

**EXPLORING THE ELEMENT OF ALLEGORY AND METAPHYSICAL
CONCEIT IN THE WORKS OF JOHN DONNE'S A VALEDICTION
FORBIDDING MOURNING & JOHN DRYDEN'S ANNUS MIRABILIS:
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

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ABSTRACT

In the Renaissance period, the rise of the 17th century metaphysical poets like John Donne, John Dryden, Andrew Marvell and others had contributed to the publication of copious colourful poetry. The use of allegory and metaphysical conceit in their poetry have further revealed their inventive metaphors and agile intelligence (Bloom, 2010). Using Aldo Nemesio's (1999) comparative method as an attempt to understand the poet and persona's human literary behaviour, researchers have categorized and analyzed the poems in multiple contexts and stanzas so as to create interpretations from the allegory and conceit depicted. Hence, this paper shall discuss the findings on the comparative analysis of the element of allegory and metaphysical conceit depicted in the poems of the two metaphysical poets; John Donne's *A Valediction Forbidding Mourning* and John Dryden's *Annus Mirabilis*.

Keywords: *metaphysical, allegory, conceit, comparative analysis*

INTRODUCTION

According to the 12th Edition of *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (2011), a poem is 'a metrical composition that is usually concerned with feeling or imaginative description'. Poetry refers to 'the art or work of poet' which has 'a poetic or tenderly pleasing quality. It is a form of literary art that contains aesthetic use of language and has evocative qualities. Poetry often uses particular forms and conventions that suggest alternative meanings or connotative meanings. As such, the emotions, experience and interest of the poet is often revealed directly or indirectly in their poems. Not only that, the poems can also be didactic as the poets sometimes take the role as an entertainer as well as a preacher in using allegory¹ as moral lesson to its readers.

¹ "A form of extended metaphor or sustained personification; a figurative narrative, either in prose or verse, in which objects, persons, and actions represent ideas and convey a veiled oral meaning" (Mohammad A. Quayum & Rosli Talif, 2000, Dictionary of Literary Terms).

Apart from its didactic roles, Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2022) elucidates another role of poetry as being metaphysical; where “bold and ingenious conceits, incongruous imagery, complexity and subtlety of thought, frequent use of paradox, harsh and rigidity of expression” are portrayed in the stanzas (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/metaphysical%20poetry>).

BACKGROUND

The use of allegory and metaphysical conceit in poetry was popularly used by the metaphysical poets of the Renaissance period. Names such as John Donne, Andrew Marvell are among those who are known as masters of metaphysical poetry. For the purpose of this paper, a comparative analysis is conducted on the element of allegory and metaphysical conceit using the work of these two metaphysical poets; John Donne’s *A Valediction Forbidding Mourning* and John Dryden’s *Annus Mirabilis*.

Metaphysical Poetry And Metaphysical Conceit

As for the term metaphysical, Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2022) defines ‘meta’ as something that goes “beyond”, and “physical” refers to matter (body and physical force). Metaphysical poetry was used by metaphysical poets to “exhibit subtlety of thought, complex imagery and wit (Curran, 2005; Rakesh, 2008; accessed: 16/6/22). Metaphysical conceit refers to far-fetched comparison or unlikely metaphor (*Concise Oxford Dictionary*: 2011) which is a highly ingenious kind of conceit used by metaphysical poets in all areas of knowledge. It is said to strike the mind’s recognition of unsuspected similarities that speaks to both the mind and emotion with great force (Holman: accessed 16/6/22).

Allegory

As defined in the *Dictionary of Literary Terms* (2000), allegory is “a form of extended metaphor or sustained personification; a figurative narrative, either in prose or verse, in which objects, persons, and actions represent ideas and convey a veiled oral meaning.” It is a literary device used found in literary forms such poems and novels. It is closely associated with the parable, fable and metaphor – differing in intricacy and length. In other words, allegory, in literature, as a representation for meanings than what is indicated on the surface an extended metaphor. In contrast, Dundas (1964) views allegory as a form of wit used by Renaissance metaphysical poet, which was used extensively by poets like Spencer and Donne. Allegory is usually treated as a rhetoric figure. However, it needs not be tied to language expression. It can also be expressed in the form of representative arts. An example of the use of allegory is the image of the grim reaper to symbolically represent death. Other examples can be seen in medieval morality plays like *Everyman* which personifies abstraction such as good deed and fellowship, and recounts the death journey of Everyman. Other best-known allegories in English are Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene* (1596) and John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim Progress* (1678).

