

Shakespeare uses the methods of rhetorical questions, irony and repetition to show that Mark Antony is a strong and skilled speaker and creates ambiguity over his true intentions and whether he is in fact a good man.

In Mark Antony's oration at Caesar's funeral he poses rhetorical questions to imply his position and gain the agreement of his audience in a subtle manner, without overstepping the limits agreed to when Brutus granted him the opportunity to speak. He says: "Did this in Caesar seem ambitious?" meaning: "Are these the actions of an ambitious man?", inviting the listener to conclude that they are not. Later he says: "When comes such another?" meaning: "When will there be another like him?" after revealing the generous terms of Caesar's will, leading the audience to the conclusion that Julius was an exceptional ruler.

Mark Antony uses irony to make it clear to the audience what his own views are, while stating the opposite. This technique is used to great effect in tandem with repetition in order to discredit Brutus. He mentions a number of examples of Caesar's actions in such a way as to make it clear that he does not believe they were in any way blameworthy. After each example he says: "But Brutus says he was ambitious. And Brutus is an honourable man." The audience is led to conclude that Brutus is making unfair judgements and may not in fact be an honourable man. Mark Antony says: "I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke, but here I am to speak what I do know." He claims that he is addressing the people to tell them about Caesar and not to dispute what Brutus has said, yet his oration is a clear refutation of what Brutus has said.

Shakespeare skilfully creates ambiguity over the character of Mark Antony. There is no doubt that he is a loyal friend of Caesar, as shown in his monologue when alone with Caesar's body: "Thou art the ruins of the noblest man that ever lived in the tide of times" ("You are the remains of the noblest man that ever lived."). However, Antony is portrayed as being unprincipled and has no qualms about deceiving others. He is quick to seemingly shift his allegiance to Brutus when he hears of Caesar's assassination. "Let each man render me his bloody hand." – He shakes hands with the conspirators. "Friends am I with you all and love you all." Brutus gives him permission to speak at the funeral on condition that he not blame the assassins. However his oration rapidly turns the crowd against the conspirators and Brutus and Cassius are driven from the city. Antony informs the crowd that Caesar has left them each 75 drachmas in his will. However once he has assumed a position of power he is happy to go back on this promise so as to raise money for the war against Brutus and Cassius. "Fetch the will hither, and we shall determine how to cut off some charge in legacies." (meaning: "Bring his will here and we'll work out how to reduce his gift to the people.")

Antony's oration at the funeral is powerful and compelling and likely to persuade the reader. However the reader is left wondering whether his behaviour is necessary for self-preservation in order to achieve justice for his friend Caesar, or whether Antony is an unscrupulous person who is trying to further his own ambitions and quest for power. This is relevant to today's world as oratory skill are a great asset to achieve prominence in politics. Barak Obama. Martin Luther King. JF Kennedy, Winston Churchill, and Adolf Hitler are great examples of

skilful orators. Great orators have the ability to convince the public they are right and create a following, even if their cause is not a good one. Shakespeare's idea is still relevant as all leaders are human beings that have flaws like the rest of us. No leaders are completely above criticism and there are plenty of examples of good and revered leaders who had significant character flaws. Having a flawed character is not necessarily an impediment to achievement as a politician. Some might even say it is beneficial.