



RESEARCH PAPER

Representation of Pakistani Indigenous Culture in Taufiq Rafat's Arrival of the Monsoon

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ABSTRACT

Pakistani poet, Taufiq Rafat epitomizes the accurate Pakistani indigenous culture in his poems in a foreign language since his verse is laden with an essence of local and cultural ethos in the form of local idiom, imagery, and symbolism which exhibits his interest in the roots. The present research explores that Rafat is an upholder of "native" and "local" cultural ethos. The research is based upon the concept given by Frantz Fanon that the native intellectuals have a dominant role in forging the new cultural and national consciousness in native people and worldwide. Further, the concept of the nation by Benedict Anderson is also used highlighting that the nation is an imagined political community. The concept of ethno-symbolism, about national identity by Anthony D. Smith that myths, memories, values, traditions, and symbols, play their role as powerful differentiators and reminders of the unique culture and fate of the ethnic community will enhance the understanding of the subject matter relevant to indigenous culture through the close reading of the selected poems. Thus, the work concludes that Rafat with profound wisdom on national perception shapes his poetry which is an authentic source of knowledge about Pakistan's native culture.

KEYWORDS National Culture, National Identity, National Myth, National Symbol, Nationalism

Introduction

"Culture" is a term used for facilitating living creatures to nurture and develop by providing an appropriate medium, whereas, when it applies to human beings it may be considered "the entire way of life of a specific human group or society". The whole way of life comprises two elements of Ideological and Material components, and the components are further divided into values and social practices. Culture is not the creation of a few individuals, but rather it is something that is "lived" and "evolved" by a particular community. Every human society lives in time and space because every culture relates to a specific human society. Similarly, every human culture is likely to be historical and territorial. It is possible and usually, it is so, that its ideological components include "extra-territorial" and "supra-temporal" elements. A vivid example is a Muslim society which despite the differences in race and language has many common cultural traits and tendencies (Majeed, Kazimi, 2005, pp. 79-80).

However, when the colonizers left the Indian Sub-Continent, the residual of the colonial regime had not been removed. But after leaving the Sub-Continent, the colonizers left behind a new community of Brown/local "Sahibs" to govern and rule the bewildered and rambling country. Afterward in Pakistan, a love-hate relationship had been developed with the English language. Some of the people considered English as a part of the colonial legacy, but a provenance of betterment and social promotion since the appropriation of this language was without any doubt. So, all the poetry of post-colonial times due to this "assimilation and resistance", directed to the conception of Pakistani national poetry in English. In a similar fashion, Pakistani poets have received and embraced a combination of traditions and procedures from both native and foreign sources. Some poets have

contributed an indelible influence on the literary scope that makes Pakistani poets in English follow their path.

Among all these prominent poets, Taufiq Rafat has an ideal place to be followed by all upcoming poets. Rafat has been writing in English for a long time. He resorts both to logical and coherent narrative as well as symbolic imagery to convey his meanings. He does not commit the typical mistakes of minor poets who were in habit of using vague and rhetorical diction. In some of his poems, Rafat portrays a story and becomes unimaginative about events. For example, in the poem "*The Boy with the Bashed-In Skull*", if the outline is changed, the verse will be read like prose:

"I was in the surgeon's office
to discuss my son's forthcoming
operation, when the doctor,
a friend, explained his dejection." (1-4)

About his poetry, Graham Hough says, "there does not seem to be any reason at all why this should be regarded as the verse" (Rahman, 1991, p. 167). Rafat indeed calls this poetry that it is a contiguous arrangement of a line rather than anything else. But of course, there is the providence of words, the abundance of explicit imagery, and the unhurried control of sentiments that has a powerful poetic effect on the reader.

Rafat is also a love poet, but his love poems avoid Bad Ghazal's excessive sentimentalism. Such poetry is lyrical, and there is a subtle Shakespearean reflection in the poem *The Time to Love*. The function of these reflections is to highlight the contrast between Renaissance liberty and indifference and the restraint and schematization of the contemporary Puritan way of life in Pakistan. (Rahman, 1991, p. 167).

