

Conflicting perspectives

[History](#), [Ancient History](#)



Before initial reading: The comments to the right are my thoughts and questions on phrases I have placed in the essay and how appropriate they would be.

Analyse the ways conflicting perspectives generate diverse and provocative insights.

All texts composed convey an agenda which is based on the composer's context. William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, Jason Reitman's satirical film *Thank You For Smoking* (2005) and George Orwell's *Animal Farm* (1945) all use conflicting perspectives to convey their agenda by generating diverse and provocative insights. Conflicting perspectives are generated through the use and potential abuse of power, manipulation and the contrast between public and private personas and thus the responder is positioned to accept the perspective the composer has deemed to be valid.

The use and abuse of power, the use of manipulation to gain power and the contrast between public and private personas are explored through the portrayal of conflicting perspectives. It can be seen that the responder is positioned to

. the point you're trying to make is that the use of conflicting perspectives allows for some ambiguity in the portrayal of these themes but you might then say that 'ultimately we are positioned to accept that...' and then you could specify exactly what.

Shakespeare's play *Julius Caesar* demonstrates conflicting perspectives on the nature of power. Shakespeare utilised this play as a commentary on the political situation of the time regarding the monarch of Elizabeth I. Elizabeth

had gradually increased her power at the expense of the aristocracy and House of Commons, giving rise to political disputes. Likewise, Caesar has been granted dictatorial powers in the Roman Republic but he is not presented to have misused his power.

Instead, Caesar's hubris is more prevalent this which is seen to be the catalyst for the potential misuse of power. Brutus is aware of this and his idealism for a Roman Republic leads him to join the conspirators, shown in his soliloquy in Act Two Scene One. Brutus uses extended metaphors of a ladder and serpents in order to question Caesar's ambition in conjunction with power. Brutus states that 'young ambition's ladder [cause him to] look into the clouds, [leading him to] scorn the base degrees by which he did ascend'. Brutus also considers Caesar 'a serpent's egg, which... would grow mischievous, and kill him in the shell'. The imagery of killing before birth reveals that Brutus is willing to remove Caesar before any tyrannical tendencies take place, suggesting that the assassination was unjust.

Brutus would later attempt to justify the assassination that 'because [Caesar] was ambitious, I slew him'. The conditional language and use of logos in demonstrating a clear cause and effect convinces the audience at Caesar's funeral oration that the assassination was just, based on the declarative mood in their reaction that 'Caesar was a tyrant'. However an alternative perspective is displayed through Antony. Even with Caesar's dictatorial powers he has not seen any way in which he has abused his position, forming the basis of his defence of Caesar in his funeral oration.

He uses conditional language by questioning 'if Caesar was ambitious' and he uses logos in presenting Caesar's lack of ambition. Antony draws on

examples such as ‘ he thrice refused [the crown]’ and when coupled with the rhetorical question ‘ did this in Caesar seem ambitious?’ he questions the view of the responders by providing a logical response to Brutus’ ill-based accusations. Antony is able to demonstrate Caesar’s lack of ambition and hence Caesar’s just use of power for the good of Rome. As a result Shakespeare presents two conflicting perspectives on power which generates diverse and provocative insights into his context.

George Orwell’s *Animal Farm* also evokes similar ideas but its context as an allegory for the Stalinist rule of Soviet Russia must also be considered. George Orwell explores the notion of the corrupting nature of power in his allegorical novel (or political satire) ‘ *Animal Farm*’. The allegory is a criticism of Soviet Communism tracks the rise of Napoleon, representing Stalin after the overthrow of Mr Jones, representing the last Tsar of Russia, Nicholas II. and how his power is seen to slowly corrupt prompting in its abuse. At the beginning of the allegory/fable the animals are seen to be harbouring discontent against their autocratic ruler of Mr Jones through their plotting to overthrow humans out of their farm. Major states with a declarative mood that they should ‘ remove Man from the scene, and the root cause of hunger and overwork is abolished forever’.

This connotes that Mr Jones has abused his powers in allowing the poor conditions for his working animals. After the animals have revolted against Mr Jones the original commandments of Animalism are created, calling for the equal distribution of power as ‘ all animals are equal’. However Napoleon’s use of intimidation through brute force upsets the equality and with the exile of Snowball Napoleon is left in a position of absolute power.

