

Islamic Articulation of the Carpe Diem Motif in Herrick's "To Daffodils": A Post-Structuralist and Intertextual Inquiry

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ABSTRACT

While Herrick is known for his religious poetry, the intersection of Islam and his work has not been explored in existing literature. The article examines the potential for Islamic meanings within Robert Herrick's poem "To Daffodils" through post-structuralist and intertextual lenses of literary analysis. The study employs the tenets of post-structuralism to explore the poem's thematic significance in relation to Islam. The analysis takes into account the temporal context of Herrick's 17th century era and the emergence of secularism, as well as the notion of the universality of Islam. The study concludes that the poem serves as a powerful reminder of the transient nature of human life, which is also a central theme in Islamic ethos. Herrick's work can be seen as an exemplar of Islamic knowledge, which imparts messages to humans about the temporality of life and its purposes and its eventual end. This article highlights the importance of Islamic reading of Herrick's literature conveying important messages about the human condition and the significance of contemplating the ephemeral nature of life.

Keywords- To Daffodils, Post-structuralism, Robert Herrick, Islamic Reading, Carpe Diem.

I. INTRODUCTION

Robert Herrick has garnered a well-deserved reputation as a beloved lyric poet, admired by readers worldwide (Cain and Connolly, 2013). Each of his poems is imbued with philosophical inspiration and conveys a myriad of themes that hold enduring relevance to the essence and purpose of human existence (ibid). However, HOLMER (1981) notes a puzzlement in Herrick's poetry, namely his religious focus. As an Anglican clergyman, it is not surprising that his works contain religious elements, particularly in his religious poetry. Paradoxically, his poetry also occasionally incorporates covert religious satire (ibid). Moreover,

Herrick's poetry demonstrates a devout adherence to religious faith, as evidenced in works such as "To Daffodils" and "To Find God" (Cain & Connolly, 2013), and the religious overtones in his poetry hold a lasting appeal for readers (Deming, 1974). Miller (1979) employs the term "devotional" to describe the religious aspects of Herrick's poetry, while Gale (2016) highlights the blending of spiritual and sensual elements in his works. Istiqomah (2019) further observes that Herrick's poetry holds value in character-building for students. Additionally, Sligh (2018) suggests that Herrick's religious poetry may reflect an intersection of multiple faiths, including Jewish, Muslim, and Christian beliefs. This article builds on Sligh's analysis by examining the

Islamic significance of Herrick's "To Daffodils," a perspective not yet explored in existing literature. This study is a significant contribution to the field, as it presents a fresh approach to understanding Herrick's poetry.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Interplay between Religion and Literature:

Religion, commonly understood as a collection of "theistic beliefs" in the supernatural, has been an integral part of human existence since ancient times. According to Horton's (1960) definition, religion involves belief in spirits and the supernatural. Over time, religion has been studied from various perspectives, including anthropology, ontology, ethnography, folklore, and theology. The origins of religion can be traced to the human quest for divine and spiritual understanding, which led to the formation of cultural myths and practices. Religion has historically played a dominant role in shaping human life and guiding moral choices.

Although modern times have seen a rise in religious disbelief, religion remains a significant aspect of human life. Flood (2011) argues that religion provides people with meaning and helps guide them in their moral choices. Moreover, religion has a broad connection to other areas of knowledge, such as individual and collective identity (Marshall, 1996; Robbins, 1993; Oppong, 2013), race, nationalism, nativity, and politics (Maldonado-Torres, 2014; Baum, 2001). Religion also influences human behavior and can play a vital role in maintaining ecological balance (Posas, 2007; Sherkat & Ellison, 2007).

Literature, on the other hand, serves as a reflection of lived experience and an idealized version of life. In this sense, literature and religion are intimately linked, with literature serving as a site for qualitative, conceptual, and experiential contents related to religion. Poetry, in particular, has a tradition of incorporating religious themes, with some poets establishing themselves as religious poets. However, the true beauty of religious poetry lies in how it speaks of religion through the art of not speaking and how it can encompass more than one religion through the craft of speaking of only one.