His first collection of the anthology under discussion appeared in 1985. The lucidity and expediency of language translate vast experiences whether local or global. Rafat's poems are laden with cultural insight or there is a "cultural synthesis". As all post-colonial poetry consists of the human past, this is an abiding inheritance in the present. Rafat surpasses locals to unlock humanity's shared history and evoke universal commonality. The authority of Rafat's words activates Carlo Coppola to witness that this lacking artifice, this artist writer's poetry is massive, gathering the local colors, has a rich texture of village life, and is direct; therefore, touches the readers' emotions making them ready to respond (quoted in Mansoor, 2012, p. 206). Grippingly, Pakistani poets writing in English extorted the European models to become coexistent with indigenous pronunciation. Pakistani poets, who used to write in English, also behold for poetic idioms, that was near to the speech pattern of the indigenous. The same is the case with Taufiq Rafat, he uses Pakistani idioms in his poems. Like in his poem "*The Kite Fliers*" the use of words "kurta" and "quail" are indigenous.

Rafat's association with the "Pakistani idiom" is a phrase that reflects the clash of tradition and modernity that is characteristic of all former colonial rule in the West and indeed encompasses the entire world in this era of globalization. Although the main task seems to be to create significant identities with indigenous roots, yet free to deal with the world outside modernism and postmodernism. Rather than following the language of British romantic poetry, as most young Pakistani poets did in the 1950s, Taufiq Rafat used a distinctive indigenous idiom while reflecting contemporary and universal themes. Rafat's concern about the "Pakistani idiom" is an expression of the clash of tradition and modernity, characteristic of indeed all former colonies of the great Western powers, which is plaguing the whole world in this age of globalization. Above all, to create a core of identity with indigenous roots, and allow us to freely deal with the outside world of our time. In the same way, rather than counting on "English Romantic Poetry" or borrowing themes from "Urdu Poetry", as Pakistani poets were doing commonly in the 1950s, Rafat sought to reflect

contemporary and universal themes, believing that building a deep and indigenous language is a better way to survive as an independent nation. He has shown his interest in roots in many ways, for example, he mentions his birth in Sialkot as a reason for translating the story of Puran Bhagat who belonged to that city. Hence, Rafat emphasizes indigenesness and roots in his works.

Further, Taufiq Rafat represents this concern with the roots in many poems including one of them called "*Kitchens*". This poem shows the divergence of the kitchens within his homeland. Those were full of life and people sat in those kitchens while having conversations about personal happenings such as a child's birth, matrimonial ties, and death. In this poem, Rafat shows the warmth of the mother's care and love. But the kitchens in the modern era are as clean "as a hospital" (Rafat, 2004, p. 44). The aloofness and strangeness of "chromium and Formica" have substituted the reliability and perpetuity of traditional houses. In short, the Pakistani urban lifestyle does not speak to the rural communities where people were not alienated and estranged. In "*A Positive Region*" the beauty of the valley and mountains is fresh and inspiring. In most of the early poems by Rafat, it seems that in those poems, nature gives dominant imagery.

Overall, Taufiq Rafat in his collection *Arrival of the Monsoon* has shown the indigenous Pakistani culture and tradition in the English language. And in this way, he enlightens the readers about our glorious traditions, culture, and ritual customs which go long way in imbibing the hearts of Pakistani people with love for Pakistan. Taufiq Rafat's poetry has been studied and analyzed from the perspective of critical poetry, love poetry, patriotic poetry, humanistic poetry, and modern poetry. I have chosen a new angle of analyzing and highlighting the concept of nation, national identity, and national consciousness, and the present research is delimited to these aspects. Further, it has been proved that Taufiq Rafat is essentially a nationalist poet bubbling with humanism, and always ready to play his role as a reformer. He is very fervent and deeply rooted in Pakistani indigenous culture and traditions.

Literature Review

All this review deals with contemporary writings and criticism of Taufiq Rafat's selected work. Tariq Rahman in his essay about Taufiq Rafat says that Rafat tops the list of the best-known English Poetry Writers of Pakistan, his other colleagues being- Maki Qureshi, Alamgir Hashmi, Kaleem Omar, and Daud Kamal, Rafat rose to prominence due to his attempt of creating Pakistani flavor in English in his poetry, and in this way, he tinted an influence on other poets whether contemporary or younger generation of writers.

