

# **SEMIOTICS OF SUFI DISCOURSE IN COKE STUDIO VIDEO SONGS**

**BY**

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**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MODERN LANGUAGES  
ISLAMABAD**

**November, 2020**

# **SEMIOTICS OF SUFI DISCOURSE IN COKE STUDIO VIDEO SONGS**

**By**  
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MPhil, Air University, Islamabad, 2013

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**  
**In English**

To

FACULTY OF ENGLISH STUDIES



NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MODERN LANGUAGES  
ISLAMABAD

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The undersigned certify that they have read the following thesis, examined the defense, are satisfied with the overall exam performance and recommend the thesis to the Faculty of English Studies for acceptance.

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## ABSTRACT

### **Title: Semiotics of Sufi Discourse in Coke Studio Video Songs**

This qualitative research seeks to inquire into the nature of the spiritual signified in Coke Studio (CS) Sufi singing (Pakistan). It explores how sign in CS singing is more important than what it stands for and it is the form, not meaning, which is forefronted in the singing. The selection of Sufi songs is made out of a total of 32, rendered by CS singers on various Pakistani TV channels within a span of 9 years and 9 seasons. Assimilating insights of three theoretical views, a method is devised to analyze and interpret signs and the discourse that they represent. The study demonstrates that CS Sufi singing is mainly directed towards materiality or the gaining of starship, fun and glamor and thereby it makes a ludic play of Sufi verses being sung. CS sign is largely simulated in that it distances itself from the sacred ambience of Sufi music and demonstrates from mild to intense degrees of concealment and masquerading in its performance and thereby confuses real with unreal or sacred with secular. CS singing, via its use of New Age discourses such as spirituality, genre fusion, adaptation and plurality of style and text, portrays Sufi music as a discourse that may be adapted and used for any material end or commodification. The study highlights the parameters CS singers use to assimilate Sufi music within modern and novel definitions of art, music and digital context. The study has identified four main aspects of the problem of spiritual signified in CS Sufi singing: Sign in this singing is largely (1) exoteric with its focus on form, causing split between signifier and signified; (2) it is simulated, fake and theatrical; (3) it is entertaining and appeals greatly to senses and (4) it is commercial and uses Sufi singing for commodification. The problem the study has attempted to address is crucial keeping in view the New Age logic of capitalism, free marketing, media hoopla and corporate monopolies over semiotic, digital and cultural resources of communities across the globe which are maintained under the cover of charity and public good as, for instance, we read through Coca Cola discourse in the present study.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I owe everything to God- the Almighty. Without His guidance, no product of this level would have been possible.

I stand in gratitude to my teachers at NUML who taught me during the course work and in particular I owe special thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Farheen Ahmed Hashmi, for her guidance and support during this research. Her cordial approval of my idea to work on Coke Studio Sufi music within a broad framework of semiotics and later her meticulous scrutiny of the work made the task a memorable learning experience for me. The final stage- a cherishing one- whereby I see my doctoral thesis completed, I believe the achievement is largely accredited to her.

I am deeply grateful to Dr. Aaliya Sohail, the principal of my college, for her support, guidance and provision of books in the area of my research. Thanks to colleagues and friends, Dr. Asma Zahoor, Ms. Ghazala Tabassam and Ms. Saima Amer in particular for sharing my college work a number of times. Their kind concern is what I treasure the most.

Thanks to Naeem Fatima, my university friend, for her valuable discussions with me. I am obliged to Dr. Abdul Aziz Sahir, Chairman Department of Urdu, AIOU and Dr. Tanvir Anjum from Quaid-e-Azam University for sharing views and material on various aspects of my study. I owe incalculable thanks to Dr. Christopher Melchert, a renowned scholar from University of Oxford, Oriental Studies Department, who shared material on Sufi music in reply to only one email I wrote to him.

I stand in debt to my mother, the real benefactor, whose prayers kept providing me the spiritual comfort I was in need of and could fall back upon in moments of despair, helping me to recuperate and take off again. Thanks to my husband and to all family members for their love and consistent support and especially to my nephew for providing technical assistance and sharing the digital library resources of Sheffield university he is enrolled in UK. His prompt replies to all my queries and unreserved help always amazed me.

Whether or not acknowledged here, my prayers go to all who accompanied me from start till end of this voyage of exploration, my doctoral thesis.



*TO THAT CREATIVE SPIRIT*  
*WHICH UPHOLDS ME*  
*EVEN IN THE DARKEST MOMENTS OF MY LIFE*

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

If a man does not honor his own house, it falls down and crushes him.

(Greek proverb)

This research is a qualitative inquiry into the new Sufi discourse in Coke Studio (CS) singing and the impact of its characteristic performance on the spiritual signified the lyrics are imbued with. It seeks to explore how sign in CS singing is more important than what it stands for and it is the form, not meaning, which is fore-fronted in the singing. Further, the study explicates how CS singing is largely confined to the exoteric, namely, it is focused more on music, rhythm and instrumentation. It highlights CS singing as a discourse which is largely intended to downplay the spiritual reality or the message the Sufi verses contain; it is, thus, a demonstration to truncate the sublime poetic text into a mere sensuous and raucous articulation.

CS Sufi singing is but a site of entertainment and pleasure and is noted as a spectacular show. Sitting in (semi)circle, with stunning light, color and sound effects in the backdrop, the singers perform in a rather splashy manner with fusion of blows, plucks, clonks, strikes, throbs intermixed with electronic raps and taps and a lot more. Their style of singing is highly rowdy, entertaining and no less theatrical which although makes the whole show spectacular and grand at the material level, entails a loss of the spiritual signified or the meaning the Sufi poetry carries.

This study considers CS Sufi singing as a play-acting of simulation and pretense than a sincere representation of the philosophy of Sufi music. It lacks devotion and spiritual verve essential for this kind of performance as the CS singers embark on to make a play of spirituality via the use of the New Age discourses such as genre fusion, adaptation and plurality of style as well as text. In addition to the “eye appeal” it makes through its play of spirituality, the digital and technological accounts that CS heavily draws on turns it into

a thicker entity than a simple media discourse which may be studied within simple artistic bounds.

The techno-cultural transfusions in its shows, per se, warrant CS a successful entry into the cosmopolitan showbiz industry in addition to its visibility as a blockbuster trend setter in its local Pakistani context. The new trends being a mark of success in the global market yield space rather ask for a random consolidation of multiple views and philosophies even if they would essentially clash with each other e.g., secular and spiritual. CS attempts the same in its Sufi singing taking two kinds of leverage, to liberalize the notion of Sufi singing and to use famous Sufi lyrics for commercial purpose and starship and thereby enacts a “signness” of spirituality (Trifonas, 2015, p. 8) in its performance. CS is, therefore, no less performative since it enacts a new brand of Sufi music in a way that it makes sense for the viewer. Using various semiotics modalities, CS constructs a new brand of Sufi music or interprets one reality (Sufi music) in terms of another (CS music) reality. And thereby, via its ‘rebranded/performative representation of Sufi music,’ it ventures to “transform reality” (Robinson, 2006, p. 58). [The word ‘discourse,’ therefore, is employed as ‘representation’ for the purpose of present study. The study uses semiotics as a way to understand and explore this discourse.]

The performativity as a persuasive strategy further displaces the meaning underpinning the Sufi lyrics and, in reality, distracts the viewers from any esoteric engagement with the text under use. By enacting simulation, CS Sufi singing entails a practice which blurs the precincts of the real and unreal. This study, by examining the Sufi singing discourse of CS (Pakistan) at its various levels of density, calls into question the inroads the CS singers make in their performance. The study widens its space and horizon to the cross and transcultural levels and probes the discursive outgrowth of the discourse under study than giving a flattering picture of it. It travels a route which though complex, is nonetheless significant in the wake of the new discourses which tend to connect Sufism/Sufi music with global peace and attempt to define it in the newer context of “globalization and corporate centralization” (Jenkins, 2003, p. 20) thereby portraying Sufism either as a jargonized discourse or a meek philosophy that may be used for any

material gain. Coke Studio Sufi singing, therefore, is a demonstration whereby semiotics of pride (real Sufi music) are consumed for profit, marketing and self-promotion.

