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Side Talk No. 05, Mark Antony's Oration Analyzed

R. E. Pattinson Kline

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EFFECTIVE PUBLIC SPEAKING

SIDE TALK No. 5

MARK ANTONY'S ORATION ANALYZED



**NORTH AMERICAN INSTITUTE
CHICAGO**

MARK ANTONY'S ORATION ANALYZED

SIDE TALK No. 5

**One of a Series of Talks on
EFFECTIVE PUBLIC SPEAKING**

By

R. E. PATTISON KLINE

**Dean Public Speaking Department,
Columbia College of Expression, Chicago**

**NORTH AMERICAN INSTITUTE
CHICAGO**

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OUTLINE OF ASSIGNMENT.

FIFTH MONTH.

FIRST WEEK

- First*—Read this Side Talk on “Mark Antony’s Oration Analyzed.”
- Second*—Read carefully Lesson No. 17, “How to Make Ideas Clear.”
- Third*—Practice the selection, “How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix,” page 93, Text Book, “Training of the Voice.”
- Fourth*—Read carefully the Preface, Introduction and Chapter 1, Text Book, “Authorities on Oratory.”
- Fifth*—Work out the Exercises in Lesson No. 17.

SECOND WEEK

- First*—Read carefully Lesson No. 18, “How to Develop Emotion.”
- Second*—Read carefully Chapter 2, Text Book, “Authorities on Oratory.”
- Third*—Memorize the speech, “Is Life Worth Living?” page 56, Text Book, “Selected Speeches for Practice,” and practice it orally.
- Fourth*—Read carefully the analysis of “The Heroism of the Unknown,” page 54, Text Book, “Analysis of Oratorical Style.”
- Fifth*—Work out the Exercises in Lesson No. 18.

THIRD WEEK

- First*—Read carefully Lesson No. 19, “How to Convince.”
- Second*—Read carefully Chapter 3, Text Book, “Authorities on Oratory.”
- Third*—Practice as an Exercise the speech beginning, “Once more unto the breach, dear friend,” page 98, Text Book, “Training of the Voice.”
- Fourth*—Make an original speech and practice it orally.
- Fifth*—Work out the Exercises in Lesson No. 19.

FOURTH WEEK

First—Read carefully Lesson No. 20, “How to Secure Action.”

Second—Read carefully Chapter 4, Text Book, “Authorities on Oratory.”

Third—Read carefully the analysis of the speech, “The Muck-Raker,” page 89, Text Book, “Analysis of Oratorical Style.”

Fourth—Memorize the speech, “Self Reliance,” page 74, Text Book, “Selected Speeches for Practice,” and practice it orally.

Fifth—Work out the Exercises in Lesson No. 20.

“By the street of by and by one arrives at the house of never.”

—Cervantes.

MARK ANTONY'S ORATION ANALYZED

The speech by Mark Antony over the body of Julius Cæsar, taken from the play by Shakespeare, has been considered one of the greatest speeches of its kind. It is possible that it ought not to be dignified by calling it an oration, but it is perhaps the greatest bit of mob eloquence in existence. The speech furnishes an excellent study in the process of inducing an audience to undertake action which the speaker desires them to take. The author has not made an exhaustive analysis by any means, so the student is urged to make a more detailed examination.

It is to be remembered that the rule of securing action is that emotion, feeling, passion aroused by certain motives is the cause of most action. The type of action and its intensity are dependent upon the type of the passion and its intensity.

JULIUS CÆSAR.

ACT III. SCENE II.

- 1 *Antony.* Friends, Romans, Country-
men, lend me your ears;
- 2 I come to bury Cæsar, not to praise
him.
- 3 The evil that men do lives after them;
- 4 The good is oft interred with their
bones;
- 5 So let it be with Cæsar. The noble
Brutus
- 6 Hath told you Cæsar was ambitious;
- 7 If it were so, it was a grievous fault,
- 8 And grievously hath Cæsar answer'd
it.
- 9 Here, under leave of Brutus and the
rest,—
- 10 For Brutus is an honorable man,
- 11 So are they all, all honorable men,—
- 12 Come I to speak in Cæsar's funeral.
- 13 He was my friend, faithful and just to
me:
- 14 But Brutus says he was ambitious;
- 15 And Brutus is an honorable man.

- 16 He hath brought many captives home
to Rome,
- 17 Whose ransom did the general coffers
fill;
- 18 Did this in Cæsar seem ambitious?
- 19 When that the poor have cried, Cæsar
hath wept;
- 20 Ambition should be made of sterner
stuff.
- 21 Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
- 22 And Brutus is an honorable man.
- 23 You all did see that on the Lupercal
- 24 I thrice presented him a kingly crown,
- 25 Which he did thrice refuse. Was this
ambition?
- 26 Yet Brutus says, he was ambitious;
- 27 And, sure, he is an honorable man.
- 28 I speak not to disprove what Brutus
spoke,
- 29 But here I am to speak what I do
know.
- 30 You all did love him once, not without
cause;
- 31 What cause withholds you then to
mourn for him?