Born in Sialkot, the birthplace of our national poet Dr. Muhammad Iqbal (1878-1938) and Faiz Ahmad Faiz (1911-1984), Rafat was educated in Dera Dun, Aligarh, Lahore, and finally, he joined his family business. In the seventies, he settled in Lahore. His frequent visitors were Khaled Ahmad, Tariq Yazdani, Shuja Nawaz, Kaleem Omar, Alamgir Hashmi, and Athar Tahir- wholly eminent names in Poetry written in English in Pakistan. Publication of Rafat's poems started in 1947, in very prestigious literary magazines of the sixties and seventies: *Perspective, Vision, and Pakistan Quarterly* from Government College Lahore had the honor to publish his poems. He polished many young poets and his disciple also wrote in magazines. His work has been widely acclaimed and has been included in reputed collections of Pakistani poetry in English. Hence, for a long, Rafat has created an impression of control and authority in English Creative writing in Pakistan.

Rafat has availed the chance to translate marvelous Punjabi pieces including *Bulleh Shah: A Selection* (1982) and *Qadir Yar: Puran Bhagat* (1983). Bulleh Shah is a renowned Punjabi poet well known for his iconoclastic verse throughout Pakistan. Qadir Yar has written the tale of 'Puran Bhagat'. Puran Bhagat, once a prince is an outcast who later on becomes a saint because of his humanity. Rafat's literary skills and prowess beam out from the translations too. These translations in English have restored the prestige of the Punjabi

Language which it deserves. They also help English readers to get introduced to Punjabi Poetry. Rafat has also played his role as a critic by writing some critical essays.

"Kitchens", a poem very well-known is an example of his concern with roots. The poem is composed of the kitchens in which his generation grew up in towns and villages. They sat there discussing all important events like birth, marriage, death, and business. Mother care and love also gave warmth and fragrance. He laments that modern kitchens are kept clean as the hospital with chromium, Formica touch and chairs, and modern furniture. The closeness of sitting on a mat is long gone. He praises the countryside people who appear to him living closer to tradition.

His poem, 'Positive Region,' beautifies Alpine foothills and mountains as invigorating and stirring. The tall pines, the greenery, and the picturesque beauty make it a fairyland. Most of the early poems of Rafat are laden with dominant imagery of Nature. Animals, a part of the beautiful world have not been missed. This description strengthens the theme that how propinquity to the natural world, beauty, and scenery becomes soothing and healing for people. These themes add charm to Rafat's work. Adding further to the subject matter there is 'loneliness' and the hurtful truth of death. In "*Poems for Younger Brother*" (1930-1979), Rafat narrates the pathetic story, of how he had to face his brother who was leaving for England for an operation for cancer and there was no chance of his return. He has great difficulty in containing himself –the passions, the fear, and attachment and remains manly. In another poem, "*Coma*" the above-mentioned themes are merged to bring profundity and authority. His voice is lyrical, sometimes having Shakespearian echoes. His models are not Shelley and Keats. (Rahman, 1991, p. 167)

In an essay, "*Complexities of Home and Homeland in Pakistani English Poetry and Fiction*" Shamsie observes:

"It is due to the acceptance of Islamic culture and philosophy that many internationally acclaimed writers are bound to Pakistan. These writers know the international trends and try to compete with them, therefore, there exist multiple works created after inspiration. Yet one thing that blurs the reality is the identity.

When we talk about Rafat, 'cultural synthesis' is obvious in his poems. The very first collection, *Arrival of the Monsoon* (1985) is marvelous and marked by the simplicity of language and studies with a world of experiences that expand from local to universal.

The vacuum that separates the lives of 'Wasteland characters' has a very negative effect on the lives of this Pakistani narrator as he watches our traditional family system fall apart before a ruthless modern era of independence. Being a "man speaking to men" however, Rafat's style does not contain verbosity and includes an unswerving and fascinating impact. Village life in Pakistan has remained a central concern of the poet throughout his work. This has been done with a will and a deep concern for localism where his identity is rooted as well (quoted by Mansoor, 2012, p. 21).

