system – *the hierarchical motive*: namely, people usually are prodded by the desire to make their way up into the hierarchy, either through action or through property, while in other circumstances people are provoked by the threat that they may be dismissed from the hierarchy, again either through action or through property. There are also circumstances in which participants fail to act or from weakness fail to acquire certain things/goods. From *hierarchy* and *the hierarchical motive* comes what is inherent in them, what Burke names, *hierarchical psychosis*, which he explains as “any worry (or anxiety) that stems from social regulation.”5

According to Burke mankind is completely dominated by *the hierarchical motive* that is experienced more intensely in socio-political manifestations, even though it may appear in many guises; namely, with regards to property, the possession of material goods, social climbing, status, etc. Of course, the socio-political *hierarchical motive* is usually expressed explicitly; but more often it is expressed implicitly as a disguised *social allegory* with overt or covert metaphors; and apparently with many kinds of non-hierarchical symbols that demonstrate that they are secretly accentuated “assessments of status.” All of this is strengthened on and off by identification, and on and off by the complacent acceptance of the socio-political *hierarchy*.

**The Political Situation**

In the theatrical play we are investigating, we shall see that social stratification defines the patricians (e.g. Brutus, his party of republicans, and Marc Antony) and the plebeians respectively. It is a given that the Roman Republic cannot be compared at all to the direct democracy of Athens. The governing institution of the state consisted

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5 *A Rhetoric of Motives*, p. 283.
of a body (e.g. the Senate) made up of the dominating class (i.e. the patricians) that participated in the exclusive taking of decisions, while being accountable to the masses of citizens (i.e. the plebeians) was considered totally unimaginable. The Senate addressed itself to the citizens only during exceptional circumstances (e.g. war, revolt, treason, triumphant processions, etc.). Without covering historical details, we can mention that the political establishment consists of a hierarchical/oligarchic class (including the various factions within the body of the patrician class) that, during the course of events in the play’s segment, finds itself seething with discontent with regards to the likely dismantling of the state by its most renowned member: Julius Caesar. Consequently, there is discord between the two blocs: the faction of republicans (Brutus, Cassius, Casca) and the supporters of Caesar (Antony, Octavian, Leppidus).

As the drama unfolds the power of the political discourse is encoded in the hierarchical principle, corroborating this communicative act as a major factor that coordinates the rhetoric that is articulated by the agents through their action. The discourse enunciated here is couched in an agonized and existentially acute form of confrontation, giving testimony to the preservation of the political status quo, while also taking into consideration the viewpoint of the two factions as they react to it. What is at stake at the same time is the preservation of the political system by reason of the conflict that has arisen in the arena of political machinations: a definite factor that depicts the methodical planning of political and social climbing. In addition, what is also at stake is the characteristic feature of the confrontation, since one faction (the republicans) is conspiring against Caesar’s surreptitious move to usurp absolute power, aiming (though in an irresolute manner) to dissolve the Roman Republic. According to the convictions of the republicans, Caesar is contravening the interests

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6 Michael Parenti in his book *The Assassination of Julius Caesar: A People’s History of Ancient Rome*, The New Press, 2003 maintains that Caesar indeed sought reforms that would improve the living conditions of the plebeians; and that the so-called ‘republicans’ were a conservative oligarchy that fought against the alleged demagogue for this political position. Moreover, he points out that the bourgeois historians over the ages describe the plebeians as “a parasitical mob that was only interested in bread and spectacles.”

7 Caesar had become “as grand as any king,” but didn’t seek to reinstate the ancient Roman monarchy, because that would have been tantamount with the traditional notion of tyranny. He only sought the institutional status of dictator, an official status he had acquired by appointment many times before and from 46 BC would then occupy for the following 10 year period. However, in February of 44 BC he was appointed dictator for life (PERPETVO). This unusual step towards absolute power was the beginning of his end (see Michael Grant, *The History of Rome*. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1978, p. 237.)
of this “glorious polity”; hence, in accordance with the conspirators’ convictions, Caesar must be wiped out without fail.

The analytic method

As I mentioned above, my analytic approach aims in principle to categorize the rhetorical features and to demarcate the hierarchical (thematic) macro-structure of the text. Pointing out and defining the rhetorical schemes, we shall see how the patterns propel a marked rhetorical emphasis by means of coherence and cohesion of the discourse where they are interconnected with the macro-structures. In the following commentary, I present a group of verses from the play and then a section of analysis that is divided into subsections pinpointing the rhetorical schemes (e.g. using the abbreviation RHET. SCH.), etc. There are subdivisions marked with an asterisk that consist of analytic clusters that I believe will facilitate the understanding of the rhetorical process. The words in bold stress the major terms of the rhetorical schemes, speech acts, basic rhetorical meanings, etc.

Julius Caesar – Act 3 – Scene 2 (COMMENTARY)

The second scene of Act 3 of the play begins with Brutus appearing with Cassius – his comrade who initially introduced him to the conspiracy. Brutus is facing the crowd of disturbed plebeians who have just got wind of the news of the assassination. As they provoke him to give them direct information, he addresses them as “friends,” empathizing with their alarm:

(1) (Plebeians) We will be satisfied: let us be satisfied.

(2) (Brutus) Then follow me, and give me audience, friends.

* The first verse voiced by all of the plebeians is articulated via two schemes: RHET. SCH. parison and epistrophe. ** Despite the fact that the plebeians are inferior as

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9 Parison (or isocolon) = Phrases of approximately equal length and corresponding structure. The Ad Herennium, IV.xx calls for the clauses to have the same number of syllables.

10 Epistrophe (or antistrophe) = Repetition of a closing word or words at the end of several (usually successive) clauses, sentences, or verses.
a social class they, however, demand with persistence some explanation for what has just taken place. It seems that they have got wind of some earth-shaking event that is unfolding and they want to get informed of all the particulars. Their curiosity demands to “be satisfied” from the agents of this act and expect a justification with regards to the fait accompli. At this point Brutus is about to approach the podium in order to address his prearranged vindication to the crowd, since at the end of the previous scene he explicitly told Cassius and Antony: “By your pardon, I will myself into the pulpit first and show the reason of our Caesar’s death.” Now he addresses the crowd of plebeians as follows:

(3) (Brutus) Public reasons shall be rendered of Caesar’s death.

* Based on the comprehension and reception of discourse through the macro-structures, we can assume the reader/audience member will intuit beforehand that Brutus’s impending speech will be framed in general by the rhetorical type known as judicial (i.e. forensic) speech. This, to be sure, is mapped out by the sequential development of the macro-theme of the main events; namely, the conspiracy against Caesar and the forthcoming justification of the violent act. Consequently, Brutus clearly states that he is in a position to convince the people of the particular virtues (i.e. republican) that inspire him – thus presaging the forensic vindication of his action. The dominant virtue will be the hierarchical principle of protecting the existent republican status quo.

(4) (Brutus) Romans, countrymen, and lovers, hear me for my cause, and be silent, that you may hear.

* The first signifiers are enunciated with the intention of fortifying the highly valued identification between the orator and his audience. We shall notice afterwards that the first three signifiers are not only a chain of formal and clichéd lexemes used for oratorical delivery, but prescribe a significant principle hierarchically conveyed that crystallizes the political project that Brutus himself adopts with prudence. ** The RHET. SCH. epanalepsis\(^{11}\) of the lexemes “hear” propels the gradual emphasis that will strengthen Brutus’s placating strategy by means of his judicial speech.

\(^{11}\) Epanalepsis = Repetition at the end of a clause or sentence of the word or phrase with which it began.
(5) (Brutus) Believe me for mine honour, and have respect to mine honour, that you may believe.

* In the prologue Brutus symbolically capitalizes on the **rhetorical strategy** in which he pushes his **ethos** forward, which has been previously achieved given the fact that he has been held in high esteem as a political figure in Rome. ** The signalling of the **signifier “honour”** will depict from the beginning the keyword as the core of **exhortative discourse** (see below: In Antony’s speech, for example, there will be an “implosion” of the core of this keyword!). *** Hence, the RHET. SCH. **epanalepsis** of the keyword “honour” is **entangled** with the lexemes “Believe me” and “you may believe” functioning as **polyptoton** in a manner in which they ensure the speaker’s sought after effectiveness. The **emphasis** on Brutus’s “honour” functions as a catalyst with the presupposition that it predisposes the audience to favourably accept his impending vindication, and with his approval to adopt the **hierarchical principle** of the Republic that he and his party represent (thus rejecting and opposing the putative tyranny represented by Caesar).

(6) (Brutus) Censure me in your wisdom, and awake your senses, that you may the better judge.

* Brutus’s plea using the **illocutionary act** “censure me” in the imperative, entrusts the plebeians to take the initiative of judging with authorized power as sovereign citizens; but how much he himself values the plebeian’s “wisdom” remains irresolute if we reflect on the gravity of the phrase, which refers us to the disparaged notion of flattery that Socrates made. **(Besides, with the behaviour of the plebeians further down, we shall see the total lack of “wisdom” on their part!).** The **illocutionary act** “awake” rather confirms the opposite of entrusting them, since it insinuates that their mentality isn’t so vigilant; hence, he begins to pontificate. In this way, the **macro-**

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12 Ethos = Character, usually the moral character of a person, either the speaker or the listener.
13 Polyptoton = (“employment of the same word in various cases”) Repetition of words from the same root but with different endings.
14 Plato, Gorgias, 465b.
15 As Stephen Newman notes: “The pride of his superior social position and his aristocratic background functions both for and against his credibility. The Roman audience can respect his nobleness and at the same time resent it. At the beginning of his speech he must make sure that he avoids any hints concerning consent, contempt or arrogance,” in “Rhetoric, Advocacy and Ethics: Reflections on Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar”, New York Law School Public Law and Legal Theory, Research Paper Series 04/05 # 23, May, 2005, p. 9-10.
strategy that is adopted aims at the entanglement of the potential – but quasi dialogical – relation between the orator and the audience. Using the modality of the verb “may,” Brutus runs contrary to (although with his irresolute stance) the plebeians’ capability to “better judge.” Consequently, he subverts their so-called authorized power. He points out that the plebeians have to “better judge” — so that his motive will be fulfilled with regards to the forensic vindication of his extreme political act.

