



## The Equation of Classical Mythology and Culturalist Politics in the Poetry of Ezra Pound and Taufiq Rafat: An Imagistic Critique

Asim Aqeel\*, Saba Rasheed\*\*, Ayesha Perveen\*\*\*

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**ABSTRACT:** *Certain European and Asian philosophical concerns germane to poetic craft, death, rape of innocence, and unrequited love formulate an equation of classical mythology and culturalistic politics operative in the imagistic poetry of Ezra Pound and Taufiq Rafat. The theoretical underpinnings of Lowell (1915) regarding imagistic poetry, having a striking bearing on establishing this parallelism of classical mythology and cultural contexture, serve as the centerpiece of discussion here. This paper presents a comparative critique on the eight selected poems from Pound's poetry collections *Ripostes of Ezra Pound* (1912) and *Lustra of Ezra Pound* (1916), and Rafat's *Arrival of the Monsoon: Collected Poems* (1947-1978) and *Half Moon: Poems* (1979-1983). The imagistic theory of poetry aspires to use run-of-the-mill diction that is liberated from the strict observance of structural prosody to ensure the objectivity of the commonplace experience fashioned in laconism. The presentation of concrete images carries a suggestive tone. The present analysis advances through close scrutiny of Pound's and Rafat's poetry for natural rhythm cadences maneuvered through verse libre, freedom from the choice of subject matter, employment of concrete imagery, common speech and hard word, and concentration. Pound archeologizes the classical tradition of poetry and aspires to 'make it new' to construct a universal identity. The classical tradition includes the poetics of ancient Greek, Provençal, Chinese, and Anglo-Saxon poets. On the other hand, Rafat constructs a national identity maneuvered through modern style and thematic dimensions. As its ultimate objective, this inquiry aspires to bring into play the culturalist atmosphere and thematic import to pursue the universal strains and symbiotic collaborations in the works of artists like Pound and Rafat that comparative literature and critique crave to accomplish as their agenda.*

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**Keywords:** Classical mythology, culturalistic politics, universal identity, cultural identity, imagistic poetics

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### Introduction

A myth is a tale that has gained worldwide credibility, though it is believed to be charged with a set of fictitious belief apparatuses (Roman & Roman, 2010). The errand of rationalizing the prevailing social systems and traditional rites of passages is performed in the vocation of mythology. Given their morphed religious and political

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\* Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities & Linguistics, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad Pakistan. (Corresponding author email: [asimaqeel@hotmail.com](mailto:asimaqeel@hotmail.com))

\*\* Visiting Lecturer, Department of English, Government College University Faisalabad, Pakistan

\*\*\* Assistant Professor, Department of English, Virtual University of Pakistan

import, the mythical figures, their actions, even their ball games, etc., not only draw universal correlatives but also ascribe meaning to every facet of the quotidian world. Myth in this sense renders the repressed, subjective, isolated, and individual experience alive and moulds it into a universal one. Thus, myth must not be deemed an abstraction only, for it makes perceived affinity for the subjectively lived experience. In this aspect, the mythical realm, as it likens the present to the past, programs the art to return to the origin, permanent human nature, and the birth of an individual in pursuit of a universal identity (Dozzi, 1968). To such a vocational adaptation, the artist is like a scientist who can equate his personal experience with universal law. Ezra Pound, exquisite in bringing this aspect of mythic reference to his poetic craft, is one such artist. Pound correlates modern art, beauty, and sensuality with the legendary past of classical beauty such that the chaotic, formless, and war-torn world is coalesced to create a universal identity. Identity is best fashioned through the art of devising poetic idiom, claims Taufiq Rafat, and poetry springs from the very land where it is penned down (Rafat, 2017). As such, the task of identity mapping for a newly liberated nation comes to be the business of a poet, a task to which Rafat attends to by infusing a distinct national character to his poetry from Pakistan. Cultural expression is revived through modern poetics by appropriating local idiom, imagery, and symbolism in Rafat. The variety of seasons and landscapes of Pakistan seemingly confide in Rafat's culturalistic politics and grace his poetry with natural mosaics to suggest modern thematic concerns of poetic craft, death, rape of innocence, and unreciprocated love to shape up a national identity he so proclaims.

