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**When Words Become Deeds: Political Metaphor as
Political Action in Julius Caesar**

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Abstract

Political language does more than describe reality; it actively shapes the social and political worlds that people inhabit. This study investigates the constitutive role of political metaphor in by integrating Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) with Speech Act Theory (SAT). Rather than treating metaphor as a decorative rhetorical device, the paper argues that Shakespeare presents metaphor as a performative mechanism through which political legitimacy is constructed, violence is justified, and collective action is mobilized. Employing a qualitative textual analysis informed by the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) and critical discourse analysis, the study examines the competing metaphorical systems employed by Brutus and Antony in Acts 2 and 3, with particular emphasis on the Forum scene (Act 3, Scene 2). The analysis demonstrates that Brutus frames Caesar's assassination through metaphors of disease, sacrifice, and surgery, thereby representing political murder as an act of civic necessity. Antony, by contrast, reconstructs Caesar's body through metaphors of martyrdom, national identity, and embodied suffering, transforming physical wounds into persuasive testimony capable of reshaping public consciousness. The findings indicate that Antony's embodied metaphors generate stronger perlocutionary effects than Brutus's abstract appeals to republican virtue because they engage immediate sensory and emotional experience. Consequently, the struggle between the conspirators and Antony is revealed as a conflict between competing conceptual worlds rather than merely opposing political opinions. The study concludes that Shakespeare anticipates modern theories of political framing by demonstrating that metaphor is not simply a linguistic ornament but a cognitive instrument through which political realities are created, contested, and transformed. These findings contribute to Shakespearean criticism, cognitive linguistics, and political discourse studies while highlighting the continuing relevance of metaphor in contemporary political communication.

Keywords: Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Speech Act Theory, Political Discourse, Cognitive Linguistics, Body Politic, Rhetoric.

المستخلص

إن اللغة السياسية تفعل أكثر من مجرد وصف الواقع؛ فهي تشكل بصورة فاعلة العوالم الاجتماعية والسياسية التي يعيش فيها الناس. تبحث هذه الدراسة في الدور التكويني للاستعارة السياسية في مسرحية «يوليوس قيصر» من خلال دمج نظرية الاستعارة التصويرية (CMT) مع نظرية أفعال الكلام (SAT). وبدلاً من التعامل مع الاستعارة بوصفها أداة بلاغية زخرفية، تجادل الدراسة بأن شكسبير يقدم الاستعارة بوصفها آلية أدائية يتم من خلالها بناء الشرعية السياسية، وتبرير العنف، وحشد الفعل الجماعي. وباعتماد التحليل النصي النوعي المستند إلى إجراء تحديد الاستعارة (MIP)

وتحليل الخطاب النقدي، تفحص الدراسة الأنظمة الاستعارية المتنافسة التي يوظفها بروتوس وأنطونيوس في الفصلين الثاني والثالث، مع التركيز بصورة خاصة على مشهد المنتدى (الفصل الثالث، المشهد الثاني). ويظهر التحليل أن بروتوس يوظف اغتيال قيصر من خلال استعارات المرض والتضحية والجراحة، وبذلك يصور القتل السياسي بوصفه فعلاً من أفعال الضرورة المدنية. وعلى النقيض من ذلك، يعيد أنطونيوس بناء جسد قيصر من خلال استعارات الاستشهاد والهوية الوطنية والمعاناة الجسدية، محولاً الجروح الجسدية إلى شهادة مقنعة قادرة على إعادة تشكيل الوعي العام. وتشير النتائج إلى أن استعارات أنطونيوس المتجسدة تولد تأثيرات تداولية أقوى من المناشدات المجردة التي يقدمها بروتوس للفضيلة الجمهورية، لأنها تتفاعل مع الخبرة الحسية والعاطفية المباشرة. وبناءً على ذلك، تكشف الدراسة أن الصراع بين المتأمرين وأنطونيوس يتضح بوصفه صراعاً بين عوالم مفاهيمية متنافسة، وليس مجرد آراء سياسية متعارضة. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن شكسبير يستبق النظريات الحديثة حول التأطير السياسي من خلال إظهار أن الاستعارة ليست مجرد زينة لغوية، بل هي أداة معرفية يتم من خلالها خلق الحقائق السياسية، والتنافس عليها، وتحويلها. وتسهم هذه النتائج في النقد الشكسبييري، واللسانيات المعرفية، ودراسات الخطاب السياسي، مع إبراز الأهمية المستمرة للاستعارة في التواصل السياسي المعاصر.

الكلمات المفتاحية: شكسبير، يوليوس قيصر، نظرية الاستعارة التصورية، نظرية أفعال الكلام، الخطاب السياسي، اللسانيات المعرفية، الجسد السياسي، البلاغة.

1. Introduction

Language occupies a central position in political life because it shapes how individuals perceive authority, legitimacy, justice, and violence. Political conflicts are rarely determined solely through military force or institutional power; rather, they are mediated through linguistic practices that define events, construct identities, and influence collective judgment. Among these practices, metaphor represents one of the most powerful cognitive and rhetorical resources through which political actors organize experience and persuade audiences. Contemporary research in cognitive linguistics has demonstrated that metaphors are not merely stylistic embellishments but conceptual structures that shape human thought and behaviour (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* provides one of the earliest and most sophisticated literary explorations of this phenomenon. Although *Julius Caesar* is traditionally examined as a tragedy of political ambition, republicanism, and betrayal, it is equally a drama about the struggle to control political meaning through language. Throughout the play, competing leaders attempt to define Caesar, Rome, and the assassination using contrasting metaphorical frameworks. These competing linguistic constructions determine how political violence is interpreted and whether it is regarded as an act of patriotic liberation or criminal murder. Shakespeare therefore presents rhetoric not as an accessory to political action but as one of its primary causes. The decisive turning point of the tragedy occurs not during Caesar's assassination but during the Forum

speeches delivered by Brutus and Antony in Act 3, Scene 2. Both speakers address the same audience and refer to the same historical event, yet they produce radically different political outcomes. Brutus initially persuades the Roman citizens that Caesar's death was necessary for the preservation of republican liberty, whereas Antony rapidly overturns that judgment by reconstructing Caesar as a heroic victim whose death demands public vengeance. The dramatic reversal demonstrates that political authority depends not only upon military or institutional power but also upon the successful construction of persuasive conceptual frameworks.

