

Conflicting perspectives joan of arc and julius caesar essay sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Composers use representation as a means of portraying their particular views or perspectives to a targeted audience to stimulate a response, challenge assumptions or rethink certainties. Representation is a statement or account made to influence one's opinion or action to effect a change. Often composers represent political figures in this way to influence audiences to respond in either a negative or positive way. Joan of Arc and Julius Caesar are examples of this. In the texts 'Joan of Arc: heretic, saint, terrorist', 'The Litany of Saint Joan of Arc' and Julius Caesar we see how composers have used representation to display their particular perspectives on Joan of Arc and Caesar and the language techniques used to shape these views.

Joan of Arc the patron saint of France and a national heroine was burnt to death as a witch and four hundred and eighty two years later was canonized a saint. 'Joan of arc: heretic, saint, terrorist' a feature article published on UPI's Religion and Spirituality Forum on January 29 2007, by Ben Daniel explores Joan of Arc's importance to France and whether, if put into a contemporary context, Joan would still be revered as a saint. He questions the ways history has been shaped to blur perspectives of Joan leaving audiences with only a beautified impression of Joan of Arc's life and the so-called piety, patriotism and courage she displayed in her lifetime. In comparison 'The litany of Saint Joan of arc' a prayer by Louis, Bishop of Saint Diï½ explores Saint Joan as a heroic and valiant saint, chosen by God, the Holy Trinity and Saint Michael the Arc Angel to liberate the county of France and to faithfully follow God's word. Julius Caesar (1599), a tragedy play by William Shakespeare, explores the ambivalence and ambiguity in the

interesting comparison of Shakespeare's representation of Caesar's elevation; a loving, loved, generous and hospitable man or the arrogant, willful and unscrupulous tyrant/dictator of Rome.

Composers may provide a complex perspective of personalities that provide another side of the character to consider; this challenges our assumptions and reshapes our view regarding our preconceived ideas and understanding. In Julius Caesar Shakespeare creates a complex representation of Julius Caesar, revealing revelations about Caesar's antagonistic character that interrogate previous beliefs. This creates complexity in the character Shakespeare presents to the audience as well as his own beliefs and attitudes towards Caesar. Cassius in Act 1, Scene 2 dismantles the mythology that surrounds Caesar when he manipulates Brutus against Caesar for his own private agenda. He shapes our view by implying that Caesar is only human and subjected to human frailties and yet is perceived as a God.

" He had a fever when he was in Spain (1, 2, 181)...how he did shake. Tis true, this god did shake" (1, 2, 121)

This quotation provides another side of Caesar to consider that challenges our preconceived perspectives of Caesar. Anecdote encourages the viewer to rethink the powerful and noble qualities Caesar is believed to be renowned for. The antithesis between " God" and the verbs Cassius uses to describe his actions creates a contrast between Caesar the great prevailing Godlike leader, and the vulnerable human frailties of a man. This perspective of Caesar creates ambivalence within the text offering a multi-dimensional

personality. Antony describes him as noble, brave hearted, honorable man, where as Cassius perceives him as a coward, weak and passive. These conflicting perspectives of Caesar leave the responder to stimulate their own response on how they view Caesar, tyrant or hero.

Composers may provide a complex antagonistic portrayal of personalities that shock and alarm readers understanding of a particular character, to challenge beliefs and create uncertainty. When looking at the text 'Joan of arc: heretic, saint, terrorist' a completely different perspective of Joan is represented from previous beliefs. Ben Daniel questions Joan's sainthood and makes reference to her as normal every day woman who may have done extraordinary deeds but plants doubt in our minds as to how perfect and 'holy' she truly was.

"How can you negotiate with a religious nutcase who disregards international agreements?"

This quotation plants that seed of doubt by using a rhetorical question, forcing the audience to rethink certainties that challenge previous assumptions about Joan's Saintly nature. Rhetorical question implies its own answer and is a way of making a point. Ben Daniel's is insidious in his suggestion that Joan worked illegally contradicting our attitude about the pure and valiant saint Joan of Arc. Daniel also uses colloquial language in the word "nutcase" implying that she is eccentric or crazy in his representation of Joan. This perspective of Joan of Arc creates a complexity and uncertainty about Joan of Arc's character and challenges our preconceived ideas from the above representation.

Composers use representation as a means to create certainty and confidence when one perspective is provided, confirming preconceived ideas. The lack of conflict creates control, which can affirm prejudice, verify assumptions and exclude 'the other', to create a simple uncomplicated impression.

Julius Caesar uses positive perspectives of Julius Caesar to challenge or affirm our assumptions and to reshape our view. The speech in Act 3, Scene 2 by Mark Antony challenges previous perspectives of Caesar by discrediting Brutus's authority and using propaganda and stagecraft to appeal to emotion rather than reason.

"For Brutus is an honorable man" (L74)

"And Brutus is an honorable man" (L79)

Repetition is used throughout the speech to question, challenge and create uncertainty regarding Caesar the megalomaniac. Harming the reputation of Brutus encourages skepticism among the audience as to whether he is a credible person to except the reasons and motives for slaying Caesar. "Had you rather Caesar were living, and die all slaves, than that Caesar were dead, to live all freemen?" (L 20). Antithesis also allows for further questioning of Caesar's character, reshaping our view on whether he was a tyrant or a merciful emperor. Language stagecraft and propaganda also sway the audience. Antony's grief in the speech creates doubt as to whether Brutus's portrayal of Caesar is indeed an accurate depiction of Caesar's character, creating energy and uncertainty. The audience is forced to rethink

established or previous certainties of Caesar the tyrant, thus challenging our assumptions on the representation of Caesar.

“ Poor soul, his eyes are red as fire from weeping (L107)...there is no nobler man in Rome than Antony L108...O noble Caesar! (L190)”

‘ The litany of Saint Joan of Arc’ like Julius Caesar provides a positive perspective of Joan of Arc to create a certainty and confidence among the audience to confirm prejudice and verity assumptions. ‘ The litany of Saint Joan of Arc’ offers the responder a positive one-sided perspective of Joan of Arc, which automatically positions the audience to view Joan as a role model to emulate and an amiable saint, something more than just a woman who changed European history but a divine holy saint. Such lines as:

“ Saint Joan of Arc model of family life and labor,” “ Saint Joan of Arc, model of generosity in the service to God” and “ Saint Joan of Arc, model of courage and purity in the field [of battle]”

Support this view of her. Repetition is used in the words ‘ Joan of Arc’ and ‘ model of” to suggest the sacredness of her name and to demonstrate that she was a person of great substance, a model who serves behavioral and social roles for others to follow and emulate. The abstract nouns ‘ generosity’, ‘ courage’ and ‘ purity’ emphasize these role model qualities and provide reason for her sainthood. This illustrates to an audience the importance of this woman. By also repeating her name it continues to bring audiences back to the fact that she was no ordinary woman but Saint Joan of Arc, someone worthy of veneration. This Representation of Joan creates a

certainty and confidence in the viewer's previous assumptions and views on Joan of Arc and creates a simple uncomplicated impression.

Composers use representation to position, persuade or simply put forward a different perspective. The representation of political figures of our time and through history can and will always be viewed with conflicting perspectives that position and persuade, and composers use this to reshape, support or confirm particular assumptions or perspectives. Joan of Arc and Julius Caesar are examples of this. In the texts 'Joan of Arc: heretic, saint, terrorist', 'The Litany of Saint Joan of Arc' and Julius Caesar we see how language techniques present a particular point of view and convince audiences to empathize, support, question or consider particular personalities, especially those of a political background.