The question as to what semiotics involves and how do semiotics, linguistics and media discourse intersect in the context of present study, also needs to be addressed here. Semiotics is fundamentally associated with Saussure who interpreted language as a composite of arbitrary signs (signifier/signified) and these signs acquire meaning on the basis of their contrast to other co-existing signs which together constitute a structured system. However, Saussure's structural legacy of the 'science' of signs has diversified into new directions in the current scenario. Interestingly, while linguists might agree that the object of their 'science' is "language," but "if asked what they mean by "language," serious divergences would soon appear" (as cited in Boxenbaum, Jones, Meyer & Svejenova, 2018, p. 133). Nevertheless, after having passed through various turns, semiotics is now far less Saussurean and sign is not merely a linguistic/psychological entity but a living and a pervasive discourse with ample "affordances" to generate/communicate meaning in various contexts or practices (Leeuwen, 2005, p. 4). Many semioticians now regard media such as film, television, music and advertisement as 'texts' and, therefore, "languages" (Tomar, 2015, para 8). New media technologies have further extended our semiotic resources by adding new modalities such as visual mode of representation and meaning extension and thereby as Leeuwen points out, we see "semiotics of the image," or "semiotics of music." We can communicate with our voice, with musical instruments, with facial expressions/ gestures and we can also communicate through the clothes we wear and the way we groom our bodies. Similarly, we use "framing" -- a technique in photography- but we "frame" meaning also whereby a signifier is "tied" to a signified (2005, pp. 39, 93). Similarly, as Kress (1993) argues, Signs are always motivated by someone's interest such as "the producer's "interest" (p. 173). Hence, new media is a discourse having material body, performance, code/language and interface(s), it has its semiotics or ways of performance, persuasion and enactment.

### **1.1 New Media Discourse**

Media are the communication tools or channels used to store and deliver information or data (BusinessDictionary, 2017). The term *media* in its modern application was first

used by McLuhan (1954) and came in general use in North America and the United Kingdom in the late 1960's (Colombo, 1994, p. 176). In the late 19th century, a revolution in telecommunications greatly changed the scenario by providing new media, i.e., the forms of media that rely on computers for redistribution such as computer animations, interactive computer installations, websites, virtual worlds and the like (Manovich, 2003).

New media discourse has moved ahead of its earlier phases of naivety, excitement and flattering interpretation. It is being regarded as one of the most complex subjects of inquiry and scholarship in present scenario engaging rather boggling theorists, scholars and researchers on account of its technicity. It is a discourse having material body, performance, code/language and interface(s), it has its semiotics or ways of performance, persuasion and enactment. A good understanding of this discourse, as Thompson (1995) argue, "entails understanding its relationship to other media." It is through a concern with the intermedial, they add that a medium is understood and that "intermediality [is] found in any process of cultural production" (pp. 15-16). These intermedial aspects, in fact, refer to the complexity of the matter in the newer worlds of computational technology which even if intelligible to some extent do affect human behavior in strangely powerful ways or in symbolically "violent" ways, using Bourdieu's (1991) term. It has its force, body and visual push to impact the mind, psyche and human behavior in coercive ways reaching beyond the conscious level. The purpose, the function, say in a performance, is overpowered by its algorithms (power of technology) as Cascio (2016) comments.

New media has transformed the existing television, films, newspapers, digital billboards and computer games by utilizing a range of audio-visual sensory techniques (e.g., still and moving images of popular culture) meant to stimulate the viewers to identify and accept the pre-structured messages. As Tebbel points out, "whoever controls the media ... controls the culture" (as cited in Turow, 2009, p. 324). The media manufactures the atmosphere and mood with which the audience can well identify and get influenced. For instance, in the fashion environment, the "ideal feminine image" is creatively deployed by using images where "faces and bodies are uniformly attractive, airbrushed to perfection" and hence "marketable" (p. 116). Similarly, sport is heavily "laden with values of

maleness,” wherein glamour often overshadows the actual sport, i.e., what creates a spellbinding effect on the audience, is the use of bright colorful outfits, staged outbursts, dramatic music, hype and the like (Dyer, 2002, p. 183).

New media is a complex network of codes and inscriptions which mediates and deeply interacts with those involved and plays a great role in the constitution of human behavior and even “refigure our perception of ourselves,” (Keep, 1999, p. 220) and the world around us. It is no longer a novel analogue of the printing press which would impress upon us within well-defined limits of time and space; its digital mechanics and behavior go beyond these fixed references. It is a continuous “spin” (Fischlin, 2014, p. 118) of electrified texts which intermediate whereby the space is defined as a simulated construct or digitalized simulation. Dyer (2000) maintains that the representation (in films, screen) is never a “finished” or fixed object as it constantly evolves, as new and old audiences decode. This space is beyond the so-far-known and familiar notions of time and space and hence is being defined in terms of what the contemporary theorists call transhuman phase with the consequent up-shoot of new challenges regarding what reality is. In Baudrillard’s (1994) terms, this is the condition whereby one cannot tell apart reality from irreality or rather reality ceases to exist since it is neither real nor unreal, it is hyperreal.

On account of these transfusions of the usual frames of time, space and reality, the term discourse has become an all-inclusive metaphor which incorporates various forms of inscription-print, visual, digital or techno text. The traditional forms of writing in the genre of Sufi poetry, for instance, are being used and assimilated into the digitalized discourse with the subsequent new digital setting and outlook accessible at cross-cultural or global forums. Defined this way, media and discourse refer to a complex network of intermedial configurations before a final product is given. In fact, there is a continuous “spin” of digital mediation and be it camerawork, lights, sounds or instrumentation, it has to have a flamboyant visual power and illusory pull enough to drag the viewer away from reality. For instance, a pre-recorded sound can be (re)dubbed in various ways and styles or any way the production team desires it to be like. Digital mediation thus can potentially turn any discourse or artistic endeavor, e.g., singing of Sufi poetry in the present study, into a spectacle of illusion and irreality or hyperreal discourse using Baudrillard’s (1994) term.

In his theory, Baudrillard questions the notion of emerging reality(s) and if seen within the new digital context, his theory of simulacra and hyperreality provides the researcher with a good point of departure. Similarly, Eco in his theory of signs, questions the nature of reality in his own way by saying that signs are being used to lie which implies that either signs are fake or they are being used to delude others. Simulation or forgery leads not only to the displacement of reality but also make people escape it by seeking alternative realities such as fun and pleasure. Dyer's (2000) theory of entertainment highlights this aspect of displacement of reality and is relevant in the present context of media discourse such as CS with its showbiz concerns and its "musicals" (p. 20). The present study draws on some of the insights of Dyer's theory.

Be it forgery, simulation or entertainment, they have specific connotations in the wake of the New Age alternative discourses and so is the case with the new form of spirituality. The section below deals with the New Age spirituality.

## **1.2 New Age Spirituality**

The New Age is a phenomenon which is though hard to define, may be understood as a ragbag with various ingredients one is free to choose from. It is a synthesis of the far Eastern mystical traditions, in varying degrees, largely of Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, Sufism, Gnosticism and Western Occultism, altered to and influenced by Western materialistic culture. It demonstrates a spiritual world-view that is hostile to institutionalized religions such as Christianity and Islam and presents itself in various secular forms. A large number of celebrated individuals and groups have heavily influenced almost every area of life and culture such as medicine, psychology, ecology, media, entertainment, music and the like. Themes that attract these people include alternative medicine, occult, various forms of healing and healing objects (e.g., crystals), paranormal phenomena, spiritual development (meditation, yoga) and contemplative sounds and music (e.g., sound of dolphins, pan flutes), religious syncretism, immanence (not transcendence), relativism, epistemological subjectivism among many others. In view of its diverse interests, New Age Movement is also referred to as Eastern Spirituality, Occultism, Perennial Wisdom, Holistic Health Movement, Age of Aquarius and some other names.

The term New Age gained popularity in late 1980s though it existed in the 1970s, and also drew on the counterculture of 1960s. American mass media of the late 1980s popularized the alternative spiritual trends such as meditation, reincarnation, psychic experience, holistic health, Earth mysteries and Crop circles. Though people of the earlier ages seemed familiar with some but not all of the New Age elements in terms of the practices of Theosophy and Spiritualism etc. These forms may be traced back to the nineteenth century having roots in Mesmerism, Magnetism, Transcendentalism, and many earlier Western esoteric or occult traditions, such as alchemy, magic and astrology.

The New Age characteristics above make it obvious that this movement bears striking similarities to religion but, as said earlier, it does not align itself to any of the established mainstream religions. However, the terms used to describe its characteristics, for example, intuition, inner essence or spirituality give the impression of its being a “religion-like” movement, i.e., it might resemble religion in some way but, in reality, would be hostile to it (Granqvist & Hagekull, 2001, p. 530). In fact, the New Age offers a concept of spirituality that has no basis in any religion and without spirituality, a religion is impossible to imagine but, the reverse- a spirituality without a religion- is quite possible as Hanegraaff (2000, p. 300) asserts in his article. What he says, is crucially important in the context of the shift of meaning taking place in the religious discourse of our day-to-day life whereby most people prefer to use the term “spirituality” than “religion.” This is what Roof calls the “soft” undercurrents of change in religious expression which is not a simple semantic shift in language but an emphasis on new ways of thinking. Religion, he points out, implies for majority a rigid, oppressive and dogmatic system which is not open to alternative perspectives. In contrast, spirituality suggests openness, flexibility, creativity and tolerance for “alternative insights from all peoples and cultures; room for doubt and searching and an emphasis upon personal experience. It is hardly surprising, then, that people readily admit to having deep interest in spirituality while carefully distancing themselves from religion” (as cited in Netland, 2001, p. 152).