This paper argues that the conflict between Brutus and Antony is fundamentally a struggle between competing metaphorical systems that generate different political realities. Brutus employs metaphors of disease, surgery, sacrifice, and potential danger to portray assassination as a necessary act of political preservation. Antony counters these representations by employing embodied metaphors centred on blood, wounds, memory, and the collective identity of Rome, transforming Caesar's corpse into persuasive evidence against the conspirators. These metaphorical systems perform political work because they reshape public understanding and motivate collective action. To explain this process, the study combines Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) with Speech Act Theory (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969). Conceptual Metaphor Theory explains how abstract political concepts become understandable through familiar bodily and experiential domains, whereas Speech Act Theory demonstrates how utterances perform social of history. Excellent. Below is the **fully rewritten Literature Review** in an international journal style. Rather than listing previous studies, it critically synthesizes scholarship, identifies the research gap, and establishes the rationale for your study.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Metaphor as a Cognitive and Political Phenomenon

Research on metaphor has undergone a fundamental transformation over the past four decades. Traditional rhetorical theories regarded metaphor primarily as a stylistic ornament employed to enhance eloquence and literary expression. This perspective, rooted in classical rhetoric, viewed metaphor as a deviation from literal language whose primary function was aesthetic rather than cognitive. However, this understanding was significantly challenged by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), whose Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) redefined metaphor as a fundamental mechanism of human cognition. According to CMT,

abstract concepts are routinely understood through systematic mappings from concrete experiential domains, making metaphor an essential component of thought rather than merely a feature of language. Subsequent research has expanded this cognitive perspective into diverse disciplines, including discourse analysis, political communication, psychology, and literary studies. Scholars such as Semino (2008), Charteris-Black (2004, 2013), and Musolff (2016) demonstrate that metaphors influence not only individual understanding but also collective social behaviour by framing political events, legitimising ideological positions, and shaping public opinion. Political metaphors therefore function as conceptual frameworks that define how societies interpret complex realities, allocate responsibility, and justify action. Within this theoretical tradition, metaphor becomes particularly significant in contexts of political conflict because competing metaphorical systems construct competing versions of reality. Rather than simply describing political events, metaphors determine what counts as danger, justice, patriotism, or betrayal. Consequently, political persuasion depends not only upon logical reasoning but also upon the conceptual structures through which audiences perceive political experience.

2.2 Shakespearean Imagery and Political Language

The study of Shakespeare's imagery has long occupied a central position within Shakespearean criticism. Among the earliest comprehensive investigations, Spurgeon (1935) catalogued recurring image patterns throughout Shakespeare's plays, demonstrating how individual dramatists develop distinctive symbolic systems. Her analysis of *Julius Caesar* identifies recurrent images associated with blood, disease, sacrifice, and the human body, suggesting that these motifs contribute significantly to the play's thematic unity. Although Spurgeon's work remains foundational, its emphasis is primarily descriptive rather than explanatory. Imagery is treated principally as an indicator of emotional atmosphere and thematic coherence rather than as a cognitive mechanism capable of influencing political action. Consequently, while the study successfully identifies metaphorical patterns, it provides limited insight into the processes through which these metaphors shape political judgment within the dramatic action. Subsequent literary criticism has increasingly situated *Julius Caesar* within broader political and historical contexts. New Historicist scholars, including Bate (2013), interpret the play as a reflection of Elizabethan concerns regarding monarchy, succession, rebellion, and legitimate authority. These approaches illuminate the historical circumstances surrounding Shakespeare's composition but devote comparatively less attention to the linguistic mechanisms through which political authority is constructed

inside the play itself. Similarly, Miola (1985) examines Roman political philosophy and the classical tradition of tyrannicide, arguing that Shakespeare explores the moral ambiguities surrounding political assassination. While this perspective enriches historical understanding, it largely treats metaphor as supporting political argument rather than constituting political reality. Consequently, an important analytical gap remains concerning the relationship between metaphor, cognition, and political action.

2.3 Political Metaphor and the Body Politic

Among the most influential metaphorical traditions in Western political thought is the concept of the Body Politic, whereby the state is conceptualised as a living organism. The origins of this metaphor extend to classical antiquity and medieval political theology, reaching systematic formulation in Kantorowicz's (1957) influential study *The King's Two Bodies*. According to this tradition, political authority possesses both a physical and symbolic dimension, allowing the ruler's body to represent the continuity and unity of the state.

Modern discourse analysts have demonstrated that body metaphors continue to structure political reasoning. Musolff (2010) argues that conceptualisations of nations as bodies frequently generate metaphors of disease, infection, and surgery, particularly during periods of political instability. Such metaphors often legitimise exclusion, purification, or violence by representing political opponents as pathological threats to collective health.