This study aims to explore the interplay of religion in Herrick's poetry, characterized by its broadness, frankness, and comprehensiveness in terms of containing religious traditions. It seeks to uncover Islamic themes in the writings of a Christian poet and examine the literary exchange that can result from this unexpected discovery. This exchange can serve as a source of Islamic knowledge for Christian literature and provide a Christian perspective on Islam.

Islam and Literature:

This particular study relentlessly pursues objectivity and, in doing so, eschews the fashionable concept of "global Islam" that is often associated with

debates, distances, concerns, and conflicts over Islam, particularly in the Western world. This stance is rooted in a factual motivation that no religion ought to be judged solely by the actions or beliefs of its adherents (Lawrence, 2002; Green, 2020; Mandaville, 2010; Mitchell, 2002; Grewal, 2014). Rather, the study takes care to refer to the scriptural sources of Islam as a prelude to understanding various themes and notions, with possible pathways of similarity found in Herrick's poetry.

Denny (2015), in his work "An Introduction to Islam," explicates that the term "Islam" has its origin in Arabic and signifies submission or surrender to Allah, which is the Christian equivalent of God. Islam is a theistic belief system that recognizes a creator of the universe and is monotheistic, holding that there is only one universal creator, Allah. A Muslim is someone who submits themselves to the will of Allah (God), and Allah's will encompasses a holistic way of life that is prescribed in the Holy Quran. For example, a person's will may be to engage in interest-based business, but Allah's will is for that person not to give or take interest on any capital. If the person complies with Allah's will and refrains from interest, they typify themselves as a Muslim.

Muslims adhere to all the beliefs and teachings revealed in the Quran, which was given by Allah to His messenger, Mohammad. At the very first chapter of the book, Allah states that "this Book has no doubt in it" (Ayaz & Saeedi, 2020). Furthermore, the book affirms that "there is no compulsion in Faith" (ibid). This implies that Muslims' beliefs are not outcomes of any sort of compulsion, and their beliefs are not based on any doubts. In fact, Islam rests on five fundamental beliefs, namely, (i) Shahada - the recital of the creed "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammad is His prophet"; (ii) Salat - five obligatory prayers in a day; (iii) zakat - giving alms to the poor; (iv) Sawm - fasting from sunrise to sunset during the month of Ramadan; and (v) Hajj - making a pilgrimage to Mecca once in a lifetime, if one is physically and financially able (Blanchard, 2009). These five pillars of core Islamic creed are impervious to questions of irrationality or unscientificity. In fact, many scholars, scientists, philosophers, and critics have challenged the Quran (Rezaee & Mirarab, 2019; Akhavan Sarraf, 2017; Sayoud, 2012), yet it has passed many scientific tests. Muslims believe that the remaining enigmas, mysteries, and miracles will also be proven true someday when science reaches that level of advancement. This is why Muslims accept anything new in Islam and consider the Quran to be the complete code of life.

Muslim believers experience a sense of confidence and victorious joy when the teachings of Islam are reaffirmed in other religious or non-religious sources. If such recognition is found in a Western poet's literary works, it would delight Muslim readers of Herrick's poetry. Moreover, didactic achievement

through reading Western literature would bring about the universality of both Islam and literature. The pervading character of literature and Islam transcends the limits of single religious traditions and the boundaries of time.

Signals of Common Terms between Christianity and Islam in Robert Herrick's Poetry:

Since the genesis of the Islamic faith in Mecca, followed by its subsequent dissemination throughout Europe, it has been widely accepted that the God of the Quran and that of the Bible are one and the same (Bevilacqua, 2018). However, over the course of centuries, Christian attitudes towards Islam across Europe, England, and America were chiefly shaped by a view of Islam as a form of Christian heresy (Kritzeck, 2015). In the present-day multicultural European milieu, Islam is confronted with a host of significant challenges. Nevertheless, a longstanding trend has been that individuals of both faiths gain a more accurate understanding and enlightenment through interaction and knowledge-based mutual discovery. In contrast, negative elements create a divide that is filled with misconceptions, distrust, and occasionally even hatred. The issue of Islamic terrorism or extremism has now become fashionable, with Islam and Muslims in Europe being frequently prefixed with this label. Goody (2013) underscores the consequences, pointing to the erosion of trust and mutual bonding of religion, by stating that "...in the West, the opposition between Christianity and Islam has led to a devaluation of the contributions of the Arab, and more broadly, Islamic culture to European achievements." As a result, European knowledge of Islam is presently based on the practices and lifestyles of certain deviant Muslims, rather than on what is taught by the Bible or the Quran. Thus, the people of the book have been transformed into people of heresy or bias. In such a scenario, clergymen, Parsons, and Moulanas would be best suited to propagate the true beauty and magnanimity of both religions. As the Quran states, "O People of the Book, come to terms common between us and you" (Günther, 2007). Given his background as a Parson, and his proximity to the Bible, it can be assumed that Herrick gained insights into the commonalities between the Bible and the Quran, and that these insights may have been intentionally or unintentionally reflected in his poetry. The knowledge of Islam in Europe, acquired by an English poet in the capacity of a Parson, is intriguing and significant, especially in terms of bridging the contemporary gap between Islam and Christianity, and between Muslims as the "others" and Europeans as "we." This study seeks to explore the "common terms" expressed in Herrick's poetry, with particular reference to his work "To Daffodils."