New Age may be said to be the instance par excellence which emerges on the foundation of a pluralist secular society with its complex of spiritualities. It is well suited to a liberal, individual-centered Western society marked by secularization of traditional,



institutionalized religion (Granqvist & Hagekull, 2001, p. 530). Moreover, being essentially liberal, it is giving rise to an environment whereby old certainties are collapsing as “new mysteries arise” and “boundaries separating one faith tradition from another that once seemed fixed are now often blurred” as states Roof (1999, p. 8). The newer trend is to look for a form of spirituality that suits an individual or groups which is what Heelas calls “self-spirituality.” It is, therefore, easy to see how vague and malleable these New religious/spiritual identities are in that they more often correspond to several traditions and have loose connections (if any) with religious institutions.

On account of the loose and vague nature of the New Age religion, we are faced with the loss of Transcendence and rise of a new sovereign self that defines and sets limits on the very meaning of the divine (Netland, 2001). The entire focus is on the self and this-worldliness or material, secular world whereby religion has become marginal in the operation of the social system (2001, p. 147). Citing Bryan Wilson, Netland defines secularization as “the process in which religious consciousness, activities, and institutions lose social significance” (p. 47). And the obvious outcome is the rise of individualism or the New Age belief ... that human beings are “essential gods in themselves [; that they] contain a ‘God-spark,’ a central infusion of divinity [;] ... that the human individual is responsible for creating his or her own reality (Dyer-Witthford, 2017, pp. 26-27).

This new wave of individualism does not simply mean being tolerant to behavioral differences, it warrants individuals to find their own ways of discerning truth. Each individual consumer is, therefore, the deciding authority what to believe in or what to leave out and thereby become the final arbiter of truth and falsity. This is a free market of religions whereby the notion that one religion is completely true, and that other religions being incompatible with it, are false, makes little or no sense. Truth (if one continues to think in terms of truth) is understood to be a pragmatic concept that is defined in terms of personal benefit and the idea that any particular religion cannot provide objectively true answers to questions about human life (origins, destiny etc.), has become popular. The New Agers, therefore, tend to pick spirituality(s) which best satisfies their desire or they can always (re)alter it the way they like, for instance, by picking items of their choice out of

various cults, traditions, cultures or even religions and fuse them so as to create an altogether a novel form.

### **1.2.1 Fusion of Contrasting Signs**

The New Age religion, as said earlier, is not grounded in the symbolic system of existing religion(s) but draws on a number of systems of various origins, bits and pieces of which are recycled time and again by the popular media. The significant point is that these bits and pieces come from domains other than religion, for example, mystery, magic, science and some kind of force/energy, occultism. This entails that the origin and source of the concept of spirituality, namely religion, is getting unsettled and readjusted in newer contexts, rather coalesced with contrasting domains such as secular art, politics and alternative medicine.

One way of lifting the canon of spirituality from religion is to intermix it with psychedelic actions and altered states experienced through the use of, for instance, drugs and “distorted electric guitar” (Clark & Geisler, 2004, p. 11). And this kind of psychic state is what the New Age celebrants perceive to be something other-worldly and spiritual. Further, this form of spirituality is intermingled with music, art and every kind of artistic performance. This trend to assimilate contrasting signs is not altogether new though it has become far more serious. It is rooted back in nineteenth and twentieth century movements whereby we see how Anton Mesmer’s concept of Mesmerism was intermixed with spiritualism and Eddy’s theory of Christian Science reduced the mainstream religion (Christianity) into merely a healing science and thus intermingled spirituality with medicine. Later in twentieth century, Blavatsky’s Theosophy, the introduction of Zen by Suzuki and Alan Watts and arrival of gurus like Muktananda and Mahesh Yogi who introduced new meditation theories, were further coalesced with many counterculture movements of the late twentieth century, e.g., with the beatnik, hippie, jazz and psychedelic movements (Clark & Geisler, 2004, p. 11). The term psychedelic as it is derived from the Greek psyche (soul) implying soul-revealing which is similar to the notion of spirituality (psychic energy) which the New Age singers attempt to get by using distorted electric guitar, electronic and digital sound effects, reverberation and thereby reduce spirituality to some kind of altered state which the performers acquire.

Within the context of the rise of urban contemporary Gospel Music in the 1980s, Harold (2012) states how a famous group of South African group of singers consumed Christian music within the secular combining new art forms and religious singing. He speaks of new joyful sounds and how they emerged for the marketing of Gospel Music. In his view, famous groups of Gospel singing such as Clark Sisters and Winans were more eager to tap into the new markets and for that matter used their energy into gaining visibility for their artistry as performers. During the first half of 1980s, the Clark Sisters, for instance, amazed the listeners with their idiosyncratic harmonic structures, deft improvisational skills, and remarkable showmanship. Trancelike rhythms coupled with mesmerizing vocals “rendered their music ideal for Sunday morning church services as well as Saturday night clubbing” (pp. 28-29).

Similar is the case with Sufi music in Pakistan and its modern adaptations such as the *Filmi Qawwali* [*Qawwali* having salacious and lewd contents] or *Techno Qawwali* or *Sufi Rock* (Bhattacharjee & Alam, 2012, pp. 220-21) and the tendency is most visibly seen from the last quarter of 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards. By doing this, the modern singers, in the view of Bhattacharjee and Alam (2012) attempt to en-cash the popularity of traditional *Qawwali* which is a form of popular Sufi music in the Pakistani/Indian context (p. 221). The fusion of *Qawwali* with secular genres such as film, as notes Kortu (2017), is made by the film producers to bring in “authenticity and quality” to their products. In other words, the same material is “re-semiotized” (Leppänen & Peuronen, 2013) with primary focus on words as physical signifiers than what they stand for or the signified meaning they carry and the material thereby is “far removed from religion or spirituality.” Pinpointing further how there is new interest among Hindi and Pakistani film viewers for Sufi songs and *Qawwali* s, Kortu says that anything with a refrain of “Maula” or “Ali” is sold to these audiences as Sufi music. This implies that words which are highly symbolic, are nonetheless used as semiotics of commodification or “commodifiable (neo)spirituality” (Dyer-Witthford, 2017, p. 21). Carrette and King’s (2005) emphasis that capitalism uses spirituality and religion to promote the corporate agenda of business, is relevant here. Moreover, the embrace of neospirituality is due to the systematic restructuring of capitalism, as it adapts to globality and the neoliberal order, including by commodifying “soft” cultural resources (as cited in Dyer-Witthford, pp. 21, 65).

Seen in the context of the neo-spirituality, the words, “Maula” or “Ali,” are not valuable for their sanctity, their value instead lies in the kind of “affects” that they carry. Zizek’s idea that the peculiar feature of today’s discourse is that it takes place through affects is relevant here (as cited in Rickert, 2007, p. 37). The word “affect” as a verb defined in *Oxford Thesaurus* means “to give the appearance of, to pretend, or to simulate” (2009, p. 21). Simulation as it occurs in various forms in the modern Sufi singing has affected the metaphoric concept of the Beloved in real Sufi singing because Sufi songs in today’s cinema are addressed to a mortal beloved, notes Kortu (2017, para, 2). Many songs such as “Mera Ishq Sufiana” from the film *Dilwale* (2015) “pretend to be Sufi,” she says further. The idea that seems to underpin this demonstration is that it is only the title “Sufi” which is needed for something to be credited as Sufi music. The simulation in CS Sufi singing shows up in various forms-mild to intense.

CS has introduced a secularized version of Sufi music whereby the singers have intermingled secular items in their singing. For instance, by intermixing Sufi verses with (semi)romantic and worldly texts, use of rowdy garments with far less observance of religious dress code, substituting the physical location (seating and setting) with the virtual-space, CS singing, in reality, distances itself from the traditional Sufi music, *Qawwali* for instance, which used to be a devotional and religious practice of singers (*Qawwals*) in the Indian context. The words (*Kala’ m*) which the *Qawwals* recited were interplay between form and content, reiterating certain words to give them a depth and a wider context (Bhattacharjee & Alam, 2012). In contrast, CS singers, by fusing the secular with the spiritual are largely unable to bring forth an earnest practice whereby spiritual meaning could be negotiated to viewers than what they demonstrate- a breach of form and content (signifier and signified). Their singing lacks spiritual substance essential to represent the real philosophy underpinning Sufi poetry that is intended for spiritual purification of listeners/viewers.