This perspective offers a productive framework for interpreting *Julius Caesar*. Brutus repeatedly frames Caesar as a potential disease threatening the health of the Republic, whereas Antony reconstructs Caesar's wounded body as the embodiment of Rome itself. The conflict between these opposing conceptualisations demonstrates that political legitimacy depends upon which version of the Body Politic gains public acceptance. However, despite extensive scholarship on body metaphors in political discourse, relatively few studies have systematically examined how Shakespeare integrates these conceptual structures into dramatic dialogue to influence both fictional audiences and theatrical spectators. This study addresses that omission by analysing how competing body metaphors function dynamically within political speech.

2.4 Speech Act Theory and Political Persuasion

While Conceptual Metaphor Theory explains how political concepts become cognitively meaningful, Speech Act Theory explains how language performs social and political actions. Austin (1962) challenged the assumption that language merely conveys information

by demonstrating that utterances frequently perform actions such as promising, warning, commanding, apologising, or declaring. Searle (1969) subsequently refined this theory by classifying speech acts according to their communicative functions and intended effects.

Particularly relevant to this study is Austin's distinction between locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. Political speeches rarely function simply by transmitting factual information; instead, they seek to persuade, mobilise, intimidate, or legitimise. The effectiveness of political rhetoric therefore depends largely upon its perlocutionary consequences—the actual responses produced among listeners. Within *Julius Caesar*, the Forum speeches exemplify this performative dimension of language. Brutus and Antony present contrasting interpretations of Caesar's assassination, yet the decisive difference lies not merely in what they say but in what their words accomplish. Antony's speech transforms grief into political outrage and passive citizens into active participants in collective violence. Speech Act Theory therefore provides an essential analytical framework for understanding how metaphor contributes directly to political action.

3. Theoretical Framework

This study adopts an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that integrates **Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT)**, **Speech Act Theory (SAT)**, and the political concept of the **Body Politic**. Together, these perspectives provide a comprehensive model for explaining how metaphor operates simultaneously as a cognitive structure, a persuasive strategy, and a performative political act in . Rather than treating metaphor as an isolated literary device, the framework conceptualizes metaphor as a mechanism through which political reality is interpreted, negotiated, and transformed.

3.1 Conceptual Metaphor Theory

The principal theoretical foundation of this study is Conceptual Metaphor Theory, developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980). CMT challenges the traditional assumption that metaphor belongs exclusively to poetic or literary language. Instead, it argues that metaphor constitutes one of the primary cognitive mechanisms through which human beings understand abstract concepts by mapping them onto more concrete and familiar domains of experience.

According to CMT, every conceptual metaphor consists of two interconnected domains: a **source domain**, representing concrete physical or experiential knowledge, and a **target domain**, representing abstract concepts requiring interpretation. Human cognition systemati-

cally transfers knowledge from the source domain to the target domain, enabling individuals to reason about complex social and political phenomena through everyday embodied experience.

Political discourse provides numerous examples of this cognitive process. Nations may be conceptualized as families, governments as machines, political crises as diseases, or elections as battles. Such metaphors do not merely describe political events; they organize public understanding by highlighting certain aspects of reality while simultaneously obscuring others. Consequently, metaphor functions as a cognitive frame that influences perception, judgment, and decision-making.

Within *Julius Caesar*, Brutus repeatedly conceptualizes political authority through metaphors of disease, surgery, and poisonous growth. Caesar is represented not simply as an ambitious individual but as a pathological threat whose removal appears necessary for the survival of the Republic. Antony subsequently replaces this framework with embodied metaphors that associate Caesar's body with Rome itself, thereby reconstructing the assassination as sacrilege rather than political necessity.

The interaction between these competing metaphorical systems demonstrates that political conflict within the play is fundamentally cognitive. The struggle concerns not only political leadership but also the conceptual framework through which political events are interpreted.

3.2 Speech Act Theory

While Conceptual Metaphor Theory explains how political ideas become cognitively meaningful, Speech Act Theory explains how language performs social and political actions. Austin (1962) argues that speaking is itself a form of action rather than merely a means of describing reality. Every utterance therefore possesses performative potential capable of producing consequences within particular social contexts.

Austin distinguishes three interconnected dimensions of linguistic action:

- **Locutionary acts**, referring to the literal production of linguistic expressions.
- **Illocutionary acts**, referring to the speaker's communicative intention, such as persuading, warning, accusing, or commanding.
- **Perlocutionary acts**, referring to the actual effects produced upon listeners, including belief, fear, sympathy, or collective action.

Searle (1969) further develops this model by demonstrating that speech acts operate according to socially recognized conventions through which speakers intentionally influence their audiences.

This distinction is particularly valuable for analysing Shakespeare's political rhetoric. The Forum speeches cannot be understood solely by examining their literal meanings. Instead, their political significance lies in their performative effects upon the Roman citizens.

Brutus intends to justify assassination through appeals to honour, liberty, and republican duty. Antony, by contrast, gradually transforms the emotional orientation of the audience by combining irony, repetition, visual demonstration, and metaphorical framing. His repeated assertion that "Brutus is an honourable man" illustrates how identical linguistic expressions may acquire entirely different illocutionary force depending upon rhetorical context. What initially appears to be praise progressively becomes criticism and ultimately functions as public condemnation.

Speech Act Theory therefore demonstrates that political metaphors acquire significance not only because they communicate ideas but because they produce observable social consequences. In *Julius Caesar*, metaphor functions as political action.

3.3 The Body Politic as Political Cognition

The concept of the Body Politic provides the historical and ideological framework within which Shakespeare's metaphors operate. Throughout medieval and Renaissance political thought, the state was commonly understood as a living organism whose various institutions corresponded to different parts of the human body. The ruler represented the head, governing reason and maintaining social harmony, while citizens constituted the remaining organs necessary for collective survival.

