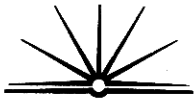


Power is a force that provides an individual or a group the ability to control and orchestrate. The term "powerplay" refers to the manipulation of power between individuals and groups of people and can be exerted in many forms, including verbal, oratorical, emotional or psychological. In "Julius Caesar," Shakespeare explores the importance of oratory skills in the manipulation of the ordinary people as well as the effects of verbal and emotional powerplay on the thinking of individuals. A newspaper article focusing on manipulation of power in Australian politics emphasises the fickleness of human nature and the scheming of politicians in order to achieve their ends. By contrast, John Donne explores the persuasive power of ~~ad~~ argument, wit and humour as tools of powerplay that are utilised in the seduction process in his poem, "The Flea."

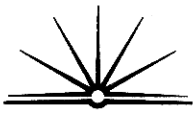
In "Julius Caesar," words as a tool of verbal and emotional powerplay are a persuasive force, capable of altering the actions of



individuals. In Act I of the play, Cassius, a shrewd and manipulative character, utilises verbal and emotional powerplay in his attempt to draw Brutus into the conspiracy. Cassius refers to the time when Caesar suffered from an epileptic fit, with the implication that power and physical strength are synonymous and thus Caesar did not deserve to be treated like a God. " 'Tis true, this God did shake His coward lips did from their colour fly." By pointing out Caesar's weaknesses and emphasising the fact that Caesar is no better than Brutus "What should be in that name, Caesar?" "Why should that name be sounded more than yours?"

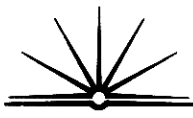
Cassius is attempting to flatter Brutus in order to draw him into the conspiracy. In a soliloquy delivered by Cassius at the end of the scene, Cassius states that he needs Brutus, an honourable and noble man, to participate to make the assassination appear more honourable.

The power of words in their appeal to



vanity is ~~the~~ also illustrated in Act II by Decius Brutus' clever manipulation of the subject matter of Calpurnia's dream. Realising that Calpurnia has thwarted the assassination plans, Decius must act quickly. Caesar's blood pouring from a ~~statue~~ statue is reinterpreted as signifying "that from you great Rome shall suck reviving blood and great men shall press for tinctures, stains, relics and cogniscance." The reference to religious relics with the implication of Caesar's eventual sainthood together with the reminder that Caesar will be ^{crowned} ~~crowded~~ that day suffices and the manipulation has succeeded.

The manipulative power of words is also illustrated after Caesar's death when Mark Antony realises that if he is to avenge Caesar's death, he must pretend to make friends with the ~~assassins~~ assassins. His message to the assassins, as related by his servant, stresses the powerful effect of words in their appeal to Brutus' vanity.

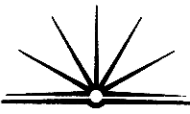


Brutus is noble, wise, valiant and honest. Say, "I love Brutus and I honour him." The manipulation was successful and Antony receives permission to speak at Caesar's funeral.

In the play, oratory power as a tool of political power assumes an important function in changing the thinking of the mob. In Act III, Brutus appeals to the virtues of patriotism and honour in an attempt to justify his actions in the assassination of Caesar. Speaking in prose to identify with the ordinary citizen, he justifies his actions by appealing to the crowd's sense of loyalty, "Not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more."

His use of the rhetorical question, "Who is here so vile that would not love his country" appeals to the crowd's sense of loyalty to the state.

Antony's task in winning over the crowd would appear difficult. However, his impressive oratory skills, his use of powerful, emotive poetry "If you have tears, prepare to shed



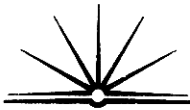
then now," and use of rhetoric reveal the importance of words as a tool of powerplay. The repetition of the irony implicit in, "And Brutus is an honourable man," creates a doubt in the crowd's mind as to Brutus' honour. The crowd is won over and seek revenge for the murder, The scene reinforces the fact that it is individuals who hold real power, but the amount of power they are able to possess is dependent on how successfully they can utilise oratory skills to manipulate the crowd.

"Bring on the Cutlery," ~~an~~ by Joseph Kerr, an article appearing in the Sydney Morning Herald on 27/3/02 explores the mechanics of powerplay in Australian politics. Through the use of humorous and colloquial language, Kerr highlights the irony involved in the process of manipulation, where the manipulator ultimately becomes the object of manipulation, "plotters and executioners

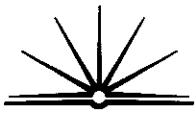


often eventually find out just how the knife feels going in." As seen in "Julius Caesar," the ability of an individual to gain power is dependent on the support of the people. In the article, the support of party colleagues is essential, the notions of power and support being inextricably linked. However, as "Julius Caesar" illustrates, this support can be transitory as the fickleness of human nature surfaces and allegiance to one leader may quickly change.

In his poem "The Flea," John Donne explores the persuasive power of argument, wit and humour as instruments of power play, such instruments becoming the means by which the male's ultimate aim of seduction of the female is to be completed. Donne's use of conceit has elevated the flea as a symbol of Donne, his lover and the holy union of marriage, "This flea is you and I, and this our marriage bed, and marriage temple is."



The flea, which has bitten both Donne and his lover, has united them "And in this flea, our two bloods mingled bee," therefore consummating their love and revealing the futility of resisting Donne's sexual advances. Donne's use of wit and humour suggesting that if ~~Donne~~ his lover kills the flea, she will commit "sacrilege, three sinnes in killing three," refer to the death of Donne, his lover and the holy sacrament of marriage and is an attempt to elevate their love to a higher status. When his lover claims that by killing the flea, neither lover has been harmed, thereby thinking she has triumphed, Donne cleverly reverses the argument, stating that the impact of his lover submitting to Donne's sexual passion will be equal to that of the flea's death. The result is a victory for intellect and argument, the seduction ~~of~~^{by} the male being completed when the female mind had capitulated. In contrast to other



texts, powerplay is represented by the use of wit and humour, where an illogical lighthearted argument ultimately prevails.

It is clear that powerplay can be explored and represented in many ways and shapes an understanding of events, personalities of people and situations. Although powerplay comes in many forms, the nature of powerplay is obvious. Power is a dynamic, manipulative force utilised constantly by individuals or groups of people in order to achieve their ends.