Marcus Stevens Julius Caesar Essay March 3, 2016

William Shakespeare, in his play *Julius Caesar,* comments on the commoners of society throughout the course of the play. He ultimately does this by creating scenes in the play that the commoners play a significant role in the outcome. Likewise, he is commenting on how the common folk can, in the long run, change the course of events in an elusive way, even when they are scrutinized.

One instance in *Julius Caesar* of Shakespeare commenting on the commoners of society is when Caesar and his supporters celebrated his triumph over Pompey. “These growing feathers plucked from Caesar’s wing / Will make him fly an ordinary pitch.” In this quote, the commoners were vouching for Caesar, but Flavius and Murellus were striving to limit his popularity, as it appears to be growing exceptionally. By doing this it would, therefore, limit his potentially “dangerous” power and keep him from becoming ruler. It is clear that Shakespeare is trying to show that if everyone works together, even ones in the lowest of the socioeconomic class, like the commoners, loyalty and devotion to Caesar will inevitably rise him to power.

Another example of Shakespeare acknowledging the role of commoners in society is the death of Cinna the poet. This scene was not very significant in terms of affecting the future in the play, but it does exemplify how easily Antony manipulated and influenced the common people. Moreover, this scene showed how virtually all of the power can be acquired by the common people and how vital they can be in a certain situation, and in this case, the death of an innocent man. Cinna declared, “[t]ruly, my name is Cinna,” and “I am not Cinna the conspirator.” Meanwhile, the Plebeians reply, “[t]ear him to pieces! He is a conspirator.” Even when they believe that he is not Cinna the conspirator, they still kill him, saying… “[i]t is no matter. His name's Cinna. Pluck but his name out of his heart, and turn him going*.*”

One of the most unobtrusive examples of Shakespeare commenting on the commoners’ role in society is with the letters that Cassius sent out to Brutus. These letters, supposedly written by the Roman commoners, actually written by Cassius in different handwriting styles, were intended for Brutus to become convinced to defy Caesar and kill him, for he was attaining too much power and could eventually become corrupt. “I will this night, In several hands in at his windows throw, As if they came from several citizens, Writings, all tending to the great opinion That Rome holds of his name.” This quote is an example of Cassius plotting the components that would contribute to the letters to Brutus. This series of events that takes place during this scene shows the impact that the common voice has on a leader and how it can be very powerful, but corrupting.