Kantorowicz (1957) demonstrates that this political theology granted rulers both a natural body and a symbolic political body representing the continuity of the state. Shakespeare appropriates and simultaneously complicates this tradition by presenting conflicting interpretations of Caesar's political body.

For Brutus, Caesar threatens the health of the Republic because excessive ambition resembles a disease capable of infecting the entire political organism. Consequently, assassination is metaphorically represented as preventive surgery intended to preserve civic health.

Antony fundamentally reverses this conceptualization. Rather than portraying Caesar as a diseased organ, he presents Caesar's wounded body as the physical embodiment of Rome itself. Every wound becomes evidence of political betrayal, and Caesar's corpse functions as living testimony against the conspirators.

The Body Politic therefore becomes the principal conceptual battlefield upon which competing political realities are constructed. Control over the metaphor determines whether violence appears legitimate or criminal.

3.4 Integrating the Three Perspectives

Although each theoretical perspective contributes distinct analytical insights, their integration provides a more comprehensive explanation of Shakespeare's political language.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory explains **how** political realities are cognitively constructed through systematic metaphorical mappings.

Speech Act Theory explains **how** these metaphorical constructions become performative acts capable of influencing audiences and generating political consequences.

The Body Politic provides the historical and ideological context that makes these metaphorical mappings culturally meaningful within the Roman and early modern political imagination.

Taken together, these approaches demonstrate that political metaphors in *Julius Caesar* operate simultaneously on three interconnected levels:

1. **Cognitive Level:** Metaphors organize political understanding by framing Caesar, Rome, and political violence through competing conceptual structures.
2. **Pragmatic Level:** Metaphors function as speech acts that persuade audiences, reshape collective judgment, and motivate social action.
3. **Ideological Level:** Metaphors reproduce, challenge, and reconstruct dominant assumptions concerning political authority, legitimacy, and civic responsibility.

This integrated framework enables the present study to move beyond traditional rhetorical analysis toward a comprehensive account of metaphor as a constitutive force in political discourse. Rather than asking merely what Shakespeare's metaphors mean, the study investigates what they accomplish within the dramatic action and why they prove capable of transforming public opinion with such remarkable speed.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design

This study employs a **qualitative interpretive research design** grounded in close textual analysis and informed by principles of **Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)**. The qualitative approach is appropriate because the objective of the study is not to measure the frequency of metaphorical expressions statistically, but to investigate how metaphor functions as a cognitive and political mechanism within Shakespeare's dramatic discourse. By combining literary analysis with insights from cognitive linguistics and pragmatics, the study explores the relationship between metaphor, political legitimacy, and collective action.

Critical Discourse Analysis provides the broader methodological orientation because it examines how language constructs power, ideology, and social relations. In *Julius Caesar*, political speeches do not merely communicate information; they establish competing interpretations of authority, justice, and violence. Consequently, discourse is treated as a form of political practice through which reality is negotiated and transformed.

The analysis also incorporates the principles of **close reading**, enabling detailed examination of lexical choices, metaphorical patterns, rhetorical strategies, and contextual meanings within the dramatic text.

4.2 Research Corpus

The primary source of data is William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. The analysis is based primarily on **The Norton Shakespeare** (Greenblatt et al., 2016), with textual references cross-checked against other widely accepted scholarly editions to ensure consistency of quotations.

Although metaphor appears throughout the play, the analysis concentrates on passages in which political discourse reaches its highest rhetorical intensity. These include:

- **Act 2, Scene 1** (Brutus's soliloquy and the conspiracy meeting);
- **Act 3, Scene 1** (the assassination and Antony's initial response);
- **Act 3, Scene 2** (the Forum speeches of Brutus and Antony).

These scenes constitute the principal corpus because they represent the decisive transformation of political opinion within the drama. They contain the highest concentration of political metaphors related to authority, sacrifice, disease, honour, blood, the body politic, and civil conflict.

4.3 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection followed a systematic qualitative procedure consisting of four stages.

Stage One: Textual Familiarisation

The selected scenes were read repeatedly to identify recurring metaphorical expressions and broader conceptual patterns within the political speeches.

Stage Two: Identification of Metaphorical Expressions

Potential metaphorical expressions were identified using the **Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP)** developed by the Pragglejaz Group (2007). According to this procedure, each lexical unit was examined to determine whether:

- it possesses a basic, more concrete meaning in ordinary language;
- its contextual meaning differs from its basic meaning;
- the contextual meaning can be understood through comparison with the basic meaning.

Expressions satisfying these criteria were classified as metaphorically used lexical units.

Stage Three: Classification

Each identified metaphor was classified according to:

- Speaker
- Scene
- Source domain
- Target domain
- Immediate dramatic context
- Political function

This classification enabled systematic comparison between Brutus's and Antony's metaphorical systems.

Stage Four: Contextual Interpretation

Finally, each metaphor was interpreted within its dramatic, political, and rhetorical context to determine its contribution to persuasion, ideological framing, and audience response.

4.4 Analytical Framework

The analysis proceeds through four complementary stages.

4.4.1 Conceptual Mapping

Each metaphor is analysed using Conceptual Metaphor Theory to identify the relationship between source and target domains.

For example:

Source Domain	Target Domain	Conceptual Metaphor
Disease	Political tyranny	CAESAR IS DISEASE
Surgery	Assassination	KILLING IS SURGERY
Human body	Roman state	THE STATE IS A BODY
Wounds	Speech	WOUNDS ARE MOUTHS
Hunting	Civil war	WAR IS HUNTING

This stage reveals the conceptual structures underlying political discourse.

4.4.2 Pragmatic Analysis

The identified metaphors are subsequently analysed using Speech Act Theory.