Intertextuality and the Possibility of Islamic Themes in Herrick's "To Daffodils":

The Abrahamic traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, being an extended family, share many commonalities, as noted by Denny (2015). Monotheism is a fundamental principle that Islam and

Christianity share, as highlighted by Marshall (1960). Renard (2011) notes that parallels exist between the Old Testament and the words of Jesus, as well as the Hadith and the words of Muhammad. This mutual reference and quality of intertextuality between the Islamic Quran and the Christian Bible raise the possibility of an intertextual relationship between Herrick's poetry and Islamic themes, as revealed in the Quran and Hadith, according to Reeves (2004).

Kristeva's (2002) concept of intertextuality, as described by Orr (2010), refers to a text's relations with other texts within the larger mosaic of cultural practices and expressions. Thus, an intertext is a focal point within this network, while a text's intertextual potential and status derive from its relations with other texts from the past, present, and future. Therefore, this study suggests a post-structural approach to Herrick's celebrated poem "To Daffodils" that allows readers the freedom to exploit their Islamic knowledge resources, rather than solely relying on the writer's Christianity. By conducting an intertextual analysis across the cited poem, this study finds that an intertextual investigation offers a fresh perspective for the reinterpretation of Herrick's "To Daffodils."

Previous Studies and Knowledge Gap:

The beauty and significance of daffodils, a type of flower, have been a source of inspiration for English poets and writers throughout history. While poets like Wordsworth and Shakespeare have made references to daffodils in their works, Robert Herrick's poem "To Daffodils" stands out as one of the best-known literary works on this flower. However, previous studies on the poem have only explored its divinity, as discussed by McCulloch (2008), or form aspects such as the rhyme scheme, as appreciated by Denman (2012). There has been no deeper exploration into the poem's substantial religious significance until now. This study aims to fill that gap by delving into the religious themes of the poem and connecting them with an Islamic reading. By doing so, this study will offer a fresh perspective on Herrick's work, elevating its significance beyond its form and beauty. With the just cited objective in mind, the present study is directed by the research question of : How can an Islamic reading of Robert Herrick's poem "To Daffodils" provide a deeper understanding of the religious significance of the flower beyond its divinity, and what thematic concerns can be explored from the poem, when it comes to an interplay between Islam and "To Daffodils".

Post-Structuralism and the Process of Meaning Making:

This research explores the tenets of post-structuralism theory, a significant paradigm in literature and philosophy. Post-structuralism is a European theory, with its roots in France, and is advocated by scholars such as Jacques Derrida, Michael Foucault, and Julia Kristeva. While these scholars began as structuralists, they later rejected this view and embraced post-

structuralism. Structuralism asserts that the meaning of a text is fixed, independent of the reader's culture, and determined solely by the writer. However, post-structuralism argues for the reader's agency in determining meaning, influenced by their cultural and experiential background. Language is arbitrary, and each culture assigns meaning based on its own unique signifiers and signified systems. Thus, post-structuralism posits that fixed meaning of a text is impossible, and the reader's background knowledge and culture will influence the meanings they derive.