METHODOLOGY

The background of these selected pieces by Donne and Dryden is of the Renaissance period. The Renaissance period is known as the period of ‘rebirth’ which occurred during the early 16th century to the early 17th century. The Renaissance which occurred in England is said to be associated with that of the pan-European Renaissance, of the 14th century, and is also referred

as “the age of Shakespeare” or “the Elizabethan era”. Nevertheless, many historians contend that the English Renaissance is merely a transition period towards the modern world. The singular notion of English Renaissance is questionable as “Renaissance” does not necessarily refer to a specific race (English). To add, historians question to whom the renaissance had developed as the status of women in the society of that period declined during the Renaissance period.

Nonetheless, undeniably, the Renaissance had spurred revolution in various aspects such as philosophy, art, music, poetry, architecture and science. The works produced this period revealed great interest in the English Christian beliefs, thoughts of life and death and the glory of the history of London (Rakesh, 2008), which is portrayed in the theme of Donne’s *A Valediction Forbidding Mourning* and Dryden’s *Annus Mirabilis*. However, the Renaissance which occurred in England was slow in transition as it revealed the steadfast English mind clinging on the old order of things and yet welcoming gradually the rebirth of ideas. Consequently, it paved for the renewal of mythical gothic influence. Such influence is evident in Dryden’s constant use of allusion to the mythical Phoenix to portray the rebirth of the time of glory (*Annus Mirabilis*).

Among the major figures of English Renaissance include names such as Francis Bacon, William Shakespeare, John Donne, Ben Johnson, Sir Thomas More and John Milton. As Donne, and Ben Johnson were the major influences on 17th century poetry, with Donne’s works being imitated by other Metaphysical poets, and Johnson by Cavalier poets, Spencer on the other hand, provided primary English influence towards Milton’s poetry. Interestingly, John Dryden had brought England a modern type of literature during the Restoration Period (between 1660 and the 1700s), that combined a cosmopolitan outlook of the latest European trends with the rich works of Chaucer and Shakespeare. The Restoration Period indicated the desire for new audience styles of Donne’s sermons, Milton’s pamphlets and even Brown’s treatise. Hence, Aldo Nemesio’s (1999) comparative method has been used in determining the impact of Renaissance period on culture and poetry, particularly through the literary works of John Donne and John Dryden.

John Donne

John Donne (21st January 1572 -31st March 1631), was an English Jacobean poet, preacher and a major representative of the metaphysical poets of this period. He was brought up as a Roman Catholic, at a time when Catholicism was illegal in England (Bloom, 2010). Despite the obvious dangers and social disadvantages of practicing Catholicism, his family arranged for his education by the Jesuits, which provided Donne with a deep knowledge of his religion. Later on, Donne attended Oxford for three years and later on Cambridge but was unable to obtain a degree from both institutions due to his Catholicism as he was not able to take the Oath of Supremacy required of graduates. Then, in 1592 he was accepted as a student at the Thavies Inn Legal School and in 1592 at the Lincoln’s Inn where he held the office of Master of the Revels. However, Donne began to further question the martyrdom of Catholicism after the death of his brother, Henry Donne, due to intense torture followed by the suffering of bubonic plague at Newgate Prison for harbouring a Catholic priest (Alexander, 2000).

Donne’s works are distinctive due to their realistic and sensual style. His works reveal a healthy desire for life and its plenty pleasures, while expressing deep emotion. He portrayed this through the use of conceits, wit and intellect, as depicted in the poems *The Rising Sun* and *Batter My Heart*. One of the Donne’s famous conceits is found in *A Valediction Forbidding Mourning* where he compares two lovers who are separated with two legs of a compass. Donne

also included the use of metaphysical conceit in his sermons and passages written (Curran, 2005). In addition, his works are also full of paradoxes, puns and subtle yet distinctive analogies. The common themes of Donne's poems are love (influence of his early life), death (especially after his wife's death), theology and spiritualism (entry in Christianity). Hence, Donne's style of poetry represents a transition from classical forms to more personal poetry. However, like Dryden, Donne's work has received criticism due to its ambivalence abuse of metaphors.