32 O judgment, thou art fled to brutish
beasts,

33 And men have lost their reason!—
Bear with me;

34 My heart is in the coffin there with
Cæsar,

35 And I must pause till it come back to
me.

36 *1 Citizen.* Methinks there is much
reason in his sayings.

37 *2 Citizen.* If thou consider rightly
of the matter,

38 Cæsar has had great wrong.

39 *3 Citizen.* Has he, masters?

40 I fear there will be a worse come in his
place.

41 *4 Citizen.* Mark'd ye his words?
He would not take the crown;

42 Therefore 't is certain he was not am-
bitious.

43 *1 Citizen.* If it be found so, some
will dear abide it.

44 *2 Citizen.* Poor soul! his eyes are
red as fire with weeping.

45 *3 Citizen.* There's not a nobler man
in Rome than Antony.

- 46 4 *Citizen*. Now mark him, he be-
 gins again to speak.
- 47 *Antony*. But yesterday the word of
 Cæsar might
- 48 Have stood against the world; now lies
 he there,
- 49 And none so poor to do him reverence.
- 50 O masters! If I were dispos'd to stir
- 51 Your hearts and minds to mutiny and
 rage,
- 52 I should do Brutus wrong and Cassius
 wrong,
- 53 Who, you all know, are honorable men.
- 54 I will not do them wrong; I rather
 choose
- 55 To wrong the dead, to wrong myself
 and you,
- 56 Than I will wrong such honorable men.
- 57 But here's a parchment, with the seal
 of Cæsar;
- 58 I found it in his closet; 't is his will.
- 59 Let but the commons hear this testa-
 ment—
- 60 Which, pardon me, I do not mean to
 read—

61 And they would go and kiss dead
Cæsar's wounds,

62 And dip their napkins in his sacred
blood.

63 Yea, beg a hair of him for memory,
64 And, dying, mention it within their
wills,

65 Bequeathing it as a rich legacy

66 Unto their issue.

67 *4 Citizen.* We'll hear the will.
Read it, Mark Antony.

68 *All.* The will, the will! We will
hear Cæsar's will.

69 *Antony.* Have patience, gentle
friends, I must not read it;

70 It is not meet you know how Cæsar
lov'd you.

71 You are not wood, you are not stones,
but men;

72 And, being men, hearing the will of
Cæsar,

73 It will inflame you, it will make you
mad.

74 'T is good you know not that you are
his heirs;

75 For if you should, O, what would come
of it?

76 4 *Citizen*. Read the will! We'll
hear it, Antony!

77 You shall read us the will! Cæsar's
will!

78 *Antony*. Will you be patient? Will
you stay awhile?

79 I have o'ershot myself to tell you of it.

80 I fear I wrong the honorable men

81 Whose daggers have stabb'd Cæsar;
I do fear it.

82 4 *Citizen*. They are traitors! Hon-
orable men!

83 *All*. The will! the testament!

84 2 *Citizen*. They are villains, mur-
therers! The will!

85 Read the will!

86 *Antony*. You will compel me, then,
to read the will?

87 Then make a ring about the corpse of
Cæsar,

88 And let me show you him that made
the will.

89 Shall I descend? And will you give
me leave?

- 90 *All.* Come down.
- 91 *2 Citizen.* Descend. (*He comes
down from the pulpit.*)
- 92 *3 Citizen.* You shall have leave.
- 93 *4 Citizen.* A ring; stand round.
- 94 *1 Citizen.* Stand from the hearse,
stand from the body.
- 95 *2 Citizen.* Room for Antony!—
most noble Antony!
- 96 *Antony.* Nay, press not so upon me;
stand far off.
- 97 *All.* Stand back! room! bear back!
- 98 *Antony.* If you have tears, prepare
to shed them now.
- 99 You all do know this mantle: I remem-
ber
- 100 The first time ever Cæsar put it on;
- 101 'T was on a summer's evening, in his
tent,
- 102 That day he overcame the Nervii.
- 103 Look! in this place ran Cassius' dag-
ger through;
- 104 See what a rent the envious Casca
made;
- 105 Through this the well-beloved Brutus
stabb'd;