What underlies this CS discourse is that no matter language is imbued with meaning, purpose or function (as Sufi text is), it still can be treated as indeterminate, a plaything to simulate reality and this view, as stated earlier, underlies the New Age spirituality. By using cultural resources in this manner, as Mukhtar (2015) notes, CS offers “alternative

conceptions of Muslims, Islam, and Pakistan to local audiences and international observers” (p. 27). Referring to Rohail Hyatt (first producer of CS) in particular, she says that CS’s primarily elite, liberal producers deploy Sufi poetry in order to reclaim a “softer” Islam and reinvent a Muslim and Pakistani identity that they “can be proud of” (p. 27). Mukhtar argues that CS actors strategize “to bring about conceptual change in people’s approach to religion within Pakistan, and in associated narratives about Pakistan amongst its Western observers” (p. 27).

The New Age reality is also characterized by various cults, e.g., cult of genius, cult of personality or leader cult and is most relevant in contemporary setting whereby politics is manifested as a religious faith amongst the followers of a political leader. Citing a historian Plamper, Pisch (2016) outlines the history of the word “cult” with reference to its religious and sacred context used by the ancient Romans which was intermingled with secular referents during the Enlightenment and French Revolution. In his view, the “cult of genius” of the Romantic era is the closest precursor to the “cult of personality,” manifesting in acts of appreciation, such as the erection of public statues of Goethe (p. 53). Similarly, in the present scenario, we see how this cult is established around a framework of veneration of a political leader which in the words of Pao-min Chang, is “the artificial elevation of the status and authority of one man... through the deliberate creation, projection and propagation of a godlike image.” In a similar vein, Plamper, also defines this cult as “god-like glorification of a modern political leader with mass media techniques, and excessive glorification of this leader” (as cited in Pisch, 2016, p. 53).

Another symbiosis that the New Agers are keen about is that of science and spiritualism which in view of King and Page (2017) is seen in an unusually intense form during the last decades of nineteenth and first decades of twentieth century. The authors further argue that each time when religion is withdrawn or is given an ancillary status as is the case in the present times, secular forms of re- enchantment – from political myths to spectator sports – simply step in to fill the space thus created (pp. 44, 47). Currently, technology and science are shot through with religious and spiritual meaning since any scientific enterprise is regarded to be a religious endeavor. In reality, the technological advance is now deemed equivalent to divine likeness, or a pervasive force which is directed

toward human redemption or recovery of man's prelapsarian perfection. Though this view is more understandable in the Christian context but the concept that science is being consigned with a godly status has broadly engaged masses of the New Age whatever religious faith they belong to. To King and Page (2017), this may be called "ideological wedding of technology and transcendence ... through technology man was to regain his divine likeness and recover the power over nature that, since Eden, he was always intended to have" (p. 46).

Though the divide between science and mysticism has been deconstructed in the New Age discourses, it is more precisely "rooted in the magic of erstwhile eras as well as the fantasies of our own," state King and Page (2017, p. 82). This modern tendency to fantasize is growing into what Gibson calls "a culture of enchantment," namely, the desire to delight, thrill and enchant people by creating some idealistic state or in Dyer's (2002) words, what may be called utopian sites or discourses of fantasy, pleasure and entertainment. Gibson's culture of enchantment refers to a wide range of movements such as environmentalism, studies on culture, animal cognition and mass cultural products (Disney film in a huge number, e.g.) that invest nature with spirit, mystery and meaning implying that inside nature lies a mystical force. These notions enact predominantly in today's global world as believable realities influencing most of us. We tend to fancy these make-believe structures without taking into account their illusory nature and thereby treat simulation as reality, a phenomenon which Baudrillard calls hyperreal. Closer to this, is the notion of immersive fallacy which, as explains Boellstorff in the context of the new media, is the idea that the pleasure of a media experience lies in its ability to sensually transport the participant into an illusory, simulated reality. This reality is "ideally so complete that the frame falls away and the partaker believes him/her to be a part of the imaginary world" (as cited in Akkaya, 2014, p. 295).

Discourse, originally from Latin *dis+ currere*, meaning "to run" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.), has, therefore, assumed new meaning/power in the wider context of communication (Jaworski & Coupland, 2006, p. 6). What underlies the studies and discourses cited above, is a shared desire to transform and dominate nature, i.e., attaining power and divine like quality (King & Joanna, 2017, pp. 46-47). The term "critical," as for

instance, it is used in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), primarily means untying or “denaturalizing” the discourses and the ideological power that these discourses carry. CDA is perhaps the most comprehensive attempt to develop a theory of the inter-connectedness of discourse, power and ideology and hunts for them via the political, gender and media discourses (Wodak, 2001, p. 2). Halliday’s work also adds more insights to CDA theories. Though CDA researches have been more focused on the analysis of linguistic structures, more recently there has been a visual turn inspired by scholars who incorporated visual images into the concepts of discourse and thereby moved towards broader multimodal conceptions (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). This extension of CDA into visual semiotics also has its origins in early Hallidayan theory which posits that language is only one semiotic resource out of many. There are several forms of representations, linguistic and non-linguistic or non-verbal, which are used in the construction of discourse (Mayr, n.d., para, 1-2).

Discourses of the New Age are transformative in that a fusion of contrasting signs is made and a new perspective is constructed. Discourse in the words of Robinson (2006) -- whether written, spoken or non-linguistic, may have the performative power to transform reality such as CS does by enacting a newer version of Sufi music. He elucidates the concept in terms of the dramatic performance of the theatre people. He writes that a person walks on stage and begins reciting lines written by somebody else and the audience believes that something real is happening (2006, pp. 58-59). Performative discourse, verbal or non-verbal, undoubtedly impacts our imagination and therefore, brings an emotive world into being and a kind of spectacle which is neither real nor unreal, is formed. This space between real and unreal is what Baudrillard calls hyperreal or a sign which is fake, simulated and which gradually takes over as reality. The more the tendency of the New Agers towards materiality, the stronger the inclination is for fakery and simulation.

### **1.2.2 Materiality of Signs**

New Age religion, a composite of spiritualities, detaches itself from the existing religions and insists on fine tuning religious symbols according to the specific needs of individuals. It draws on aspects which are not too closely associated to religions and their theologies. The purpose is to give a religious cover over what is essentially secular and

rooted in material culture. Further, these trends are popularized through a rapid flow of popular literature which does not follow one clear direction either or any exclusive commitment to a religion (Hanegraaff, 2000, pp. 304-305). As such, New Age is the manifestation par excellence of individualism, materialism and secularization of religion whereby religion becomes just a matter of individual choice and hence is hardly compatible (if at all) with mainstream religions. For these various characteristics, New Age religion seems to follow the Enlightenment tradition in that it claims to have liberated its followers from the confines of religious dogmas which, in its view, hindered people to freely discern spirituality/divinity of their own (2000, p. 305).

For New Agers, spirituality is any notion which conveniently fits in within their frame of understanding: any vague, abstract idea, any consciousness related to healing and the like, a fancy material object or a fetish to be treated with utmost adoration, care and even religion-like veneration. Hence the defining feature of New Age spirituality is heterogeneity and its infallible faith in materiality of objects and these value codes is what new media or “material media” articulates. In the same vein, Spyer (2013) defines the New trend as, “irreducible materiality of objects, the composite fabrication of heterogeneous elements ... and the power of fetish over human bodies” (pp. 61-62).

The New Age Movement conforms to spiritual pluralism which in Wilson’s (2006) words, is a consequence of secularization and the decline of traditional religions. This New perspective allows people to treat various spiritual traditions of the world as public or personal property which may be possessed like goods or (re)commodified in the market and no longer be preserved by any religious authority that they once were. In this free and open process, as York (2010) in his article “New Age Commodification and Appropriation of Spirituality” states that the sacred becomes commodified and since it is treated as a material product, it can be bought and sold and hence consumed according to the capitalistic, free-market principles. El-Zein (2010), for instance, points out in the American context how Rumi’s verses are seen to be used as a pleasurable spiritual product or as something which could soothe one’s mind when listened to (p. 83) and thereby the idea that spirituality, too, is a product of the market of new religions is in the air. Fuch (2016)



rightly points out that the new logic of capitalism insists on the production, circulation and consumption not only of commodities but of ideologies as well (p. 154).