For each metaphor the analysis identifies:

- **Locutionary meaning**
- **Illocutionary force**
- **Perlocutionary effect**

Particular attention is given to Antony's Forum speech because it illustrates how metaphor develops from description into political action capable of transforming collective behaviour.

4.4.3 Critical Discourse Analysis

The third stage examines how metaphor contributes to the construction of political ideology.

The analysis investigates:

- legitimisation of violence;
- construction of political identity;
- representation of authority;
- dehumanisation of political opponents;
- emotional mobilisation of the Roman citizens.

This stage situates metaphor within broader questions of power and political persuasion.

4.4.4 Comparative Interpretation

Finally, Brutus's and Antony's metaphorical systems are compared.

The comparison focuses on:

- conceptual differences;
- rhetorical strategies;
- ideological assumptions;
- political consequences.

Rather than analysing individual metaphors in isolation, the study examines how complete metaphorical systems compete for dominance throughout the play.

4.5 Trustworthiness of the Analysis

Because qualitative literary research depends upon interpretive judgement, several procedures were adopted to enhance analytical credibility.

First, metaphor identification follows the internationally recognised **Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP)** rather than relying solely on intuitive interpretation.

Second, interpretations are supported by direct textual evidence from Shakespeare's play.

Third, conclusions are interpreted within established theoretical frameworks including Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Speech Act Theory, and Critical Discourse Analysis, thereby reducing subjective speculation.

Finally, the analysis remains grounded in the dramatic context of each quotation rather than isolating individual expressions from their surrounding discourse.

4.6 Scope and Delimitations

The study deliberately limits its investigation to political metaphors occurring in the principal rhetorical scenes of *Julius Caesar*. Other forms of figurative language—including simile, irony, symbolism, and allegory—are discussed only when they directly reinforce metaphorical framing.

Similarly, although the play contains numerous historical and philosophical themes, the present study focuses specifically on the relationship between metaphor and political action. Broader questions concerning Shakespeare's historical sources, theatrical performance, or Elizabethan censorship fall outside the scope of the investigation.

4.7 Limitations of the Study

Several limitations should be acknowledged.

First, the analysis is confined to a single literary text and therefore does not claim universal applicability across all political discourse.

Second, although the study draws upon cognitive linguistic theory, it does not include experimental psychological evidence capable of measuring readers' actual cognitive responses.

Third, the qualitative nature of the analysis inevitably involves interpretive judgement despite the use of systematic analytical procedures.

Future research may complement the present findings through corpus linguistic techniques capable of measuring metaphor frequency, computational analyses of conceptual patterns, or experimental studies examining audience responses to political metaphors.

Contribution of the Methodology

The methodological design enables the study to bridge literary criticism and linguistic analysis by combining close reading with systematic metaphor identification and pragmatic interpretation. Rather than treating Shakespeare's metaphors as isolated stylistic ornaments, this approach demonstrates how they function as cognitive, rhetorical, and political mechanisms that shape public perception and influence collective action.

Excellent. We have now reached the **core contribution** of the article. In a publishable

journal paper, this section should present evidence systematically rather than simply describing the play. Below is the first part of the **Results and Analysis** in an international journal style.

5. Results and Analysis

The analysis demonstrates that political metaphor in functions as a constitutive mechanism through which political legitimacy is negotiated and collective action is mobilized. Rather than employing metaphor merely for rhetorical ornamentation, Shakespeare constructs competing conceptual systems that enable characters to interpret the same political event in fundamentally different ways. The assassination of Caesar acquires radically different meanings depending upon the metaphorical framework adopted by the speaker. Brutus presents the assassination as an act of political preservation, whereas Antony re-constructs it as an act of moral violation demanding public vengeance. The findings are presented under four interrelated themes.

5.1 Constructing Political Reality through the Body Politic

The dominant conceptual structure underlying the political discourse of the play is the metaphor **THE STATE IS A BODY**. Although this metaphor had long been embedded within medieval and Renaissance political philosophy, Shakespeare transforms it into an active rhetorical resource through which political legitimacy is contested.

Brutus consistently conceptualizes Rome as an organic body whose survival depends upon removing internal threats before they become fatal. His reasoning is expressed most clearly during his soliloquy:

“And therefore think him as a serpent’s egg, Which, hatch’d, would, as his kind, grow mischievous, And kill him in the shell.” (2.1.32–34)

From the perspective of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the source domain of **natural danger** is mapped onto the target domain of **political ambition**. Caesar has committed no identifiable crime; instead, Brutus justifies assassination through anticipation of future corruption. The metaphor therefore replaces evidence with prediction.

This cognitive mapping produces an important ideological consequence. Because the serpent’s egg represents potential rather than actual danger, violence becomes preventive rather than punitive. The conspirators no longer appear as murderers but as guardians of public safety.

Table 1 summarizes the principal conceptual mappings identified in Brutus's political discourse.

Source Domain	Target Domain	Political Interpretation
Disease	Tyranny	Caesar threatens Rome's health
Surgery	Assassination	Killing preserves the Republic
Serpent	Ambition	Political danger develops naturally
Sacrifice	Murder	Violence becomes moral duty

These conceptual mappings demonstrate that Brutus's political reasoning depends almost entirely upon metaphorical framing. The legitimacy of assassination derives not from Caesar's actions but from the conceptual world created through metaphor.

5.2 Brutus's Medical Metaphors and the Legitimation of Violence

The analysis further reveals that Brutus consistently employs medical and sacrificial metaphors to transform political violence into civic responsibility.

Perhaps the most significant example occurs when Brutus advises the conspirators:

"Let's be sacrificers, but not butchers." (2.1.166)

Although this statement appears simple, its cognitive implications are profound. The metaphor establishes a conceptual distinction between **ritual sacrifice** and **criminal slaughter**.