(7) (Brutus) If there be in this assembly, any dear friend of Caesar’s, to him I say that Brutus’ love to Caesar was no less than his.

* Brutus anticipates the possible doubts Caesar’s loyal followers may have by using the strategic manoeuvre of making laudatory remarks concerning love and friendship. “Love” for Caesar appears in the light of symbolic evidence (and is decisively codified), thus prescribing its meaning in the following juxtaposition with the hierarchical principle of the Roman Republic.

(8) (Brutus) If then that friend demand why Brutus rose against Caesar, this is my answer: Not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more.

* With the conditional he predicates the “answer-vindication” as ethically normal with regards to his viewpoint, where the forensic development of his speech will focus on. The manoeuvre of the quasi-dialogical interplay continues unabated: “If then that friend demand … this is my answer.” With steadfast decisiveness he discloses to the audience the issue under discussion with uprightness and without beating about the bush. Brutus’s next move is to briefly verify his close friendship with Caesar; however, he simultaneously presents the vivid antithesis in which Rome – as the hierarchical principle – is elevated beyond the noble bonds of friendship. Hence, the antithetic lexemes “less/more” function in a way that propels the juxtaposition that Brutus poses as part of the dominant macro-theme: that is, the political dividing line between tyranny and republicanism. The antithetic projection of

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16 See Newman: “There is no equivocating, no attempt to evade or sidestep the problem, no words that hedge or obfuscate. The twelve words that follow – “Not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more” – gives his argument a clear, simple theme, one that summarizes his case in a memorable way” (p. 11).

17 Antithesis = (“opposition”) Conjoining contrasting ideas.
the macro-theme becomes the scaffolding where rhetorical proofs (pistis)\(^{18}\) will play their role, especially here with the commonplace of ranking; namely, as a paraphrase: “Rome is the supreme good; hence it is triumphant when it is compared to the friendship of a beloved person who has made it his goal to overthrow this precious good.”

(9) (Brutus) *Had you rather Caesar were living, and die all slaves, than Caesar were dead, to live all free men?*

* RHET. SCH. erotesis\(^{19}\) (rhetorical question). Brutus launches a chiasmus-like rhetorical question that functions like an enthymeme\(^{20}\). In this way he extends the motif of antithesis in his argumentation (e.g. “slaves/free men”). Brutus implies that Caesar was guilty of undermining the polity, which guarantees “freedom”; hence his victimization (and final destruction) was necessary as catharsis from his disgraceful political aspiration, which was unpardonable.

(10) *As Caesar loved me, I weep for him; as he was fortunate, I rejoice at it; as he was valiant, I honour him; but as he was ambitious, I slew him.*

* Brutus intensifies his explanatory strategy beginning with a series of parallel RHET. SCH., e.g., isocolons (in verbal phrases) that escalate (e.g. gradatio)\(^{21}\) with a swift style till the climax of his dramatic act. ** RHET. SCH. epanalepsis of the causative “as” beginning with the first, second and third colon; consequently he answers, in consecutive turns, by praising Caesar; while the final colon undercuts the eulogy, thus highlighting the ultimate act of assassination. After the escalation (gradatio), Brutus introduces for the first time the keyword that functions as a reprehensible signifier: “ambitious” along with the basic signified that underscores his guilt. The overthrow of the “ambitious” Caesar is the unconditional justification

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\(^{18}\) Pistis = Proof, means of persuasion. The categories of pistis discussed in the Rhetoric are artistic (entekhnikē) and non-artistic (atekhnikē) and among the artistic those based on the presentation of the character of the speaker, arousing the emotions of the audience, and on logical demonstration.

\(^{19}\) Erotesis = A “rhetorical question,” one which implies an answer but does not give or lead us to expect one.

\(^{20}\) Enthymeme = A rhetorical syllogism, i.e., a statement with a supporting reason introduced by for, because, or since or an if … then statement. In contrast to a logical syllogism, the premises and conclusion are ordinarily probable, not necessarily logically valid. A premise may be omitted if it will be easily assumed by the audience.

\(^{21}\) Gradatio = Mounting by degrees through linked words or phrases, usually of increasing weight and in parallel construction.
that Brutus gives for his deed. With this argument Brutus assumes full responsibility of the assassination; and so shows boldness, self-confidence and political courage. Moreover, his justification is totally personal, rendering his special honour and love of the fatherland as being more important.

(10) (Brutus) There is tears, for his love; joy, for his fortune; honour, for his valour; and death, for his ambition.

* RHET. SCH. isocolon, asyndeton and gradatio. ** Brutus continues step by step to stack up Caesar’s virtues, ending with the marked signifier “ambition” that creates polarity. Brutus claims that this is the real cause that motivated him and his friends to carry out the assassination. Brutus insinuates that the virtues of such a reputable Roman had been undermined by a haughtiness and an unbridled “ambition” that would have inevitably led to the disruption of the republican institutions of the state.

(11) (Brutus) Who is here so base, that would be a bondman? If any, speak; for him have I offended.

* RHET. SCH. erotesis. ** The strategic device of using the rhetorical question aims at affirming the institutionalized formation of the state. Brutus’s motive is to corner the plebeians by pushing them to face the ultimate, burning question of political autonomy by asking them to choose between slavery and freedom. Of course, this cornering forces them to choose only the political existence they have been inculcated to believe in; namely, that they are free citizens of Rome!

(12) (Brutus) Who is here so rude, that would not be a Roman? If any, speak; for him have I offended. Who is here so vile, that will not love his country? If any, speak; for him have I offended. I pause for a reply.

(All) None, Brutus, none.

* RHET. SCH. erotesis/rhetorical question. Brutus chiefly attempts – directing his rhetorical questions to the plebeians – to guide them to decisively weigh and judge the rhetorical discourse as bone fide critics. As a matter of fact, he doesn’t give them a chance at all to follow his advice. He asks them at once to choose; but afterwards he

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22 Asyndeton = (“unconnected”) Omission of conjunctions between words, phrases, or clauses.
brings up the issue in a manner that doesn’t leave them any leeway for choice. Those who love Rome, he says, must admit that Caesar had to be murdered. For those who don’t love Rome, let them come forward in protest. However, no one budges – hence, the assassination is stamped with approval! ** The repetition of the RHET. SCH. epanalepsis “for him have I offended” contains a subtle rhetorical effect that Brutus has on the plebeians, since he cashes in on the favour he has obtained from them the moment he touches the sensitive spot concerning their patriotic convictions.

(13) (Brutus) Then none have I offended. I have done no more to Caesar than you shall do to Brutus. The question of his death is enrolled in the Capitol; his glory not extenuated, wherein he was worthy; nor his offences enforced, for which he suffered death.

* The sense of injustice is reduced in a flash from the rhetorical coercion in which Brutus wields over his audience. Brutus’s rhetorical stratagem consists of placing himself diametrically opposed to the outcome of Caesar’s fate, by restoring his original ethos: namely, that he totally respects the hierarchical principle of the Republic and is in a position to sacrifice himself for the good of Rome. (It is here that he proclaims what he will say further down in regards to taking his own life in the traditional manner of a noble patrician’s act of suicide). In other words, he places himself in the same boat with one who has hubris and ambition in transgressing the hierarchical principle of the Republic (i.e. maintaining it in this case). Moreover, Brutus doesn’t dispute the initial ethos and the “glory” of Caesar, for he had won the esteem of the people before he went astray with his fall, which appeared fateful for him as Brutus’s murderous initiative has demonstrated.

(14) (Brutus) [Enter Mark Antony and others, with Caesar’s body.] Here comes his body, mourned by Mark Antony, who, though had no hand in his death, shall receive the benefit of his dying, a place in the commonwealth, as which of you shall not?

* During this moment of the “mourning procession,” the dramatic meaning of the heinous act is intensified: With the public appearance of Caesar’s corpse, the specific gravity of the political assassination is manifestly shown. Nonetheless, Brutus doesn’t underrate the institutional tradition that demands the proper “mourning” for such a prominent figure of Rome. Moreover, this climax of his justification – as an
indication of a timely political act – certainly provokes a terrifying awe in those who are present. Brutus informs the audience of Antony’s non-participation in the conspiracy to kill Caesar, which is the crucial turning point that completely subverts his political expediency of **forensically** accounting for his act. Here emerges Brutus’s impending **tragic flaw** (see below), thus revealing the naiveté that overcomes him when he declares that Antony “shall receive the benefit of his dying, a place in the commonwealth.” However, there is a coherence in this statement: it proves that Brutus is consistent with regards to the significance and worthiness of the republican principle that provides for the political integration of all Romans without exception. 

** RHET. SCH. rhetorical question (“which of you shall not?”). – Addressing the plain citizens with this rhetorical question, he reinforces the **validity claim** of the previous **principle** that keeps the republican integration of all Romans within view.

(15) (Brutus) *With this I depart, that, as I slew my best lover for the good of Rome, I have the same dagger for myself, when it shall please my country to need my death.*

* Brutus’s **ethos** is fortified through an **emphatic** reasoning that corresponds to the hierarchical principle concerning the protection of the Roman Republic. The phrasing of this reasoning becomes expansive with Brutus’s blunt statement that he will take his own life with the “same dagger” that he is already brandishing as a **sign-index** of sacrifice (i.e. as an irrevocable duty) for the benefit of the hierarchical principle. (By the way, referring to the duty of a honourable suicide for the benefit of the principle foreshadows that which will take place on the battlefield at Phillipi later, since he along with his co-conspirators will be defeated by Octavian).