With the emergence of a *new* technological phenomena, the consumption or circulation process of ideologies, e.g., new spiritualities, may well be grounded “within the materiality of contemporary digital media which allows personal space to new vectors and thereby invest capital, be it the investing of the reverent religious traditions such as Sufi music being marketed by CS singers. Sufi music, singing of the sublime Sufi verses, in reality, was meant to engage people to hear to God’s commands (*Sama*) and help people understand Allah, the Prophet and the saintly ways (*Tareeqa*) of the Mystics to reach the Transcendent (Siddique, 2009). The music thereby represented a transcendental sign, a sign in strong correlation with the (a priori sacred reality) reality it signified.

Nasr (2001), a leading Islamic philosopher of 20<sup>th</sup> century, speaks of the “Sacred” as the sacred science whereby one is able to perceive and understand God as Reality (pp. 1-2). Otto in his book *The Idea of the Holy* also emphasized that “holiness” could not be derived from anything other than “a priori sacred reality” (Jones, 2017, p. 1). Sufi Music or *Sama* as advocated by early Sufi scholars and theologians particularly from 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> centuries is inseparably linked to its ritual “sacred” discipline: the Sufi *tariqah* or proper conduct to be observed during the Sufi assembly. *Sama*, literally meaning “audition,” depends on the acoustic sensibility, the spiritual “attunedness” of the soul, but that is not the whole rule, since it also “demands proper time, place and brethren (*zaman, makan* and *akhwan*)” (al-Ghazali as cited in Lewisohn, 1997, pp. 7-8). Sufi music is, therefore, underpinned with the notion of the sacred and has pedagogical targets for those who seek to experience it in that way; of observing the inward silence, self-control and contemplative sobriety and eventually the realization of ecstasy. Among those who argued for the validity of Sufi concert from a theological standpoint, Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali (d. 1111 CE) is the staunchest advocate (See Chapter 2, 2.4-2.8). Ghazali defended Sufi music/*Sama* in his famous book, *The revival of the religious sciences* (Trans. Karim, 2019). The present study employs his views on Sufi music and its relation with the Sacred as a point of reference to analyze Sufi discourse in CS singing (Chapter 4 & 5).

Although Sufi Music (*Sama*) is an art form, it is a spiritual exercise as well and so different from various forms of secular art such as CS Sufi singing discourse. Sufi music, both music and whirling, as said earlier, symbolically represented how to harness and harmonize the self to the Divine rhythm and a mystic's struggle to hear the "music of the spheres" (as cited in Lings, 2007, p. 64). However, in the contemporary modern times, Sufi music has largely ceased to be a symbolic discourse of the transmission of meaning. In addition to other factors, the technological advancements, however, have particularly turned the reverent religious performances such as Sufi music into showmanship and entertainment (Bhattacharjee & Alam, 2012). This can be comprehended better in the context of the contemporary capitalistic era which is marked with an increasing presence of mass media technology, advertising and a ludic play of empty signs.

Baudrillard (1994) posits that in the present era, the sign has "no relation to any reality whatsoever: it is its own pure simulacrum" (p. 6). He further adds that the classical era of sign which represented symbolic exchange of meaning, has ended and consequently, the sign has turned into a digitalized simulation amidst the digital culture. The sign was historically grounded in the spiritual signified, and imbued with the intended meaning of the supremacy of beliefs, norms and moral boundaries. This was in Baudrillard's (1996) view the pre-modern era of the representational culture which expressed its belief in the symbolic exchange of meaning. Even in the Renaissance, symbols were used to represent mystery and intrigue though the trends underwent a remarkable shift towards the materiality of signs. With the advent of the Industrial Era (the mark of modernity), came a terrific increase of discretionary funds for more people apart from leisure time and consuming goods and this caused a dramatic change in the way the produced goods (material signs) were seen- goods themselves of worth and value, divested of their symbolic meaning.

Baudrillard (1970/1998) characterizes this era as the beginning of the consumer society wherein social relations are read through a system of commodified signs rather than symbolic value, i.e., the automobile is a personal and movable symbol of status (non-linguistic code in Barthes' terms) and driving a Suzuki car does not carry as higher a value as does the Mercedes. It was Strauss, the founder of structural anthropology, who expressed

his concern regarding how signs in terms of their value are placed within the societal structures and thereby introduced the idea of “signs as value” (Cobley & Jansz, 2000). The contemporary culture does present an array of signs to be bargained over as commodities amidst the new digital world with its bric-a-bracs novelties which outdate the very moment they are marketed. The plus/minus value is accorded to where you shop, the way you clothe or listen to music (on MP3/4 players, CDs) and even to what you carry your purchases home in (canvas bags, plastic or paper). More precisely, the new culture itself has become a material sign than a symbolic exchange of values and beliefs.

In his theories of simulacra and hyperreality, Baudrillard states that since signs/images do not represent any symbolic exchange of meaning, they are no more real for which he uses the term hyperreal. Signs, he says, present only a spectacle of *signness* or at the most an artificial discourse. The notion may be further explained by using the term *signness* (Trifonas, 2015, p. 8) drawing on Barthes’ (1978) idea of *Romanness* which he postulates through his semiotic analysis of the film *The Romans in Films* to show how persuasively certain signs are used to create the myth of *Romanness*. Similarly, Barthes (1978) states in “The World of Wrestling” that signs made up of the wrestler’s bodies and excessive gestures are used to create a “spectacle” or some fantasy work (as cited in Cobley & Jansz, 2000). It seems as if these spectacles are meant to create discourses of fantasy, of pleasure and entertainment for the audience. Hence the hyperreal which is simulated or utopian (Dyer’s term) in nature makes the audience suspend their disbelief and voluntarily accept anything being presented to be true and real. Dyer’s theory of utopian entertainment validates the concepts of spectacle, pleasure and willing escape presented by the theorists mentioned earlier. His theory deals particularly with the semiotic study of the showbiz or the world of entertainment and offers significant tools of analysis and present study being an inquiry of the showbiz media (CS singing) finds it useful.

The study draws upon Eco’s theory that signs can also be used to lie, to mislead, to impersonate or theatricality and thereby it questions the truth of the message being communicated through this kind of Sufi singing. Further, Baudrillard’s theory of hyperreality has been found a useful tool to investigate the performativity (make-believe discourse) of Sufi singers which makes it a legitimate and acceptable discourse for the

audience, making perfect *sense* for them despite its simulation and making the copy even more real than real (Brooker, 2005) or create the “effect” of truth, borrowing Foucault’s term (Heikkinen, Silvonen, & Simola, 1999, p. 142). This phenomenon has made it hard to trace the nature of the sign and what it stands for causing a gap between sign and the signified (spiritual).

### **1.3 Coke Studio, Pakistan**

CS, sponsored by Coca Cola, world’s largest beverage company, and Frequency Media, is a Pakistani music television series which features live studio-recorded music performances by stars and even super stars. Produced by Rohail Hyatt in 2008, the music series has completed 54 episodes of nine seasons and has launched its 10th season in August 2017. From its 7th season, it was taken up by the Pakistani Strings Band-a famous pop rock band- which though formed in 1988 by Bilal Maqsood and group, revived in 2000 and introduced a new wave of pop music. Led by its producers, “CS’s musical output typically combines Sufi and folk poetry with pop and rock song lyrics and traditional musical formats with more contemporary and Western rhythms. A new set of songs and other footage is released every year in a series of ‘Episodes’ that together comprise a ‘Season’ ...” (Mukhtar, 2015, p. 30).

First debuted in Brazil in 2007, the CS was adapted in Pakistan and gained immense popularity in the country by introducing a new style of musical fusions, mixing of genres and cultures. By using new digital techniques of, e.g., editing or (re)mixing or sampling, CS did innovative things hitherto not practiced in the music industry of Pakistan. It thus reshaped the popular cultural trends by pioneering these innovations and creating an altogether a new source of entertainment for a wide range of audience, it motivated an international franchise as well, e.g., in India, Africa and Middle East (Moye, 2014, para. 3).

The music shows of CS have a frequent access on at least 40 Pakistani TV channels and 10 famous radio stations. Videos and MP3 files are made available for free download on its official website after each episode gets aired. Most of the songs aired so far have been liked by majority of the viewers, national and international, on almost all social media, e.g., Facebook, Twitter, YouTube etc. Some of its Sufi songs have also gained enormous

popularity, e.g., “Main Sufi Hun” (I am Sufi) by Abida Perveen and “Alif Allh Jugni” (radiant love of *Alif* Allah) by Arif Lohar and Meesha Shafi. Ben Sisario (April 26, 2012) from the New York Times, reported that CS video song “Jugni” got “eight million views on You Tube.” The same song is reported to have received almost 14 million views on YouTube, making it the most-watched online video in Coca-Cola history (Moye, 2014). Another researcher in her article also notes that likes on CS’s Facebook page exceeded 3.2 million and its YouTube channel had more than 500,000 subscribers with viewer numbers for the top five most popular song videos ranging from 3million up to 15million (Mukhtar, 2015, p. 30).