Post-structuralism proposes that objective truth is subject to change with varying contexts, and a text is always open to more than one meaning, confirming an "objective truth." In deconstruction, another tenet of post-structuralism, assumptions of single truth are disassembled, and the idea of "the death of the author" is embraced. This means ignoring the writer as the primary source of meaning, and exploring multiple meanings in the text. Thus, the reader is empowered to derive their own meanings from the text, independent of the author's original intent.

Barthes (1964), a proponent of post-structuralism, argues for the "death of the author" in his article of the same name. Barthes claims that literary texts have multiple meanings, and exploring them begins with ignoring the writer as the primary source of meaning. Instead, he suggests that the focus should be on the reader's interpretation, which is influenced by their own cultural and experiential background.

In conclusion, post-structuralism offers a more flexible and nuanced view of meaning-making in literary analysis, emphasizing the reader's agency in constructing meaning. The theory posits that the meaning of a text is shaped by the reader's cultural and experiential background and argues against the idea of fixed meanings. This approach enables readers to explore multiple meanings, independent of the author's original intent, and emphasizes the importance of cultural context in understanding a text.

Attaching Post-Structuralist and Biographical Perspectives to the References to Religiousness of Herrick:

The present study draws on a theoretical framework rooted in post-structuralism, albeit with occasional allusions to the religious aspect of Herrick's personal life. The study aims to bolster the analysis of the poem in question by employing a multi-dimensional approach that accounts for diverse viewpoints and considerations. As such, this study represents a hybrid methodology that merges the dichotomous theoretical settings of post-structuralism and biographical analysis - the former being writer-independent, and the latter acknowledging the dependence of meaning-making on the writer's life.

The religious significance of the poem "To Daffodils" is primarily established by the idea that literature stems from a seed planted in the mind of its

creator, born of experiential, personal, and imaginative thoughts. In this regard, Mansfield's assertion that "the only way to live as a writer is to draw upon one's real familiar life" (Mansfield & Boddy, 1996:11) is particularly relevant. Herrick, a gifted poet with a remarkable ability to incorporate human experiences into his writing, frequently imbues his poetry with religious themes and didactic messages. Shaw (2015) notes that Herrick's poetry is particularly distinguished by its interplay of thought, which emphasizes religion and beliefs.

Herrick's relationship with religion was a mutable one, marked by a transition from an earlier attachment to a Christian "parson" lifestyle, which instilled in him a "phenomenology of religion" that shaped his religious philosophy regarding the transience and eternity of human life. Herrick's theological insights and religious beliefs undoubtedly influenced his poetry, which reflects his Christian worldview. Moreover, given the homogeneity between Christian and Islamic perspectives (Miner et al., 2014), it seems plausible to conduct an "Islamic perspective-based" reading of Herrick's poetry.

However, Herrick's religious preoccupation was not without its deviations. In particular, his same-sex desires were not well-received in his time. Yet, Bruzzi (1995) argues that Herrick's love poetry betrays a certain ambiguity regarding his sexual proclivities. Despite this, Herrick would later come to identify more as a religious poet and a Christian man. Miller (1979) suggests that religion and sex are never too far apart in Herrick's mind, and a close examination of his earlier love poetry reveals a passionate and often obscene tone. Still, Herrick's poems on religion, as found in 'Hesperides' from 1648, have an unmistakable religious orientation and psychology.

Precisely, Herrick's unique poetic expression channels the cooperation between his religion and the thematic elements in his writing. Nevertheless, there is a significant unexplored dimension to his poetry - the implied Islamic connectivity and constructs that could broaden the readership and engagement of Muslim readers of Islamic faith and practice.

The Fleeting Nature of Human Life in Islamic Philosophy:

It has been posited by Islamic philosophy that human beings have two lives to live, each pertaining to a different realm. The first is the earthly life, characterized as being transient and fleeting, while the second is the life after death, which is deemed to be eternal and unending (Rayshahrī & Hikmah, 2023). The latter is described as having a beginning, but no end, while life on earth is deemed ephemeral, often filled with humans being completely consumed by worldly pleasures and luxuries, remaining oblivious to the transitory nature of life (Life of this world (Dunya) and the hereafter (Aakhirah), 2018).

