

Compare and
contrast 'morning
song' by sylvia plath
and 'infant sorrow' by
willia...



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In this assignment I intend to contrast, compare and analyse these two poems, which convey the writers perspectives towards childbirth and its affects on the parents as well as the babies. 'Morning Song' was written by Sylvia Plath who was born in 1932 in America.

She excelled at school and put all her effort into everything she did. She attended Cambridge University and married Ted Hughes, another poet, in 1956 but their relationship clashed due to them both being extremely intelligent and colourful people. They had two children; Ted left Plath for another woman and so Plath became depressed and so tried to commit suicide three times and succeeded on the 3rd attempt using cooking gas in 1963 when she was 31 leaving two young children. The poem opens with a colourful and effective simile, ' Love set you going like a fat gold watch'. The word ' fat' illustrates the natural appearance of a newborn baby, usually plump, chubby, and round faced.

I think the adjective ' gold' was used to convey the image that a baby is priceless, precious and how you always want it to be close to you like a mother and baby. ' Watch' is a comparison to the baby's life; steadily ticking along until eventually it slows down to stop. Onomatopoeia is used in the active verb ' slapped' to suggest the quick, sharp action on the baby's sensitive foot-soles to inflate their lungs, which was a common practice in those times. The affect of this action on the newborn baby is that it releases a piercing ' bald cry' that shatters the mood with its clarity and symbolises its arrival into the world. On into the next stanza, it opens with an extended metaphor in which Plath compares the new baby to a new exhibit in a

museum, which illustrates a realistic comparison because people gather to look at new objects to admire and collect information from.

The parents are overwhelmed by the baby's arrival and 'New statue' metaphorically compares the baby to an object being unveiled for the first time with the parents or visitors looking in awe of it. There is an image of vulnerability created in, 'your nakedness shadows your safety' which conveys the serious responsibility of the parents and so they feel they have to protect the baby from danger. 'We stand around blankly as walls' conveys to the reader that the baby is the centre of attention and that no-one else seems to be interested in anything other than the baby. The next stanza is reflecting on the distant relationship between the mother and the baby. She uses imagery such as clouds to convey her love to the movement of a cloud and how it appears from nowhere and then disappears. Cloud is also a good comparison of the relationship because clouds are distant from us, like the relationship.

A physical image is created of breath appearing then disappearing and the tone that Plath uses here is a gentle and reflective one revealing a sense about their relationship. She feels distant from the baby; she sees herself as an observer, watching over the baby but not having any physical contact with it. A subtle and delicate extended image is written in the next stanza, 'All night your moth breath flickers among the flat pink roses' where a metaphor is used by Plath to convey the image of a babies breathing, fragile and gentle like a moths that 'flickers' which uses the moth again as a comparison because of the way the moth silently flickers naturally. We see that Plaths role as a lover has changed to mother in this stanza. 'One cry'
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indicates the change in her senses because she now needs to be more alert and aware of any actions made from the baby. ' And I stumble from bed, cow heavy and floral', illustrates the physical appearance of her, like a cow which is clumsy and dopey.

Even though she is alert she will be exhausted from waking up in the middle of the night. Also comparing her, as a cow is effective because a cow solely produces milk, which is partly what she is doing for the baby. The reference to a Victorian nightgown indicates a clear change in her role because the Victorian attitudes to women were that they kept their body covered and a Victorian nightgown is perfect to illustrate the image due it covers all the body. Plath uses the garment to hide her anxiety about her body image because she will not feel attractive after her pregnancy. The next stanza continues which a technique called enjambe to convey the moving of night to day to add fluency to the poem. Personification is used in ' the window square whitens and swallows its dull stars' which means because it is dawn the stars are dullish because of light and they are gradually fading away.

' And now you try your handful of notes; the clear vowels rise like balloons which illustrates the way vowels are rounded sounds and are prolonged and so Plath compared them to balloons which rise up until they fade out of site like the baby produces. After analysing ' Morning Song' I am left with a relaxed and reflective view on child birth and real events that happen around a new born baby and how life changes with it. Now that I have analysed ' Morning Song' I will now proceed to compare and contrast ' Infant Sorrow' Infant Sorrow' was written by William Blake who was born in 1757 and died in 1827. He was an English poet who had very strong views on the world at <https://assignbuster.com/compare-and-contrast-morning-song-by-sylvia-plath-and-infant-sorrow-by-william-blake-essay/>

that time. Opening in a very pessimistic and gloomy way, the poem conveys a striving and painful image in 'groaned and wept'. I think the parents are mourning due to the baby being born because it might be un-wanted or it was a bad time for the baby to be born into maybe due to wars or diseases, therefore the mood is very mournful.

The baby illustrates a sense of challenge because the baby seems to be confident and active. The baby presupposes the future for itself and seems to have a prior knowledge of the world it is entering. The word 'leapt' conveys that the baby is ready to challenge the world and fight for itself. Blake is hinting a sense of re-incarnation here. There are many defined issues conveyed in, 'helpless, naked piping loud'; 'piping loud' because there is a sense of anger due its high pitched and persistent pitch. It illustrates that the baby wants to be heard and listened to.

'Naked' symbolises purity and vulnerability. The baby looks ordinary, but mentally is very strong and is conveyed to an evil spirit 'feond' that is hiding away in the clouds and waiting to strike from its vantage point in the skies. The final verse strongly conveys strife and struggle of the baby because it is trying to overcome physical forces that withdraw it from speaking out and being free. 'Fathers hands' and 'tightly wrapped swaddling bands' are what the baby has to face up to and there are strong hints that the baby has to escape from his parents who are stopping him from fulfilling his opinions to the world. The baby knows what kind of a life it will have if it doesn't break away soon. 'Swaddling' was a common practice in those days and was tightly wrapped to give the baby a sense of security, but this baby seems to

want to break free which illustrates that this baby is different from normal babies.

In the final couplet the mood changes dramatically because the baby is very weak and has to physically give up a fight and is so exhausted it decides to sulk which reflects he is resentful and bitter of his actions. After reading this poem I am left with a feeling of sadness because of the fact that this baby wanted to break away so eagerly because it knows it is right but unable to overcome physical forces that prevent it from doing so. I will now compose a section of similarities and differences between 'Morning Song' and 'Infant Sorrow'. Both of the poems are about babies in their first hours and days of their lives and how other people perceive them.

They both explore to some degree the attitudes of the parents and times of when the babies were born. There is a strong difference in moods and tone between them because 'Morning Song' is very calm and un-physical whereas 'Infant Sorrow' is very quick and has a striving tone. The poems are written from different perspectives one from the parents and one from the baby's point of view. They also both explore the vulnerability of the newborns particularly their frailty. Both of them contain a strong sense of impact to the parent's lives and futures, but 'Morning Song' is positive and reflective whereas 'Infant Sorrow' is negative and mournful. The babies themselves are different because in 'Morning Song' the baby is a conventional and traditional whereas in 'Infant Sorrow' the baby has some kind of prior knowledge of the world it is entering. 'Morning Song' has a relaxed pace to it and reflective imagery whereas 'Infant Sorrow' is quick, sharp and aggressive. After analysing both poems and looking at the <https://assignbuster.com/compare-and-contrast-morning-song-by-sylvia-plath-and-infant-sorrow-by-william-blake-essay/>

similarities and differences I have come to the conclusion that these are very emotive poems conveying two different perspectives of child birth and its positive or negative affects it has had upon the parents.