

# **Student Essay on Subtext-Julius Caesar**

## **Subtext-Julius Caesar by William Shakespeare**

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# Essay

In the novel *Julius Caesar* by William Shakespeare, subtext is employed to subtly develop a character. Mark Antony is a very complex character whose motives and character are often developed through the slight use of subtext. Antony's speech at Caesar's burial is full of subtext because Antony is attempting to sway the crowd in his favor without being overly obvious because the conspirators believe that he is aligned with them. Antony's subtext in his speech helps to sway support away from the conspirators, "He hath brought many captives home to Rome, Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill. Did this is Caesar seem ambitious? When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept...Yet Brutus says he was ambitious, and Brutus is an honorable man." (III.i.97-103) Antony attempts to make Caesar into a martyr that fought for the country and fought for the downtrodden. Additionally, the subtext in the way that Antony talks about Brutus, saying that Brutus thought Caesar was ambitious; turns Brutus into an enemy of Caesar, and therefore the enemy of Rome. Antony continues to subtly insinuate that Caesar was not a power hungry politician, "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 honorable man?" (III.i.105-108) The first part of Antony's quote is meant to discredit Brutus's depiction of Caesar. After this has been done, the subtext of Antony's speech questions Brutus's motives by mentioning that Brutus is against a man who Antony has represented in a favorable way. Antony once again questions Brutus's portrayal of Caesar and, in turn, makes Caesar appear to be less ambitious than he actually was. The subtext in Antony's speech expands upon him as a character and helps to show how he can use subtle things in his speech that he be very powerful.