John Dryden

John Dryden (9th August 1631 – 12th May 1700), was a notable English poet, who was also known as a literary critic, translator and playwright. Dryden dominated the literary life of the period of Restoration to the extent that among the literary circles the Restoration period was also known as the "Age of Dryden" (Alexander, 2000). Dryden's upbringing did not have the controversial turmoil of Catholicism as Donne. As Dryden was upbringing was that of a Puritan Christian, unlike Donne whose family practiced Catholicism discreetly, his progress in education was smooth. He studied at Trinity College, Cambridge and was a valedictorian of his B.A class. Following the decease of his father, Dryden went to work with Cromwell's Secretary of State as his landowning income inherited from his father was insufficient to live on. After the restoration of the monarchy and the return of Charles II, Dryden instantly established himself as the leading poet and literary critic of his day and transferred his allegiances to the new government. However, with the disposal of King James, Dryden's refusal to take the oaths of allegiance to the government left him out of favour at court which cost him his stature as Poet Laureate and forced him to give up his public office and live by the proceeds of his pen (Ibid, 2000).

Dryden's work reveals his interest in royalty and shift from Anglican practice to that of his conversion to Roman Catholicism later on his life. His works include not only poetry but also composition plays for the King's Company (Augustine, 2011). However, it was through the lengthy historical poem *Annus Mirabilis*, which contained a modern epic of pentameter quatrains that established him as a preeminent poet of his generation, and was crucial in ensuring his post as Poet Laureate (1668) and historiographer royal (1670). His greatest achievements were in satiric verse: a mock-heroic *MacFlecknoe* which satirized Shadwell's offences against literature. Other satires include *Abssalom and Achitopel* (1681) and *The Medal* (1682). His other major pieces of this period as the religious poems *Religio Laici* (1682), written from the stand of a member of the Church of England. However, his 1683 edition of *Plutarch's Lives Translated from the Greek by Several Hands* and *The Hind and the Panther* (1687) celebrates his conversion to Roman Catholicism (Ibid, 2011).

A Comparison Between John Donne's "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" and John Dryden's (*London Reborn*) *Annus Mirabilis*

Donne poem's *A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning* foretells a man who is saying farewell to his beloved as he prepares to leave. Donne relates his views and personal experience on the human condition of love, its connection to the soul, and the separation of the soul from the physical body. To add, the word "Valediction" which is specifically used, translated in Latin means Vale= Latin for "farewell" and Diction= "speaking". Thus, "A speaking farewell but forbidding mourning".

In the first stanza, Donne writes of a funeral. Whereupon, those who are good in virtue will pass away peacefully into the next life as because they do not fear what is on the other

side. Conversely, the ‘sad friends’ connotes those are not virtuous fear death. So, as the two leave without fear of the future, so must the speaker of the poem and his wife leave one another without fear of their future. Hence, no mourning of separation should be presented. For the remainder part of the poem, the separation of body and soul is an integral concept of the poem. The man assures his wife that they are not the normal lovers-their love is beyond the physical constraints of physical attraction. Whereupon, they are connected mentally, emotionally, spiritually and physically. Therefore, a brief separation will not damage their bond, but rather strengthen it.

There are six metaphorical conceits used in the poem “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning”. The first conceit is of the image of leave-taking of those who are dying. It reveals the usual belief of religions such as Christianity during the Renaissance period that those who faced a good and peaceful death were those who led a good life. In contrast, the allegorical reference of ‘sad friends’ connotes those who have led a life that lacks virtue would fear death and try their best to avoid it. To add, the second allegory, “whisper” depicts the communication connection between the body and soul (Curran, 2005).

The second conceit is found in the second stanza. This further reveals Donne’s knowledge of theology and spiritualism. The love between the spouses is depicted as being ‘sacred’ love. The word “profanity” is emphasized on the sacred nature of the love which should not be lowered from its status and made profane by weeping at parting. The third allegory, “melt”, indicates the influence of metallurgy in alchemy, in understanding Mankind’s existence and change from physical embodiment to that of soul. According to the ordinal of alchemy, the body which consists metal elements is polluted and destroyed by the worldly elements (Pattison Muir, 2004). Hence, melting changes the physical embodiment from a polluted state to being a better one.

The third conceit in stanza three indicates the influence of astronomy and geology. Earthquakes are natural disasters that can cause physical damage. In contrast, “trepidation of the sphere” which a supreme force is imperceptible and harmless. The fourth allegory, “spheres”, suggests that it may also refer to the realm between the living and the dead. As for the fourth conceit of stanza four, “Dull Sublunary lovers’ love”, it reveals the influence of astrology and theology. It was the belief during the Renaissance period that change or ‘mutability’ only occurred beneath the moon. Change, however, was deemed as a sign of imperfection. In contrast, according to theological argument, God created the universe perfect. Hence, in perfect shape – in perfect circles. Due to the fall of humankind, God had limited the effects of the earth and planets orbits. In Donne’s day, this was being discredited as it was known at that time that planets’ orbits were elliptical. The fifth allegory, “Dull sublunary” indicates that the love bound between the husband and wife, though appearing to be lack in physical passion, is beyond the physical presence needed of ‘ordinary lovers’ who depend on physical presence as physical attraction binds them.

