



The Misplaced Confidence of The Common Man in *Julius Caesar*

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Abstract

The research article shows the force of rhetorical language and its powerful impact upon the masses when they are a crowd through the speeches of Brutus and Antony to the people of Rome in *Julius Caesar* by the Elizabethan dramatist, William Shakespeare. The article draws on the textual analysis as primary source, and modern critical body as a secondary source. It shows how Shakespeare remains a dramatist of the highest order by virtue of his psychological understanding about the generality that we have today with the same conceptual framework. The misplaced confidence on populist, demagogue, and an authoritarian person culminates in the killing of an innocent person, Cenna, with the establishment of anarchy. This work tries to show the general perception of the masses their own troubles that are always ignored in the government.

Introduction

Shakespeare enjoys a reputation of an exceeding repute of in-depth psychological insights, to the extent that his pre-eminent worth is measured, with any other artist of any genre and time. The Bard serves both for erudition and aesthetic pleasure. Daiches (1960) makes a powerful defense of the national poet to be a man of undisputed eminence in the entirety of English Literature. This noteworthiness owes to a number of dimensions that work on different channels like the intuitive knowledge about art, occupation, individual, tradition, and customs. Ben Jonson (1982) speaks about the dramatist to withstand the test of time for his characters who are the verisimilitude. We, as readers, reap the benefit of an aesthetic and a profoundly didactic message, dealing with the mundane issues of social, moral, and martial mores to the highest point of philosophical discourse.

The paper deals with the common man (the term I apply in strict sense for the public) and the general problems he confronts, by the close reading of the text of *Julius Caesar*. The study is conducted in the context of Brutus's and Antony's speeches, and the major reaction of the Romans who produce the total effectiveness for the play. It is closely scrutinized how the identical reaction after centuries made in the modern democracy of the West, Kingship in the middle east, and dictatorship in the third world countries in the guise of Brutus, Antony, and Roman republic. The major objective of the exercise in this project is the republic (I call 'common man') whose likes, dislikes, desires, and problems remain unconsidered. The major characters like Brutus and Antony have their respective address to the republic of Rome to judge the killing of Caesar. If the former speaks in favour of the killing; the latter stands against it; and the Romans are the audience.

Both Brutus and Antony attracted over the centuries a high volume of research who is right. Zander (2005) comments upon the polarised perspective of the critics about the protagonist to be either Brutus, or Caesar, or Antony. This sympathy has political overtones, too from a diverse perspective with the label of the murderer, liberator, conspirator, or rhetorician. There is profound divergence among the critics about the principal character as well. The major role in play more important than Brutus or Antony is the republic. They are still disenfranchised and disconnected in the government. The paper tries to make a convincing case how in this play the common man is caught, and is thus unable to make a discerning case, on the one hand between the plain speech based on reason, logic, and evidence; and on the other hand of speech that has nothing to do a step beyond rhetoric.

Fish (1980) argues that Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* "a speech act-play", that might be discussed as "it is about what the theory is about" as there is no other play to demonstrate how to do things and how not to do things better with words than *Julius Caesar*. He makes the illustration of the "self-consuming" theory of J. L. Austin. We see the

intention and function of both speeches to rest the audience satisfied, but the maneuver is different, and so is the reaction of the Romans. The commonality of society fails to make out the total intention of the speaker in order to draw a clear cut line between reality and rhetorical language. They lack the requisite knowledge of the devices. We see a comprehensive debate about words, the inflated language, and the total ignorance on the part of the audience.

Donnelly (2021) frames a debate on Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric in *The Lost Seed* in response to Dorothy Sayers's most influential essay "The Last Tools of Learning" that it is in our information culture. The focal point of Grammar is diction and syntax by arranging them into clauses. Rhetoric subsumes grammar on a larger than scale by concentrating on arguments and their arrangements. Logic, on the other hand, is the formulation of arguments either valid or invalid. These three verbal arts - grammar, logic, and rhetoric are called trivium (or three fold path). They all had their due realization in the curriculum of the medieval universities. The trivium at any stage is an optimal model for the psychological growth of the students.

Brutus remains consistent, sensible, and up to the mark both in content and context, and desires the establishment for the highest forms of truth. However, Antony remains steadfast in touching the soft side (by appealing to their hearts) of the audience to hoodwink them into believing the matter with the sentimental dose rather than the actual case is. Who suffers? The audience. For they always fall victim in such scenarios as they cannot make an informed choice in distinguishing the true from the false; or the false from the true. Antony's appeal overwhelms the ignorant hearts. Whitney and Packer (2002) in their critical review discuss that Brutus never entertained that notion that the funeral would turn into oration, and is deceived by his own self. Self-deception is a terrible mistake in Hamlet, King Lear, Macbeth, Richard III, King John, and Julius Caesar.