- 106 And as he pluck'd his cursed steel
away,
107 Mark how the blood of Cæsar follow'd
it,
108 As rushing out of doors, to be resolv'd
109 If Brutus so unkindly knock'd, or no;
110 For Brutus, as you know, was Cæsar's
angel:
111 Judge, O you gods, how dearly Cæsar
lov'd him!
112 This was the most unkindest cut of all;
113 For, when the noble Cæsar saw him
stab,
114 Ingratitude, more strong than traitors'
arms,
115 Quite vanquish'd him; then burst his
mighty heart;
116 And, in his mantle muffling up his face,
117 Even at the base of Pompey's statue,
118 Which all the while ran blood, great
Cæsar fell.
119 O, what a fall was there, my country-
men!
120 Then I, and you, and all of us fell
down,

121 Whilst bloody treason flourish'd over
us.

122 O, now you weep, and I perceive you
feel

123 The dint of pity; these are gracious
drops.

124 Kind souls, what! weep you when you
but behold

125 Our Cæsar's vesture wounded? Look
you here,

126 Here is himself, marr'd, as you see,
with traitors.

127 *1 Citizen.* O piteous spectacle!

128 *2 Citizen.* O noble Cæsar!

129 *3 Citizen.* O woeful day!

130 *4 Citizen.* O traitors! villains!

131 *1 Citizen.* O most bloody sight!

132 *2 Citizen.* We will be revenged.

133 *Citizens.* Revenge!—About!—Seek!
—Burn!—Fire!—Kill!—Slay!
Let not a traitor live.

134 *1 Citizen.* Peace there! Hear the
noble Antony.

135 *Antony.* Stay, countrymen!

136 *2 Citizen.* We'll hear him, we'll
follow him, we'll die with him.

- 137 *Antony.* Good friends, sweet
 friends, let me not stir you up
 138 To such a sudden flood of mutiny.
 139 They that have done this deed are hon-
 orable:
 140 What private griefs they have, alas!
 I know not,
 141 That made them do it; they are wise
 and honorable,
 142 And will, no doubt, with reasons an-
 swer you.
 143 I come not, friends, to steal away your
 hearts:
 144 I am no orator, as Brutus is;
 145 But, as you know me all, a plain blunt
 man,
 146 That love my friend; and that they
 know full well
 147 That gave me public leave to speak of
 him.
 148 For I have neither wit, nor words, nor
 worth,
 149 Action, nor utterance, nor the power
 of speech,
 150 To stir men's blood: I only speak right
 on;

151 I tell you that which you yourselves do
know,

152 Show you sweet Cæsar's wounds, poor,
poor dumb mouths,

153 And bid them speak for me: but were
I Brutus,

154 And Brutus Antony, there were an
Antony

155 Would ruffle up your spirits, and put
a tongue

156 In every wound of Cæsar, that should
move

157 The stones of Rome to rise and mutiny.

158 *Citizens.* We'll mutiny.

159 *1 Citizen.* We'll burn the house of
Brutus.

160 *3 Citizen.* Away, then! come, seek
the conspirators.

161 *Antony.* Yet hear me, countrymen;
yet hear me speak.

162 *Citizens.* Peace, ho!—Hear An-
tony,—most noble Antony.

163 *Antony.* Why, friends, you go to do
you know not what.

164 Wherein hath Cæsar thus deserv'd
your loves?

165 Alas! you know not: I must tell you
then.

166 You have forget the will I told you of.

167 *Citizens.* Most true. The will! let's
stay and hear the will.

168 *Antony.* Here is the will, and under
Cæsar's seal.

169 To every Roman citizen he gives,

170 To every several man, seventy-five
drachmas.

171 *2 Citizen.* Most noble Cæsar! we'll
revenge his death.

172 *3 Citizen.* O royal Cæsar!

173 *Antony.* Hear me with patience.

174 *Citizens.* Peace, ho!

175 *Antony.* Moreover, he hath left you
all his walks,

176 His private arbors, and new-planted
orchards,

177 On this side Tiber; he hath left them
you,

178 And to your heirs for ever; common
pleasures,

179 To walk abroad, and recreate your-
selves.

180 Here was a Cæsar! when comes such
another?

181 *1 Citizen.* Never, never! Come,
away, away!

182 We'll burn his body in the holy place,
183 And with the brands fire the traitors'
houses.

184 Take up the body.

185 *2 Citizen.* Go fetch fire.

186 *3 Citizen.* Pluck down benches.

187 *4 Citizen.* Pluck down forms, win-
dows, anything.

[Exeunt Citizens with the body.]

188 *Antony.* Now let it work: mischief,
thou art afoot,

189 Take thou what course thou wilt!

ANALYSIS.

Note first how the speaker is careful to put himself on friendly footing with his audience. Trace carefully the statements which Antony uses to prevent any arousing of antagonism. Fix the point where he changes his method, speaking of Brutus with criticism and antagonism. Observe in lines 7 and 8, how skillfully Antony sug-

gests that Cæsar was not ambitious. "If it were so," with the proper vocal intonation, is an effective device.