Imagism, a literary movement that existed between 1909 and 1917, marking the inception of modern poetry, was an iconoclasm of the poetry of the immediate past – genteel tradition<sup>1</sup> and Georgian poetry<sup>2</sup> – the focus of which was teaching Victorian morality under strict prosody. While the imagist John Gould Fletcher flags up the fact that the matter of writing poetry is to state concretely and not to teach morality and the meaning should be left on the reader to decipher serving the basic purpose of literature as art for art's sake (Dilley, 2000). The imagists, reiterates Flint

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<sup>1</sup> In America, genteel tradition of poetry, artificial and removed from social reality as escapism from contemporary corruption, was at work which dwelt on traditional morality in order to draw attention towards decorum and conventionality following Victorian poets.

<sup>2</sup> Georgians were a group of poets who wrote in traditional meter about solitary insight away from the complexities of the modern world in Britain.

(1913), insist only on treading the heels of the poetic tradition of all-time great writers such as Sappho, Catullus, and Villon.

The standards of writing a timeless piece of art have been taken into consideration while the literary canons of the immediate past are discouraged. The ancient Greek, Latin, Provençal, Hebrew, Chinese, and Japanese literature and modern French literature inspire the imagists to pen down modern poetry. Liberation from conventional metrical predictability laws by using *verse libre*, clarity of image, brevity, the hardness of the outline, and suggestiveness are the focus of this timeless standard (Hughes, 1972).

The present study attempts to create a correlation between Pound's international and Rafat's national identity that is created through similar modern themes by using the imagistic technique. However, different poetic philosophies which are developed through different cultural images inform their works.

### **Literature Review**

Pound cherishes the design of classical mythology as the living monuments of paradoxes that unfolds to be the basis of unity of existence, observes Bryan R. Dozzi. It provides the framework for the embodiment of natural permanence for humanity by conceiving an endeavour to find individuality that encompasses universal airs based on affinity. Mythology paves its way as a model for individual experience when some individual psychic and delightful experience is felt to be expressed in a camouflaged way to layer multiple interpretations. To such a degree, myth becomes the touchstone for the transubstantiation of apparently subjective experience into a universal blueprint. The gap is bridged through a return to nature recapturing historical figures and events as a model to act naturally in harmony with nature. The big game of verisimilitude ceases to exist as a separable entity for history is a continuum with the agency of man as a historical figure that is linked to absolute type vertically (Dozzi, 1974). Pound views that human conditions and formal discoveries of art – *melopoeia*<sup>3</sup>, *phanopoeia*<sup>4</sup>, and *logopoeia*<sup>5</sup> – are best explored through Greek literature. The entanglements of existence are embodied in historical figures and events which make poetry an expression of epiphanic enlightenment (Tryphonopoulos, 2005). Hence, Pound, the first traditionalist, sees great art

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<sup>3</sup> Melopoeia is the musical quality of poetry using various rhythms.

<sup>4</sup> Phanopoeia is visual effect that poetry creates.

<sup>5</sup> Logopoeia is the epiphanic process of meaning making through the dance of words.

blossoming from the great lyric traditions of Greek poets who fathered all the ancient world poetry. Loyalty to tradition becomes the landmark of workmanship either by giving form to what is formless at present or making it new (Rosenthal, 1960).

To Pound, poetry possesses a repository of all-time wisdom, sentiments, and human values. A universal human identity that equalizes past, present, and future is hence stitched out through poetry, notices Rosenthal. The art of music and versification knits together sound, sense, and images fabricating an organic composition that was given the importance of a pulled hen by the modern chaotic world. The metamorphosis of old poetic traditions of ancient Provence, China, and Rome regarding exact language, concrete imagery, musicality, sensuality, and restraint in guiding emotion becomes Pound's signature poetic style. Ian Clark Christie beholds Pound's love for classicism responsible for his intolerance of his age as he sets on the mission to find the glories of the past as a substitute for the chaotic present. Favoring verse libre as technical hygiene, he draws attention, following classical patterns, to the music of all syllables instead of focusing on metronomic strokes of end rhymes only (Clark, 1956). His major contribution seems to be his focus on the line to violate the iambic tyranny. Poetry should be free from clichés, set phrases, and stereotyped expressions. Such poetic effect is obtained by precision, i.e., objectivity through concreteness not generalities as a great form of art (Nadel, 2007). Allusions to forgotten writers, neglected ages, and complex works along with other techniques of composing criticism make a colossal contribution in the development of poetic traditions. Such chameleonic style of Pound brushes up the reader's sensibility regarding the role of the legendary past in shaping the present, notices Ira Nadel. His attraction to a visionary ideal becomes a reawakening call to medieval courtly love and sensibility for classical beauty hyperbolized through Hellenism. (Nadel, 1999)