(16) (All) *Live, Brutus! Live! Live!*  

(1. Pleb.) *Bring him with triumph home unto his house.*  

(2. Pleb.) *Give him a statue with his ancestors.*  

(3. Pleb.) *Let him be Caesar.*  

(4. Pleb.) *Caesar’s better parts shall be crowned in Brutus.*  

(1. Pleb.) *We’ll bring him to his house with shouts and clamours.*
This culmination with a crescendo of declarations made by certain “citizens” in the audience seems to corroborate the total rhetorical impact Brutus has brought about up to the present. For he has managed with his macro-strategy to succeed in gaining the faith/adherence of the audience to identify with the putative hierarchical principle, which he sought to secure by means of his justification. ** RHET. SCH. irony. – However, we observe (as a third party) that there exists a distortion of the hierarchical principle’s meaning that runs contrary to Brutus’s intention/proairesis. How is it possible that the citizens can “Let him be Caesar” when he has taken the responsibility to eliminate the man who deviously attempted to dissolve the republican institutions?

(17) (Brutus) My countrymen –


(1. Pleb.) Peace, ho!

(Brutus) Good countrymen, let me depart alone, and, for my sake, stay here with Antony.

* RHET. SCH. dramatic irony – The irony is prolonged, for it seems that Brutus didn’t hear the absurd statements voiced by the plebeians concerning ‘Caesar-ization’.

** Perhaps he heard them, but is assuming a look of innocence. On the contrary, there doesn’t seem to be any indications for such an interpretation, because it would overturn the whole ethical-political edifice in which Brutus has tried to secure with his macro-strategic judicial rhetoric. It rather seems that Brutus hasn’t rightly assessed the reaction of the audience; and so has finally lost the chance to win over the consent of the people regarding the republican governing of Rome (see below).

* RHET. SCH. isocolon, anaphora. - ** This culminating with a crescendo of declarations made by certain “citizens” in the audience seems to corroborate the total rhetorical impact Brutus has brought about up to the present. For he has managed with his macro-strategy to succeed in gaining the faith/adherence of the audience to identify with the putative hierarchical principle, which he sought to secure by means of his justification. ** RHET. SCH. irony. – However, we observe (as a third party) that there exists a distortion of the hierarchical principle’s meaning that runs contrary to Brutus’s intention/proairesis. How is it possible that the citizens can “Let him be Caesar” when he has taken the responsibility to eliminate the man who deviously attempted to dissolve the republican institutions?

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* RHET. SCH. dramatic irony – The irony is prolonged, for it seems that Brutus didn’t hear the absurd statements voiced by the plebeians concerning ‘Caesar-ization’.

** Perhaps he heard them, but is assuming a look of innocence. On the contrary, there doesn’t seem to be any indications for such an interpretation, because it would overturn the whole ethical-political edifice in which Brutus has tried to secure with his macro-strategic judicial rhetoric. It rather seems that Brutus hasn’t rightly assessed the reaction of the audience; and so has finally lost the chance to win over the consent of the people regarding the republican governing of Rome (see below).
To be sure, the **tragic irony** – and the **tragic harmatia**\(^29\) of Brutus – lies entirely in the flaw (i.e. from an incomprehensible naiveté) whereby he allowed Antony to act undisturbed with his stealthy intentions, which up to this point had been slowly simmering behind the scenes. *** Moreover, the first depiction of the crowd as a mob of irresponsible and wishy-washy individuals appears at this point. We shall discover (see below) that the audience of plebeians – as recipients of Brutus’s forensic discourse, which aimed to persuade them of the importance of the **hierarchical principle** – shamelessly vacillates from one moment to the other without any compunction whatsoever (see, once again, below how the audience’s instability evolves when listening to Antony’s speech!).

(18) *Do grace to Caesar’s corpse, and grace his speech tending to Caesar’s glories, which Marc Antony, by our permission, is allowed to make. I do entreat you, not a man depart, save I alone, till Marc Antony have spoke.*

* RHET. SCH. epanalepsis (“grace”). – With the **illocutionary act** in the imperative, Brutus directs the citizens to recollect the glories of Caesar through his civic virtue (i.e. grace). ** Brutus’s impending (calamitous) **strategy** is coming to a head in which he “permits” Antony to deliver what he thinks is a normally expected **epideictic speech** as a funeral oration. Brutus simply believes that Antony will pay tribute to the deceased; and with an unjustified oversight, he “requests” the citizens to listen to Antony’s speech while preferring to leave!

(19) (1. Pleb.) *Stay, ho! And let us hear Marc Antony.*

(3. Pleb.) *Let him go up into the public chair. We’ll hear him. Noble Antony, go up.*

(Antony) *For Brutus’ sake, I am beholding to you.*

(4. Pleb.) *What does he say of Brutus?*

(3. Pleb.) *He says, for Brutus’ sake he finds himself beholding to us all.*

(4. Pleb.) *’Twere best he speak no harm of Brutus here!*

(1. Pleb.) *This Caesar was a tyrant.*

(3. Pleb.) *We are blest that Rome is rid of him.*

(2. Pleb.) *Peace! Let us hear what Antony can say.*

\(^29\) Harmatia = A failure, error, or sin.
* With the appearance of the “corpse,” one notices agitation in the crowd. Antony is about to deliver his speech to the audience; and the plebeians obey Brutus’s appeal to listen sympathetically to whatever the orator has to say. ** As it appears up to now, however, the plebeians are still under the influence of Brutus’s apparently well-aimed argumentation, which in the end seems to have appeased them. There is, at least, the indication that they “identify” with the rhetorical vision that Brutus has promoted (as far as the hierarchical principle is concerned). Moreover, there is the apprehension that Antony might speak with impertinence against Brutus (“’Twere best he speak no harm of Brutus here!”). The first plebeian exclaims that he has been totally persuaded that “Caesar was a tyrant”; while the third plebeian considers that they “are blest that Rome is rid of him” (i.e. collectively!). Consequently, one can surmise that Brutus’s justification found its target. But, there is more to come; which means, as we shall see, that what is in store for him is the complete reversal of everything he has claimed the moment Antony goes up to the podium.

(20) (Antony) You gentle Romans, -
(All) Peace, ho! Let us hear him.
(Antony) Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears; I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.

* Antony begins to secure his ethos with an address that clearly flatters the audience (“You gentle Romans”). From the outset Antony addresses the plebeians using the argumentative technique known as argumentum ad populum. 30 However, I should stress that, as with Brutus, Antony also holds an eminent socio-political position; hence, his ethos already emits prestige and carries a good reputation with the Roman public. Though how much the orator believes the plebeians to be “gentle” is a matter we shall see in the course of the speech. ** RHET. SCH. apophasis. 31 – We now see the spawning of Antony’s macro-strategy (treacherous, as we shall see) taking shape, which is based on this rhetorical scheme; namely that which he states from the start: “I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him” will shortly constitute a covert falsehood, since apophasis means one states something that is diametrically opposite of what one means (while it will assume other argumentative dimensions as the speech unfolds towards other directions where the ultimate aim will be to vanquish the

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30 Argumentum ad populum = An appeal to the crowd.
31 Apophasis = Pretending to deny what is really affirmed. A type of irony.
opponent – relentlessly in this particular case). *** RHET. SCH. metaphor.\textsuperscript{32} – “[lend] me your ears” is a metaphor taken from economic transactions that presupposes a future repayment (loan = payment in full). The scheme in question implies that Antony, as a “reliable” and well-disposed follower of Caesar, will “repay” the plebeians with a rhetorical impact striving for the calculated overthrow of Brutus and the other conspirators.

(21) (Antony) The evil that men do lives after them, the good is oft interred with their bones; so let it be with Caesar.

* RHET. SCH. Antithesis (“evil/good’’). – Antony continues with an ambiguous syllogism in an aphoristic style in which he implies that Caesar deserved punishment. This statement is essentially a truncated enthymeme constructed from probable knowledge. But Antony here begins to invent a subtle disengagement from Brutus’s (almost) impeccable justificatory development. Already we begin to notice that Antony’s speech is gradually subduing the plebeians, while he faintly declines employing epideictic speech and unequivocally proceeds step by step to shape his impending exhortative rhetorical affectation. Here we find the starting point of a masterful elaboration of discourse that paves the way for an all-too-clear exhortative rhetoric (i.e. in opposition to epideictic rhetoric), which he impetuously sets forth without further delay.

(22) (Antony) The noble Brutus hath told you Caesar was ambitious. If it were so, it was a grievous fault, and grievously hath answered it.

* RHET. SCH. epanalepsis and polyptoton (“grievous/grievously’’). - ** Antony’s conditional clause (“If it were”) indicates the first breach of the controversial but dominant signifier/signified “ambition” – (the most significant keyword that Brutus used when he had underscored the underlying reason for eliminating Caesar for the benefit of the hierarchical principle) – to assert that “perhaps” Caesar couldn’t refrain from avoiding the mishap (viz. “ambition” = “fault” = “the fall”): “and

\textsuperscript{32} Metaphor = Changing a word from its literal meaning to one not properly applicable but analogous to it; assertion of identity rather than, as with simile, likeness.
grievously hath (Caesar) answered it.” We have here a singular example of an enthymeme as Aristotle had described:

* Ambition is a grievous fault (major premise)
* Caesar had ambition (minor premise)
* Caesar made a grievous fault (conclusion)

Naturally, Antony neither accepts the minor premise nor the conclusion of this argument; but, since the audience agrees with Brutus, it was necessary to offer them an adequate proof in order to show that this is merely a sophism that was inherent in Brutus’s syllogism. He chose to do this by developing an anti-syllogism where resonant signs are presented (see below [25], [26], [27]).