Despite the temporal nature of human existence on earth, many humans are still unable to fully grasp the concept of mortality, often losing sight of the fact that one day they will leave this world behind and embark on a new life, one that is endless (Dasgupta, 1993, p.19). In many places in the Quran, Allah reminds us that life on earth is short, hurrying towards its inevitable end (Life of this world (Dunya) and the hereafter (Aakhirah), 2018). As compared to the life that Allah has arranged for humans in the hereafter, the duration of earthly life is described as being nothing more than a fleeting momentary pleasure (Ibid). The Quranic verse reads, "They will say: We stayed a day or part of a day; ask those who enumerate" (Reflection No.3:44 on Q. 23:113-The shortness of life, 2018).

To drive home the point of how little time humans have to live on earth, the Quran also presents an equivalence of time that can be quite shocking. According to the holy book, one day of the afterlife is equal to one thousand years of human existence (Abdul-Rahman, 2003). Given this mind-boggling equation, it becomes clear that humans are only meant to live on earth for a short time, a fact that most of us are still unaware of.

In this context, the Prophet Mohammad also sought to impress upon his followers the fleeting nature of life on earth. He compared it to that of a traveler on a short journey, constantly moving and never stopping. In essence, the Prophet was highlighting the fact that human life is incredibly brief and that people should make the most of it before it ends (Elias, 2018). Mohammad taught his followers that the purpose of life on earth is religious in nature; to worship Allah and to follow his teachings (Life of this world (Dunya) and the hereafter (Aakhirah), 2018). The Prophet urged his followers to worship Allah in every moment of their lives, not just in the mosque during prayer times. To him, a life lived in adherence to Islamic teachings and principles is the only way to attain success on earth and in the afterlife (Ibid).

Finally, the Quran uses nature to provide an analogy for the shortness of human life. It highlights how nature and humans are alike in that they both have a limited lifespan and that they are subject to decay and death (Rayshahrī & Hikmah, 2023) Allah has created nature and human beings with the same fate and meaning, and it is up to us to realize the importance of this fact and to make the most of the time that we have on earth.

A Brief Introduction to "To Daffodils":

Herrick's sublime lyrical composition, 'To Daffodils', ranks amongst his most renowned works. The piece was included in his illustrious anthology of lyrical verses, 'Hesperides', which was first published in 1648. The poem serves as an enduring reminder of the ephemeral nature of human existence on earth. The opening stanza of the poem poignantly mourns the fleeting beauty of daffodils, whose splendor disappears

all too soon. The remainder of the poem then proceeds to expound on the central motif of transitory human life, juxtaposing human existence with a variety of other exquisite but fleeting natural phenomena such as summer rains, morning dewdrops, and the spring season. Furthermore, the poet universalizes the notion that all things beautiful have but a brief lifespan and that every lovely and gratifying thing on earth possesses an expeditious nature of expiry. The poem concludes with an additional reminder of the inevitable nemesis that renders human life a mere nothingness, leaving no hope of return.

III. METHODS

This qualitative study examines Robert Herrick's poem "To Daffodils" through an interdisciplinary lens of religion and literature, specifically focusing on the potential for Islamic meanings within the text. While the study is not aimed at introducing new theoretical concepts, it employs a post-structuralist approach to explore the poem's thematic significance in relation to Islam. The study aligns itself with Ziolkowski's (2021) definition of the interdisciplinary field of religion and literature, which emphasizes the examination of religious influences and reflections in literary texts. The analysis takes into account the temporal context of Herrick's 17th century era and the emergence of secularism, as well as the notion of the universality of Islam. Though limited to a single poem, the study's thematic exploration suggests the potential for intertextuality between Herrick's poetry and Islam as an additional religious tradition with significant similarities to Christianity.

IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION ON "TO DAFFODILS"

(a) The Islamic Spirit in Herrick's 'To Daffodils': A Reminder of Transitory Human Life

Shakespeare has some famous lines that comment on the nature and function of human life. He feels that-

"Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing."
(McClelland, 2004)