The equation of similar human experiences in the past and the present appears to Pound as the basis of poetic models. This fact comes up as the first step to reawakening that is substantial to understand the needs of the present (Nadel, 2007). Similarly, Pound's philosophy of art and his lived experience as self-exile finds its analogy with those of ancient Chinese and Anglo-Saxon poets. He conceives objective poetry that transcends time and space while hitting on concrete images that bear a variable significance of universal stamp.

During British Raj in the subcontinent, traces Asma Mansoor, the Muslims succeeded in the reconstruction of the lost selfhood of Muslim exceptionalism through fiction which is niched in poetry after independence but with transmuted DNA. The diffusion of the Pakistani multicultural melting pot in Rafat becomes a crystal-clear residuum of silk-sticking artistic patrimony. By drawing upon natural images rooted in cultural canvas, Rafat creates a universal equation with an antediluvian time period sculpted in modern technique (Mansoor, 2012). Similarly, Muneeza Shamsie considers that cultural idiom umbrellas multifaceted cultural constructions inviting various mental responses to revive a national identity after getting liberation. In this regard, Rafat's poetic realm fans out the repository of cultural heritage, festivities, landscapes, myths, art, seasons, climate, and values articulated through code-switching occasionally. The wildlife images present an allegory to the lived experience fashioning mythology. These culturalist chronicles are brought to life through the lively descriptions of picturesque cultural-specific facsimiles by devising a narrative technique. (Shamsie, 2017)

Correspondingly, Tariq Rahman meditates over the iconoclasm of ghazal in parallel with the metaphysical style of unfamiliar comparisons forcibly juxtaposed in Rafat. Rafat's reservoir overflows with prosaic experience in the national landscape which serves as befitting paraphernalia for identity delineation. Traditional civilization, the mystery of life, and love colour his poetic parasol connoted through country and town life, natural landscapes, flora and fauna, and cultural customs (Rahman, 1991). Hand in glove notice Safeer Awan and Munawar Iqbal the cultural flavor, mannerism, rites and rituals, geographical imagery, symbolism, and Pakistani idiom staging out mundane panoramas that forge a cultural singularity in Rafat. The instinctive idealization of native life is pulsated by drawing upon Asian poetic traditions to recover the identical roots of eastern connotation carried through images from the countryside. This cultural recovery is carried through clearing out the cobwebs of vague clichés and rhetorical words to deal with multifarious everyday subjects ranging from seasons to philosophical mysteries (Awan & Ahmed, 2011). Carlo Coppola also notes Rafat's contribution to be significant in carving out national identity through a descriptive plethora of ecological community, seasonal diversity, sundry gospels, macho bravado family ties, and living style. The imagery of flora and fauna serves as the metonymy of cultural practices. The comparison and contrast formula unfolds the pros and cons of cultural heritage which is shown in country and town life to represent the kind and cruel sides of civilization (Coppola,

1998). Sajid Ali, Sajid Ahmad, Rashid Mahmood, and Muhammad Asif Amir scrutinize the linguistic ingenuity in Rafat to praise the cultural flavor. (Ahmad et al., 2013)

### ***Theoretical Framework***

The poetics of imagism comprises six essentials – common speech, free verse, everyday subject matter, concrete images, hard and clear vocabulary, and economy of words (Lowell, 1915 as cited in Poetry Foundation, 2009) – modeled on the theoretical views of Pound. This model requires the direct handling of the thing, apt diction, and avoidance of unbridled adjectives and abstract metaphors. (Ayers, 2008)

The first imagistic postulate is the use of everyday language for an exact expression felt by the poet at the sight of the image. For example, the poet uses the word ‘glass’ for stones in moonshine to convey the sense that the shining stones in the moonlight appear to the poet as glass.

