

# Comparison of mckays and tato lavieras poetry

Literature



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## Comparison of McKay's and Tato Laviera's poetry

Claude McKay's poem "American" describes the misery that is faced by the African American community in the United States of America, while Tato Laviera's poem speaks of the problems that are faced by the community of people who have Puerto Rican roots. Both writers, while they discuss the problems faced by either community, also speak of the fact that America, despite its defects, remains the best place for people of all cultures to reside.

McKay says,

I love this cultured hell that tests my youth! (n. p.)

This line evokes the multicultural ethos that pervades America and the communities that are a part of it. The importance of this lies in the ability that people of all cultures have in staying and fulfilling the great American Dream. According to McKay, America does oppress the African American community; however, the American system also gives them an opportunity to rise up from their misery. This rise to the level of the bourgeoisie is something that the African American community has been able to achieve in the twentieth century following the Reconstruction.

Laviera speaks of the same issues. He writes,

we stand, affirmative in action,

to reproduce a broader answer to the

marginality that gobbled us up abruptly! (n. p.)

These lines point clearly to the affirmative action program of the American government that was put into place following the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Laviera speaks of the benefits that the American government has provided the marginalized sections of the American communities,

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seeking to uplift them. Like McKay, he too speaks of the problems inherent in the American system; he also, however, speaks of America as the only nation that possesses true plurality.

#### Works Cited

Lavieras, Tato. " American". Web. 25 Nov. 2013

McKay, Claude. " American". PoemHunter. Web. 25 Nov. 2013.