(23) (Antony) Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest, (for Brutus is an honourable man, so are they all, all honourable men) come I to speak in Caesar’s funeral.

* RHET. SCH. epanalepsis (“honourable man/honourable men,” “all/all”) and irony. – The signifier “honourable” is reduced to the notional level that implicitly undercuts Brutus’s ethos and also that of the others; hence, the methodical distortion of the meaning of “honourable” with its ironical repercussion (i.e. this rhetorical tactic functions like a stealthy ad hominem attack).** Antony from the start stresses that he has “leave” to deliver the “funeral” oration; and in this way he insinuates that he hasn’t any direct dealings with the political assassins, which lifts any shred of political impropriety. This gives him the opportune distancing effect in order to fulfil his rhetorical goal. *** RHET. SCH. apophasis (“come I to speak in Caesar’s funeral”). With this scheme he is going to transform the supposed “funeral” oration into an exhortative and quasi-deliberative speech (see further down). Moreover, he is going to turn against Brutus and his associates dramatically, carefully planning mortification and victimization, whereby it will bring about final catharsis and redemption.

33 Argumentum ad hominem = 1. Abuse of your opponent’s character. 2. Basing your argument on what you know of your opponent’s character.
(24) (Antony) He was my friend, faithful and just to me; but Brutus says he was ambitious, and Brutus is an honourable man.

* Antony here camouflages, with his presumed funeral oration, an incipient deployment of exhortative argumentation that aims to refute and finally destroy Brutus, beginning, indeed, with his cunning game of playing with the keywords “ambitious” and “honourable.” He emphasizes the virtue of friendship he had with Caesar so that the deceased might recover his once glorious ethos, since, he says, in life he was “faithful and just.” ** RHET. SCH. The epanalepsis of the two signifiers “ambitious” and “honourable” function as a launching pad for his cynical irony that immediately follows. *** From this point and after, a rhetorical trap is artfully set that unlocks the meaning of “ambition” as it was presented by Brutus; hence, as we shall discover, Brutus will become a plaything in the hands of Antony!

(25) (Antony) He hath brought many captives home to Rome, whose ransoms did the general coffers fill: Did this in Caesar seem ambitious?

* Antony uses a narrative device including both paradiegesis34 and anamnesis35 as a ruse in order to confirm the unquestionable merit of Caesar’s socio-political contribution (“did the general coffers fill”). ** RHET. SCH. auxesis36 and martyria.37 – Antony’s conspicuous attempt to describe Caesar’s exploits (martyria) that favoured Rome’s prosperity consists of a macro-strategy in which the validity claims of his argumentation appear precisely through the particular events in the narrative. It depicts the brilliant life of Caesar that is now vividly unfolding. *** erotesis. – auxesis and anaphora, as they will emphatically be developed further, coexist in this unequivocal rhetorical question: “Did this in Caesar seem ambitious?” With these schemes Antony plays his trump card: the sought after refutation of the keyword’s impact (i.e. “ambitious”). We shouldn’t forget how Brutus attempted in his justification to instil in the minds of the plebeians this

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34 Paradiegesis = A narrative digression used to introduce one’s argument.
35 Anamnesis = Recalling ideas, events, or persons of the past.
36 Auxesis = 1. Use of a heightened word in place of an ordinary one. 2. Words or clauses placed in climactic order. 3. Building a point around a series of comparisons.
37 Martyria = (“testimony, evidence”) Confirming something by one’s own experience.
particular signified as the underlying cause of Caesar’s hubris (viz. “ambitious” = “hubris” = “the fall”)

(26) (Antony) When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept; ambition should be made of sterner stuff: Yet Brutus says he was ambitious, and Brutus is an honourable man.

* RHET. SCH. hyperbole.38 – Antony spins a yarn to the gallery by hyping up Caesar's compassionate (so to speak) identification with the “wretched” plebeians. Antony begins a subtle stratagem that portrays, in sweeping brushstrokes, a popular leader who “only” cared for the good of the citizens (see this rhetorical tactic in the auxesis on this theme below). ** Antony begins to weave indexes in his speech that are entirely based on pathos.39 The sentiment that is here presented from a personal account (martyria: “Caesar hath wept”; in other words, Antony himself was a witness of this event!) aims for the audience to respond by accepting the idealized image of Caesar and to gradually identify with the ethos of this projection. Thus, according to what Antony says, the negatively marked sense of “ambition” that Caesar allegedly had as a motive – and that Brutus used as a validity claim in his speech to denounce as a reprehensible motive – doesn’t appear to really hold water.

(27) (Antony) You all did see that on the Lupercal I thrice presented him a kingly crown, which he did thrice refuse. Was this ambition? Yet Brutus says he was ambitious, and sure he is an honourable man.

* The narrative incident with the “kingly crown” and with how Caesar avoided it excludes any doubt that the plebeians could have with regards to his supposed authoritarian designs. Antony allows the audience to infer from his apparently irrefutable argument that what Brutus professed was entirely spurious and absurd. ** RHET. SCH. irony, auxesis, erotesis (“Was this ambition?”). – Antony accentuates irony openly with the sardonic expression: “and sure he is an honourable man.”

38 Hyperbole = (“excess, exaggeration”) Exaggerated or extravagant terms used for emphasis and not intended to be understood literally; self-conscious exaggeration.
39 Pathos = Emotion, a temporary state of feeling awakened by circumstances; in the Rhetoric especially the emotions of members of an audience as moved by a speaker.
(28) (Antony) *I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke, but here I am to speak what I do know. You all did love him once, not without cause; what cause withholds you then to mourn for him?*

* RHET. SCH. **apophasis.** – This scheme also functions as a **paradox,** since Antony attempts to accomplish with this narrative ploy precisely the opposite together with distorting the sense of “ambition”; namely, to “discredit” whatever Brutus set forth as a justification! ** He elevates himself as an authority in telling the truth, because he gives the impression that he will call a spade a spade. *** RHET. SCH. **hyperbole.** – He states as a given fact that “everyone” loved Caesar, regardless of deviously playing with the word “cause” as **epanalepsis,** which emerges here in an ambiguous way. **** RHET. SCH. **erotesis.** – Antony once again underscores the sentimental element of **pathos** with the aim of provoking the outburst of tears: “what cause withholds you then to mourn for him?” Up to now he has selected the depiction of sentimental incidents that focus on **pathos.** Moreover, we have here an aptly formed **enthymeme:**

(1) “We should mourn those who once had cause to love” (major premise)
(2) “We once had a cause to love Caesar” (minor premise)
(3) “Therefore, we should mourn Caesar” (conclusion)

In this way, and with the dramatized diffusion of the sentimental incidents, Antony is in a position to manipulate the audience with an affected discourse that he fervently executes without restraint. Behold the following interjection:

(29) (Antony) *O judgment, thou art fled to brutish beasts, and men have lost their reason.*

* RHET. SCH. **apostrophe.** – The invocation to an abstract power is equivalent to a judgment that is contained within the sphere of **rhetorical entanglement** (orator →
speech → audience); namely, the accomplishment of the normalization process where
the audience carries out its judgment after the reception of the addressed discourse. **
RHET. SCH. hyperbole. – However, the apostrophe/interjection “O judgment” is
instrumental in creating the impression of the end of the world (“thou art fled”),
which is caused by the “brutish beasts,” that, with their machinations, have
performed a disgraceful act. *** RHET. SCH. pun. – His playing on the word
“brutish” as a subtle reference to Brutus captures the way Antony can denigrate his
opponent. **** He makes the attempt to hurl accusations: “judgment” is jeopardized
due to the fact that “men have lost their reason.” He portrays the situation as a
departure from rational thought and the disintegration of the social fabric.

(30) (Antony) Bear with me. My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar, and I must
pause till it come back to me.

* RHET. SCH. hyperbole, metaphor. – The traditional symbolism of the heart as a
“vessel” for sentiments is transformed here metaphorically as a flying object. It is
obvious that Antony reinforces with his soaring imagination the stirring up of pathos
that is increasingly being instilled in the minds of the plebeians. ** RHET. SCH.
aposiopesis.42 – The device of momentarily pausing allows the audience to reflect on
what has been said so far. Until the dust of the world-shaking event has settled and the
gravity of its consequences has been embedded in their minds, then will Antony be
able to lead this crowd without scruple.

(31) (1. Pleb.) Methinks there is much reason in his sayings.
(2. Pleb.) If thou consider rightly of the matter, Caesar has had great wrong.
(3. Pleb.) Has he, masters? I fear there will a worse come in his place.
(4. Pleb.) Marked ye his words? He would not take the crown; therefore ’tis certain
he was not ambitious.
(1. Pleb.) If it be found so, some will dear abide it.
(2. Pleb.) Poor soul! His eyes are red as fire with weeping.
(3. Pleb.) There’s not a nobler man in Rome that Antony.