Moreover, his poems are impregnated with social vision as well. "The melody of "red-arsed bulbuls" in "*Reflections*", brings his garden before the eyes, and "Shisham" (tree) and "Gulmohar" (plant) and his art of constructing verbal monuments remind of the remote past when life was understood through the locally constructed stereotypes and myths, and in this way, he connects local with universal (Malik, 2009, pp. 830-835). Similar cultural ways are found here and there in the philosophical poetry of Allama Iqbal in his poems like "Poppy of the wilderness" and "On the bank of the Ravi". This quality of creating a cultural hybrid has allowed Rafat to attract bilingual readers. Mina Fareed Malik observes that "The audience for writing in English are though more fluent in English yet have plentiful knowledge of 'indigenous' language... writing on the beauty of bilingualism, she writes that the reader proficient in this practice is not only completely in to understand, situated beautifully with the impressions created by the writer, but also gives a complete sense of deepness to English

Literature echoing their culture, beliefs, context, and sensibilities that has “nothing to do with the shape of an L or crisp of a T” (Malik, 2009, p. 831).

As with all post-colonial poetry, the human past remains very powerful. Rafat entwines the locals by adding the shared traits of humanity which erase the difference between self and other as “the drone of the homing jet/pollinates all culture/between Hong Kong and San Francisco” (Rafat, 2001, p. 87), resonates the same concept. In doing so, he meets the philosophical criteria of moving through common ideals given by Iqbal. It is interesting to note that Pakistani poets in English have brought changes in European models so that they become synchronous with the changes in the vernacular. Pakistani poets in English have also searched for poetic idioms close to the speech pattern of vernacular. This effort to indigenization has yielded interesting results. Pakistani English Poetry is direct and single in address and is interesting in the study. It depicts how the English language shapes and reshapes (Mansoor, A. 2012). Taufiq Rafat’s poetry has been studied and analyzed from the perspective of critical poetry, love poetry, patriotic poetry, humanistic poetry, and modern poetry. I have chosen a new angle of analyzing and highlighting the concept of nation, national identity, and national consciousness.

Material and Methods

The theoretical framework of this research is post-colonialism with the concepts of theorists including Frantz Fanon, Benedict Anderson, and Anthony D. Smith. In his work, Fanon says that national consciousness is dependent upon important cultural activities. National consciousness and national culture cannot be separated from each other. The writers, artists, and native intellectuals have a vital role in making new national consciousness. The native intellectuals must modify the traditional culture to forge a new national consciousness. It is also the responsibility of the native intellectuals to follow new paths toward the future and take part in the growing national culture. Additionally, Benedict Anderson’s concept of the state, that the state is a fictitious community, imagined as essentially a limited sovereign has been used as a conceptual thread. The concept of the nation as deep, horizontal comradeship has also been used. Moreover, Anthony D. Smith’s concept of ethno-symbolism that the myths, memories, values, traditions, and symbols, play their role as powerful differentiators and reminders of the unique culture and fate of the ethnic community has been used as a lens to analyze Rafat’s poetry.

Analysis

This qualitative research is descriptive cum interpretive. This research analyses that Taufiq Rafat represents the true Pakistani indigenous flavor of culture in his poems in a foreign language. Here I would like to name Taufiq Rafat as a nationalist poet, reformer, humanist and avid lover of indigenous Pakistani cultures and traditions. Above all his affiliation with the masses and the country is evident in his poetry. For this purpose, the poems have been selected from Rafat’s collection *Arrival of the Monsoon*. His anthology was written between 1947-1969 and picturizes the advent of the monsoon in Pakistan. As the wind liberating from the parched summer arrives, it takes away every particle of sand with it. The clothes on the washing line flap up and down.

“And drunk with motion, clothes on the washing line
are raised above themselves; a flapping sheet
turns a roof corner into a battlement.” (p. 55)

With the advent of monsoon, the writer paints the whole season including wind, rains, the intensity of sunlight, and the enterprises of the Pakistani community while welcoming that season. Gliding days are over.

“The birds are tossed
side-ways and back, and lifted against their will...
...Harsh contours
dissolve and lose their prosaic condition.

All the sounds we have loved are restored. And now the rain! In sudden squall” (ibid, p.55)

The naked boys appear paddling in the ditches. We savor the rain’s coolness on our lips and eyes.