The fifth conceit in stanza six draws upon metallurgy of alchemy indicates transition to a better and higher state. Gold is ductile (can be drawn out indefinitely) and malleable (can be beaten until it is very thin). Thus, though there is physical separation, there is no real separation between these two soul mates. The sixth allegory, ‘gold’, suggests the higher state that will be achieved in the separation.

The sixth conceit, contained in three stanzas, depicts the bond of love between man and woman, using the analogy of a description of a compass. The fixed foot connotes the woman who re-

mains at the center, while the man moves away to create a circle, and yet, leans outwards following his mate. As time passes by, this cycle would be complete, and both meet in the center. This sends the message: “If his love is true, he will return to you”. The seventh allegory used is the “foot” to show the characteristic of women (of the Renaissance period) in general: faithful, homebound and steadily rooted.

Annus Mirabilis

Dryden’s poem *Annus Mirabilis* foretells of the Great London Fire of 1666. He uses the Latin phrase “Year of Miracles” or “Year of Wonders” to suggest that the events could have been worse. Ironically though, for Christians, every time date ends with 666, any kind of disturbance or disaster was deemed as a sign of dooms day as 666, according to the Book of Revelations, the number 666 is the symbol of the beast. And, hence, as all the disturbances and disasters that occur within the year of 1666, the enemies of King Charles II viewed this as a sign that God was displeased. Firstly, however, the miracle of the fire was that London was saved and the fire was stopped. Secondly, Charles II would rebuild for the king had already announced plans to improve the streets of London and to begin the development of great projects. Thirdly, another blessing was the defeat of the Dutch to the English fleet in the St James Day Battle which ensured regain of economical power. Fourth, it was also in the of 1666 that Sir Isaac Newton had made revolutionary inventions and discoveries in calculus, motion, optics and gravitation – indeed, a Year of Wonder that brought upon a vast prospect of development. Hence, Dryden viewed the disasters as being averted, in other words, God saved England from destruction and had performed miracles for England (Sexton, 2007).

The poem consists of 13 metaphysical conceits. The first conceit in stanza 1 is that of the fall and rise of the sovereignty of London to be reborn into a “nobler frame. However, Dryden views it as a natural cycle likened that to life and death. The first allegory used is “empress” which refers to the sovereign rule of Queen Elizabeth from London over its colonies. The second allegory is present from the word “fire”².

Fire connotes the meaning of spirit. In this poem, it also suggests the influence of gothic mythical characters such as the Fire Bird or better known as the “Phoenix”. According to ancient Greek mythology, the phoenix is mythical sacred bird that is a fire spirit (refer to appendix). It burns itself to ashes to be reborn and live for eternity (Alexander, 2000). Hence, the rebirth of London promises the prospect of eternal glory. The allusion to the phoenix in its allegory is suggested again in the fifth stanza – “chymic flame”. It also suggests a combined archaic allusion to the phoenix and that of alchemy of which the flame acts as an agent of change to the physical embodiment of a matter to be transformed into a more dignified and pure state, with the flame of the great fire of London. Alchemy was a precursor to legitimate chemistry, and the purpose of this practice was to find the Philosopher’s stone which could be used to transmute any form of matter into another matter, for instance lead into gold. Apart from the Dryden’s intention to indicate the process of rebuilding London as a miraculous quasi-mystical process, it also serves as an indication of the rise of the industrialization era.

The second conceit is in the second stanza. It suggests the effect of God’s will on London, in scourging it of its impurities, of which assumed birthright glory of London is hidden by common rubbles and ashes. As mentioned earlier, the sign of the Beast or Devil is 666. Hence, the

² Larkin Romaneski, (Accessed 15 June 2022), *Annus Mirabilis Analysis*. <http://www.lehos.com/PassageAnalysis.doc>.

allusion “usurper” in its third allegory suggests enemies of the king who are considered as devil’s advocates that have brought upon the wrath of God onto London³.