The second postulate of imagism is to create a natural rhythm for the verbalization of new moods through free verse cadences. H. D. develops a novel rhythm of natural cadences having new emotional states in her poem ‘Oread’. The first two lines make the first two cadences, the next two lines make the third cadence, and the last two lines make the fourth and fifth cadences:

Whirl up sea...  
 whirl your pointed pines,  
 splash your great pines  
 on our rocks,  
 hurl your green over us,  
 cover us with your pools of fir. (D., 1915)

The third postulate is the freedom in the choice of the subject matter to deal with every odd, exalted, ordinary, and poetic experience of life. Pound expresses the pleasure of conversation with fair sex in his poem “Tame Cat”. Similarly, Rafat does not feel ashamed at touching upon a man pissing on the roadside in his poem ‘The Squalor in Which Some People Live’.

The fourth postulate is the description of a concrete image to have employed all kinds of imagery – visual, auditory, tactile, gustatory, olfactory, kinesthetic, and even organic. Instead of stating that she is beautiful, the poet's business is to tell how she is beautiful, i.e., she has black almond eyes, blond long hair, and slender hands, etc. Concretization renders particulars of a subjective image which are equalized with an image of objective emotion. It is experienced in great works of art of all times by presenting the objective natural equivalent of a subjective emotional state (Pound, 1913).

The fifth postulate is the use of hard and clear words. The 'hard' word calls to attention personal and contextual situations. The readers' mind is put to work to relate the relevance of the rain during a wedding with pot-licking by the bride in Rafat's idiomatic poem 'Wedding in the Flood'. Similarly, clear words should be selected to give the particulars of the image. John Gould Fletcher aptly makes the use of clear words to present the emotion of fragility in his poem 'Moods': "A poet's moods:/ Fluttering butterflies in the rain." (Bean, 1945)

The sixth postulate is the conciseness and brevity of the poem to create common speech expression and concentration. It is found in Pound's most celebrated distich 'In a Station of the Metro' that usher's succinctness, compression, and condensation of language.

### **Data Analysis**

The imagistic analysis of Eight poems from Pound's poetry collections *Lustra of Ezra Pound* (1916) and *Ripostes of Ezra Pound* (1912) as well as Rafat's poetry collections *Arrival of the Monsoon: Collected Poems* (1947-1978) and *Half Moon: Poems* (1979-1983) make the content of this paper as to how European and Asian literary minds have bearings on the modern theorems of poetic craft, death, rape of innocence, and unreciprocated love. The aforementioned scanning aspires to make a bid for an equation between classical tradition and culturalistic politics effectuated under the aegis of imagistic Lenz. This section scrutinizes the above-mentioned thematic dimensions between the poetic sketches of Pound and Rafat to come up with affinities and dissimilarities between their poetic philosophies, the symbolism of images, mood, and imagistic style.

### ***To Formianus' Young Lady Friend***

"*Make it New*" is Pound's slogan to create any piece of art. The '*it*' of this catchphrase comes across as Classical poetic craft in form and content as a standard. The chaos and uncertainty of the present must be resolved by finding its equivalent in the legendary past, opines Pound. The classical literary tradition must be worshipped to create a great kind of poetry since the DNA of human nature remains un-transubstantiated. Pound's philosophy of poetry is to renew the classical past.

As a metapoem <sup>6</sup> "To Formianus' Young Lady Friend" deals with his poetic craft, i.e., to follow the Classical tradition of art as a standard. A Roman poet Gaius Valerius Catullus (82-52 BC) used the literary pseudonym of Lesbia for his beloved in his poetry. Lesbia serves the standard for classical beauty as she possesses fair skin, a small nose, black eyes, fine bones, a well-shaped mouth, long and slender fingers, a dry mouth, beautiful feet, and an elegant tongue. But the poem sculpts the common speech description of a lady who is opposite to these traditional beauty standards. Her peers use the metaphor of Lesbia for her when they do not know Lesbia. Pound views the modern generation as 'unfortunate' for their inability to appreciate classical beauty as he asserts: "O most unfortunate age!" (Pound, 1916 : 51).