The central characteristic of the liberal arts lies in the application of apprenticeship in the art of rhetoric. It makes us able to face rhetoric as something more than mere a name for other people's arguments, and has a durable advantage in the field of persuasion. The fundamental aim of this article is to explain history-based rhetoric in order to help common man of the community hear a variety of voices in a text and its function. Students who are not adjusted to the understanding of rhetorical reading are dupes by the trick of language, especially at the hands of politicians.

History is full of kings, queens, their ambitions, their vulgar ambitions and their cruelties coupled with a sybaritic life and eroticism, having no concern about the common man. The cornerstone of Brutus' call is based not on approximation but exacting calculation and realism. The common man is predetermined as the hegemonic designs of the rulers prevail. In democracy, run by a few people, the common man and his problems go without any attention. The elected ones do not inconvenience themselves for his problems. Pakistan has been experiencing the ruling of dictatorship, aristocratic class, and political parties since 1947, and the common man is being misguided; and he profusely pins high hopes on them. Today, in the shape of democratic system, we see the imperialism of one nation with the imperialism of others. The common man is over and done, he becomes scapegoat, and the ways of imperialism keep going on. In Shakespeare's history plays their lie the didactic meaning for the ruler to gauge the credibility of the ruler, requires the combination of divine right and leadership capabilities. We perceive our own problems through Brutus' and Anthony's speeches. Shakespeare provides us insights regarding the sufferings and troubles confronted by the common man.

Literature Review

"It is absurd to hold that a man should be ashamed of an inability to defend himself with his limbs, but ashamed of an inability to defend himself with speech and reason; for the use of rational speech is more distinctive of a human being than the use of his limbs." Aristotle

The republic of the twenty-first century remains the injured party of the socioeconomic disparity, social seclusion, and psychological suppression under controlling governments. The technocrats of the state keep them in perpetual rigidity, and by large keeps selling the bogus narrative of inflated words. In their turn, they always give their support to the demagogue, populist agenda, and conspiracy theories. Brutus takes a dispassionate course of action without sowing any distrust, manipulation, or twisted turns as a more realistic person. . He attempts unquestionably to make men think with clear wisdom. It involves logic and ethical standards. Lillie (2021) argues that logic deals with standards by which we judge statements to be true or false, and ethics deals with the standards by which we judge human emotions to be right or wrong.

His balanced stuff conveyed by three chief points: (1) He urges the crowd to "Be patient till the last. Romans, countrymen, and lovers, hear me for my cause, and be silent, that you may hear" (p. 78) as it is a primary road towards reason. Deliberations, thinking and considerations are executed in being calm, patience, and silence. (2) He requires the mob's rationality "Censure me in your wisdom, and awake your senses that you may be the better judge" (p. 78) to build their conclusion of the case on rational ground. (3) He awares them for his unflinching love "there is tear for his love; joy for fortune; honour for his valour; and death for his ambition" (79) and this awareness is just here for the sake of awareness.

Dillon (2007) contends about the speech to be stand-offish, inquisitive, judicious, logically sequenced by

setting aside personal considerations in the larger interest of political stability. There still is no saner system in view to take into serious accounts the fundamentals issues facing the public. He received the applause "Caesar's better parts/Shall be crown'd in Brutus." (P. 80). It is more a convincing option to think and judge.

Crane (2013) sums up thus: "If the speech of Brutus is quiet, reasonable, and logical, Antony's speech is, of course, opposed to it in every possible way. When Brutus is calm, Antony is impassioned; where Brutus pays honest tribute to Caesar, Antony gives Brutus the lie with cunningly repeated epithet, "honourable; where Brutus appeals to reason, Antony befuddles his reason." (p. 144)

Critics do not favour Brutus speech as an ineffective and insufficient, but it is Shakespeare who shows him in this fine colour. He just desires the best for the republic of Rome so that their mundane issues may be taken up at the appropriate level. This class is always subjected to disenfranchisement, disconnects, and dehumanized values by the leaders like Antony who won them with the verbal trick of persuasion. Antony, like the dictator, democratic, and the king won the stage not by what he says but what he is. Colclough (2009) makes a brilliant point at this stage that Antony, throughout the speech, remains demagogue who by the trick of flattery insults the people, making a reference to their reason, but in fact, provoking their sentiments.