The fourth conceit is in the third stanza which likens the onset of the fire as that of the swelling of a puss or pimple that erupts suddenly. The fourth allegory, “mighty mischiefs”, reemphasises God’s punishment on those who have caused mischief and misdeed in London. The fifth allegory, “power” of the “prince” refers to the feeling of fear and need to be secure of the ruler, King Charles II, in regaining London’s glory.

The fourth stanza contains a dramatic description of the spread of the fire from the bakery to the other buildings of “obscured” wooden structures that further spurred the flames to the “palaces and temples spread”. However, this also suggests the high regard of nobility and the monarchy, in contrast to the common citizen of London. The sixth allegory, prodigious fire, indicates that unique feature of the fire that brought on the rebuilding of London. The allusion to “temples” suggests the influence of archaic Greek notions of worship in the poet.

The fifth conceit is in the fifth stanza. It dwells on the process of transition to a more gloried state of London after the great fire. The seventh allegory uses the allusion of the role of flame and transmutation of a physical state to a “precious mold”. The eighth allegory, “The Indies” is an allusion to what all Native Americans were called as there was no known distinctive demarcation between cultures in America. However, this allusion may also refer to golden cities of the Aztecs. Again, an element of magical transformation campaign is presented to the reader. To add, the descriptive imagery of the roads of London being rebuilt with Heavenly glory is further presented⁴.

The sixth conceit is contained in stanzas six till ten, personifies the trials and tribulation of London as a lady surviving the burden of labouring a “mighty fate”. It indicates that London is going through hard times that cause her to lose her dignified stature, in the attempt to bounce back from the tragedy. In addition, England as a whole is undergoing great change under the rule of a new king and that of a period of rebirth – the Renaissance period. Indeed, what does the poet think of London’s “mighty fate”? Dryden spins a positive a campaign of situations can easily be perceived as bad omens. Dryden goes on to emphasize how the “mighty fate” was God sent to prepare London for greater things.

The ninth allegory, “August”, in stanza seven uses the gothic allusion of the times of the Roman Empire. “August” was used during the Roman Empire when referring to the ruler, i.e. “Your August majesty”. Hence, “August” suggests the transformation (from ashes of the big fire) of London into that of a more divine and more glorious stature, equating and even being more that of the glory of Rome. For this matter, the allusion “deified she from her fires does rise” plays again with the image of the legendary phoenix. This suggests reemphasis of the divine, magical quality of London⁵.

The tenth allegory, “flies” suggests that with the transformation of London into a better glorious self, is likened to that of a bird that is able supremely fly after recovering from hurt brought on by a mishap. The 11th and 12th allegories reveal a contrast of images from the uncouth,

³ Larkin Romaneski (Accessed 15 June 2022), *Annus Mirabilis Analysis*. <http://www.lehos.com/PassageAnalysis.doc>.

⁴ Ibid (Accessed 15 June 2022), *Annus Mirabilis Analysis*. <http://www.lehos.com/PassageAnalysis.doc>.

⁵ Larkin Romaneski (Accessed 16 June 2022), *Annus Mirabilis Analysis*. <http://www.lehos.com/PassageAnalysis.doc>.

common “shepherdess” to that of “Maiden Queen”. It suggests the influence of social norms of class. The allusion to the “Maiden Queen” suggests the influence of Catholicism as “Maiden Queen” suggests reference to Virgin Mary, who is catholic mythology is also often called as “Queen of Heaven”⁶. Undeniably, at this stage of Dryden’s life he was already influence by Catholicism. Hence, it is evident in his writing.

In addition, the 13th allegory uses the word “doom” to refer to the fate that will befall the supplying colonies of the British Empire for the sake of the glory of England. This suggests Dryden’s colonial master view of colonies under the British Empire, as those that have no voice, but faithfully serve and supply the needs of the Empire.

The seventh conceit in stanza 10 further personifies the purification of London to an ‘August’ stature. The 14th allegory of period flow or “domestic flood” suggests that the cleansing of London waterway and sewage system which contributed to the outbreak of the plague. On the other hand, the 14th allegory, “sweeping train’ suggests the meaning of a train of people in a royal procession. However, the irony is that Dryden uses the setting of the Thames as the background of the procession, which has been historically and contemporarily, a filthy and polluted waterway used to empty the sewers of London.

Stanzas 11 to 12 present the poets continuing campaign of playing with dramatic visualisations of destined wealth and glory of London that surpasses that of its enemies – the French and the Dutch. The 15th allegory uses the celestial allusion of the “Northern Star” to suggest that London (England) will be the dominant deity guiding sailors and merchants to luxurious and profitable land, replacing that of other places. The “Northern Star” also implies that London will be the center of administration and rule for all those under her⁷.