In a manner quite analogous, the works of Herrick serve to mirror the transience of human life. The magnificent poem entitled 'To Daffodils' by Herrick provides a valuable admonition to humanity at large regarding the ephemeral nature of life. It serves as a clarion call, especially to those who are engrossed in the pursuit of delayed pleasures as well as to those who have

not taken the time to contemplate the fleeting nature of existence. Denman (2012) notes that "To Daffodils reinforces the touching reminders of impermanence so central to the poem." This poem, therefore, can be seen as containing within itself the Islamic ethos, which imparts messages to humans about the temporality of life and its eventual end. The poem could be regarded as an exemplar of Islamic knowledge, highlighting the fact that the world is replete with beauty and allure, yet none of these are enduring. Natural beauty fades rapidly, serving as a reminder to humans that their time on this earth is similarly fleeting. Humans have an innate yearning to partake of the inexhaustible streams of captivating phenomena. However, they are often oblivious to the fact that all the alluring entities that they so eagerly imbibe are implicit reminders of the reality of transience. Herrick deftly employs simple language and similes to draw attention to the fact of transience by contrasting it with the affairs of natural objects in a striking manner.

A Comparison with Elements of Nature and Validation of Quranic Views:

Regarding theological matters, it has been suggested that neither poets nor philosophers are able to produce novel propositions. Rather, they merely bring to light that which is already established within religious communities. As with the arrival of spring, no new species of flowers emerge, but rather, the pre-existing species bloom anew. Similarly, the philosophical or theological pronouncement alluded to by Herrick in his poem "To Daffodils" is fundamentally unoriginal. Notwithstanding, Herrick utilizes the daffodil as a symbol to emphasize the abrupt cessation of human life. The daffodil, one of nature's most resplendent blossoms, has a beauty that entralls even the most tenacious admirer of natural beauty. However, its beauty cannot be fully appreciated by the human eye, as it blooms in the morning and withers before noon. Therefore, it can be inferred that the daffodil has a lifespan of only half a day, a lesson that has been expounded upon in the Quran as previously discussed. Herrick likens human life to that of the daffodil, in order to illustrate the similarity between the brevity of human existence and that of the daffodil. He states: "We have short time to stay, as you" (To Daffodils, L.11).

The profundity of Herrick's grasp and insight into the fleeting nature of life can be paralleled with the Qur'anic declaration, previously mentioned, that human existence is akin to "a day or part of a day" when compared to the afterlife. Herrick, a Christian poet, may not pique the interest of devout Muslim readers due to their preconceived notions that his poetry would not touch upon their religion. However, Herrick's work can be deemed an exception to this prejudgment. In fact, his poem can be compared to a seed that has the inherent objective of growing into a tree. Therefore, disregarding the seed, which is To Daffodils in this case, would be a

mistake, as it may inherently become synonymous with Islamic literature due to the spirit of the poem reflecting a theme also found in the Quran.

Islamic literature posits that Allah pervades the truth of human existence throughout nature. Consequently, Allah urges knowledge seekers to uncover the truth about life, death, and other enigmatic aspects of life by studying nature. Humans, created in the likeness of nature, are part of this truth. Herrick, as a poet, empathizes with this concept and conveys it to readers through his work *To Daffodils*. For Wordsworth, poetry is the "overflow of powerful feelings" (Pokrivčák et al., 2016). As such, poets use their poetic inclination to communicate their emotions and thoughts to readers through their poetry. It is in this process that Herrick's poetic ability to articulate Islamic knowledge, even without overt influence from Islam, may result in a high level of readability for Muslim readers.

Herrick's exploration of the parallel between human life and the ephemeral nature of Daffodils serves as the opening theme in the poem. Through his vivid enumeration of various transient objects in nature, the poet skillfully draws a comparison between the brevity of human existence and that of natural phenomena. Herrick proceeds to expand his discussion of the impermanence of human life by illustrating the fleeting nature of spring, summer rain, and morning dew. While spring may offer a breathtaking display of renewal and rejuvenation, its short-lived duration leaves one lamenting the inability to extend its pleasures. Similarly, summer rain brings much-needed relief to a parched earth but quickly disappears upon contact with the scorching ground. Morning dew, with its stunning beauty, quickly evaporates in the warmth of the morning sun.

Herrick's intent is to illuminate the evanescent nature of human life by linking it with the transient elements of nature. This analogy between the impermanence of human life and the transience of natural phenomena highlights the notion of the correspondence between human beings and nature, which is expounded in the Quran and Hadith. In fact, Herrick's poetic expression of this idea can be seen as a validation of the Quranic view that humans are modeled upon nature. As Vive and Vive (2018) note, "Allah has made the humans modeled upon nature," and Herrick's *To Daffodils* offers an artistic interpretation of this concept.