The poem takes the form of a threnody on the dead aesthetic sense of the modern age in twelve free verses. The enjambment of lines licenses the comment on the previous situations. Each cadence introduces new feelings such as disgust, adoration, and loss to concretize the theme of the modern age's sciolism of classical standards. The image of Lesbia symbolizes Pound's philosophy which emphasizes the learning of classical Greek art as the pure standard of aesthetic beauty.

### ***Squirrels***

Rafat considers the creation of poetry from the roots of the land in which it is created. The real subject matter of poetry then becomes everything that dwells within that land. Being a metapoem, "Squirrels" presents the poetic philosophy of Rafat, i. e., the presentation of cultural terra firma to delineate a culture-specific identity. His poetic process involves the vision of cultural phenomenon which is followed by a brain-taxing process of selection and rejection to come up with exact

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<sup>6</sup> A metapoem is a poem in which the poetic philosophy of the poet, his writing process, and role in society is discussed explicitly or implicitly

and clear words to describe the image struck upon as well as its symbolic equivalent making it the objective correlative.

The focal point of “Squirrels” is a common day countryside phenomenon of two squirrels which chase each other. Their beautiful intermixing texture sets him to work upon poetic creation. The poet starts the mental process of word selection and arrangement. Rafat develops the analogy of his poetic process with that of Mansur. In his ecstatic state of merging with the ultimate Reality, Mansur chants the slogan *Ana al-Haqq* (“I am the Truth”—*i.e.*, God). Similarly, when Rafat gets inspired from a cultural phenomenon, he starts searching for appropriate words and their pattern of arrangement to flower the vine of creativity, *i.e.*, the best symmetry of best words. The image of squirrels become the metaphor for thought and that of their chase for the process of selection and arrangement of words to write a poem. As Rafat puts it “word and thought/ chase each other along/ wire and parapet/ seeking a common vine” (Rafat, 1985, p. 99).

The poem has been fashioned in the modern technique of verse libre of nine quatrains. Punctuation marks like caesuras, periods, and line breaks have been moulded to suggest the pauses and plays the squirrel take when they turn up or down the vine as well as of the process of creation. The very process of composition entails many emotional stages such as inspiration, excitement, adventure, confusion, disillusionment, resignation, and contentment that partake in the process of creation. Rafat’s subject matter becomes the cultural perspective for his grand task of national identity delineation.

### ***Epitaphs***

The glow-worm of death has been taking to the air from ancient Greeks’ to Provencals’ to Chinese’ to Romans’ to Anglo-Saxons’ to the modern writers’ literary texts. The same premise resurfaces in Pound’s “Epitaph” as it traces a tradition of deaths from ancient Chinese to the modern man. Catering to freedom in the choice of subject matter, “Epitaph” introduces Pound’s take on death, *i. e.*, ambition leads one to the way of death. The feelings of loss, mourning, loneliness, and depression in the process of pursuing an unfulfilled desire are created through the natural cadences of a free-verse couplet. The text of the poem becomes the content of the epitaph which reports the identity and the cause of death of the deceased.

The thematic concern of unceasing ambition leading one to death has been developed through the images of Li Po, Du Fu, and I. Li Po is an ancient Chinese poet. He desires to become immortal like other heavenly bodies. He uses the symbol of the moon for immortality. In a drunken state, he embraces the reflection of the moon in Yellow River and meets his death. Similarly, Du Fu is another Chinese poet of the Tang Dynasty. He is a staunch believer of the Confucian philosophy of social justice which aspires to make the world a paradise where there is no corruption. Symbolically, this paradise is the meeting point of cloud and hill in Du Fu for the images of cloud and hill are taken as the meeting point of heaven and earth. This point is away from worldly corruption and it gives birth to life. He uses the symbol of wine for paradise. He tries to convince his people to practise this philosophy so that the world may become a utopia. But nobody listens to him. As a result, he gets disillusioned and becomes self-exile. He takes to alcoholism because it seems to him the only way of getting paradise. His excessive indulgence in wine brings death to him. Likewise,

