

# Good poetry comparison essay example

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## Poetry Comparison – ““ Million Man March” by Maya Angelou and “ A Farewell to False Love”

Maya Angelou is a 20th century poet who was born in 1928 in the USA, and Sir Walter Raleigh, born in 1552 in England both wrote two poems which are significantly different yet similar in many respects. Maya Angelou speaks strongly about the oppression of a race because the color of their skin makes them from others. It ends on a note of forgetting and forgiving past hurts and to love. Sir Walter Raleigh wishes to forget or to say farewell to the poisonous wrong that was done. He wants to forget that love ever existed. Both poems though written in different centuries and the poets born worlds from each other, they herald the same message and their subjects - the reader and by extension all people, are the same. Both poems call for a spiritual renewal and a healthy way of thinking, absent from all hate and crime, so that love can grow.

In each poem the speaker is lamenting the deception that can be subtly covered when we profess on the surface to care for each other. In “ Million Man March” Angelou calls for an end to the discrimination against black and that they will receive the same rights that their white counterparts get. The injustice that slavery has had on the black people has affected them even to this day. “ The hells we have lived through and lived through still” (Angelou l. 29). In “ A Farewell to False Love” Raleigh calls love many names ‘ the oracle of lies’, ‘ A bastard vile’, (l. 1&4). He wishes that it could disappear forever, “ adieu! / Dead is the root whence all these fancies grew” (Raleigh l. 29-30).

Both speakers reflect on the unfortunate circumstances of life and warn against letting it consume our very existence but we should never allow life’s

atrocities to take over but we should let go of all the hurt, stick to each other and be wary of bearers of false love or those who seek to inflict pain for their own gratification. Raleigh calls love a “poisoned serpent covered all with flowers” (l. 7). He has had a very bad experience with love and is now feeling and expressing the hurt and the anger. Angelou’s mood is one of disgust but she keeps shifting from one mood of depression and despair to one of hope if only all her people would bond together for peace and comfort. Both poets send out an appeal by their choice of words. Words that will resonate with the people and hopefully there will be a resolution.

In Angelou’s poem a combination of literary devices are all blended to bring out the themes of love, truth, pain and rebellion. The imagery and the repetition in the stanzas - “the night has been long, the pit deep / the wall steep” (Angelou stanzas 1, 3, 4 & 5). These images give the reader a vivid picture as to the hurt and the pain that is being suffered by the subjects involved. In the sixth and the seventh stanzas of the poem though, there is hope if only everyone joins together and deal with each other in love. “Let’s come together.. with love / and let us get from low road of indifference” (Angelou l. 39-40). This forcefully brings out the theme of love. She reassures her people and positively tells them that with each other they can all rise above the hurt as long as they all remain true and love the family and stick together.

In stanza six of her poem, Angelou’s use of connotative words of strength and shows their positive attitude gained from past experiences. They are thinking positively about the future. She says “The hells we have lived through/ have sharpened our senses../ this morning I look/ right down to your

soul / I know that with each other we can make ourselves whole" (Angelou l. 31-36). The structure of the poems gives an uplifting effect. The use of the repetitive phrase ' clap hands' allows the reader to join with her in celebrating a new day. The black race is rising above all hate.

Contrasted with Raleigh, he seems not to be able to forgive or let go of past hurts. He rages against the hurt and expresses a finality to love. He is angry " Dead is the root whence all these fancies grew" (Raleigh l. 30). He uses strong metaphors to highlight the theme of hatred. He keeps returning to it to show his utter disgust - " A mortal foe and enemy to rest." (Raleigh l. 2). The speakers in both poems have been wronged but one is able to forgive and put past hurts aside but the other is unable to grow past the hurt.

Raleigh's repetition of love being false and untrue gives one the impression that he is past forgiveness and in fact is raging against love. For him love is dead. The poem begins with a foreboding, a message of doom - " Farewell false love, the oracles of lies" (Raleigh l. 1). For him love has no hope in the future. It is all just false pretenses.

In both poems the use of metaphors shows the emotional intensity that the speakers go through. Sir Walter Raleigh was an English Explorer who worked for Queen Elizabeth I. She loved him and he was knighted and appointed captain of the queen's guard. However, the queen soon threw him in jail after she learnt of the secret marriage to one of her maids. Raleigh wrote the poem to show how love can be fickle and not to be trusted. Maya Angelou's poems are largely about the struggles that the black race encounters but she assures them that the hate can be conquered through love and unity. She

epitomizes love with her words but Raleigh made it seem that there was no love left in the world.

## **Reference**

Poetry Analysis: " Million Man March" [http://www.writing.com/main/view\\_item/item\\_id/1970672-Poetry-Analysis-Million-Man-March](http://www.writing.com/main/view_item/item_id/1970672-Poetry-Analysis-Million-Man-March)

Analysis: " Farewell to False Love" <http://www.studymode.com/essays/Farewell-To-False-Love-Analysis-941968.html>