“[T]he drenched trees rise and shake themselves
and summer ends in a flurry of drops.” (ibid, p. 55)

This is a marvelous poem by Rafat, which depicts the season of monsoon in Pakistan. In Pakistan, the summer season remains for a long time with all its fever and fury. Here, the tormenting heat of summer plays havoc not only with the people but also with the birds and trees and they all are withered and dreary. The soil becomes dry. In summer the weather conditions become hard for people. But when a wind storm comes it is welcome by the people because the darkness prevails on everything and gives a soothing effect from the heat of the sun. No doubt wind storm makes the atmosphere dirty but it is considered as a hope of rain. After the wind storm stops, it starts raining. Anthony D. Smith’s concept of the continuance of the present generation can be best applied to Rafat’s idea that children come out of their houses and start playing in the puddles of water depicting centuries-old tradition (Smith, 2009, p. 25). After hot weather, the cool and soothing effect of rain is enjoyed by everybody. People enjoy the blessings of nature. Even the trees become alive due to rainwater. Rafat depicts social reality through these symbols, memories, and traditions as explained by Anthony D. Smith’s concept of ethno-symbolism and in this poem, he shows this side of Pakistani culture that in Pakistan rain is considered God’s blessing. Rain is treated as a source of relief from the blazing heat of summer. Rafat explains things in the context of social reality as Anthony D. Smith elaborates in his theory of Ethno-symbolism. Anthony D. Smith while giving his theory of Ethno-symbolism argues that myths, symbols, and memories are part of social reality. Further Smith puts forward this idea that shared values, rituals and traditions have greatly assisted in the insurance and continuance of the present generation with those of the past-a sentiment which is potentiated by the overall acceptance of collective symbols as elaborated by Rafat (Smith, 2009, p. 25). Once again Rafat while celebrating the glory of tradition in his poem *Kitchens* written from 1947 to 1969 recalls and laments over the glorious past when our kitchens used to be high roofed and spacious. They were the main attraction for all the members of the family. Especially, during winter all of them gathered there.

“Kitchens were places
[W]e grew up in.
High-roofed, and spacious,
they attracted us
with the pungency

of smoke and spices.” (p.44)

It was a source of family union, highlighting the worth of parents especially, those who maintained and ran this place smoothly. They used to enjoy breakfast and sitting side by side discussing all matters. The family and the economy mattered to them the most. The mother used to grace the occasion with her sweet presence and serve food and soup to all of them. Their closeness and noise reflected their bond of love and affection. Rafat uses particular parameters that are quite fit to give an advanced description of the Kitchens of Pakistan. He shows ethnicity through shared symbols. Adjectives used by Rafat can again be supported by Smith’s concept of Ethno-symbolism (Smith, 2009, p. 24). It becomes evident that he is talking about kitchens in villages. The very interpretation can be supported by the use of the word ‘smoke’.

“... Mother presided,
contributing only
her presence, busy
ladling ladling. Noise
was warmth...” (lines 19-22, p.44)

They shared everything and thus they shivered from their problems. Then during the period of slavery, we followed foreign traditions. Separate chairs came in and the spaces cramped. The table in between the chairs and with this intimacy marched off. Now even after independence, we are slavishly following foreign traditions and we do not find any such place as our traditional kitchens, to unburden our grieves. The very idea has been supported by Fanon when he speaks of it as a sacred duty to establish a strong connection with the past/tradition. Now we are always in hurry not sharing our fears and pleasure with our family members and even taking our last gulp standing up. In the poem “Kitchens”, Rafat depicts the picture of Pakistani society, tradition, and culture in the postcolonial era. No doubt we have got independence but we are still not successful in getting rid of slavery mentally. In the post-colonial era, we are still under the charm and charisma of our colonial masters and follow their traditions. Rafat bemoans over the past in which there was a strong family bond. But now in this modern era that strong family bond which kept intact all the family members together is no more present. Now everybody is so busy in his life that he has no time for his family. The kitchen is a symbolic poem representing the indigenous past of Pakistan. The poem also highlights the significance of national culture that must be followed and not forgotten. This poem is in fact, a lamentation over our collective failure not to keep our contact with our glorious past intact. According to Frantz Fanon, the native intellectuals as a matter of their sacred duty must have established contact strong enough with the past as there is nothing to be ashamed of in it rather there is dignity, glory, solemnity, and honor in it. He further argues that dignity in national culture in the past not only rehabilitates the particular nation but also strongly serves as a justification for the hope to establish the national culture. He further goes on to put on record that national culture is “the whole body of efforts” made by the people in the sphere of thought to proclaim praise and justify the action through which that particular nation has created itself and kept itself in existence. Fanon also embarks upon maintaining that national consciousness and its existence national consciousness and national culture are inseparable from each other, and separately their existence is in jeopardy (Fanon, 2004, p. 148, 149). As Smith also highlights that myths, memories, symbols, values, rituals, and traditions are extremely crucial in analyzing ethnicity, nation, and nationalism and various combinations of these elements have played and continue to play a vital role in shaping social cultures and structure (Smith, 2009, p. 25). All these concepts support Rafat’s ideas which he depicts in his poem Kitchen.