The “I” in “Fu I” unfolds to be Pound’s identification of himself with Du Fu. Ignoring the division of time, Pound’s political and literary underpinnings regarding the mentorship of legend from the past to guide the present are no less than those of Du Fu. Pound is also a rebel, wanderer, self-exile, and follower of the Confucian philosophy of social justice. Pound wants to make his age sensible for classical traditions of art to achieve a renaissance of cultures. In this way, he tries to maneuver a timeless universal identity that will turn the world into paradise. Like Du Fu, he goes into self-exile after public criticism of his ideals. It is the death of his philosophy. Not only does he follow the classical tradition in his poetic works but treads this path in his real life as well.

### ***Half-Moon***

Death is not limited to a specific region while it encompasses the whole range of creations from a leaflet to a giant of all ages transcending cultural and special rags of time. Rafat draws his rendering of the theme of death upon culturalistic politics. The family system, a celebratory cultural aspect, secures a special space in Rafat’s poetic canvas, especially when the subject turns to the death of family members. The family members are like human body parts, each and every important for the proper functioning of the whole system. ‘Half-Moon’ is an expression of his feelings when his brother is fighting an incurable disease. The

poem expresses the hidden horrors, uncertainty, and mental agony that occupy the poet when he discovers his brother's impending death. The fearful and confused state of mind of the speaker animates itself by the agency of natural cadences of non-rhythmic stanza forms and line lengths. The uncertainty of the poet's mind is reinforced when he wonders: "Uncertain. All's uncertain." (Rafat, 2008 p.16)

The poem deals in simple images that carry a tense and heavy symbolic significance. The image of the half-moon denotes two aspects of the cycle of the moon, i. e., one is the completion of a stage and the other is the beginning of a new one. The image is symbolic of the completion of the journey of his brother's life. But at the same time, it is suggestive of the optimistic view of the continuation of his life in a new form as the moon is about to enter the diminishing phase of life but only to restart its life cycle. The poet is in the garden and views the moon but his brother is in the room where there is no moon. This absence of the moon puts into effect the last stage of the moon when it disappears and it symbolizes the impending darkness in the life of his brother or grave. His worldly life is going to end but there is the foreshadowing of the new beginning also for life is generated in darkness like the initial stage of the moon is dark in its circle. Rafat creates national identity in his attempt to define death in cultural and religious aspect in "Half-Moon"

### ***The Coming of War: Actaeon***

Wars were considered the lifeblood of nations before WW1 in the literary and historical arena. Sacrificing one's life for the cause of national ideals was celebrated as heroism. But WWI, in which the whole world got involved leaving millions of dead people and mass destruction, changed the history of the world. The previously so-called heroism was transformed into disillusionment and the horrors of war brought hopelessness, senselessness, massive loss, and rape of innocence. Pound views this loss as nothing new, rather he takes it to be the defamiliarization of the older Greek tradition, as he mythologizes the brutalities, sadism, wantonness, and animalities of war with the image of Actaeon in his poem "The Coming of War: Actaeon". The poem has a modern and gruesome theorem of rape of innocence in war. The contrasting images of war and peace – Lethe River, golden fields, Gray cliffs, unceasing sea, granite, fair meadows, golden greaves, Actaeon, gods, ancient people, and silent cortege – stuff the poem in a chaotic manner following a stream of consciousness technique. This narrative style airs the confusion that strikes the minds of soldiers on the front. The war-like situation is recreated in the images like

“A sea/ Harsher than granite,/ unstill, never ceasing;” (Pound, 1916, p.42). The two free-verse stanzas carry the emotional effects of horror, calmness, hopelessness, ferociousness, and senselessness in natural cadences.

Pound develops the sense of tradition in the loss of innocence in war by bringing into play the image of Actaeon. In Greek mythology, a huntsman Actaeon is warned by Artemis, the goddess of the moon, not to speak a word when he sees her bathing naked. Not understanding the implication of this pronouncement, Actaeon calls his hounds and turns into a stag. His very hounds give a chase to the stag and tear it apart. Pound weaves the myth that the soldiers are made to glorify patriotism and are sent to the war in their innocence like Actaeon. But the real horrors of war rape their prior idealism. Like Actaeon’s hounds, they attack their fellow human beings with whom they share no animosity. In Pound, a universal identity is constructed as he traces a tradition of cruelty from ancient Greece to the modern world wars.

