

Conflicting perspectives essay – representation and text



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Conflicting perspectives are different points of view expressed and influenced by one's context and values. ??? Birthday Letters??? by Ted Hughes is an anthology of poems challenging the accusation that he was responsible for his wife, Sylvia Plath's death. The three poems Fulbright scholars, The Shot, and Red are an insight into Hughes' justification of the death of Plath using a very subjective and emotive poetic form. The poems hold many deliberate techniques such as extended metaphors, connotations, diction and juxtaposition to encourage the audience to accept his argument that he was not the one to blame for this world-renowned tragedy. The film ??? Forbidden Lies??? (Palace Films 2007) covers the journey of the lies of a woman influencing public perception, representing events selectively to make them more enticing and claiming them true. This film holds the conflicting perspective of appearance versus reality.

??? Light is Like Water??? by Gabriel Garcia Marquez highlights the conflicting perspectives of adults and children and the limits of their minds. These last two texts both highlight the notion of conflicting perspectives holding linking devices to strengthen Ted Hughes' implicit argument.

Fulbright Scholars is the first poem in the ??? Birthday Letters??? anthology. It is the representation of the first time Ted Hughes saw his future partner Sylvia Plath. The opening of this poem starting with the rhetorical question ??? where was it, in the strand??? sets up the tension between the conflicting perspectives of his memory and hindsight.

The rhetorical questions dominate this poem creating a tone of questioning and uncertainty. This tone is enhanced through the use of words like ??? maybe??? and ??? or.??? Contrast is shown through diction, the word choices
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in the poem. The contrast of first and second person perspectives is made obvious through ??? I??? and ??? you.

??? This choice highlights conflicting perspectives within their relationship. The frequent use of personal pronouns conveys a sense of subjectivity and personal perspective. Word techniques such as alliteration and repetition are used also within the phrase ??? sore-footed, under hot sun, hot pavements. This is used to put the audience in the position of the day he experienced her photograph and brings discomfort to the poem through the ??? s??™ sound reminiscent to a burning sensation. Connotations and allusions as a major part of Hughes poetry are evident within Fulbright Scholars predominantly with the image of the peach, the peach highlights the perspectives of appearance versus reality. The image of a peach, as soft and sweet on the outside, but with a hard centre. It seems he is implying the peach is Plath as in those days an attractive young woman was a ??? peach??™.

Another connotation is when Hughes speaks of her luggage; this is a connotation to the emotional luggage Plath Brought to the relationship. Within the poems he also alludes to her problems, he implies her grin is fake and held its own purpose, ??? grim for the cameras, the judges, the strangers, the frighteners.??? The frighteners are an allusion to the demons that haunted Plath. Fulbright Scholars is when Hughes establishes his argument to further be built upon throughout the anthology. The argument that there were many contributing factors to Plath??™s death and he was not the sole benefactor.

The Minotaur is one of the many poems in ??? Birthday Letters.??? The title of the poem ??? the Minotaur??™ is an allusion to a Greek mythological creature. It is half man-half beast that feeds on flesh and is found within a labyrinth. Within the poem the focus on two personalities, Plath and Hughes and the dialogue between them. There is also reference to other family members such as their children and Plath's deceased father. Hughes implies that Plath's father is the Minotaur and establishes how her father has slowly eaten away at her soul and flesh.

The opening of the poem is of a violent nature, showing Plath in a fit of rage, ??? the mahogany table top you smashed,??? for Hughes the action went beyond the physical, the line ??? mapped with the scars of my own life??? suggests that Hughes also has emotional scars with memories held within this heirloom. The poem has a fast pace, this is enhanced through the use of limited punctuation coupled with enjambment. The effect of impulsive and rapid action is given by the enjambment; this is accompanied by extreme emotions which are triggered by the actions conveyed. Sarcastic dialogue is used as Hughes words within the context of the incident. ??? Get that shoulder in your stanzas and we??™ll be away??? is focusing on the anger within her personality and suggests she fails to incorporate these tendencies in her poetry. Hughes positions himself as calm and encouraging her in her art. The image of a ??? bloody skein??? hints of Plath??™s connection to her father and that it is what led her to her destruction. The skein is a strong image conjuring notions of an intact umbilical chord connecting two people.

Toward the end of the poem the repetition of 'your' 'your' 'your' 'your' creates an accusatory tone. Hughes has purposefully written himself out of the equation. The simile of 'left your children echoing like tunnels in a labyrinth,' connects the children to the 'minotaur' the grandfather. It implies that the children were also affected by the 'ghosts' that haunted their mother.

Juxtaposition of ideas is used in the second last line 'Grave of your risen father' this foreshadows Plath's death. The two last stanzas of the poem are Hughes explanation for Plath's death. He implies it was a consequence of her manic tendencies and uncontrollable rage but mainly her obsession with her father leading her to insanity, speaking of her fathers grave and her own corpse in it. This poem highlights the conflicting perspective of Hughes against the public and gives reason that because of Plath's mental instability he could not possibly be responsible for her death. Red is the final poem in the anthology 'birthday Letters' the poem sums up all conflicting perspectives of Plath through juxtaposing colours of red, white and blue and reveals Ted Hughes true love for his deceased wife. 'red was your colour' is how the poem is opened, the colour symbolises her strong and vibrant side but also has the conflicting perspective within the colour, life force vs. the dark side which was her fathers influence leading to suicide.