Thus, Herrick's work offers a poignant exploration of the ephemeral nature of human life through a comparison with elements of nature. His poetic inclination to communicate deep emotions and thoughts allows him to capture and express the idea of the transience of life with profound sensitivity. As such, *To Daffodils* should not be overlooked by Muslim readers, as its message aligns with the Quranic view of the relationship between humans and nature.

Human Mortality in Herrick's "To Daffodils":

The literary merit of Herrick's *To Daffodils* lies in his masterful use of simple diction as a vehicle for conveying profound truths about the ephemeral nature of human life. The theme of human life's fleeting and feverish haste is underscored by Herrick's employment of a set of simple, unfussy, synonymous attributes such as "run," "haste away," "hasting," "quick," and "short." These words serve to emphasize the transitory nature of human existence, which Herrick perceives as lasting no more than one or two days. In an entreaty addressed to the daffodils, Herrick urges them to delay their departure from the site, so that he and his fellow humans may depart at the same time, thereby highlighting the surprising overlap between the short lives of daffodils and human beings. This concept is exemplified by the scenario of two friends negotiating a bus-travel time to Florida, where the difference between departing at 8 AM or 8.20 AM seems negligible, prompting them to take the same bus. Similarly, Herrick argues that daffodils vanish into non-existence by noon, while human beings expire around evening, a time difference which he considers insignificant. This supplicatory plea serves to underscore the brevity of human life and the necessity of seizing every moment. As stated by Herrick:

"Stay, stay
Until the hasting day
Has run
But to the even-song;
And, having pray'd together, we
Will go with you along " (To Daffodils, L. 5-10)

It is discernible that Herrick's methodology of comparing and relating 'nature' to 'humans' parallels that of Allah's. While Allah links 'nature' to 'you' (humans), Herrick establishes a connection between 'nature' and 'we' (humans). Hence, upon reading Herrick's work *To Daffodils*, a Muslim reader may discern the congruity of the theme with their holy book, thereby amplifying the likelihood of regarding Herrick as a poet of the Quran and Hadith.

The Compatibility of Herrick's "To Daffodils" with Quranic Teaching:

The concept of literature is not bound by any one group's ownership, be it Christians or Muslims. It belongs to everyone, spanning across all ages. The religious themes in a poet's work, regardless of their faith, are fundamentally similar across all religions. Therefore, it is not entirely implausible to suggest that Herrick's *"To Daffodils"* contains a message from the Quran. While Herrick's religious convictions during the composition of the poem may be debatable, his verses may reflect the beliefs and ideas accepted by a Muslim reader through their scripture.

Thus, an Islamic interpretation of Herrick's poem may align well with the Muslim readership. When a devout reader, with theological expectations,

approaches Herrick's *"To Daffodils,"* they may find the poem in line with the teachings of the Quran. Religion motivates humans to think beyond the mundane and perform actions that transcend their being. It leads the religious towards the higher level of human action, which is the worship of Allah. For instance, one of the fundamental commitments in Islam is to perform prayers five times a day. Similarly, Herrick remembers his own pious devotion to prayers and wishes to complete his "evening prayers" before his death.

"Stay, stay
.....
.....
But to the even-song"

The meaning of the term "evensong" in Herrick's poem *"To Daffodils"* has been interpreted in various ways. It may refer to the Christian practice of singing hymns or performing choral evensong in a church, or it may also suggest the Muslim evening prayer called "Salatul Magrib" conducted in a mosque. Post-structuralism theory suggests that the meaning of a word is not fixed but depends on the context and the interpreter. Thus, the Islamic reading of *"To Daffodils"* is possible at the level of religious words such as "prayed" and "evensong".

Although Herrick may not have intended to be seen as a religious poet, his poem reflects his religious deeds and beliefs. As a believer in religion, he follows the religious teachings until the end of his life. In *"To Daffodils"*, he personifies nature, including daffodils, as having human-like attributes and acknowledging the Creator's greatness. Herrick proposes a final prayer to be performed together by humans and daffodils before their demise.