Within the source domain of religious sacrifice:

- violence is sacred;
- victims possess symbolic value;
- killing serves a higher moral purpose.

These assumptions are transferred directly to the assassination.

Consequently, Caesar ceases to be an individual human being and becomes a symbolic obstacle whose removal promises political renewal.

The metaphor therefore performs two simultaneous functions.

First, it legitimizes violence by associating assassination with religious purification.

Second, it reduces moral responsibility by replacing ordinary homicide with ceremonial obligation.

Speech Act Theory further clarifies the pragmatic force of this utterance.

The locution is a request concerning the manner of killing.

The illocution is an instruction establishing the moral identity of the conspirators.

The perlocutionary effect is psychological reassurance, enabling the conspirators to perceive themselves as patriots rather than assassins.

Thus, metaphor functions not simply as description but as moral authorization.

5.3 Antony's Reconstruction of Caesar's Political Body

Whereas Brutus attempts to distance the audience from Caesar's humanity, Antony systematically restores it.

His speech begins with visual rather than abstract evidence.

Instead of discussing constitutional principles, Antony directs public attention toward Caesar's wounded body:

"O, pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth..." (3.1.254)

Here, Caesar's corpse becomes more than physical remains.

The metaphor simultaneously constructs Caesar as:

- the embodiment of Rome,
- the victim of betrayal,
- and the moral centre of the political community.

Unlike Brutus's abstract political vocabulary, Antony relies upon highly concrete lexical choices including:

- blood,
- wounds,
- mantle,
- tears,
- body,
- hands,
- heart.

These lexical selections repeatedly activate bodily experience, encouraging the audience to interpret political conflict through direct sensory imagination.

One of the most remarkable conceptual metaphors appears later in the Forum speech:

“Poor poor dumb mouths, And bid them speak for me.” (3.2.225–226)

The metaphor **WOUNDS ARE MOUTHS** performs several cognitive operations simultaneously. First, it personifies the injuries.

Second, it transforms physical evidence into verbal testimony.

Third, it allows the dead Caesar to participate rhetorically in the political debate.

The corpse therefore becomes both witness and speaker.

This metaphor effectively eliminates the distinction between physical evidence and political argument.

Instead of Antony accusing the conspirators, Caesar’s wounds appear to accuse them directly.

From the perspective of Speech Act Theory, Antony transfers the illocutionary force from himself to the body of Caesar.

The persuasive authority no longer originates from the orator but from the visible evidence of violence itself.

This strategy significantly increases rhetorical credibility because audiences tend to trust apparently objective evidence more readily than explicit persuasion.

5.4 Competing Conceptual Worlds

The comparative analysis indicates that Brutus and Antony do not merely disagree politically.

Rather, they construct entirely different political realities.

Brutus’s discourse is organized around abstraction.

Its dominant vocabulary includes:

- honour,
- liberty,
- ambition,

- Republic,
- reason,
- virtue.

Antony's discourse is organized around embodiment.

Its dominant vocabulary includes:

- blood,
- wounds,
- mantle,
- body,
- tears,
- heart.

This distinction reflects two competing modes of political cognition.

Brutus asks the citizens to think politically.

Antony asks them to feel politically.

Importantly, Shakespeare does not portray Antony as abandoning reason altogether.

Instead, Antony embeds political argument within embodied experience.

The audience is persuaded not because logical reasoning disappears but because emotional perception reorganizes political judgment.

The dramatic outcome confirms the superiority of Antony's metaphorical framework within the immediate political context.

The Roman crowd rapidly abandons Brutus's interpretation and adopts Antony's conceptualization of Caesar's death.

The decisive shift occurs not because new factual information emerges but because a new metaphorical system becomes dominant.

Consequently, the analysis supports the central argument of this study: **political metaphors do not merely describe reality—they actively construct the reality upon which political action depends.**

5. Results and Analysis

5.5 Speech Acts and the Mobilization of Political Violence

The analysis of the Forum scene demonstrates that Antony's rhetorical success depends not only on metaphorical representation but also on the performative capacity of political speech. His language transforms the Roman citizens from passive observers into active participants in a collective response. Through carefully constructed speech acts, Antony changes the social meaning of Caesar's death and redirects public emotion toward the conspirators.

A central example of this process is Antony's repeated statement:

"For Brutus is an honourable man." (3.2.83)

At the beginning of the speech, the utterance appears to function as a respectful acknowledgment of Brutus's reputation. However, through repetition and contextual modification, its illocutionary force gradually changes. The phrase becomes increasingly ironic, forcing the audience to reconsider the meaning of "honourable." The same words remain constant, but their pragmatic function changes.

This transformation illustrates Austin's distinction between linguistic form and communicative force. The literal meaning of the statement does not explain its political effect; rather, meaning emerges through interaction between language, context, repetition, and audience interpretation.

The perlocutionary consequence is the gradual destruction of the conspirators' moral authority. Antony does not directly accuse Brutus at first; instead, he allows the audience to reach the conclusion independently. This rhetorical strategy creates the impression that judgment originates from the citizens themselves rather than from Antony.

Therefore, Antony's speech demonstrates a fundamental principle of political communication: successful persuasion often depends not on direct instruction but on constructing a framework within which audiences produce the desired conclusion.

5.6 The Metaphor of Wounds as Political Testimony

Among all metaphors in the Forum speech, **WOUNDS ARE MOUTHS** represents the most powerful transformation of physical reality into political meaning.

Antony states:

“I show you sweet Caesar’s wounds, poor poor dumb mouths, And bid them speak for me.” (3.2.225–226)

This metaphor creates a reversal of ordinary communication. Normally, a speaker uses words to describe events. Antony reverses this relationship: the wounds themselves become speakers, while he becomes merely their interpreter.