Her wilful dominance is expressed with the colour red turning their bedroom into a figurative torture chamber, a 'cell,' with the allusion of an 'Aztec altar- temple.' This was where sacrificial offerings were made to appease their Gods, the sacrifices hearts were torn out, this is a utilising <https://assignbuster.com/conflicting-perspectives-essay-representation-and-text/>

hyperbole to position the reader to think that this is how Plath made Hughes feel. Also the line ??? splashed it with roses, defeated it??? implies that Plath was so wrapped in the colour red that it eventually defeated her. The second colour white is used to represent Plath??™s mental illness which is heightened as Bi-Polar disorder through the juxtaposing colours. ??? In the pit of Red you hid from the bone-clinic whiteness??? expresses how she tried to escape her illness and by doing this her personality changed to a negative one.

Also the colour white has connotations to hospitals; Plath hated hospitals as that is where her last memories of her father are held. An outer influence that heightens Hughes argument that Plath was mentally ill was the many suicide attempts that led her to hospital and also the suicide of their son Otto; this shows that the mental imbalance could have been hereditary. ??? Blue was better for you??? is when Hughes shows his softer loving side to the audience. He speaks of how if folded her in ??? crucible caresses??? he juxtaposes the colour blue with her bad side ??? blue was your kindly spirit ??“ not a ghoul??? this effectively positions the audience to double take and reflect on the fact that maybe there was something wrong with Plath. This last poem ends lightly leaving a beautiful image of Plath and how the world has lost a beautiful thing with the simple line ??? but the jewel you lost was blue.??? The summary of Plath through these colours reveals everything about Plath reinforcing many arguments Hughes presents throughout his anthology. Forbidden Lies is a documentary by an Australian director Anna Broinowski and produced by Palace Films 2007.

In this film conflicting perspective of appearance versus reality is employed, as in many of Hughes poems. This is shown through all readers of the book believing true later to discover the author to be exposed as a liar. The film goes about to define whether the book ??? Forbidden Lies??? by Norma Khouri is a true story or fiction where real events are fictionalised to give more impact. This ties in with Hughes poetry as he selectively reinterprets life events in poetic form from his perspective the only difference is Hughes does not claim it true as it is poetry. Imagery of Khouri dressed in black blowing smoke across the camera to show chapter headings implies it is impossible to establish the facts and one must interpret what is presented to them. Khouri is also revealed as mentally unstable after a series of tests which links to the mental state of Plath, a presented argument within Hughes poetry.

Another link between Khouri and Hughes is the response of female activists although the feminist views in both cases are of a different cause. Hughes is accused of Plath's death whereas Khouri is accused of making situations worse damaging the cause for women in Jordan. She is accused of betraying her country. Forbidden Lies reinforces the notion of conflicting perspectives mainly that of Appearance versus Reality that is expressed within Hughes poetry. Light is Like Water by Gabriel Garcia Marquez uses magic realism and subtle irony to represent the conflicting perspectives of adults versus children and also that of appearance versus reality. Adults in the story are shown as being completely adapted to the limits of the physical world, their only form of escapism is ironically one that is presented to them in the cinema. The story shows how adults underestimate and patronise children for their

wild fantasies. The children as juxtaposition to the adults all want to experiment and use their imaginations to overcome the limits of reality.

The children are told upon asking a question and told that ??? light is like water??™ which leads them to believe they can sail a ship on light. Through tactical thinking and improved school grades they convince their parents to buy them a boat and scuba equipment and while their parents are out go on amazing journeys mastering the ??? science of sailing on light.??™ This is where appearance versus reality comes in. the boys truly believe they are sailing on light and gradually raise the levels to further their adventures. But when the parents come home they are completely naive as the children are ??? asleep like angels on dry land.??™ juxtaposition is used ??? rescued from the depths of the light the things that had been lost in the darkness.??™ This is the indication that their imaginations are growing stronger until one night with a group of friends they fill the room with too much light and have no air drowning with adult things floating around them.

The story provides a message not to treat children like they don't understand because if you tell them the half-truth it could lead to something bad. Their imaginations can run wild until they are exposed to the adults dimension and their imagination is killed. This story ties in with Hughes poems reminding a person that what appears to be true isn't always so. Forbidden Lies and Light is Like Water both employ conflicting perspectives of appearance versus reality which tie in with the poetry of Ted Hughes. All these texts encourage the audience to not always believe that what is presented to them is the real truth and that there are outer influences in many situations and truth can be revealed when all aspects are considered.

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Through his poetry Hughes effectively positions the readers to reconsider the feminists point of view that Hughes is a murderer, and alongside the other texts one is almost forced to rethink their original perspective and accept the notion that Hughes was not solely the one responsible for Sylvia Plaths death.