As Herrick says, "And bid good night, till we shall meet again" (line 12), the poem suggests a continuation of life after death, which is also a fundamental belief in Islam. The Islamic readers of *"To Daffodils"* may find resonance with their religious teachings and practices, enhancing their appreciation of Herrick's poem.

"An having pray'd together, we
Will go together"

The Intersection of Christian and Islamic Teachings in Robert Herrick's "To Daffodils":

This Christian way of human life departure may again be extended to Islamic way and Muslim ideas. As mentioned earlier, the prophet of Islam lays so much significance on utilizing every moment until death by obeying Allah's commandments and, saying prayers to the last minute. Therefore, reading the above lines of 'To Daffodils' readers of Islamic beliefs and faiths might explore Islamic ways of life and teaching as well. To be

able to die after performing last prayers is considered to die on the Islamic path (Sunna).

The Prophet also breathed his last at some evening performing his last evening prayers with two of his disciples to help him up. He said before his demise: "Us Salat, us salat" (translated as "Prayers, prayers"). It is like, as earlier explained, as per Muhammad's teaching that prioritizes 'taking advantage of your life before your death'. According to Christian faith, "prayer is the way of connecting with God (Stead, 1994)." Islam also holds the same faith that the worshipers through prayers get closer to Allah (God). Henry (2015) explains,

"...prayers connect people with God and make them closer to Him."

The closing lines of *To Daffodils* provide Islamic meaning. Herrick says that the earthly life ends and it will never re-appear on earth. Actually, Christian belief is that there will be a spiritual, eternal life after their physical death. The Bible in chapter of Eternal Life says: "Jesus said, I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies (John 11:25-26) (Buttrick, 1952)". Islam also inspires a commitment for a larger life hereafter. Muslims generally embrace that there is an indefinite life after the present earthly life meets mortality. Once the present life terminates, it will never again resurface which may be the synonymous reading of Herrick's lines:

"...We die

...

Ne'er to be found again."

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion, the present article concludes that the poem 'To Daffodils' by Herrick serves as a powerful reminder of the transient nature of human life, which is also a central theme in Islamic ethos. The poem employs simple language and similes to draw attention to the fleeting nature of existence by contrasting it with the natural world. Herrick's work can be seen as an exemplar of Islamic knowledge, which imparts messages to humans about the temporality of life and its eventual end. This article highlights the importance of literature in conveying important messages about the human condition and the significance of contemplating the ephemeral nature of life. In this way, Herrick's 'To Daffodils' provides a valuable contribution to the ongoing conversation about the meaning and purpose of human life.

Herrick's poem "To Daffodils" offers a poignant exploration of the fleeting nature of human life through a comparison with elements of nature. Herrick uses the daffodil as a symbol to illustrate the abrupt cessation of human life. His poetic inclination to communicate deep

emotions and thoughts allows him to capture and express the idea of the transience of life with profound sensitivity. The literary merit of Herrick's work lies in his masterful use of simple diction as a vehicle for conveying profound truths about the ephemeral nature of human life. The Quranic view that humans are modeled upon nature is validated through Herrick's artistic interpretation of this concept. Hence, Muslim readers should not overlook Herrick's work, as its message aligns with the Quranic view of the relationship between humans and nature. Ultimately, "To Daffodils" serves as a timeless reminder to appreciate the beauty of life, given its ephemeral nature. While Robert Herrick's religious convictions during the composition of "To Daffodils" may be debatable, his poem reflects his religious deeds and beliefs, which may resonate with the teachings of the Quran and Islamic readership. The Islamic interpretation of "To Daffodils" may align well with the Muslim readership, particularly at the level of religious words such as "prayed" and "evensong". Herrick's proposal for a final prayer to be performed together by humans and daffodils before their demise may also find resonance with Islamic teachings and practices, which emphasize utilizing every moment until death by obeying Allah's commandments and saying prayers to the last minute. The poem's closing lines, "We die / Ne'er to be found again," may also provide an Islamic meaning, suggesting a commitment for a larger life hereafter that Muslims generally embrace. Therefore, it is plausible to suggest that Herrick's "To Daffodils" contains a message from the Quran and an intersection of Christian and Islamic teachings. In some other words, this article finds that Herrick's "To Daffodils" provides an enduring contribution to the ongoing discourse on the meaning and purpose of human life.

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