**AP Literature Comparative Poetry Analysis**

**Prompt:**

The following two poems present two different minority perspectives of America as revealed by an experience in a movie theater. Read each poem carefully. Then write an essay in which you compare and contrast the techniques used in the poems to characterize the speakers and convey their unique viewpoints.

**Main Character**

Jimmy Santiago Baca

I went to see   
How the West Was Won   
at the Sunshine Theater.   
Five years old,   
deep in a plush seat,   
light turned off,   
bright screen lit up   
with MGM roaring lion-   
in front of me   
a drunk Indian rose,   
cursed   
the western violins   
and hurled his uncapped bagged bottle   
of wine   
at the rocket roaring to the moon.   
His dark angry body   
convulsed with his obscene gestures   
at the screen,   
and then ushers escorted him   
up the aisle,   
and as he staggered past me,   
I heard his grieving sobs.   
Red wine streaked   
blue sky and take-off smoke,   
sizzled cowboys’ campfires,   
dripped down barbwire,   
  
slogged the brave, daring scouts   
who galloped off to mesa buttes   
to speak peace with Apaches,   
and made the prairie   
lush with wine streams.   
When the movie   
was over,   
I squinted at the bright   
sunny street outside,   
looking for the main character.  
**“Indian Movie, New Jersey” (1990)**

**Chitra Banejeree Divakaruni**

Not like the white filmstars, all rib and gaunt cheekbone, the Indian sex-goddess smiles plumply from behind a flowery branch.  Below her brief red skirt, her thighs   
are satisfying-solid, redeeming   
as tree trunks.  She swings her hips   
and the men-viewers whistle.  The lover-hero dances in to a song, his lip-sync a little off, but no matter, we   
know the words already and sing along. It is safe here, the day   
golden and cool so no one sweats,   
roses on every bush and the Dal Lake   
clean again.

 The sex-goddess switches to thickened English to emphasize a joke.  We laugh and clap.  Here we need not be embarrassed by words dropping like lead pellets into foreign ears. The flickering movie-light wipes from our faces years of America, sons who want mohawks and refuse to run the family store, daughters who date   
on the sly.

         When at the end the hero   
dies for his friend who also   
loves the sex-goddess and now can marry her, we weep, understanding.  Even the men   
clear their throats to say, “What

qurbani! What dosti!”  After, we mill around unwilling to leave, exchange greetings and good news:  a new gold chain, a trip to India.  We do not speak of motel raids, canceled permits, stones thrown through glass windows, daughters and sons raped by Dotbusters. 

In this dim foyer   
we can pull around us the faint, comforting smell   
of incense and pakoras, can arrange   
our children’s marriages with hometown boys and girls,   
open a franchise, win a million   
in the mail.  We can retire   
in India, a yellow two-storied house   
with wrought-iron gates, our own   
Ambassador car.  Or at least   
move to a rich white suburb, Summerfield or Fort Lee, with neighbors that will   
talk to us.  Here while the film-songs still echo in the corridors and restrooms, we can trust   
in movie truths:  sacrifice, success, love and luck,   
the America that was supposed to be.

*qurbani*:  sacrifice   
*dosti*:  friendship   
*pakoras*: fried appetizers   
*Dotbusters*:  New Jersey gangs that attack Indians