42 Aposiopesis = Stopping suddenly in midcourse, leaving a statement unfinished; sometimes from
genuine passion, sometimes for effect.
It is becoming noticeable that the plebeians are on the verge of completely submitting to the imposition of Antony’s highly charged, scheming rhetoric. To be sure, the obvious inconstancy, fickleness and shallowness of the crowd show how the audience, in this particular instance, can radically change its beliefs in a flash! The statement made by the first plebeian “Methinks there is much reason in his sayings” renders paradoxical the upshot of his reception of Antony’s discourse, for it gives the impression that the element of a probable (“Methinks”) rational judgment on his part works. Antony gives a speech that up to this point is totally based on refuting Brutus’s fundamental argument, whose macro-strategy is to embellish it with pathopoeia.\(^4^3\) The crux of the problem between the logical and emotional articulation of discourse lies in the fact that the rhetorical process is entangled in the realm of uncertainty; namely, in regards to the probable, as Aristotle had aptly phrased: “For that which is probable is that which generally happens, not however unreservedly, as some define it, but that which is concerned with things that may be other than they are, being so related to that in regard to which it is probable as the universal to the particular” 1357b). Hence, when the second plebeian says “If thou consider rightly of the matter, Caesar has had great wrong” there is incontestable evidence that within the arena of rhetorical combat the psychological feedback of the audience is prevalent vis-à-vis the putative persuasiveness of each orator. In other words, that which the audience in this case takes as the probable is compatible with the apparent proof that the conspirators indeed caused a “great wrong” to Caesar. **I want to stress here the following matter of utmost importance concerning argumentation: First, in general terms, when one argues he or she assumes that the listener is “misguided” or may have an erroneous idea about something; and so he or she needs that idea to be set right. Second, the speaker is obliged to present justifiable arguments (e.g. give reasons) to the listener. And third, while presenting his or her arguments, the speaker appeals to the convictions (or beliefs) of the listener as well as his or her actions. Argumentation gives reasons for the re-evaluation or revision of a conviction or conduct. Moreover, the act of persuasion tends to assist the listener in taking the decision so as to behave or to act as the speaker wishes. Consequently, persuasion in effect demands a commitment from the listener in the form of changing his/her mind or behaviour. However, such a commitment may fall by the wayside in the act of argumentation;\(^4^3\) Pathopoeia = Likely to refer to any emotional appeal.
that is to say, one may argue without persuading! *** Returning to the text, we see the reactions of the plebeians with regards to their “commitment” to the argumentation of the two orators. The impression we have obtained is that their “commitment” vacillates. Hence, one can conclude that the plebeians embrace, without discretion, what Antony claims; and so they become in the end his pawns due to the strength of his exhortation. However, one wonders what remained of the recent validity claims made by Brutus that seemed to have been persuasively received. If we weigh the consequences of the course of events, we realize that Antony has clearly outflanked Brutus by virtue of his macro-strategy, which consists of his masterful enthymemes and the elaborate pathopoeia. **** RHET. SCH. exhortation/ominatio. 44 – The third plebeian mistakes Antony’s latent indication that there is a pending deterioration of the political order, since he makes this ominous prediction: “I fear there will a worse come in his place.” However, there is a comment by the fourth plebeian that is connected to the previous development of the martyria scheme that functions like a validity claim in the form of an enthymeme: Caesar “would not take the crown; therefore ’tis certain he was not ambitious.” Now the fact becomes clearer that the plebeians are leaning towards Antony’s position, since the “misguided” – due to Brutus’s forensic justification – are ready to accept ungrudgingly the reasons Antony has so smoothly presented. ***** Finally, Antony’s ethopoeia 45 succeeds with the culmination of the deeply intense emotion (pathos) that flows from the second plebeian’s expression: “Poor soul! His eyes are red as fire with weeping” (simile). The plebeians elevate Antony as the “noblest” man in Rome; and so he now manages to gain supremacy in the arena of the current political confrontation.

(32) (2. Pleb.) Now mark him; he begins to speak.

(Antony) But yesterday the word of Caesar might have stood against the world; now he lies there, and none so poor to do him reverence. O masters! If I were disposed to stir your hearts and minds to mutiny and rage, I should do Brutus wrong, and Cassius wrong, who you all know, are honourable men.

44 Ominatio = Prophesy of evil.
45 Ethopoeia = Simply a description of character, or of characteristics, for whatever purpose and whatever kind.
* RHET. SCH. **apophasis, irony, anaphora** ("wrong"), **isocolon** ("I should do Brutus wrong, and Cassius wrong"), **epimone**,46 **sarcasmus**.47 – Antony continues impetuously to clash with Brutus and the other conspirators by sticking firmly to the scheme of **apophasis**. His intention (e.g. **macro-strategy**) is in fact to "stir [...] hearts and minds to mutiny and rage"! His **irony** is designed to utterly "wrong" both Brutus and Cassius. His **epimone** in using the **epanalepsis** of the phrase [they are] "honourable men" reaches the point where total calumny is heaped upon them by means of this prominent scheme of **sarcasmus**.

(33) (Antony) *I will not do them wrong; I rather choose to wrong the dead, to wrong myself and you, than I will wrong such honourable men.*

* RHET. SCH. **epanalepsis, parison, hyperbole, epimone**. – We have reached the saturation point with the incessant **epanalepsis** of the signifier "honourable" whereby Antony uses the scheme of **epimone**. Moreover, his **hyperbole** becomes ignominious the moment that he supposedly prefers to "wrong the dead, to wrong myself and you"! His tactic is undoubtedly an indirect, though explicit, efficacious **diasyrmus**.48

(34) (Antony) *But here’s a parchment with the seal of Caesar; I found it in his closet; ‘tis his will. Let but the commons hear this testament, which, pardon me, I do not mean to read, and they would go and kiss dead Caesar’s wounds, and dip their napkins in his sacred blood, yea, beg a hair of him for memory, and, dying, mention it within their wills, bequeathing it as a rich legacy unto their issue.*

* The bait contrived that is about to raise the curiosity and later the fury of the crowd will be the notorious "will" (see below). ** RHET. SCH. **apophasis** ("pardon me, I do not mean to read"). – Antony accentuates the flagrant use of this scheme solely on the level of tactics with a premeditated end in itself. As we shall see, Antony masterfully handles the subject of the "will" as bait in order for it to later sink into the audience’s consciences with the ulterior motive of leading to **protrope** (see below).

46 Epimone = Frequent repetition of a phrase or question, in order to dwell on a point.
47 Sarcasmus = ("mockery, sneering") A bitter gibe or taunt.
48 Diasyrmus = Disparagement of opponent’s argument through a base similitude.
** RHET. SCH. enargia⁴⁹ and prosopographia.⁵⁰ – The vividness of the depiction that Antony accomplishes here banks on the histrionic mingling of hero-worship with the hybrid Christian sainthood of Caesar (which is a fabrication conceived by Shakespeare). It isn’t surprising that the sense of “hero-worship” of Caesar – as Shakespeare handles it in his play – refers to Christian “hagiography.” The effect of this hagiography is a worked out plan for practically making Caesar a “god”! And here the “sacred blood” works, with all its trappings, as a fetish for assimilation by the plebeians.

(35) (4. Pleb.) We’ll hear the will. Read it Mark Antony.
(All) The will, the will! We will hear Caesar’s will!
(Antony) Have patience, gentle friends; I must not read it. It is not meet you know how Caesar loved you. You are not wood, you are not stones, but men; And being men, hearing the will of Caesar, it will inflame you, it will make you mad. ’Tis good you know not that you are his heirs; for if you should, O, what would come of it?

* RHET. SCH. parison, antithesis, paradiastole,⁵¹ (supposed) paraenesis,⁵² hyperbole. – Antony is methodically taking the plebeians for a ride, thus trying to beguile and having them believe in the pointlessness of reading the will: “it will inflame you, it will make you mad” (parison). However, his motive is quite clear: it is precisely this outcome that he is trying to pull off! He insists on informing the plebeians that Caesar “loved them”; and he reaches the point of carrying the “joke” too far by claiming that they “are his heirs”! The paradiastole in the form of parison “You are not wood, you are not stones” is a move that further reinforces the consolidation of pathos.

(36) (4. Pleb.) Read the will! We’ll hear it, Antony! You shall read us the will, Caesar’s will!

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⁴⁹ Enargia = A generic term for visually powerful, vivid description which recreates something or someone “before your very eyes.”
⁵⁰ Prosopographia = A type of enargia which vividly describes the appearance of a person, imaginary or real, quick or dead.
⁵¹ Paradiastole = “A putting together of dissimilar things.”
⁵² Paraenesis = Warning of impending evil.
(Antony) *Will you be patient? Will you stay awhile? I have o’ershoot myself to tell you of it. I fear I wrong the honourable men whose daggers have stabbed Caesar; I do fear it.*

(4. Pleb.) *They were traitors. Honourable men!*

(All) *The will! – The testament!*

* RHET. SCH. **anadiplosis** (‘the will/the will’)* [53] **parison** (Will you be patient? Will you stay awhile?), **anaphora** (‘will’ and ‘I fear/I do fear’), **aganactesis**, [54] **onedismus**. [55] Pricking the curiosity of the plebeians with the contents of the will, Antony eggs them on to take out their rage against the conspiracy. It is evident that Antony is utterly domineering the plebeians with his rhetoric; and that they have completely abandoned themselves to it. With their adherence to Antony’s discourse, their volition identifies wholly with his volition. The complete refutation of Brutus’s justification has taken place the moment the fourth plebeian utters the tirade: “They were traitors. Honourable men!” In a nutshell, the citizens are now condemning the conspirators with acrimony due to Antony’s rhetorical influence; and hence they reach **onedismus**.

(37) (2. Pleb.) *They were villains, murderers! The will! Read the will!*

(Antony) *You will compel me then to read the will? Then make a ring about the corpse of Caesar, and let me show you him that made the will. Shall I descend? And will you give me leave?*

(All) *Come down.*

(2. Pleb.) *Descend.*

(3. Pleb.) *You shall have leave.*

(4. Pleb.) *A ring! Stand round.*

(1. Pleb.) *Stand from the hearse! Stand from the body!*

(2. Pleb.) *Room for Antony, most noble Antony!*

(Antony) *Nay, press not so upon me; stand far off.*

(All) *Stand back! Room! Bear back!*

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[53] Anadiplosis = Repetition of the last word of one line or clause to begin the next. It often also creates climax.