### ***The Village***

Tangible and intangible cultural genocides carried through the design of war are attempted to erase a particular identity from the face of the world. The loss of tangible cultural heritage brings with it the intangible loss of innocence in the unconscious of the victims. A link to the tangible past in literature can be helpful in the recreation of lost identity. An attempt at cultural erasure can be thwarted by saving cultural relics in literary history. Keeping this aspect of literature in mind, Rafat compiles up the chronicle of the 1965 Indo-Pak war in his poem “The Village”. The description of the lost cultural relics which are tangible and intangible is an attempt to preserve the old cultural traditions. The erasure of cultural assets creates a lost identity. Rafat recreates this lost identity by recreating the cultural heritage in this poem.

Loss of innocence in war as an important imagistic theme emerges in Rafat’s “The Village” as the order of the modern-day in common speech rhythm. The picture of a war-torn village has been embodied through concrete images inscribed in exact words such as green greedy centipede, rank breath, fumbling hands, mad eyes, trembling legs, bloody quilts, ruined landscape, broken railway tracks, churned up fields, mosque without minarets, poisoned wells, stumps of trees, topless stupas, mangled buddhas, cut down shisham trees, unattended fields, shepherdless cattle, ruined women, weeping children, foot-prints by the riverside, overlooked mines,

jackals, and skeletons. These images in themselves are the spoken monuments of brutality and excessive cruelty attempted in war. All the images symbolize the deterioration of cultural legacy at the hands of war to present the theme of rape of innocence as one of the horrors of war. Their very description is the condemnation of the strategy to erase the foreign culture. As Rafat laments: "Houses will be rebuilt/ fields ploughed again/ but who can rebuild a broken heart?" (Rafat, 1985 , p.32) The tangible cruelties done to material objects lags behind an immortal haunt of intangible guilt and loss as a piece of baggage of cultural history in the minds of the victims.

On the other hand, contrasting prewar peaceful images tell the tale of a grand civilization. Rafat relates that the village was a thriving market square. It used to enjoy prosperous economic, political, social, and cultural affairs. The cultural traditions were transferred to the new generations through orature to inculcate a sense of belonging. The traditional home architecture created intimacy among the family members. The people were friendly and hospitable. Even the banks of the roads were covered by Shisham trees to provide shade for the passengers under the blazing sun. Wives used to bring lunch for their husbands who had been working in the green fields. A growing economy has also been concretized through the image of railway tracks. It was a multi-cultural village where people used to respect one another's religious and ethnic beliefs. All the cultural images reinforce the lost culture. This strategy is an attempt to save the lost culture which can be recreated to reconstruct the lost identity.

Lengthy narrative quatrains employ natural rhythm cadences to relate the experience of the common man in war. The presentation of contrasting images arouses the emotions of loss of innocence, nostalgia, excitement, self-pity, fear, helplessness, horror, hatred, hopelessness, shame, and guilt. The comparison and contrast technique suggests an argument that analyzes pre-war peace and post-war anarchy. The presentation of contrasting images suggests the condemnation of war and restoration of peace to reconstruct the lost national identity.

### ***'A Girl' Vs 'Village Girl'***

Disappointment in love is an age-old episode of two cent's worth of human nature in case of unreciprocated love. The beloved is cruel and leaves the lover lingering in the wilderness of unfulfilled desire. No one escapes disappointment in love. That is why every poet has employed this theme in his poetry. Similarly,

Pound's "A Girl" develops the theme of disappointment in unreciprocated love. On the contrary, Rafat appears with a new perspective of the other side of the coin, striking upon cultural keys. The mental imagination of fanciful charms that are associated with the fulfillment of desire also has a say in the matter. The mental pleasure at the sight of a desirable image brings to mind the feel of the achievement of the dream irrespective of real fulfillment. The territory of pleasure loses its charm with the materialization of the dreamy realm. The footprints of this unreciprocated love escapade make their show in the snowy fields of Rafat's "Village Girl".