The metaphor produces three significant effects.

First: It humanizes Caesar’s suffering

The conspirators attempted to represent Caesar as an abstract political threat. Antony restores his individuality by presenting the physical consequences of violence.

The audience no longer encounters Caesar as:

- a potential tyrant,
- a political symbol,
- or a constitutional problem.

Instead, they encounter a wounded human body.

Second: It transforms violence into visible evidence

Brutus’s argument depends on an invisible possibility: Caesar’s future ambition.

Antony’s argument depends on visible reality: Caesar’s injuries.

The rhetorical conflict therefore becomes a conflict between imagined danger and observable suffering.

Third: It creates collective identification

By presenting Caesar’s wounds publicly, Antony transforms private violence into communal experience. The citizens are invited to regard Caesar’s body as a shared political injury.

The metaphor therefore converts individual grief into collective anger.

5.7 The Role of Embodied Metaphor in Political Persuasion

A significant finding of this study is that Shakespeare contrasts two different forms of political persuasion: abstract conceptual framing and embodied experiential framing.

Brutus relies on abstract metaphors associated with political philosophy:

- Rome as a threatened republic;
- Caesar as a future tyrant;
- assassination as necessary protection.

His rhetoric requires the audience to accept a hypothetical future and evaluate an invisible danger.

Antony, however, employs embodied metaphors based on immediate experience:

- blood;
- wounds;
- clothing;
- physical remains;
- visible suffering.

His rhetoric does not require the audience to imagine what Caesar might become; it requires them to respond to what Caesar has already suffered.

This difference explains why Antony's speech produces a stronger immediate emotional effect. His metaphors are grounded in physical experience and create a direct connection between language and perception.

However, this does not mean that Antony's rhetoric is simply more truthful than Brutus's. Rather, Shakespeare demonstrates that political effectiveness often depends on the ability to construct a persuasive frame. Both characters manipulate interpretation through metaphor; the difference lies in the metaphorical system that successfully dominates public consciousness.

5.8 Metaphor, Ideology, and the Ethics of Political Framing

The final analytical finding concerns the ethical implications of metaphorical framing. Shakespeare reveals that metaphors possess moral consequences because they influence how societies categorize individuals and justify actions.

Brutus's disease metaphor is powerful because it removes Caesar's human complexity. Once Caesar is conceptualized as a political illness, his elimination appears reasonable and necessary.

This process reflects what contemporary metaphor studies identify as the danger of pathological political language. When individuals or groups are represented as diseases, parasites, or infections, violence can become framed as a form of protection rather than aggression.

Conversely, Antony's metaphorical reconstruction of Caesar creates the opposite effect. By emphasizing bodily suffering, Antony increases identification with the victim and encourages moral condemnation of the attackers.

Nevertheless, Shakespeare presents Antony's rhetoric with considerable ambiguity. The same emotional power that restores Caesar's humanity also produces uncontrolled violence. The crowd, once persuaded, does not move toward rational political reform but toward revenge and destruction.

Therefore, the play offers a complex insight: metaphors can challenge injustice, but they can also intensify conflict. Their ethical significance depends not only on their persuasive power but also on the actions they inspire.

The textual analysis produces five major findings:

First, political metaphors in *Julius Caesar* function as conceptual frameworks that construct competing versions of reality.

Second, Brutus uses medical and sacrificial metaphors to transform assassination into an act of political necessity.

Third, Antony uses embodied metaphors to reconstruct Caesar as a symbol of Roman identity and transform his wounds into political testimony.

Fourth, metaphorical speech operates as a performative act whose effects extend beyond meaning into social and political action.

Fifth, Shakespeare demonstrates that control over metaphorical framing represents a form of political power because whoever defines reality influences how audiences judge events and respond to them.

6. Discussion

The findings of this study support the argument that metaphor in *Julius Caesar* functions as a form of political action rather than merely a rhetorical strategy. Shakespeare presents political conflict as a struggle over interpretation, where competing metaphorical systems

determine the meaning of events and guide collective behaviour.

The assassination of Caesar is therefore not a fixed historical reality within the play. Its meaning is continuously reconstructed through language. For Brutus, Caesar's death represents necessary political surgery. For Antony, it represents the destruction of Rome's most valuable citizen. The difference between these interpretations does not originate from different facts but from different conceptual frameworks.

6.1 Political Metaphor as a Constitutive Force

The central contribution of this study is the demonstration that political metaphor in *Julius Caesar* functions as a constitutive force: it does not merely represent political reality but actively participates in creating it. This argument extends beyond traditional rhetorical analysis by showing that metaphor determines the categories through which political events become intelligible.

The conflict between Brutus and Antony is therefore not simply a disagreement concerning Caesar's character or political intentions. It is a deeper conflict over the conceptual definition of Rome itself. Each speaker attempts to establish a dominant metaphorical framework through which citizens can interpret the assassination.

Brutus's metaphorical system is organized around preservation and prevention. Through images of disease, poison, and sacrifice, he constructs Caesar as a potential threat whose removal is necessary for the survival of the Republic. His argument depends upon a medical model of politics in which violence becomes comparable to treatment.

Antony reverses this logic by presenting Caesar's body as the violated body of Rome. Through metaphors of wounds, speech, and sacrifice, he transforms the assassination from an act of political protection into an act of betrayal. The same physical event is therefore assigned opposite meanings according to the metaphorical structure through which it is perceived.

This finding supports the argument of Lakoff and Johnson (1980) that conceptual metaphors shape reasoning itself. Individuals do not simply choose metaphors after forming political opinions; rather, metaphors provide the conceptual frameworks through which opinions become possible.