CS presents a fusion of the Eastern and Western music and genres, for instance, the fusion of hip hop, rock and pop music and the Eastern classical, folk, *bhangra* (a type of Asian pop music), *Qawwali* and Sufi music. This innovative fusion distinguishes CS from other music programs which is something they call “new music genre” and much of its fame depends on this aspect. In the view of Rizwan Khan, general manager of Coca-Cola Pakistan, “By creating a new genre of music, we are touching generations of people across Pakistan and around the world.” He added that they enact music to bridge barriers between East and West and thereby fuel optimism and ‘Open Happiness’—which is what Coca Cola stands for. In his view, CS has given a strong sense of inspiration and pride to Pakistani people (as cited in Moye, December 21, 2014).

Moreover, CS has attracted famous musicians such as Aahad Nayani (drums) Babar Ali Khanna (*tabla & Dholak*), most renowned singers such as Saeen Zahoor “the best BBC voice of the year 2006” (Sheikh, 2012, p. 225), Abida Perveen, Arif Lohar, Abrar-ul-Haq, Fareeha Pervez, Hadiqa Kiyani and emerging star singers such as Ali Zafar, Meesha Shafi, Atif Aslam, Sanam Marvi and Sara Haider among others. The artists of each show or episode are usually backed by a house band, backing vocals and guest artists. From season 6 onwards, CS features a lineup of artists from other countries also such as Italy, Turkey and Morocco. To celebrate the success of the CS music show over the last five years, Coca-Cola Pakistan published a coffee table book and released a documentary film which takes into account the “inspirational journey of a music show to help reclaim the rich and vast musical heritage of Pakistan post 9/11 that brings together unique talents of various cultural

backgrounds and genres” (NewsBytes, 2016). This aspect also enhances its significance as a professional forum in the music industry of Pakistan.

### **1.3.1 Why (not) Coke Studio**

CS with its new musical fusions has become one of the most famous entertainment shows in Pakistan within a short span of time. CS with its width and breath, international franchise, a large body of sponsors, huge viewership and tremendous increase in popularity rate, makes a befitting choice for this level of study.

CS’s executive team, producers and directors particularly, make many claims (on its official website) such as (a) producing music which has legs, (b) a forum with a completely new source of entertainment (c) genre-crossing and fusion of various or contrasting elements such as hip hop, pop, rock and Sufi (d) source of pride for Pakistanis and hope-giver in times when there is despair (e) source of spiritual enlightenment (Sufi songs, e.g.) (f) forum which brings in different artists to collaborate over a Coke and (g) makes musicians come out of their comfort zones, have fun and music of their free taste. Their claims are interesting but not free of ambiguity. Hence, the issue of ambivalence underpinning of what they say, makes CS a serious subject for inquiry.

CS’s popularity rate has dramatically increased and statistics given in the print and social media show that CS is one of the most viral musical shows of Pakistan. Even Google officials who recently came to meet the CS team, were amazed to see “how a show originating from a country where YouTube is blocked went so viral that it has 72 million downloads and is watched in 120 countries” (Ahmad, 2015; Sarfraz, 2015).

CS’s immense popularity over a time of 8-9 years is certainly more than what we can call a game of numbers. What the Coca Cola executives claim to bring in Pakistan via the CS music, i.e., “positivity” which, in their view, is essential for a country that is too often associated with terrorism, ironically does not match with their expansion plan in Pakistan and India. And for the execution of their plan, CS provides them the best strategy. On Adage news, Zmuda (2011) notes that CS musical performances are a “boon to the country, and prompts plans for expansion, ... CS is attracting viewers in droves and has become a key element of Coca-Cola’s strategy to not only net the youth population in Pakistan but to grab share from PepsiCo, the market leader in the country ... Coke Studio has already helped Coca-Cola make

inroads in Pakistan” (para, 2-4). CS, therefore, stands out as an important contemporary musical site to promote and shape the new spirituality ethos. It sets its agenda on the “capitalist spirituality” in the manner of the Post-Fordist capitalism (as cited in Dyer-Witheford, 2017, p. 36).

CS has an amazing musical output- a consistent production of 25-30 songs a year- which no other band such as *Junoon*, *Laal*, *Noori*, and Zeb and Haniya, has been able to make. In addition, the frequency with which the shows are aired on more than 40 Pakistani TV channels and famous radio stations evidently speaks of the budgeting and cost (in millions) involved. The show is marketed through a strong media presence- print, social and digital, Coca Cola packaging, outdoor ads, licensed products/brands, promotions, concerts and a lot more which again involves heavy cost. Production of new apps such as Coca-Cola placelists which are meant to let users freely surf, choose and index out of thousands of songs available on media is not free of cost. This aspect, undoubtedly, is significant in the emerging socio-digital context whereof the big companies make use of new digital distribution models to generate revenue streams.

CS musical show has indeed an ample width and breath to be taken up for a scholarly inquiry. The present study is though mainly concerned with its Sufi singing, it takes into account related questions as well on the premise that no study is possible in a vacuum. The researcher has used a sample of 16 CS Sufi songs selected on the basis of a 4-unit criterion for this study (see 3.6.3).

#### **1.4 Rationale of the Study**

In Pakistan, the earlier scholarship in the genre of Sufi literature or poetry, though not Sufi music, is noted to have been conducted by using hermeneutics as methodology or via the CDA lens. The focus of their critical appreciation, however, has not gone beyond an evocative interpretation or paraphrasing of the works of Sufi poets, though a few of the studies did produce credible scholarly work (Rammah, 2002). A few studies, especially articles, on Sufi music have been done but it is *Qawwali* that has been the focus of attention for these researches. Very limited work is available on CS singing and that too is done in contexts other than Pakistan. The way how Sufi literature or poetry is being consumed as

a cultural practice far and wide or more precisely being assimilated amongst other trendy jargons of the New Age, has not engaged academia.

Moreover, no scholarly endeavor is so far done which, using the lens of semiotics, explores the relationship of art, media and Sufi music in the wake of the newer music industries in Pakistan such as CS- a popular forum of cultural practice and production. This research is, therefore, an attempt to address the gap, with the hope to add something useful within the scope of English studies via its exploration of the CS Sufi music. It is an interdisciplinary work which broadens its analytical lens by underscoring the co-influence and intermedial ways of production employed by the CS in its singing. It studies not simply the techno-digital form and ways of presentation of the Studio discourse but emphasizes a way of thinking about the discourse itself, in its broadest semiotic conception- as a digital media practice.

Furthermore, in the wake of globalization and the New Age discourses which tend to connect Sufism/Sufi music with global peace and attempt to define it in the newer context of “globalization and corporate centralization” (Jenkins, 2003, p. 20) thereby portraying Sufism either as a jargonized discourse or an adaptable philosophy to be used for any material end, there is a pressing need to conduct this kind of inquiry which through its focus on the intrinsic message of Sufi music, brings to light the sacred ambience it is based on, in reality, whereas the newer versions are largely focused on form and stylistic demonstration.

## **1.5 Significance and Scope of Study**

As the study deals with a significant theme, i.e., spiritual significance of Sufi music, it is significant in terms of its subject matter. No less significant is the researcher’s concern and resistance against innovative discourses being introduced in the areas of artistic representation which disseminate dubious meanings among the masses by celebrating counterfeit spirituality. Since the study also addresses the mechanics of the new digital world with specific reference to CS video songs and its digital productions, this adds an element of novelty to it. This aspect makes my inquiry even more valuable on account of its investigation of the *innovative* use/misuse of digital technology to represent the Sufi traditions of music. The study is concerned regarding these emerging technological



advances to negotiate the symbolic representation of the spiritual signified. Each research, I believe, has to have enough space, depth and expansion as well. The study on account of its cross cultural (Sufi music in other contexts) and transcultural (flashbacks of the past and archetypes) aspects widens its space and horizon as a serious inquiry and scholarship.

The study is innovative on account of its exploration of Sufi music and digital media discourse within the framework of semiotics and hence may be instrumental for coming researchers to explore new areas. Without making an exhaustive claim, it still offers valuable line of thought and insights for them to think and reflect over a range of exploration within the ambit of our culture and society. On account of its multi-disciplinary nature, it may benefit readers from various disciplines. In the wake of newly emerging areas such as media, film, theatre and cultural studies, semiotics is being regarded an effective educational tool. Its application in ELT curriculum designing such as the inclusion of pictures and visualized materials and its practical use in the classroom may enhance the teaching/learning experience.