Pound's '*A Girl*' is a free verse metaphor of a Greek myth that stages the characters of Apollo, Eros, and Daphne. Eros shoots Apollo with an arrow which imparts in him love for the nymph Daphne. Along the same lines, Daphne receives the arrow which imparts in her hate for Apollo. Daphne requests her father to turn her into a mandrake to avoid the pursuit of Apollo. As she says: "The tree has entered my hands / The sap has ascended my arms" (Pound, 1912, p. 21). Apollo gets dejected. This plot crystallizes the opposite tendencies of attraction and repulsion in the mythical nature of humans. The theme of disappointment in love disseminates the feelings of wonder, awe, and loss through natural cadences throughout the poem.

Contrarily, Rafat's free verse '*Village Girl*' concretizes the optimistic view of unreciprocated love by throwing a cultural image of a towering girl who is standing in the countryside though the hot weather is baking the atmosphere. The girl has been compared with the image of darling local crop sugarcane to disseminate a sense of relish attached with the sweet taste of sugarcane as Rafat asserts: "there she was/ tall and straight/ as a sugarcane stalk" (Rafat, 1985, p.5). There is a narrator who is feeling very thirsty due to hot weather. As soon as he glimpses the girl, he gets overwhelmed by her youthful beauty. He finds a solution to compromise with the hot weather. This cultural scene is symbolic of the fact that nature offers a solution to every problem like a blessing in disguise. Though the beloved is ignorant of the lover's pursuit, the lover satisfies himself with imagination. The theme develops the emotional states of frustration, wonder, excitement, calmness, resignation, and satisfaction throughout the poem.

### **Findings**

Common modern themes have been drawn upon by Pound and Rafat employing the same imagistic style. But their takes on themes and the images bear

cultural treatment to create contextual identities. To materialize the theme of poetic craft, Pound introduces his poetic philosophy – to follow the classical form and content in poetic creativity with the classical image of Lesbia – and Rafat introduces his poetic philosophy – to describe cultural phenomenon immediately with the cultural image of chasing squirrels. Pound's take on death is the pursuit of desire using the images of Li Po and Du Fu while that of Rafat is familial care using the image of his brother on his death bed. The rape of Innocence in war is treated by Pound using the image of Actaeon while by Rafat using the images of devastated landscapes. Pound eyes the dark side of unreciprocated love employing the image of Apollo and Daphne while Rafat its enlightened side using the image of the village girl. The difference in the treatment of the same themes is nothing more than cultural. But the use of free verse cadences to express theme oriented feelings is the same in Pound and Rafat.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the above-listed investigative scrutiny, it is concluded that classical tradition and culturalist politics tend to formulate an equation in the poetic worlds of Pound and Rafat. Pound is a staunch believer of classical literary tradition and wants to make it the standard for writing poetry. Pound's poems relate legends from classical literature as a solution to the chaotic present. "To Formianus' Young Lady Friend" alludes to classical character Lesbia to be followed as a standard of beauty. "Epitaph" introduces the philosophy, lifestyle, and literary taste of ancient Chinese poets as a model. "The Coming of War: Actaeon" develops the theme of the rape of innocence by using the myth of Greek hero Actaeon. Similarly, "The Girl" is the rendering of the age-old theme of disappointment in unreciprocated love through the myth of Daphne and Apollo. Pound's poetic philosophy is the employment of classical legends to relate to the modern situation.

In this way, the modern lived experience becomes similar to the classical one because human nature remains the same. This parallelism between the classical and modern periods creates a universal identity. On the contrary, the depiction of culturalist politics becomes the poetic philosophy of Rafat. "Squirrels" describes Rafat's poetic craft, i. e., to write a poem on the sight of some cultural phenomenon. "Half-Moon" discusses the death theorem with relevance to the cultural aspect of familial love. "Village" develops the theme of the rape of innocence through the destructive images of cultural relics. "Girl" unfolds the positive side of

unreciprocated love by presenting a cultural image of youthful beauty. Rafat aspires to create a national identity through his poems. The classical tradition which informs Pound's poetic works and culturalist politics that informs Rafat's poetry establish an equation maneuvered under modern style.

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