Rafat through this poem encourages the people of his country that they have a dignified past and there is nothing to be ashamed of it. All the traditions and rituals which we follow in our daily life show that we are a nation with strong social culture and structure.

Rafat's poem "Death of Carpenter", is an elegy on the death of a carpenter who is a true representative of culture and the past. The carpenter by profession was a highly seasoned experienced worker. He produced indigenous furniture used to grace our houses and his expertise suited every pocket. The cut glass and brass work earned admiration from the onlooker but unaware of this admiration he was found bending quietly over his work, with full devotion and concentration. He did not receive a handsome reward but still, he was satisfied. The poem's chunks celebrate of past that is memorable due to elders' deeds.

"One by one they have gone
[T]he skilled old men we used to
who brightened our lives.....
by simply creating
or reward, fashioning the
usual commodities with love" (ibid, p. 128)

This poem exemplifies the aspect of Pakistani culture that Pakistan is famous for its wooden furniture all over the world. This poem is a tribute to the carpenter who works devotedly in making the furniture. The carpenter is unaware that he is playing an important part in depicting and celebrating Pakistani culture. The carpenter works with full enthusiasm and does not long for any reward. His only reward is the appreciation of his elegant work of cut glass and brass. This poem also laments that this true spirit of working is now dwindling with time when Rafat says that one by one they have gone. The old generation was very skilled but now in this era of the modern world, that spirit is gradually lost by the coming generation. A carpenter plays a powerful role in highlighting our culture, traditions, and living style. The furniture with which we decorate our houses reflects our ways of living. We follow the culture and tradition which has descended upon us from generation to generation and it has unknowingly differentiated us from other people. It also demarks our culture from that of others. His dedication, beauty, and devotion to his work are representative of our tradition and culture and make our cultural identity prominent from others. These ideas by Rafat in the very poem can be elaborated by Smith's view that myths, memories, values, and traditions are very powerful differentiators and bring to our memory the distinct culture and fate of the ethnicity (Smith, 2009, p. 25). Anthony D. Smith is also of the same view as Rafat explores in the poem that cultural elements have gifted each particular community with differentiated symbols in the form of language, religion, custom, and institution which give it a particular identity from other similar communities and these symbols are familiar to the people and those who are outsider and demarcation has been separating these people from others (Smith, 2009, p. 25). So, all these concepts by Smith are beautifully elicited by Rafat in this poem.

Another poem, "Wedding in the Flood", is written between 1974- 1976. This time collaborates typical marriage traditions in the countryside which is explaining the arrangements of the marriage in a mess due to heavy rain but luckily at lunch, there was a bit of pause when people hurriedly finished their lunch and started for the destination of the bride.

"The rain nearly ruined everything,
[B]ut at a crucial time, when lunch was ready,

[I]t mercifully stopped.” (p. 134)

Then there is an air of pathos when the bride’s mother sobbingly says that they are taking her girl away forever. She wonders about her performance in the cold house among the strangers. Her dowry consisting of a cot, a looking glass, and the tin trunk is carried along with the bride who is sitting in the palankeen, her hennaed hands fascinate the bridegroom and he wonders if her face matched her hands, he will never mind her dowry, and above all if the bride does not complain about her mother-in-law. While in palankeen the bride is drenched to the skin. She worries about the cot, trunk, and looking glass being ruined by the rain.

“They are taking my girl away forever,

[S]obs the bride’s mother, as the procession

[F]orms slowly to the whine of the clarinet. (ibid, p.134)

I like the look of her hennaed hands,

gloats the bridegroom, as he glimpses ...