Napoleon's guard dogs are used as a motif to symbolise his power as even after his initial deployment of his dogs against Snowball ' the dogs growled so threateningly that they accepted his explanation without any further questions'.

Napoleon's power is also seen to corrupt him and he is ironically presented as to be simply a replacement for Mr Jones. Through reverting the name of the farm back to ' Manor Farm' Orwell perceives that the situation the animals are in do not differ from the reality of life under Mr Jones. Napoleon's ' transformation' into a man is seen to represent this as the animals ' look from pig to man, from man to pig, and from pig to man again, but already it was impossible to determine which was which'.

The repetition and inversion of the order of ' pig' and ' man' highlight the confusion the animals have over their present reality. This illustrates the corruption of power in Napoleon and with this Orwell is suggesting that life under Stalin was no different than from Russia's previous autocratic ruler of Tsar Nicholas II. Consequently Orwell's use of conflicting perspectives over the issue of power in an allegory is able to provide a commentary of Orwell's perspective of the nature of Stalinist Russia. Good – you clearly analyse and show the changed perspective of Napoleon but revise and consider how to clearly identify the conflicting perspectives.

Julius Caesar demonstrates how a conflict between public and private personas can result in conflicting perspectives of characters. Act One Scene One introduces the idea of conflicting perspectives within personas with the Senators Flavius and Murellius and their perception of the commoners. The Senators clearly see the commoners as inferior with their descriptions as of

<https://assignbuster.com/conflicting-perspectives-2/>

them as 'vulgar' and 'the basest metal'. This juxtaposes the positive diction used by them to describe the commoners as 'good countrymen' when they are in the public sphere, suggesting that the patronising tone used had the sole purpose of gaining support from the commoners. However Antony is the character that conceals the deepest division between public and private personas, demonstrating his Machiavellian nature.

His public persona is presented to be supportive of the assassination by being supportive of the conspirators as he states that 'it would become me better than to close in terms of friendship with thine enemies'. Give a bit more info of context. Who does he say this to? However his antithesis is indicated through his 'hope that you shall give me reasons why and wherein Caesar was dangerous'. How? This is implied to be a signal of support from Antony towards the conspirators but it hid his inner motives of his desire for conflict against the conspirators.

His private persona is presented to be heavily opposed to the assassination and he calls for 'havoc' and 'let slip the dogs of war', with the violent imagery clearly stating his intention and perspective of the assassination. Mention that this is in a soliloquy before the oration and what we learn. His private persona is reflected in his funeral orations where he repeatedly implies his disagreement with the assassination but never explicitly stating his stance. Initially he states that he 'comes to bury Caesar, not to praise him', but this is juxtaposed with his questioning tone and use of rhetorical questions that serve the purpose of suggesting the lack of justice in the assassination. Eg?

His private persona comes into full view by the conclusion of his oration where through pathos he calls the ‘stones of Rome to rise up and mutiny’. Link to the dogs of war comments. This perspective of encouraging mutiny is therefore in direct contrast with his interactions with the other conspirators. Explain where. As a result conflicting perspectives are shown also within the characters in order to generate diverse and provocative insights.

Similarly, Jason Reitman’s satirical film Thank You For Smoking also projects similar ideas regarding public and private personas. The film is a satire on the perception of cigarettes and tobacco but not to the extent in which it is condoned, due to the fact that no character in the film is seen smoking. Conflicts in private and personal personas are seen through the protagonist of Nick Naylor with his public support of cigarettes and questioning of its associated health issues, juxtaposed with his private persona where he openly admits to smoking-related health issues. This issue is displayed through Naylor’s criteria for winning an argument, that ‘I proved that you’re wrong. And if you’re wrong, I’m right’ extend this quote with film techniques used at this point. His public persona has a distinct lack of integrity as he provides false promises on the nature of his employer, the Academy of Tobacco Studies. This is shown at the beginning of the film where on a talk show he promises ‘50 million dollars to encourage kids not to smoke’.