[54] Aganactesis = Arousing the audience’s scorn and indignation.

[55] Onedismus = Reproaching someone as ungrateful or impious.
With the carefully planned question: “You will compel me then to read the will?” that is supposedly prompted by the pressure of the public, Antony, for histrionic purposes, submits himself to the “importunities” of the plebeians. This is an opportune manoeuvre where he entrusts the plebeians with their desired sense of esteem so that they can be in a position to impose their wishes (i.e. that befits “free citizens”). In this way, Antony restores his fame as the “noblest” Roman the moment he asks “leave” (permission) from the crowd. Here we notice Antony’s mastery in consolidating a fruitful interaction between orator and audience. This interaction is successfully accomplished with the open dialogue that he carries out with the plebeians. Here we see his populist theatricality being played out when he asks to step down from the podium in order to be amongst “the body” and the jostling mass of people. His aim is to symbolically elevate Caesar by bestowing honours and simultaneously securing sympathy from the audience.

(38) (Antony) If you have tears, prepare to shed them now. You all do know this mantle. I remember the first time ever Caesar put it on; ’twas on a summer’s evening in his tent, that day he overcame the Nervii. Look, in this place ran Cassius’ dagger through: see what a rent the envious Casca made: through this the well-beloved Brutus stabbed; and as he plucked his cursed steel away, mark how the blood of Caesar followed it, as rushing out of doors, to be resolved if Brutus so kindly knocked or no; for Brutus, as you know, was Caesar’s angel.

* RHET. SCH. **martyria**, **enargia**, **metonymy**56 (“mantle”), **antithesis**. – Urging the plebeians to mourn, Antony returns to the device of **martyria**, presenting the semiotic force of Caesar’s “mantle” (viz. with this semiotic move he undertakes to re-establish and stir up **pathos** more intensely). The dramatic vividness (**enargia**) of his description with regards to the conspirator’s stabbings doesn’t leave the audience any room for doubt of this heinous political crime. Moreover, since he has made the effort to show contempt for the conspirators (e.g. “the envious Casca”), he focuses on his bitter enemy in order to stress his treachery. He demonstrates that Brutus’s treachery consists in the blatant antithesis to the previous “sacred” friendship he had with Caesar (“the well-beloved/Caesar’s angel”). We once again notice the **macro-theme**

56 Metonymy = A particular kind of substitution: the abstract for the concrete, cause for effect or effect for cause, proper name for one of its qualities or vice versa.
of Caesar’s “deification” in which nothing is more odious than being an “angel” and revolting against the “god” with such deadly treason. Consequently he finds himself in an advantageous position to lash out against this foul incident.

(39) (Antony) Judge, O you gods, how dearly Caesar loved him. This was the most unkindest cut of all; For when the noble Caesar saw him stab, ingratitude, more strong than traitors’ arms, quite vanquished him: then burst his mighty heart; and his mantle muffling up his face, even at the base of Pompey’s statue (which all the while ran blood) great Caesar fell. O, what a fall was there, my countrymen! Then I, and you, and all of us fell down, whilst bloody treason flourished over us. O, now you weep, and I perceive you feel the dint of pity. These are gracious drops. Kind souls, what weep you when you but behold our Caesar’s vesture wounded? Look you here! Here is himself, marred, as you see, with traitors.

* RHET. SCH. apostrophe, martyria, polyptoton (“fell/fall/fell down”), auxesis, cohortatio.57 – He invokes the “gods” (apostrophe) to judge the murderous act as high treason. It follows that Antony indirectly exhorts the plebeians to judge – in a similar manner – Brutus and his cohorts unfavourably. To be sure, he will use the word “traitors” explicitly now, for in the course of his speech the ironical expression “honourable men” as a catalyst has almost played its strategic role (see below 41). The steady tactic of his martyria continues unabated with the depiction of the horrors the conspirators have perpetrated. The description of the particular heinous act committed by Brutus escalates (auxesis) to the degree that it signifies the final quashing of his justification, which has already been fading. Antony, indeed, has crossed the threshold with his triumphant rhetorical performance. The intimacy he has systematically developed with the audience consolidates the greatly desired identification between orator and audience, which certainly secures the total predominance of his initial motive. Moreover, as an agitated social body, the plebeians have succumbed to the corresponding reception and dedication that clears the path for them to be captivated by his rhetorical mastery.

(40) (1. Pleb.) O piteous spectacle!

(2. Pleb.) O noble Caesar!

57 Cohortatio = Amplification that moves the hearer’s indignation, as when the horrors of an enemy’s barbarities are dwelt upon to promote patriotism.
(3. Pleb) *O woeful day!*

(4. Pleb.) *O traitors! Villains!*

(1. Pleb.) *O most bloody sight!*

(2. Pleb.) *We will be revenged!*


(Antony) *Stay, countrymen.*

(1. Pleb.) *Peace there! Hear the noble Antony.*

(2. Pleb.) *We’ll hear him, we’ll follow him, we’ll die with him.*

* RHET. SCH. **anaphora** (“O”), **isocolon**, **aganactesis**, **onedismus**. – This segment magnifies the dramatic element of **aganactesis**. With the complete submission of the plebeians to Antony’s rhetoric (which is due to their favourable reception), he has decisively produced the **onedismus** that they now feel for the conspirators. Antony collects payment from the plebeians’ fickleness. This is converted into a profitable execution of his rhetorical aim which has exerted influence on their reception and which is now being displayed – in a relentless way – with shouts and fierce threats.

(41) (Antony) *Good friends, sweet friends, let me not stir you up to such a sudden flood of mutiny. They that have done this deed are honourable. What private griefs they have, alas, I know not, that made them do it. They are wise and honourable, and will, no doubt, with reasons answer you.*

* RHET. SCH. **anadiplosis**, (“friends/friends”), **apophasis**, **anaphora** (“honourable”), **paradox**. – With the repetitive use of **apophasis**, Antony speciously attempts to sidestep the major issue that is without doubt the “sudden flood of mutiny”! It is evident that he is aiming to incite the plebeians towards this direction. Although he shows his so-called “ignorance” of the conspirators’ motive, he once again takes up the ironic attitude of calling the conspirators “wise and honourable,” while he concocts a **paradox** concerning the “justification” that the plebeians had previously heard from Brutus’s own mouth!

(42) (Antony) *I come not, friends, to steal away your hearts. I am no orator, as Brutus is, but (as you know me all) a plain blunt man, that love my friend; and that*
they know full well that gave me public leave to speak of him. For I have neither wit, nor words, nor worth, action, nor utterance, nor the power of speech to stir men’s blood;

* RHET. SCH. **apophasis, anaphora** ("nor"), **isocolon** ("nor..."). – Antony’s conspicuous objective to persist in using the scheme of **apophasis** demonstrates his unswerving tactic of continuously deluding the plebeians. He asserts that he is “no orator” as Brutus is, for instance. On the contrary, this phrasing renders Antony culpable of a spurious statement and distortion of reality, since he is, in the final analysis, a great orator! (Like hell is Antony “a plain blunt man”!). ** Up till now we have seen for ourselves that Antony is an adroit and tenacious orator who manipulates the audience with thoroughness, using **ethos**, persuasive **logos** (e.g. **enthymemes**), and especially **pathopoeia**. *** With the **anaphoric** series of “nor,” he juggles notions of social values such as “wit,” “worth,” “utterance,” “action,” “power of speech” in order to supposedly disclaim them; whereas in reality he has indisputably demonstrated that in the course of his speech he holds these qualities at an enviable level! Consequently, in the arena of rhetorical combat, Antony has literally stolen “the hearts” of the plebeians.

(43) (Antony) I only speak right on. I tell you that which you yourselves do know, show you sweet Caesar’s wounds, poor, poor dumb mouths, and bid them speak for me. But were I Brutus, and Brutus Antony, there were an Antony would ruffle up your spirits, and put a tongue in every wound of Caesar that should move the stones of Rome to rise and mutiny.

* RHET. SCH. **anaphora** ("I"), **epizeuxis** "poor, poor"), **chiasmus** ("But were I Brutus, and Brutus Antony"), **metaphor** ("dumb mouths," “wounds...speak,” “tongue”), **eidolopoeia**, **hyperbole** ("move the stones of Rome to rise and mutiny"). – Antony mobilizes the motif of the straightforward man, thus anticipating his unwavering tactic come to fruition, which happens to be the consolidation of **pathos**. Focusing on Caesar’s “wounds” for semiotic emphasis, he tries to elevate his

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38 Epizeuxis = Emphatic repetition of a word with no other words between.
39 Chiasmus = ("a placing crosswise") The crisscross order and correspondence in meaning or syntax of two pairs of words, whether or not involving word repetition.
60 Eidolopoeia = Presenting a dead person as speaking, or the speech thus assigned.
rhetoric metaphorically to the imaginary level of *eidolopoeia*, so that it can be expressed as a substitute rhetoric coming from “*Caesar’s wounds*”! With the use of *chiasmus*, Antony denies having the expertise of a smooth-tongued orator by alluding that it is Brutus who personifies this; and that with his insidious oratorical skill Brutus can easily incite the masses. Hence, he strives to tarnish Brutus who – according to Antony’s insinuation – holds the reprehensible status of being a demagogue and rabble-rouser. He juxtaposes himself – “the non-orator who speaks bluntly” – with a scheming orator, who is usually censured and despised by the public.

(44) (All) We’ll mutiny.
(1. Pleb.) We’ll burn the house of Brutus.
(3. Pleb.) Away then! Come, seek the conspirators.
(Antony) Yet hear me, countrymen. Yet hear me speak.
(All) Peace, ho! – Hear Antony, most noble Antony.
(Antony) Why, friends, you go to do you know not what. Wherein hath Caesar thus deserved your loves? Alas! you know not: I must tell you then. You have forgot the will I told you of.
(All) Most true. – The will! – Let’s stay and hear the will.