"O judgment, thou art fled to brutish beasts,

And men have lost their reason. Bear with me./ My heart is in the coffin till it come back to me." (P. 82)

It is a fine oratory, running on a systematic course of action towards its aim to stir them to the highest pitch so that they cannot come back to a common sense. The common sense must be taken aback to hear the word "reason" from the populist leader like Antony whose entire oratory runs counter to the reason and logic. Dorch (1955) assumes that Ben Jonson ridicules either this passage or its presumed sentiments as Antony plays with the emotions. He further maintains "this is a telling stroke. The crowd are given time to put their heads together and carry the argument to the illogical conclusion that Caesar was not ambitious, and he has had great wrongs; and they are also able to see Antony with a manly effort to pull himself together to resume his speech. (Dorch, 1955, p. 1ii, iii).

The common man in the shape of a plebian emerges again from when he was addressing "Live Brutus! live! live!" (p. 80) to "Me thinks there is much reason in his sayings./There's not a nobler man in Rome than Antony." (p. 80). The play revolves around this man who makes decisions with rash impetuosity without any deliberation; it is out his mental encompass to offer reasons about the goodness of Brutus to the goodness of Antony. This shift causes a huge vacuum and he is the ultimate target of the disingenuous policies. The populist know the psychology of the masses."Antony understands that success will lie with those who know how to and what to feed them." (Roe, 2010, p. 96). The common man is being fed with words rather than actions. The major issue being encountered by the common man like that of the Romans is their ignorance of rhetoric and common sense.

"In fact, the art of rhetoric has always been suspect in the Western philosophical tradition, an outlaw of disciplines only occasionally allowed respectability; even so, many of the most important figures in the Western intellectual tradition were indeed trained in this art. In literature, the epic poets Virgil, Ovid, Dante, and Milton were themselves educated in rhetoric, and Homer arguably invented it. Shakespeare's schooling was thoroughly rhetorical. In philosophy, rhetoric's most thoughtful critics, Plato and Augustine, were both trained in rhetoric, and Augustine was himself a teacher of the art even after his conversion to Christianity. Nietzsche was a professor of rhetoric." (Crider, 2005, pp. 1-2).

In the likewise manner, Crider (2009) takes a historical case that Plato, Aristotle, and Shakespeare were the great admirer of questions, of ethical standards, merged from rhetoric. The philosophers are concerned about the principles of rhetoric whilst the dramatist is concerned about the persuasive action. The major victim is the common man like the republic of Rome who even killed Cinna.

"Truly my name is Cinna

Tear him to pieces; he is a conspirator,

I am Cinna, the poet; I am Cinna, the poet.

Tear him to pieces for his bad verse, tear

him for his bad verses

I am not Cinna the conspirator

It is no matter his name's Cinna; pluck but his name out his heart, and turn him going."

(P. 89 & 90).

Here, the poet is not the victim of any mistaken identity; however, he fully made his acquaintance with the mentality provoked by rhetorical deliberation that he had nothing to do with the killing of Caesar. Shakespeare's greatness has no limit when we as readers confront such a situation after centuries. We find the angry mob rising to mutiny and chaos. Pakistan has experienced such cases in recent history where an angry mob claimed the life of an individual in the name of religion, politics, and differences. Kornstein (2012) asserts that Shakespeare shows no hard labour to name the plebians, but they are shown as faceless creatures, hoodwinked into believing the narrative, far

removed from reality. They are in the grip of a demagogue. The well calculated speech by Brutus they had acknowledged is now in the background. Doty (2017) goes on to argue that Shakespeare treats politics in extremely modern way. We, as readers, perceive Brutus, the statesman modern today, Antony, the fascist of the modern day, and the republic of the modern day in a very unique way. It is the republic that pays the price for their sentimental jumps to the conclusion rather than building up those conclusions partly upon their own experience and certain amounts of proof. Elloway (1986) quite excellently comments about the play to be political one without any political issues involved.

Discussion

"The right thing in speaking really is that we should be satisfied not to annoy our readers, without trying to delight them; we ought in fairness to fight our case with no help beyond the bare facts; nothing, therefore, should matter except the proof of those facts. Still, as has been said, other things affect the result considerably, owing to the defect of our hearers." (Aristotle, Rhetoric)

The major objective of the rhetorical dimensions lie in the application of the sentiments to be wrongly directed, and keep the audience enchained, drawn along, enticed beyond degrees, incited, coerced, and ruled over on different angles. It, as a matter of fact, bypasses reason, logic, and common sense in the background. The public like the Romans buy into inflated narrative, which is nothing, beyond the cycle broken pledges; and it is because of their misplaced confidence who suffer. Populism promoted by Antony is predicated on lies that maintain its mythic structure in order to make sure the light of actual things must never break through, and keep a firm grip in the state of spiraling authoritarian wrongs that are never exposed.