Stanzas 13 to 16, reveals more Dryden’s style of writing which is based on the facts and logical persuasion, in contrast to the metaphysical style of Donne which called more on personal expressions supported with the Renaissance notions of theology, alchemy, mythology, spiritualism, astrology and plain simple love. Undeniably evident is Dryden’s dramatic rhetoric which further glorifies the power of the British navy in strengthening the England’s influence and control on new shores and especially the French and Dutch, overcoming the impact of the Great Fire of 1666. This was evident as since the fleet of England defeated the Spanish Armada a hundred year earlier, the British navy had remained the ruler of the ocean. As a result, the riches of other nations conquered were enough to strengthen the economy of England. Hence, Dryden’s creates the illusion of guaranteed security of citizens of London and England as a whole as they need not anymore fear the wrath of invaders or competition from other nations. And, those who are too proud to do trade with England will debase themselves to the status of pirates to get their share of England’s riches. To add, in the final stanza, the 16th allegory, “cape” suggests that the strength and increased number of naval ships ensures a prospect of trade to be conquered⁸.

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

Based on the findings obtained from the comparative analysis of Donne’s *A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning* and Dryden’s *Annus Mirabilis*, the following can be concurred:

⁶ Ibid, (Accessed 16 June 2022), *Annus Mirabilis Analysis*. <http://www.lehos.com/PassageAnalysis.doc>.

⁷ Larkin Romaneski. (Accessed 16 June 2022), *Annus Mirabilis Analysis*. <http://www.lehos.com/PassageAnalysis.doc>.

⁸ Ibid (Accessed 16 June 2022), *Annus Mirabilis Analysis*. <http://www.lehos.com/PassageAnalysis.doc>.

SIMILARITIES		DIFFERENCES	
1	Allusion to alchemy in matters of change and transition of physical embodiment involving notions of transmutation and transition material/physical state	1	Donne uses more of metaphysical conceits to present theological and spiritual issues. In contrast, Dryden uses more of allusion in his allegory
2	Use of logic supported by theological argumentation of blessing of God.	2	Donne's literary style does not ramble with dramatic descriptions of material glorification for political agenda as that of Dryden. Donne uses metaphysical conceits and allegory that is easily perceived by the simple common man who practices religion such as Christianity.
3	Notions of life, death and fate are depicted in the use of metaphysical conceits and allegory.	3	Dryden's rhetoric style and rich use of gothic and archaic allusion reveals his attempt to inject elements of magic and glory of the days of yore in his factual style of writing.
4	Donne's uses of Radical Image ⁹ , for example, the compass. In addition, in his religious poetry, he has used many figures from 'le geometre en flamme' ¹⁰ .	4.	Dryden's style of poetry writing suggests deep Puritan and royalism influences which glorifies the monarchy need to pure oneself to attain glorification.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the type of metaphysical conceit and allegory used by a poet is greatly influenced by their personal background, religious upbringing and conversion, the period and theme of the poem. To exemplify, Donne's style of writing typified that of the metaphysical style employed by metaphysical poets and the interests of the Renaissance period, which may have welcomed more new ideas than that of Dryden's era. Nonetheless, as gathered by Hanson (2021), Dryden's style reveals his refined use of language and extensive knowledge of gothic and archaic allusions. For those who seek more of factual and dramatic descriptive rhetoric, Dryden's style would appeal to their senses. On the other hand, those go for realistic based use of expressions and catchy wit, would certainly marvel at the beauty of the word play of Donne.

⁹ "Metaphoric vehicle something which has no obvious emotive associations, which belongs to prose discourse, abstract or practical" (Wellek & Warren, 1977: 202, *Theory of Literature*. USA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich)

¹⁰ Ibid, (Wellek & Warren, 1977: 202, *Theory of Literature*. USA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich)

Nevertheless, from the perspective of Islam, the self-conceit trait or self-centeredness (*Ananiah*) where one thinks highly of him/herself, full of vanity and egoism is one of the *mazmumah* traits that should be shunned by practicing Muslims (<https://www.muis.gov.sg/officeofthemufti/Khutbah/English/2020>). Hence, human beings on the whole and Muslim *ummah* specifically have been entrusted by Allah to wisely use their ‘*aqli* (acquired knowledge) and *naqli* (revealed knowledge) in dealing with daily circumstances.

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