In Shakespeare's drama, whoever controls the dominant metaphor controls the inter-

pretation of political reality.

6.2 The Relationship between Metaphor and Political Violence

The analysis also contributes to discussions concerning the relationship between language and political violence. The play suggests that violence is frequently preceded by processes of linguistic transformation. Before Caesar can be physically eliminated, he must first be conceptually reconstructed as a danger.

Brutus does not begin with murder; he begins with metaphor.

The transformation of Caesar into a serpent, disease, or excessive growth changes the moral conditions surrounding his death. The assassination becomes imaginable because language has already altered the category to which Caesar belongs. This process reflects a broader pattern identified in contemporary political discourse studies. Metaphors of contamination, illness, and purification have historically been used to construct opponents as threats rather than legitimate participants in political communities. Such metaphors reduce complexity by dividing society into categories of health and disease, belonging and exclusion. However, Shakespeare's treatment is not one-dimensional. Antony's metaphors, although directed against injustice, also produce destructive consequences. His emotional reconstruction of Caesar generates collective rage that exceeds controlled political judgment. Therefore, the play does not present metaphor as inherently positive or negative. Instead, it demonstrates that metaphor is a powerful instrument whose ethical consequences depend upon the political purposes it serves and the actions it motivates.

6.3 Shakespeare and Contemporary Political Communication

Although *Julius Caesar* was written within a specific historical context, its exploration of metaphorical politics remains highly relevant to contemporary political communication. Modern political discourse continues to rely heavily on conceptual metaphors to simplify complex social realities and influence public attitudes. The metaphor of the nation as a body remains particularly influential. Political actors frequently describe societies as being threatened by internal or external "diseases," requiring protection, purification, or repair. Such language can shape public perceptions by presenting political disagreements as medical emergencies rather than democratic debates. Similarly, Antony's rhetorical strategy anticipates modern forms of political communication in which visual and emotional symbols play a central role. The public display of Caesar's wounds resembles contemporary practices in which images of suffering, injustice, or victimhood become powerful

tools for mobilizing collective response. The relevance of Shakespeare's analysis lies not in suggesting that modern politics operates identically to Roman politics, but in revealing a persistent human tendency: political communities interpret events through narratives and metaphors that organize emotional and moral responses. Consequently, the study supports the importance of **metaphorical literacy**—the ability to recognize, evaluate, and critically examine the conceptual frames embedded within political language.

6.4 Theoretical Contribution of the Study

This study contributes to existing scholarship in three principal ways.

First: Contribution to Shakespeare Studies

Traditional approaches to *Julius Caesar* have extensively examined themes of ambition, republicanism, rhetoric, and political morality. This study extends those discussions by demonstrating that metaphor itself functions as a central mechanism through which these themes are constructed. Rather than viewing metaphor as secondary to political meaning, the study shows that metaphor produces political meaning.

Second: Contribution to Cognitive Linguistics

The study applies Conceptual Metaphor Theory to a literary text in order to demonstrate how metaphorical mappings operate within dramatic discourse. The analysis confirms that metaphors organize not only individual cognition but also collective political interpretation.

Third: Contribution to Political Discourse Analysis

By integrating Speech Act Theory with metaphor analysis, the study demonstrates how conceptual framing becomes political action. Metaphors become powerful not only because they structure thought but because they influence behaviour through persuasive communication.

This interdisciplinary approach provides a model for analysing political discourse across historical and cultural contexts.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that political metaphor in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* functions as a powerful mechanism of political action. Through the integration of Conceptual

Metaphor Theory and Speech Act Theory, the analysis reveals that metaphor operates beyond the level of literary decoration: it constructs political identities, legitimizes violence, and transforms collective responses. The conflict between Brutus and Antony represents a struggle between competing metaphorical realities. Brutus frames Caesar's assassination through metaphors of disease, surgery, and sacrifice, presenting violence as a necessary act of political preservation. Antony counters this framework by employing metaphors of bodily suffering, martyrdom, and testimony, transforming Caesar's wounds into persuasive evidence of injustice.

The outcome of the conflict demonstrates the importance of metaphorical framing in political communication. Brutus appeals primarily to abstract concepts such as honour, liberty, and republican virtue, whereas Antony connects political judgment to visible and emotional experience. Through this embodied rhetorical strategy, Antony successfully reshapes public perception and redirects collective action. However, Shakespeare's portrayal remains critically complex. Antony's victory does not produce political stability; instead, it contributes to social disorder and civil conflict. The play therefore presents metaphor as a double-edged instrument capable of exposing injustice while simultaneously generating destructive emotional consequences. Ultimately, *Julius Caesar* offers a profound insight into the relationship between language and power: political struggles are also struggles over meaning. The metaphors through which societies understand events influence what actions appear possible, necessary, or justified.

7.2 Recommendations

- Future studies should extend this research through computational and comparative approaches. Corpus-based analysis could examine metaphor frequency across Shakespeare's political plays and determine whether similar conceptual patterns appear in other dramatic contexts.
- Further research could also compare Shakespearean political metaphors with contemporary political discourse to investigate the continuity of metaphorical framing across historical periods.
- Teachers and researchers should consider *Julius Caesar* as a valuable resource for developing critical language awareness. The Forum scene provides an effective case study for examining how rhetorical strategies influence interpretation and collective judgement.
- Students should be encouraged to analyse not only what political speakers say but also the conceptual frameworks through which their arguments become persuasive.
- Educational programs should emphasize the importance of recognizing metaphorical framing in political communication. Understanding how metaphors of disease, threat, and purification operate can help

citizens critically evaluate persuasive language and resist manipulative forms of political discourse.

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