... [I]f only her face matches her hands,

and she gives me no mother-in-law problems,

I’ll forgive her the cot and the trunk

and looking glass...” (ibid, p. 134)

On their way, they have to cross the swollen river. The bridegroom’s father grumbles over the dowry and expects a bullock or a couple of oxen instead, which might be helpful for them. It cannot be unexpected that a marriage party is arriving on time despite the rain. They manage to cross the angry river and at last, the bride reaches her bed. In the poem, Taufiq Rafat draws a picture of a typical marriage in the countryside. The poem depicts the whole scenario of a marriage in a village full of emotions and feelings. The poem fully justifies that Rafat has a strong grip on portraying the emotions of people. The feelings of the bride’s mother about her daughter, the fascinating charm of the bridegroom towards the bride, the fear of the bride about her husband, and the dowry ruined by the rain all combine to form a true representation of human emotion with the expression of culture. The dowry is a part of our culture. In our culture, now, it has become a ritual to give a dowry to the daughter. Moreover, Rafat uses the words palankeen, hennaed hand, and dowry to depict Pakistani culture. Anthony D. Smith, whatever Rafat has said in a few lines speaks volumes of the identity given by a particular culture to a particular community. He emphasizes the strong bond of affiliation as well as a powerful cultural affinity or irresistible attraction for the remote past in which a community got its existence and identity (Smith, 2009, p. 14). Despite all the changes, it has undergone over time remains distinctly the same community that it was as Taufiq Rafat portrays in his very poem that the rituals and customs of marriage remain the same and despite the modifications which have been made with time, for example, the dowry system, the lunch in honor of the bridegroom, the feelings of the departing bride and her mother, the expectations of the bridegroom and his father continue to be the same. Although the marriage halls and the car have replaced the open areas and the horse and the palankeen yet the inner soul of the whole function remains unchanged.

Rafat’s other poem “Sacrifice”, reflects an aspect of our culture- the foundation ceremony of the house. The poet precisely narrates the entire scene with such clarity that we become the eyewitness of the occasion. It has become a part of the culture that the sacrifice of a goat is considered necessary at the time of laying the foundation of a house. After a brief prayer of blessings for the inhabitants of the house, the goat is sacrificed.

“We are laying the foundation of a friend’s house.
After a brief prayer that all who dwell here
may be blessed, we stand in a tight circle
around the animal to be sacrificed; it has
a civilized and patient look...” (p. 67)

A necessary part of the ritual is that the owner should make the sacrifice with his hand. With this the poet allows the goat to speak through his poetic license. The goat seems to say, “Four calloused hands imprison my jerking legs” (16) and “Two spadefuls of dirt will cover me up forever” (19-20). A white-beard man “chants something holy” and sacrifice is done. Children are fascinated and witness the occasion. In this poem, Rafat highlights the aspect that to boast off upon wealth has become a part of our culture. People spend money on those things which are just trivial and show off their wealth. The culture has become a snob culture where people consider it their right to spend money on stupid rituals. The poet laments over this aspect of our culture in a low tone in the opening couplets and feels as if the tip of the knife is over his neck.

“As he moves the knife across the neck of the goat
I can feel its points on my throat” (ibid, p. 67)

In this poem, Rafat seems fully agreed with Frantz Fanon that the native intellectual as a matter of his duty also may modify, reform, and reinterpret the traditional culture in the better interest if he feels so (Fanon, 2004). Rafat in this poem criticizes though in a lower tone a ritual that has no binding with religion but has become the practice of the prosperous at the time of laying the foundation stone of the house. We need to cut these unnecessary rituals for easy survival.

Conclusion

It has been proved by the research that Taufiq Rafat has a place as a cynosure for all those Pakistani poets who write in English since his poetry keeps him intact with the roots. Rafat’s work has been studied and analyzed from a variety of dimensions like critical poetry, patriotic poetry, humanistic poetry, and modern poetry yet this study has highlighted the representation of national ethos, the concept of nation, national identity, and national consciousness on a deep-rooted level through close analysis. It has been deduced that before Rafat, poets followed the path of European poets and remained engaged in different techniques and literary movements of history; however, Rafat has chosen a different perspective of poetry with the help of which he serves the nation as an intellectual who has a deep sense of national consciousness. Hence, it has been concluded that Rafat’s poetry is an enriched source of knowledge about Pakistan’s indigenous culture.

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