* RHET. SCH. anaphora (“Yet hear me”), epistrophe (“Antony...Antony”). – The crowd is getting enraged and is on the verge of carrying out a fierce “mutiny.” The evocation of Antony’s *logos* has been implanted in the minds of the plebeians with the result that they have, as mentioned earlier, become subservient to him. Moreover, the motive to urge the masses to take direct action is attained. There is no doubt whatsoever that here we could find the motto “the end justifies the means” suitable. However, after the *paradiegesis* where Antony violently attacks Brutus and his cohorts, the utter confusion of the plebeians’ forgetfulness concerning the will surfaces!

(45) (Antony) Here is the will, and under Caesar’s seal. To every Roman citizen he gives, to every several man, seventy-five drachmas.
(2. Pleb.) Most noble Caesar! We’ll revenge his death.
(3. Pleb.) O royal Caesar!
(Antony) Hear me with patience.
(All) Peace, ho!

(Antony) Moreover, he hath left you all his walks, his private arbours, and new-planted orchards, on this side of Tiber; he hath left them you, and to your heirs for ever: common pleasures, to walk abroad and recreate yourselves. Here was a Caesar! When comes such another?

(1. Pleb.) Never, never! Come, away, away! We’ll burn his body in the holy place, and with the brands fire the traitors’ houses. Take up the body.

(2. Pleb.) Go fetch fire.

(3. Pleb) Pluck down benches.

(4. Pleb.) Pluck down forms, windows, anything)

[Exeunt Plebeians with the body]

(Antony) Now let it work. Mischief, thou art afoot,
Take thou what course thou wilt!

* RHET. SCH. erotesis, pragmatographia, isocolon (“fetch/Pluck down”). – The description of the contents of the will (pragmatographia) elicits the approval of the audience, but in the form of total rage against “the traitors.” High treason will neither be decided in court nor punished by standard procedures; i.e., by the formal institutions of the Roman Republic. The conspirators are going to be punished – as Antony has assiduously premeditated – by the anarchic revolt of the plebeians. Before they reach the culmination of the action by way of their unbridled rage, the plebeians will be informed of their supposed legacy. Antony’s objective is the spiritual uplifting of “social justice.” This constitutes being grateful for Caesar’s professed beneficial gift. However, the meaning of social justice that Antony imparts indeed suggests a distorted reciprocation in the form of social-political “purification” by means of an atavistic behaviour, which is, in this case, lawless revenge. The erotesis – and its expected answer – capitalizes on the infinite value of Caesar as the highest personage of Rome. Consequently, Antony’s subtle way of exhorting the plebeians to take action for revenge – which began in the middle of his speech – is finalized with the sanctification of Caesar. The imminent annihilation of Brutus and his cohorts is “afoot.” His last utterance reveals the cynicism that has possessed him throughout his oration, regarding not only the conspirators, but also the plebeians. Hence, Antony launches forth his clever plan of manipulating the audience in such a robust and masterful way that it doesn’t leave us with any room for doubt about his deceit. As
regards his manipulation as a **rhetorical motive**, it is clearly shown with the last utterance: "Now let it work. Mischief, thou art afoot, Take thou what course thou wilt!" Finally, one could definitely say that the **rhetoric** that was executed with such mastery by Antony has really taken its "course"!

**Conclusion**

The attempt to comment on this dramatic segment has no bearing on the standard type of literary criticism as traditionally perceived and practiced. My initial goal was to present the peculiarities of the rhetorical structure of a paradigmatic literary text, thus avoiding either its deconstruction, for example, or even its evaluation as a literary text within the domain of general Shakespeare criticism. In other words, my intention was to present this segment as if it were a simulation of a rhetorical enactment in which a sequence of elaborate communicative acts unfold. I wanted to show the prismatic *rhetorical process* of a breathtaking political conflict that happens, nonetheless, to take place in a literary text. For this reason, I regard the two speeches as *archetypal events* of a vividly dramatized, rhetorical signifying process simply for educational purposes; hence, the detailed inventory of the crabbed terms the rhetorical schemes embody. I also wanted to define the aspects of discourse that represent the substance of the *dramatistic* spectrum as part of a general rhetorical phenomenon using the text as a springboard. Apart from that, it is a given fact that as spectators or readers we usually distance ourselves from the strikingly powerful enactments that fictionally appear in the play. As a matter of fact, we find ourselves in a position as privileged observers (thanks to Shakespeare’s imaginative rhetorical simulation) discerning the particular nuances of rhetorical discourse by following the evolving process as critics/judges outside the text. And as Aristotle underscored, rhetoric in general is addressed to critics/judges (cf. *Rhetoric* 1358b).

Towards the end of Scene II of this theatrical Act, and after the delirious violence of the mob, Antony’s servant informs that Brutus and Cassius "are rid like madmen through the gates of Rome." Antony confides with frankness to the servant – and for us to overhear – his deliberately planned rhetorical goal: “Belike they had some notice of the people, how I had moved them.” To be sure, we have discerned either as spectators or readers of the play (e.g. with our reader-response) that Antony with his rhetorically clever ruses has intentionally and unfailingly endeavoured to fire
up political tension by having “moved” the plebeians. His firing up the spirits is codified towards the end of the preamble when he starts to magnify the auxesis of his caustic irony against the “honourable” Brutus. At that moment the spectator/reader intuits that Antony is making a speech that employs a single-minded aim: an exhortative rhetoric that will later have a sweeping effect throughout the public sphere of Rome.

By taking into consideration the rhetorical impact of the two orations, I will move on to the major issue which is the evaluation of rhetorical art as it appears in this play; and in this way I will discuss its adroitness as communicative action. I should add that at first sight the two speeches don’t allow us any room for holding divergent views concerning their expediency.

With his oration, Brutus intended with a hierarchical motive to boldly admit committing the audacious act of heinously annihilating Caesar and what he stood for, thus seeking to protect the hierarchical principle; namely, being impelled by an ethical motive that consisted of preserving the republican ideal of the Roman polity. Indeed, the crucial issue of preservation was for Brutus non-negotiable. Hence his unswerving stance to justify his extreme political act with a strong faith based on his sincerity and self-confidence, as far as the hierarchical principle is concerned. However, trying to articulate a rational forensic speech, he fails to present facts in order to support his charge against Caesar. He simply concludes that Caesar strove to subjugate the people and omits (as crucial validity claims) the causes, events and examples that could have supported this conclusion. Strictly speaking, his pride and socio-political superiority serves him admirably; and so he doesn’t seem to care about explaining his thoughts in detail. Since Brutus found himself to be on the defensive, his communicative action inevitably rested on this type of rhetorical discourse (i.e. judicial). In this way, the adroitness of his speech is composed of the rhetorical schemes (e.g. antithesis) and arguments that essentially focus on juxtapositions (e.g. “freedom/slavery”). As a matter of principle, he condemned the unforgivable (for him) “ambition” of Caesar with a macro-strategy that consists in the juxtaposition between the hierarchical principle and its prospective subversion.

Antony, on the other hand, worked out a speech in which he sought to completely stun the audience, first with the proof of the treachery of assassination;

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secondly, with the *exhortation* for them to accept the “hero-worship” of Caesar; and finally with *inciting* the plebeians to turn against the conspirators with furious indignation and unbridled violence. With regards to his rhetorical intuition, there wasn’t any mention of the particular *hierarchical principle* in his oration concerning the preservation of the Republic. Moreover, cultivating a personality cult, he pointed out how he approved, in an indirect way, of dissolving the regime in favour of Caesar’s despotism. Besides, the characteristic feature of his oration was the success in designing a resourceful *pathopoeia*, which had as its primary goal to destroy Brutus and his cohorts with the help of the plebeians. Indeed, he was able to change the minds of the plebeians with a skilfulness that consisted in the feigned intimacy he had forged with them.\(^\text{62}\) And since he could *converse* (i.e. carry out a dialogue) better with them and win over their *adherence*, he managed in the end to impose his own *hierarchical principle* on them.

Focusing on the eloquence of the two orations, I shall point out that rhetorical types appear that are both diachronic and synchronic. For a start, there is at first sight a flexible overlapping of the three types of rhetorical speech as defined by Aristotle. For example, Brutus, as we saw, believes that the highest virtue happens to be the so-called *hierarchical principle* of the Republic; and so he is compelled to vindicate himself of the assassination he has committed. However, in due time he tries – and with a noble approach – to mitigate in part the particular gravity of Caesar’s despotic designs by saying that he had nothing but praise for him. It is here the overlapping of two types of rhetorical discourse emerges: the *judicial* along with the *epideictic*. Although a defining factor of this overlapping is, of course, his strategy of presenting more vividly the political-ethical breach the “*ambitious*” Caesar has apparently committed as opposed to the *hierarchical principle* that he himself represents. On the other hand, Antony joins the *epideictic* with a quasi-*deliberative* form of speech. His ultimate aim was to upstage Brutus with his oration in which he anticipated the future reciprocation of the audience (i.e. quite promptly in this case!), so as to get the plebeians to impulsively pronounce a judgment by taking the initiative (i.e. as planned). This quasi-deliberative tendency is interlocked with his dominant epideictic

\(^{62}\) See Newman: “Antony pauses to let the crowd react to his words; he interacts with them; he asks them questions. His alertness to their feelings is palpable, as he repeatedly incites the people to emotional outbursts, calms them, and then stirs them up again. He can see and hear his audience’s responses to his words” (my emphasis), p. 19.
manoeuvre (e.g. with his obsession to “deify” Caesar). Finally, regarding the diachronic and the synchronic, it’s not surprising that in our contemporary era we usually catch sight of similar types of overlapping (without, of course, reaching such extreme circumstances as we saw in the play). Without going into details, the combination of the epideictic (i.e. either positive or negative), the judicial, and the deliberative forms of speech usually embellishes the rhetorical process – especially employed by political leaders – in the parliaments and above all in the mass media.