This is done despite it being completely contradictory to the perspectives of his employer who asks him ‘50 million dollars? Are you out of your mind?’ The anger of his boss on promising the sum of money is seen through the closeup of his face as well as his questioning tone. However Naylor’s private persona admits to the health issues associated with smoking. In a meeting

with the MOD group (Merchants of Death, constituting people from America's firearms, alcohol and tobacco industries) in the film they discuss deaths directly attributed to their industry in order to gauge America's most hated industry. Naylor boasts that ' my product puts away 475 000 a year' and he gloats that the level of alcohol related deaths is miniscule in context ' 100 000 in a year? Wowee... a tragedy.

Excuse me if I don't exactly see terrorists getting excited kidnapping anyone from the alcohol industry'. The unconcerned facial expression coupled with the mid-close up shots of Naylor displaying no emotion and the comparison of deaths to terrorism demonstrates the complete disregard of human life. You need to comment on the use of satire as a way to highlight the conflict between what is said on screen and the purpose of the film maker. This is exemplified by the fast transition of shots in the conversation indicating the competitiveness of the argument. This scene is a satire ? on the perceived lack of moral concern demonstrated by tobacco industry through its use of absurdist behaviour, mainly instigated by Naylor. Therefore Naylor's contradiction between his public and private personas is also another medium used by Reitman in order to convey conflicting perspectives on his satire of the tobacco industry.

Manipulation is one central concern in Julius Caesar which generates conflicting perspectives. Cassius is able to manipulate Brutus into firstly believing the idealism of his cause and thus joining the conspirators and enacting Caesar's death. Brutus is presented to be an idealistic character as he ' loves the name of honour more than I fear death'. The antithetical language of ' honour' and ' death' demonstrates that he has cast

himself as the honourable idealist, and when coupled with Brutus' fear that Rome 'chooses Caesar as their king' Cassius is free to manipulate him into joining the conspirators. He uses hyperbole to exaggerate Caesar's status and he juxtaposes images of him being both a 'Colossus' and a 'sick girl' in order to prove his weakness to Brutus. Cassius also appeals to his idealistic nature. His monologue contains the epistrophe 'one man' that reveals Caesar's true power, that only 'one man... is Rome'.

This position is different to the democratic Roman Republic that Brutus represents and admires and he is slowly manipulated to join the conspirators. Manipulation is also seen to demonstrate the power of language, seen through the differing funeral orations of Brutus and Antony. Initially the commoners are irate on about Caesar's assassination and the declarative mood presented through 'we will be satisfied' highlights their anger but it also serves as a point of juxtaposition. Brutus' use of logos convinces the crowd that he 'loved Rome more' than Caesar through posing rhetorical statements that question the loyalty of the commoners and Caesar's supposedly true nature. Immediately following his oration the commoners immediately affirm that 'Caesar was a tyrant', with this declarative statement juxtaposing heavily with the sentiment displayed in the first line of the scene. However the crowd are manipulated again by Antony to subscribe to his point of view.

He adopts a questioning tone throughout his oration in inquiring on about the validity of Brutus' statements in order to not directly oppose Brutus but let his audience question their own perspectives. He repeats the phrase 'Brutus says he was ambitious, and Brutus is an honourable man' but the repetition

of the phrase combined with the logos in his argument in proving Caesar's lack of ambition therefore hint at the invalidity of Brutus' argument. Further on in his oration Antony also uses metaphor to describe Brutus, that he was 'Caesar's angel'. This image is contrasted with the assassination, the 'most unkindest cut of all' and this contributes to the sentiment of betrayal with Brutus that assists in manipulating the audience. By the conclusion of the speech the commoners are united with one common purpose, shown in the stage direction in that all the commoners state 'We'll mutiny [against Brutus]. Antony's rapid manipulation of the crowd demonstrates the power of language and how it can be used to shape perspective.

The manipulation of the animals in Animal Farm also conveys similar sentiment. Orwell utilises a cyclical structure of the allegory in order to demonstrate the power of manipulation instigated mainly by the antagonist of Napoleon and his spokesperson of Squealer. Orwell's use of the text as an allegory of Soviet Russia creates a chilling context for the reader due to the fact that manipulation was repeated in Stalin's rule of Russia, leading to the subjugation of the citizens of the Soviet Union. The pigs of Napoleon and Snowball quickly establish themselves as the superior class in the new 'classless' society of Animalism. Their superior intellect immediately allows them to create a simplified maxim for Animalism, which was to be 'four legs good, two legs bad'. The sheep, representing the uneducated class, immediately begin to circulate this simplified form of Animalism and their attitude is reflected in the sheep 'bleating this on for hours on end'.