Populists like Mark Antony direct the policies that are only framed in order to stir up resentment rather than resolve issues, they provoke a spiral of ever-more disturbing narratives that soon turn against 'insiders' too: the 'stab in the back' by 'foes of the people', culminating in conspiracy theories regarding globalist 'elites' or an undefined 'deep state'. Finally, this cycle of broken pledges does threaten the 'deep' state and the common citizens – in other words, independent institutions, governance, and the rule of law.

Shakespeare's Brutus and Antony, and masses epitomize the actual scenario engulfed by the demagogues and common citizens who fail to take a firm stand before the rhetorical debate. In the longer run, the man of integrity who might belong to all walks of life, not necessarily from the political arena, is failed by virtue of his failed intellectual curiosity. He just directs the stuff of his content on reason, logic, and evidence unlike the populists with the unrealized pledges, and is largely failed by the majority of the citizens.

We have these disturbing people who are always making attempts to overlook a constitutional crisis – which finally topples the entire country – in ways that can resonate with contemporary politics of dishonesty. Moony (1903) asserts that the worthless citizens failed to understand the logical appeal of Brutus who does not excite their sentiments. Antony draws on the persuasive language of flattery and easily triumphs over Brutus. The well-meaning citizens in the 21st century are befooled across the world by electing their leaders who have nothing to do with the seriousness.

They not only caused psychological but economic chaos leading to huge amounts of trouble inside their country. The United States Capitol Attack as Trump made false claims of electoral fraud is a fine example in this regard. The common man is now languishing behind the bar. The article tries to show the teething troubles of the common man who is wilfully coerced into buying the bogus of narratives of the leadership while ignoring the issues he encounters. It is the didactic message that is in the face of Antony, he is entrapped in the modern day of democracy. The modern man himself is the creator of the existential crisis by swallowing the content, dancing before any tune, and then is disgusting with himself for his own fragility. Being psychologically manipulated to a blind lover to a brutal murderer of Cinna, the poet, to an absolute divorce from reason, to an ignored personality. This is a downfall - and the very man is the ultimate master of this downfall.

It is not so much that the common man buys into the mainstream propaganda worldview because he is dumb, or because he is selfish. Primarily, he buys into the mainstream propaganda worldview because he is lazy to a degree that you cannot think. The term lazy means he does not maintain intellectual curiosity that is a lazy thinker. He still keeps on pins high hopes on the promises backed by bombastic words. He remains among those who have gone from fully believing the mainstream propaganda worldview to realizing that everything he has been trained to believe about the world is a lie, then he knows how uncomfortable and disruptive this shift can be. This glitch in the minds is exploited by propagandists, who serve up power-serving information for him in ways that is palatable and easy to digest. Antony exploits it quite quickly and easily. He must transcend this dysfunctionality and become a conscious species for the larger interest of his rights being manipulatively ignored. Morell (2012) comments that the Roman failed to have an objective view about the address of Brutus and Antony.

At first, notwithstanding, he seeks reconciliation; Antony breaks his pledge and seeks revenge on them for Caesar's death. It shows Antony's merciless and mendacious disposition, as he employs deviousness to stir the public against the conspirators. He draws on subtle irony, complex metaphor, and scathing satire for the justification of his

cause to prove them false. "For Brutus is an honourable man." (P.). Helder (2011) speaks about irony to convey the opposite. Antony like the modern populist knows the emotional capabilities of the common man, and is this psychologically manipulated. Morell (2012) sums this up:

Whereas Brutus listing serves as emphasis, by repeating Brutus' words, Antonius is able to undermine the idea that Brutus is honourable, first rising question in his audience's mind, then provoking them to fury. Successive challenges to the charge of ambition are juxtaposed with Brutus 'honourable' label. (Morell 2012, p. 89)

Abstractions and generalisations are always the weakest points of the public. They can hardly make out those propositions in convenient ways. The populist draws on such devices at his disposal in order to keep the man in an ambiguous situation. Donald Trump, the 21st President of the United States is a fine examples in this regard - above all the resurrection of the senate over his defeat is no exception.

Conclusion

The public as portrayed in the Elizabethan age remains the same in terms of their misplaced confidence upon demagogue. Shakespeare's enduring status is still intact as we see the same Brutus, Antony, and the Public like of the Rome. The common class is still hoodwinked into buying the propaganda of the populist in the 21st century while overlooking his fundamental problems. The paper is a type of defense against the critic who held the belief based on their own reason that Shakespeare does not have a good opinion about the public. It represents a sustained endeavour that the public bypasses the reason by emotions by investing their hopes on the populists.

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