Turning now to the nuances of the two orators’ discourse, I should like to note that they produce rhetorical – and clearly stylistic – elements that push the particular resonance of dramaticistic force forward. Brutus, for example, espouses the ideal of the hierarchical principle with a moral stance that is related to the negative injunction. In other words, according to Brutus, it is self-evident that it is forbidden to subvert the regime in the interests of tyranny. Although he ruminated quite a bit over the consequences of Caesar’s assassination earlier in the Second Act with the result of being burdened with hierarchic psychosis, his latent “fall” will be brushed aside the moment he consents to carry out the deed with the other members of the republican faction. Thus, mortification along with the victimization of Caesar, that took place in the Capitol, enhanced the political (and social) dimensions of the moral drama. Brutus’s faction firmly believes that with their deed they have warded off evil by “sacrificing” Caesar, who as a scapegoat becomes a corollary of expiation. This expiation incorporates the shaking off of Caesar’s “morbid” aspiration to overthrow the republican regime. Furthermore, Brutus offers the explication of the event in his speech, directly declaring that it was absolutely necessary so that socio-political catharsis and the following redemption could parade in the full glare of public view.

However, on the other hand, Antony sees the unfolding of the moral drama from a completely different point of view. With his rhetorical harangue, he lashes out against Brutus reshaping the hierarchical principle for his own purposes, which is to elevate Caesar as the one and only benefactor of the people. Hence, according to Antony’s view, the reverberation of the meaning concerning “the fall” in the moral drama belongs entirely to Brutus and his faction. The negative injunction for Antony means that Caesar’s assassination is indicative of a reprehensible act of cosmic proportion. Hence, Brutus and his associates must be mortified and victimized until Roman society will be content with catharsis and redemption; namely, to be rid of these “sacrilegious” conspirators.
A fundamental theme of diachronic and synchronic rhetoric centres on the defining character of an audience. Observing the putative tug-of-war between Brutus and Antony, it is as plain as day that the question of who will prevail depends in the final analysis on the cultivation of pathos. We understand that the specific “war of words” was a battle that aimed to win the acceptance – and the eventual adherence – of the audience not only through the influence of ethos that usually prevails as a decisive element in the rhetorical process, but also chiefly, as we have seen, through the formation of pathopoeia. This entails that we have to deal with an audience that displays an unstable and amoral behaviour. Antony was clearly more perceptive in weighing the character of this audience, all the more, indeed, if we acknowledge that he advantageously exploited the volatile situation thanks to Brutus’s consent for allowing him to speak after his own oration. Brutus, on the contrary, resoundingly failed to believe that the plebeians were in a position to indisputably accept the hypothetical social imaginary concerning the Roman Republic. It appeared at first sight that surely they would accept it; but their flagrant superficiality utterly subverted the possible adherence to this ideal when they later heard with sympathetic ears what Antony had to say. Therefore, Antony managed to accommodate the identification of the audience with his own hierarchical principle. Antony’s outflanking his opponent consisted of his deftness in inciting the crowd to take action by intentionally penetrating their emotions (i.e. their passions); and, as it occurred, undermining the magnitude of the social imaginary concerning the preservation of the Roman Republic. It is quite obvious that Brutus paid heavily for his political naiveté when he allowed Antony (i.e. a golden opportunity without precedent) to deliver a speech to such an uncivil audience. Hence the outcome of this was his “fall,” due to his tragic mistake.

Taking into account the two orations, we find ourselves on the verge of a paradoxical conclusion. In principle, we must look very closely at the rhetorical art that emerges from this “war of words.” On the one hand, we have the forensic rhetoric of Brutus that on the face of it makes the impression that it is apparently effective as persuasion, but also grand in expression – however short it may have been.63 His

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63 See Newman: “In delivering this speech in one film version of the play, actor James Mason, as Brutus, spends only three minutes addressing the crowd, before taking his leave. The citizens are appeased, but not educated to truly understand the nature and consequences of Caesar’s ambitions” (p.19). The film that Newman is referring to is Julius Caesar (1953) directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz with James Mason as Brutus and Marlon Brando as Marc Antony.
attempt to persuade gives the impression that it was tentatively successful; but, in the end, it lacked substance, depth and details as to the significance of his macro-strategy in relation to the assassination of the most famous political leader of Rome. On the other hand, Antony’s exhortative rhetoric can be misapprehended as a grand composition of discourse (i.e. the “splendour of rhetoric”); but it doesn’t cease to give an impression of rhetorical baseness (i.e. “misery of rhetoric”) due to the deceitful manipulation and sheer exploitation of the audience. The combination of “grand” and “base” language renders the outcome of this rhetoric as a recognizable feature of mystification. In addition, Antony’s acrobatics between argumentative counterattack and the crystallization of pathos turns out well for his sake. Consequently, the realization of his political omnipotence in the public sphere is strengthened with this rhetorical tone of mystification.

In a nutshell, Antony’s macro-strategy is triumphant in the end as opposed to Brutus’s. Perhaps this happened because his speech had a texture that consisted of a multifaceted variety of rhetorical schemes, which turned out to be effective. More specifically: he succeeds in stamping his sought after goal with the enterprising development of the narrative form, especially with the scheme of martyrria. Apart from that, it is a given fact that most people respond favourably to narratives that reveal personal experiences that are depicted with colourful events. Moreover, the perspicacity that Antony has in sizing up the psychological frame of mind and the affected moods of the plebeians give him the upper hand to manoeuvre easily; particularly in presenting his personal narration about Caesar. With this advantage over Brutus, he banks on the intimacy he has secured with the audience through this scheme. Hence, he uses with acumen the rhetorical scheme of martyrria that results in exciting the audience. Knowing well the mental and psychic state of the plebeians, he was in an advantageous position to whip them up into action, thus cashing in on the atavistic complex that happens to be an undercurrent within them. In the final analysis, this turned out favourably for the consolidation of pathos, which Antony pursued with such oratorical skill.64

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64 See Newman: “Marc Antony’s speech is a model of rhetorical art, the brilliant use of language to guide an audience to the conclusions the speaker wishes to draw. He uses well chosen facts, engages with the audience, assesses the people’s reactions as his argument proceeds, stimulates their emotions, and appeals effectively to patriotism, friendship, and human self-interest, doing all this with thrilling rhetorical flair” (p. 23).
What can one finally gather from the comparison of the two orations? Overlooking the fact that we are observing a type of discourse that has value beyond dispute as literary substance, I consider any value-judgment regarding this distinctive use of *logos* to be debatable, because it produces the paradox that emerges from the elegant style of the rhetorical phrasing of the two orations. Given that here we encounter a perfect example of the *rhetoric of advantage*, a question can be posed with reference to the success of the rhetorical performance of the two orators. In any case, the structure of the two orations contributes to our positive reaction as a felicitous composition of *logos* – either of the one or the other. (This may hinder our final judgment regarding the evaluation of its linguistic force as an *aesthetic* impact).

Nonetheless, the upshot of the whole endeavour of evaluating the rhetorical art of the speeches consists in the signifying power of the particular motive that impelled the two orators. Although Antony’s victorious influence was attained by using a highly expressive *logos*, we discern that it is founded on a questionable, though, overpowering motive. It should be noted that the motive appropriates the already strictly divided class structure of Rome, in which the citizens’ practice of self-definition is vulnerable to the patricians’ exploitation. Antony exceedingly turns this existing social division to advantage, transforming it into the *identification* of his ultimate goal.

Rhetoric, according to Burke, falls into two distinct tendencies: either towards *identification* or *division*. It is commonplace knowledge that each society is divided into classes, political parties, warring ideologies, conflicting economic interests, religions, belief systems, etc. Rhetoric, as a rule, is made up of a *logos* in which the orator seeks to instil his or her worldview in an audience so that they will *identify* with it, thus overcoming *division*. In this play *division* arose due to the contention over the *hierarchical principle*; and thus the confronting of this clash centred on the following issue: Was there a *probability* for the plebeians to *identify* with Brutus’s *hierarchical principle* or not?

Confronting, then, rhetoric whenever it takes place, we usually reproach it when it takes the form of chicanery. This type of rhetoric is contrary to the expectations we have of rational discourse in which we want prudence and mainly credibility to prevail. However, there are occasions where an orator can become
credible even when he or she deliberately misleads the public with specious language (especially when it is exceptionally ornate). Thus, his or her discourse infiltrates the consciences of an unsuspecting audience with a result that it might have a subtle influence upon them. Yet, if we concede that this happens quite often in the public sphere, it follows that the public must perceive the likely consequences of the expediency and the basic motives the orator may have so that it may remain safe from potential manipulation. Certainly in our case the plebeians didn’t act soundly so as to detect Antony’s ulterior motive; and that is why they became easy prey.

Finally, Antony triumphs over Brutus, because with self-confidence he entrenches himself in his worldview that was destined to vanquish his opponent. With his efficient communicative action, he pillories him and his faction, managing later to wipe out the Roman Republic in a roundabout way. By all appearances he imposed credibility on the plebeians with his pyrotechnic oration and with his affected persuasion. In the end he charmed the plebeians with his rhetoric. With an identifiable strain of cajolery, he was in a position to lead this uncivil audience down a pathway that he himself had chosen.

66 See Newman: “Unfortunately, the speech is also a model of deceit and manipulation. Shakespeare illustrates the unpleasant truth that an advocate need not be truthful to be effective. Antony repeatedly misleads his audience as to his true thoughts and intentions” (p. 23-24).