The study hopes to make a significant contribution to the existing scholarship of audio-visual semiotic discourse by having devised systematic parameters or analytical categories to examine CS Sufi singing as a layered discourse. The study thus hopes to theorize, expand and interpret semiotics of CS Sufi music by devising a method of analysis.

## **1.6 Statement of the Problem**

The poetic verses sung in the Sufi congregations (Sufi music) are replete with symbolic meanings intended for the esoteric experience or moral purification of the audience. *Dhikr* which is an Archetypal sign of the remembrance of God forms the basic philosophy of this experience. *Dhikr* means *Dhikr-Allah* (remembrance of God) which is an archetypal sound and word symbol (Allah) and is essential to move onto the spiritual path or search for the Divine Reality (Vaughan-Lee, 2016, para 13). The exoteric also serves and reinforces the same purpose. For instance, the seating and setting in these gatherings or a befitting apparel of the singer are significant in that they contribute to achieving the set goals i.e., the uplifting of heart and soul. Even the body movements of the singers have to be in perfect harmony with the solemnity of purpose.

In contrast, the CS singing with its prime focus on the exoteric has made an attempt to inverse the real discourse of Sufism and this makes it an issue. CS presents a jam of guitarists and pianists who make a simultaneous use of various percussion instruments, e.g., cymbals, *dholak* and drum etc. Hence it is basically the music, rhythm or instrumentation which is foregrounded in CS singing and this not only eclipses the message the Sufi verses contain but also creates a hyperreal effect. In addition, the multi-semiotic setting plays a great role to heighten the simulated or hyperreal effect. This context pushes the message the Sufi verses contain into the background. The study thereby attempts to engage in a set of issues that are central to the CS- a popular forum of musicals fusions.

## **1.7 Objectives**

The study has the following objectives:

1. To emphasize the spiritual signified that Sufi lyrics are imbued with
2. To examine how CS singers perform these lyrics in a multi-semiotic space
3. To investigate the role of various signs in turning CS singing into a ludic play of Sufi verses
4. To highlight the role of digital mediations in turning CS performance into a site of simulation and hyperreality

The above given objectives are met via an in-depth, qualitative study of the following questions.

## **1.8 Research Questions**

1. What reality do the Sufi lyrics in CS singing symbolize?
2. How do CS singers perform these lyrics in a multi-semiotic space?
3. How do various signs in CS musical performance make it a ludic play of the philosophical Sufi verses?
4. How do the digital mediations regulate CS performance whereby signs simulate and tend to go hyperreal?

## **1.9 Delimitations**

This is a qualitative research that examines semiotics of CS singing through the selected Sufi songs. Out of a total of 32 Sufi songs rendered by CS singers on various Pakistani TV channels within a span of 9 years, 9 seasons and 56 episodes, 16 songs are selected through purposive sampling. The focus of the study is not only on tracing the significance of Sufi music (singing of Sufi poetry) as a sign of the spiritual signified (a priori sacred reality that Sufi poetry carries) but also on tracing gap between the sign and the signified found in the innovative singing of these texts by CS singers.

## **1.10 Chapter Breakdown**

This dissertation contains six chapters, each of which is a separate entity in some ways and yet a coherent part of other chapters.

Chapter one lays the foundation work for the following chapters. It provides an overview to the research area, context and background of the present study. The chapter introduces the topic, states the problem and gives the rationale of why to conduct this study in the immediate as well as in the broader context of existing scholarship.

The second chapter serves to review theories and previous studies thematically instead of putting them in sequential order so as to cover aspects most relevant to the present work. It begins with mapping how semiotics is closely linked with the study of truth and thereby an apt tool to explore the mystic reality underlying Sufi music. The review mainly focuses on Sufi music, ragas and instrumentation involved in this singing and their mystical depth and meaning as established by eminent Sufi scholars. Lastly, it reviews studies concerning how and why Sufi music has emerged out to be more a sign of materiality particularly from the last quarter of 20<sup>th</sup> century, the aftermath of 9/11.

Third chapter sets up methodological preliminaries of CS Sufi singing by assimilating three theoretical concepts. The chapter also gives a brief discussion on the selection of the method of inquiry for the study, rationale for the choice of exploratory design of research, sampling technique(s) and units of analysis. Lastly, it states the limitations of the work and ethical concerns which have been taken into account during the process of research

Chapter four and five form the main body (analysis) of the research. As the present study deals with the analysis of video songs, signs, both linguistic and non-linguistic, have been analyzed. Chapter four deals with three categories of representational signs selected for semiotic study of Sufi songs of the CS singers. These include: (1) Lyrics/poetry (2) Music and Performance of Singers (3) Costume of Singers. Chapter five carries on with non-representational category of signs subdivided into four units: (1) Set Design (2) Colors (3) Lighting (4) Camerawork.

Chapter six gives a brief summary of the previous discussions but mainly focuses on critical insights that emerge from various strands of the central argument of study and thereby articulates its voice, stance and contributions that it has made in the existing scholarship of audio-visual semiotic studies. The chapter also attempts to orient future researchers to cross-discipline studies such as language, music, culture, the role of translation in the emerging global world and intermedial digital discourses.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter serves to detail the relevant academic context for the study. Instead of organizing the review of theories and studies in a sequential order, the chapter proceeds to review them thematically in order to cover aspects most relevant to the present work. It begins with tracing how semiotics is closely linked with the study of truth and thereby an apt tool to explore the mystic reality underlying Sufism and Sufi music. The ground for this discussion is sought through the views of various Sufi scholars known for their erudition and scholarship in this area. The major part of the review is focused on Sufi music, its mystical depth and meaning as upheld by eminent Sufi scholars. Lastly, the studies concerning how and why Sufi music has emerged out to be more a sign of materiality particularly from the last quarter of 20<sup>th</sup> century, are reviewed.

#### **2.1 Semiotics and the Communication of Truth**

Truth--the ultimate Reality and its quest is deeply ingrained in all human beings whether we know or not at conscious level. Even if we do not seek it knowingly, the desire for it as the signified goal of our life resurges time and again making us stand, reflect and consciously orient ourselves for its attainment. The more we reflect over this Reality, the more we may be able to know it and move to search and grasp it to a little if not to a greater extent. In this esoteric journey, what motivates us more is the presence of various signs which are externally manifested in and around us. Time and again, the Holy Qur'an exhorts people to "look at the signs of God," signs that are hidden "in the horizons and in themselves" (Chapter 41, Verse 53) cites Schimmel (1994) in her *Deciphering the Signs of God*.

What makes Schimmel's book more insightful for a reader, is her focus on how even the simplest of natural phenomena such as flowers, plants, water, animals, becomes highly suggestive and meaningful if studied carefully. Even the "meanest" (Wordsworth) of it keeps unfolding profound drops of insight for us and inspires us to embark upon an esoteric journey towards the Sublime Reality. Schimmel further elaborates the discussion by emphasizing how religion(s) and symbolic language make a frequent use of these natural

objects as signs of the Divine Reality. The focus of her argument mainly lies on exploring semiotics in terms of its relationship with human quest for truth focusing primarily on nature as an external manifestation of the Reality.

The Signs of this Divine Reality exist in the universe since times back and those who pursue, figure them out through a constant vigil and gear their life accordingly, are certainly prophetic souls. History of mankind is replete with instances of prophets, seers, mystics, philosophers or even scientists and poets who sought inspiration through these signs and symbols, e.g., of caves, mountains, rivers, birds or symbolic human actions to express the profundity of this Reality and to inform their disciples and readers about the semiotic value of these signs which work as a bridge between the seeker and the sought if thoughtfully reflected over. The signs thereby become an act of solicitation or invocation to the Higher Deity to create a “flame within us” (Mew, 1869-1928) and keep us steady on the spiritual path. Citing Williams, Downing (2012) in her book *Changing Signs of Truth: A Christian Introduction to the Semiotics of Communication* shares the same insight saying, “the true quality of a sign is that it is effective in communication” (p. 21). This emphasizes the power of words enacting as truthful signs or invocation and expression of a strong binding between God and human beings.

Many prophets, e.g., Moses, Jesus, Joshua, Solomon, Abraham and prophet Mohammad (PBUH) were bestowed with the power of doing miracles or employing words as signs to communicate their spiritual strength. Religious history is replete with instances of prophets who expressed truth through their symbolic actions (non-verbal signs). King Solomon, for instance, during the dedicatory prayer of the temple, “stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands toward heaven” (Sarkissian, 2009, pp. 170-171). Their seemingly strange actions and gestures were imbued with meaning in terms of shaping the future course of action of their people. Their silent actions, therefore, enacted as signs to seek true guidance for their people and lead them to the path of Higher Reality. Similarly, Sufi text is a symbolic representation of human quest for truth as the language in terms of its relationship with semiotics of truth lies in the center of the Sufi compositions. The section below briefly highlights this aspect prior to a detailed discussion on Sufism and Sufi music.

