

The comparative and
contrast analysis of
john donnes death be
not proud and claud...



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THE COMPARATIVE AND CONTRAST ANALYSIS OF JOHN DONNE'S

DEATH BE NOT PROUD AND CLAUDE MCKAY'S IF WE MUST DIE

Death be Not Proud
Death be not proud, though some have call thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou are not so; For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me. From rest of sleep, which but thy picture be, Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow, And soonest our best men with thee do go, Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.

Thou art slave of fate, chance, kings, and desperate men, And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell, And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well
And better than thou stroke; why swell'st thou then
One short sleep past, we wake eternally
And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die. By John Donne The Norton Anthology of Poetry. 1983. Third Edition, p.

222. If We Must Die
If we must die, let it not be like hogs
Hunted and panned in an inglorious spot, While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs, Making their mock at our accursed lot. If we must die, O let us nobly die, So that our precious blood may not be shed
In vain; then even the monsters we defy
Shall be constrained to honor us though dead! O kinsmen! we must meet the common foe! Though far outnumbered let us show us brave, And for their thousand blows deal one deathblow! What though before us lies the open grave
Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack, Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back! By Claude McKay The Black Poets Dudley Randall (ed.). 1971.

p: 63. ANALYSIS: In my opinion, ??? Death be Not Proud by John Donne??? and ??? If We Must Die by Claude McKay??? are quite interesting to observe. Both of them are unique in a sense that they have their own characteristics over their similarities.

Here, I will analyze it from the construction of the form and also the figure of speech used. First, both poems are in the form of sonnet consist of 14 lines with the standard meter, iambic pentameter, in most of the lines. The 14 lines are divided into 3 quatrain and a couplet in each poem but they have different rhyme schemes. Donne??™s poem ??? Death be Not Proud??™ rhyme scheme differs a little from usual, consisting of abba abba cddc ae besides McKay??™s ??? If We Must Die??? uses a quite common rhyme scheme of English sonnet, abab cdcd efef gg. Those create different lyrical feeling for me in which Donne??™s is sense more calm while McKay??™s is firm. It is also supported by the different ending sound in each line of the poems. In Donne??™s, the ending sound of each line consists of /i:/, /ou/, /e/, and /ai/ which give calm and gentle rhyme. Besides in McKay??™s, the ending sound of each line uses /o/, /ai/, /e/, and /?/ which sound firm and a little rigid.

In a broad thought, those are related with the different messages which want to be conveyed by the author. Donne considered death as something which did not have to be frightened so that just let it happened. It is stated in ??? Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.??™ (line 4). But McKay??™s thought that even when we were dying we still have to fight for live.

It is stated in the last line ??????!..., dying, but fighting back!??™.

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They are identical in topic of death but differ in thought of how to react at it. While let's™s back to the iambic pentameter that is clearly seen in the first line of each poem ???/Death be / not proud/, though /some have/ call thee/??™ and ???/If we / must die,/ let it/ not be/ like hogs/??™. It creates rhythmical feeling within the poems. Therefore, as the effect of it, the reader especially I myself, has been persuaded enjoying the rest lines from both. Second, ??? Death be Not Proud by John Donne??? and ??? If We Must Die by Claude McKay??? have another similarity in form of the figure of speech used. Both uses alliteration, like we can see in Donne??™s bellow: Line 4: Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst though kill me Line 6: Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow Line 13: One short sleep past, we wake eternally While alliteration is also seen in McKay??™s below : Line 3 & 4: While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs, Making their mock at our accursed lot. Out of the alliteration, both poems use different figure of speech, such as simile which can be found in McKays ??????, let it be like hogs??|??™ and ??????|bark the mad and hungry dogs,.

.??™. Here, the comparison of blacks to hogs and whites to mad dogs are similes rather than metaphors. Besides in Donne??™s, another figure of speech which can be found is personification. Donne??™s personified death as a person using the second-person singular (implied or stated as thou, thee, and thy), as we can see in line 1 ??????|..., though some have call thee??™ and ??? For those whom thou think??™st thou dost overthrow??|??™.

Overall, based on what I have analyzed above, I like Donne??™s poem ??? Death be Not Proud??? more than McKay??™s ??? If We Must Die???

For me the message Donne's want to convey to us is so nice. As far as I can tell, Death be not proud actually depicts that, we should not be afraid of death. Because in the first quatrain states that, some people called death might be very terrible and unpleasant experience, whereas, John Donne assures them that, death is not like that and proves himself by showing it in his sonnet. What a good work it is!