Note line 3 and line 14: Surely the audience will listen respectfully while a friend speaks the last rites over the body of his friend. He does not ask the crowd to join him—this is Antony's service for his friend. The psychological effect of this method is very subtle, but very effective.

Study lines 17 to 24. Cæsar could fill the general coffers with the slave money and yet be ambitious. Antony knows, however, that when one's pocket book is being lined he is not so very particular about ethics in other matters. He knows also that their satisfaction because of national riches will prevent them from thinking very closely of his claim that Cæsar was not ambitious.

Lines 30 and 31 establish a very important principle in argument. The statement of fact may very positively have the effect of disproving another's statement, but to say that a speaker is wrong, and that you disapprove, or disagree, or contradict what he says arouses antagonism, thus making it

difficult for the facts to have the weight they would have if stated in the manner Antony states them.

Examine lines 32 and 33. He does not ask them to praise Cæsar, or to admire him, or to excuse him. They can mourn for him because of their former love, and his former good deeds. When addressing an audience which is clearly opposed to the idea to be discussed it is absolutely necessary that common ground upon which both speaker and audience can stand, be found.

What effect was desired by Antony in his use of lines 34 to 37? Whether his weeping was genuine or a clever bit of acting, it had its effect. Many modern speakers—especially among the clergy—have learned the power of an unsteady voice and of tears to move people to a sympathetic consideration of ideas to which they have been opposed. The speeches of the citizens indicate that Antony is now thoroughly in the good graces of his hearers. That is what he desired first of all.

That is what every speaker must secure if he is to be heard willingly.

Study carefully lines 51 to 57. Mark well the skillful appeal to the motive of power. The very name Rome stood for power, and it was a keen stroke which went deep when Antony suggested that they had permitted the most powerful man among them to be smitten. Note the conditional statement, "If I were disposed," etc.

In 61 the speaker makes a very rapid shift to another motive. Make a careful analysis of this use of the will. His refusal to read the will, and the intimation of the great gift to the people the will made, could not help but secure the result he desired.

One who understood mob psychology less than Shakespeare, would have made Antony read the will upon the demand voiced in lines 71 and 72. Lines 73 to 79 will seem at first reading to be decidedly far-fetched in method. It must be remembered that Antony has already developed a very positive and intense emotional state among his hearers. It is when the emotions are running high that the mind does

not think as keenly or as closely as it does when there is little emotion. Antony knows also that to delay the granting of a request urgently demanded serves to increase the intensity of the desire. Back of it all is the offer of goods which he has made to the citizens through the will. Think how closely the motive of property is connected with every phase of life.

Lines 85 and 86 call forth just the statement from the crowd that Antony wishes. He has succeeded in getting them to declare themselves on his side. It will be a comparatively easy matter to secure next the action he desires them to take.

Note how through these lines the speaker flatters his audience by appearing to be acting according to their orders.

From 103 to 132 there is provided a most skillful appeal to the emotions. To deepen and intensify several emotional strains is necessary if the desired end is to follow. An examination of real oratory reveals the fact that the orator frequently steps aside from his argumentative process for a time in order to arouse

the emotions. Study the manner in which Antony leads up to the implication that Cæsar died of a broken heart rather than by the assassins' weapons.

His charge in lines 125 to 132 that national greatness has been injured by the murder of Cæsar produces a very positive effect. National greatness was a tremendous motive with the Roman. Whatever stood in the way of national power and development was to be destroyed. In these lines Antony does not hesitate to call the conspirators by such terms as he would not have dared to use at the opening of the speech. He knows that the sympathies of his audience are with him.

Study carefully each detail of the development of his speech through this portion. Each new statement is set forth with the idea of increasing the emotion until it comes with such an onrush that the conspirators will be swept away.

Lines 133 to 143 indicate the degree to which the mob is willing to go to avenge the death of Cæsar. Antony is not sure, however, that their purpose will remain

firm after they leave him, so he leaves the reading of the will as the final stroke.

Weigh fully the effect of each line from 144 to 164. Lines 151 to 158 show the use of a very effective and universal device. Such talk sounds well to the ears of the masses. Line 158 illustrates a very subtle method. To be able to lead an audience to a conclusion in such a manner that they believe that they themselves were the ones who first held the conclusion is very skillful, and very effective. Then openly to give them the credit of knowing first your argument and having thought it through, only adds to the effectiveness of the device.

The remainder is the very clever re-introduction of the matter of the will and its reading. It will be readily seen that with the crowd in the frame of mind and in the emotional state which Antony has brought about, the reading of the will simply tends to produce with great rapidity a crystallization of their purpose to revenge themselves upon Cæsar's assassins.

Set down in order the various appeals to motive made in the entire speech.

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—Garfield.

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