

# Poetry compare and contrast essay

[Literature](#), [Poetry](#)



“ Writing is the painting of the voice. ”(Voltaire) This impactful quote was written by a French Enlightenment writer, Voltaire evidently demonstrates how creative writing and the proper usage of language allows for an even further representation of any piece of literature. The appropriate usage of words enlightens readers as different senses may start becoming more involved. Subsequently, these words contribute to creating a specific atmosphere or mood. The poems “ Mother to Son” and “ The Rose That Grew From Concrete” both share the similar theme of poverty, and obtaining faith to get through life’s barriers. After inquiring the usage of the poetic devices in Langston Hughes’ “ Mother to Son” and Tupac Shakur’s “ The Rose That Grew From Concrete” it affirms that Hughes sets a greater impact on how you can not allow life’s obstacles to hold you back and to always exceed your limits. The use of literary devices such as metaphor and symbolism will be compared between the two poems in order to demonstrate Hughes’ success in executing his poem.

To begin, Langston Hughes and Tupac Shakur both effectively use an array of different literary devices in their poems to help get across their meanings. Metaphors, in particular, are present and used in both poems. In Hughes’ poem, “ Mother to Son”, an extended metaphor is present in the second line: “ Life for me ain’t been no crystal stair” (Hughes). The poet compares the mother’s life with the crystal staircase which suggests how life for her isn’t as simple or smooth just like crystal. In addition, the crystal staircase also symbolizes prestige and wealth, in this case, Hughes is demonstrating the mother’s lower economic class and perhaps living in poverty. Hughes, an African American living in the United States, wrote this poem in 1922. During

this time period, the United States was still facing human right issues such as discrimination specifically, racism. Events such as slavery were taking place during this era. Using this metaphor, Hughes is trying to get across the history of African-Americans and how through hours of exhausting labor, they are still faced with living in cramped ghetto neighborhoods. This metaphor is not only an efficient way to compare life and it's hardships, but it also creates a visual component.

Readers can easily picture a crystal staircase and compare it to life. Hughes wrote this poem circulating around the idea of this metaphor, as it is seen throughout the entire poem. He successfully portrays his message because his audience can conveniently connect the crystal staircase with life and using it in another perspective. Along with Hughes, Tupac Shakur also uses an extended metaphor in his writing. Found in lines one and two, Shakur writes: “ Did you hear about the rose that grew from a crack in the concrete” (Shakur). In this metaphor, Tupac uses the rose to represent himself to portray how he was able to make something out of practically nothing. Tupac Shakur, considered by many as one of the best rappers of all time uses this metaphor to illustrate how he grew up in a poor community and not necessarily having the best start in life. However, through his continuous faith and effort, he proved society wrong by turning out to be an icon known today. Between the two poems, Langston Hughes more effectively executes his usage of the metaphor because the way he wrote his poem is more motivating, and his message is more general, therefore a greater amount of individuals may relate. Also, the way he wrote this poem in the perspective of a mother to son shows more devotion, It displays the affection and love of

a poverty-stricken mother full heartedly giving advice to her son. The topic of a mother's unconditional love is usually a topic that touches the weak spot of our hearts. A staircase is also a very exceptional way to compare with life because it shows two directions found within life; up, or down, but the choice belongs to you. Langston Hughes' poem is, therefore, more effective than Tupac Shakur's. In addition to metaphors, symbolism is also presented in these two poems. Symbolic elements allow writers to illustrate a bigger picture from just words, especially since these poems are both emotionally driven, the usage of symbolism helps create a deeper meaning. In Langston Hughes' "Mother To Son", symbolism is found within the quote: "It's had tacks in it, / And splinters, / And boards torn up" (Hughes). In this quote, the symbolic words include tacks, splinters, and boards torn up. Hughes is illustrating how his life isn't as smooth as a crystal staircase, instead, there are tacks, splinters, and boards torn up. These words not only help readers to visualize, but they also represent deeper meanings. All these illustrate the challenges one may face in life. For instance, imagine a staircase with tacks on it, the staircase symbolizes life, and the tacks represent challenges, as a whole, it exemplifies how every step in life comes with painful barriers, this may include making tough sacrifices, or physical labor. When Hughes mentions about the board being torn up, the readers can visually picture torn up cardboard boxes, however, they may also perceive it as a symbol of poverty and inadequate shelter. Following Hughes, symbolism is also shown in Tupac Shakur's "The Rose That Grew From Concrete". In the lyric "Did you hear about the rose that grew from a crack in the concrete?" (Shakur).

The words, “concrete” and “rose” is the main symbolic elements as they express greater ideas. The word “rose” is used to symbolize the poet’s life, this is proven throughout the poem as Shakur mentions how the rose learned to dream, walk, and breathe. The word “concrete” symbolizes the ghetto area he grew up in as a child. Typically, when you think about a rose, you would expect it to grow out of the fertilized soil, however, in this case, a rose growing out of concrete could also represent strength and resilience as it is defying the odds. Clearly, both of these poems involve the use of symbolism, however, Hughes does a better job executing this literary element because the meaning behind his symbol is more obvious compared to Shakur. The symbolic element used in Tupac Shakur’s poem is a little too broad, as readers may perceive other meanings. For instance, an individual may consider a rose growing out of concrete as a miracle. However, that is not the case because the message Shakur is trying to get across is that through his courage and determination, he succeeded by turning out the way he was, not necessarily a because of a miracle. As a result, Hughes’ use of symbolism is more compelling than Shakur’s. In conclusion, after inquiring the usage of the poetic devices in Langston Hughes’ “Mother to Son” and Tupac Shakur’s “The Rose That Grew From Concrete” it affirms that Hughes sets a greater impact on how you cannot allow life’s obstacles to hold you back and to always exceed your limits. It is fascinating to see how through something as simple as words, a writer can paint a bigger picture to share even deeper meanings behind it. Consequently, these poems both share the similar message of life’s greatest struggle; poverty, which is still dealt by billions today. Hughes’ usage of poetic devices allows readers to create an

even deeper connection, touching readers on an emotional level. His literature is evidently well thought out, and for him to write his poem in a woman's perspective displays just how passionate he is about his story. Life was never meant to be easy, and those who choose to keep climbing are the ones who succeed.