The onomatopoeia exemplifies the repetitive nature and submissiveness in accepting this maxim and thus of the commands set by Napoleon throughout

the allegory. Motif as well? The commandments of Animalism is used as a vehicle to demonstrate the manipulation of the animals. The commandments are changed repeatedly throughout the allegory to manipulate the common animals and their 'poor memory' as well as their naivety contributes to their ultimate acceptance of the new norm. The first notion of this manipulation is done when the pigs move and reside in the farmhouse. The new commandment reads 'no animal shall sleep in a bed with sheets', with the 'sheets' clause added. The character of Clover demonstrates the naivety of the animals in general as she 'had not remembered if it mentioned sheets, but as it was there on the wall, it must have done so'. The high modality of 'it must have done so' contrasts her failure to remember the commandment. Squealer's immediate entry in justifying the change in the commandment is another example of manipulation as he uses his intellectual superiority and logos in order to influence his listeners. He states that a bed 'is simply a place to sleep in' and not a physical construct and his argument juxtaposes the affirmation at the establishment of Animalism that the commandments were 'unalterable laws'. The death of the character of Boxer also reveals the extent of Napoleon's manipulation.

Boxer is a follower of Napoleon through the adoption of the motto 'Napoleon is always right' which, when combined with his hardworking nature, should warrant great care and respect from the pigs. However when Boxer falls ill he is taken to the 'horse slaughterer' to be killed in exchange for money. This reality, witnessed by the animals, contrasts the explanation of Squealer in that 'the van had previously been the property of the knacker, and had been bought by the veterinary surgeon'. By the conclusion of the allegory

Napoleon's power has become increased to such an extent that even the commandments of Animalism are shown to reflect the changes in that 'all animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others'. The paradoxical nature of this statement juxtaposes the original idealistic thinking based behind the creation of Animalism and demonstrates the extent of the manipulation of the animals. The animals are not aware that they are living in conditions very similar to life under Jones which forms the basis of Orwell's cyclical structure of the allegory. The bending of the truth by the pigs as well as the willingness of the animals to accept this reality highlights the vast extent and impact of manipulation. Thus manipulation is another medium in which conflicting perspectives can be revealed.

Composers of texts use conflicting perspectives in order to generate diverse and provocative insights into their context. These perspectives are shown to favour one side and they can provide an insight into the opinion of the composer on issues affecting their context. This is seen in Julius Caesar, Thank You For Smoking and Animal Farm where the composers, through their portrayal of power, public and private personas and manipulation that form the basis of conflicting perspectives.

This is excellent overall. However, there are things you can do to improve. The analysis of AF is almost longer than Caesar. You must mention the end of Caesar in your analysis. There doesn't seem to be at least one quote from Acts 4 or 5. Find a couple and use them. In the first body paragraph on power, use quotes for Antony from elsewhere in the play, not just the oration. Eg comment on the deification of Caesar at the start and how stage

directions are used by Shakespeare to contrast the views of the commoners/Antony/ and Cassius/Brutus and others.

Give an example of where we see Caesar's hubris 'northern star'... and contrast that with his humility elsewhere. Shakespeare is always offering contrasting views and creating ambiguity. However, comment also on how we are finally positioned at the end of the play. If discussing Brutus's hubris, mention the tragic structure. Contrast the way this character is presented at the beginning, middle and then the end when we see the consequences of both his idealism and hubris when he fights with Cassius and dies and then the final comments by Antony.

When writing about Antony, consider the way he is presented as loyal, then angry and vengeful about the murder of Caesar, then pitiful, then scheming and manipulative. Take quotes from a range of places throughout the whole play to give the reader a better understanding of the narrative arc of this character. The final paragraph on AF could be edited. It is very long and veers away from the idea of conflicting perspectives in the middle and becomes an analysis of the novel. Throughout the discussion, you could make links between it and Caesar to remind the reader of your point. Email if you have questions.