### 2.1.1 Semiotics of Sufi Poetry

Punjabi Sufi poetry interweaves its own semiosis or a network of meanings through the use of metaphoric signs and analogies. Bulleh Shah, Sultan Bahoo, Sachal Sarmast, Waris Shah among others use words in a way which enact as signs and facilitate the reader towards conscious meditation and deep thinking whereby we “experience breath-taking beauty” (Angha, 2013). Here “symbols grow” (Rauch, 1999, p. 8) and the more they expand and grow the stronger they become ontologically for those who seek the Divine grace. Their ontology as signs of truth, truth woven around *Ikkō Alif* (One Alif), gives the vantage point to the seeker of seeing beyond the veil of materiality. Among the mystic analogies that they use is the flower imagery, for instance, jasmine flower which Sufi poets use to visually and aurally evoke the profundity of the Divine notion, its majestic depth and its all-scented nature. God is but *chambe di booti* (Fragrance/Fragrant seed of His love), *Piyar* (Love) and *Haq* (Truth) and to express this Reality, jasmine seems the most befitting choice for Sufi poets. The flower itself; its form, shape, color, delicacy, softness and above all fragrance speaks volumes of the Majestic Self-the sum and essence of all beauty.

The flower imagery thus acts as a triadic sign; index, icon and symbol. Though it is not exactly an icon in the typical sense, it does provide some feel of the ungraspable Divinity. Indeed, it is a symbol of the Divine inspiration for mystical poets to speak what truth is. In fact, the use of flowers as the images of beauty provide a point of reference to the mystic poets to speak of the Divine Love and be able to pass it on to the readers who might be geared forward according to their own capacity. A quote from Angha’s (2013) article “On Beauty” may help to further enlighten the reader in this regard. The images of beauty in the mystical compositions, she says, carry the essence of beauty, the essence of beauty is imparted into the images of beauty, just as invisible sound waves travel into space in accordance with the laws of physics so that any susceptible receiver, according to the level of its capacity, can receive (p. 21).

Sufi poets express their philosophy of *Wahdat-ul-Wujud* (oneness of Being) by employing the flower imagery- Jasmine as God-Scented flower but the intention behind using this imagery, per se, is to hold onto and evoke the quintessential spirit of beauty that

the flower carries. Indeed, for a true seeker, even the “meanest flower” becomes a metaphoric sign to translate “signs mysterious” or “dark enigmas” that Ibn Ata, a mystic poet also speaks about within the same context. By means of using the symbolic, metaphoric language, mystical poets express “so high a truth, whose span /Surpasses human measure” (as cited in Schimmel, 2003, p. 407). The metaphor of “growth,” for instance, forms a recurrent symbolic pattern in Punjabi Sufi poetry and the poets employ it as a continuous process of seeding, nurturing and growing in the wider context of soul-making. The metaphor thus stands for an experiential journey of the lover of God in addition to its function as a linguistic mentor. Put it simply, the metaphoric language in Punjabi mystic poetry facilitates the reader to dig out the meaning of an otherwise ungraspable spiritual experience (see 4.2- 4.7).

Before moving on to Sufi music in section 2.3, important concepts such as *Sufism*, *Sufi* or *Tasawwuf* and other related concepts are discussed below.

## **2.2 What is Sufism?**

The term “Sufism” is of German coinage and as Anjum (2006) in her article states, it was introduced by a German professor of Divinity in 1821 (p. 223). Peter Pannke, a German writer and musician in his lecture on Sufism, reported by *The Dawn* newspaper on November 8, 2012, endorses the same but the term, he says, was coined in 1824. The term is generally regarded to be an anglicized form of the word *Tasawwuf*. The postfix “ism” in the view of both writers implies philosophy or a system of thought. The term Sufism was popularized by the British Orientalists (Chittick, 2000, p. 2), which has been spelled as Sufiism as well (Anjum, 2006, p. 223).

*Tasawwuf*, an Arabic word, has been derived from the word Sufi. Various theories have been put forth concerning the etymology of the words *Tasawwuf* and *Sufi*. Scholars from 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries wrote treatises on the topic. For instance, al-Kalabadhi (d. 385/995), a 10<sup>th</sup> century Sufi scholar, devotes one chapter to explain how Sufis account for their being termed as Sufis. He cites many opinions concerning the etymological derivations of the word Sufi which are summarized as follows:



*Safa* (purity), because of the purity of their hearts; *saff* (rank) as they are in the first rank before God; *suffah* (the platform) as the qualities of the Sufis resembled those of the *ashab al-suffah* (People of the Platform, a group of the Companions of the Prophet (peace be on him) who had devoted their lives to worship and learning); *suf* (wool) because of their habit of wearing wool, and *safwah* (the chosen, the select) owing to their being the elite, or the chosen or selected ones. (as cited in Arberry, 1978, pp 5-11)

In practice, the term “Sufi” was reserved for ideal usage, and Sufis referred to themselves in other terms such as *abid* (slave, devotee), *zahid* (ascetic), dervish or *faqir* (impoverished), *arif* (knower of spiritual truth), *salik* (spiritual traveler), or *ashiq* (lover). While acknowledging that the term “Sufi” was not present at the time of the Prophet, Sufi theorists maintain that this specialization in spirituality arose in parallel with other disciplines such as Islamic law and Koranic exegesis. Ali ibn Uthman al-Hujwiri, an eminent scholar of 11<sup>th</sup> century, digs out the roots of *Tasawwuf* in his famous work *Kashf al-Mahjub* (The Unveiling of the Veiled). He cites opinions of the well-known scholars who quote more or less the same derivative sources of the term such as *suf* or wool, *saff-i awwal* (first ranked) or *safa* (purity). Hujwiri, however, “accepts that these explanations of the true meaning of Sufism are far from satisfying the requirements of etymology, though each of them is supported by subtle arguments. He concludes by asserting that the word *Sufi* has, in fact, no etymology” (Bilqies, 2014, pp. 55-56).

In the introduction to the English translation of Suhrawardi’s *Awarif al-Ma’arif* (13<sup>th</sup> century Sufi scholar), Clarke (2009) also gives more or less the same derivations of the word Sufi; *suf* (wool), *sufiy* (wise or pious), *sufi* (woollen), *safa* (purity) and *safi* (pure) (p. 1). There is yet another view which traces the origin back to the Greek word *Sophia* which means wise and wisdom. Burckhardt, states Anjum (2006) however, rejects this view.

Scholars like Lings (2005), Burckhardt (2008), Nasar (2010) and Gaetani and Michon (2007) attempt to trace profound implications of this word via its roots in Uzbek, Arabic and Greek languages. The word Sufi according to these scholars refers to the one who wears *soof* which in Uzbek language means wool (Lings, 2005) or who is a seer, a sage and observes purity. In Sufi al-Rudhabari’s terms, “Sufi is the one who wears wool

on top of purity” (Kabbani, 2004, p. 83). The mystical ascetic sect of Muslims who wore a rough woolen garment called themselves Sufis (Saran, 2005, p. 161). Woolen dress was already associated with spirituality in the pre-Islamic world and Moses is said to be clothed entirely in wool when God spoke to him on Mount Sinai (Saran, 2005). Lings (2005) through its Arabic root traces the meaning of Sufi as the one “chosen as an intimate friend” connecting it to Holy Prophet’s name “al-Mustafa” the Elect, the Chosen by God Almighty (p. 46).

The above given views indicate that there is no agreement on the etymology of the words *tasawwuf* or Sufi. However, in the view of the majority scholars, the word Sufi has been derived from *suf*, an Arabic word which means wool. Hence, literally the word *tasawwuf* means “wearing wool” and Sufi is the “one who wears wool.” According to Abu Nasr al-Sarraj, a 10<sup>th</sup> century Sufi scholar, it was customary among the ancient prophets as well as ascetics “to wear coarse woolen garments” in the pre-Islamic times (Nicholson, 1914, p. 21). This specific kind of attire symbolized self-denial, penitence as well as the rejection of worldly desires and needs. In the Near East, Nestorian Christian monks also wore woolen cloaks, who had adopted poverty for reasons of piety, and later it came to be used by early Muslim Sufis as well (Yaldiz, 2016, pp. 62-65).

Numerous views have been given regarding how the term *Tasawwuf* was initially used. Al-Hujwiri traces the word *Tasawwuf* back to the Holy Prophet (PBUH), and cites his words, “He who hears the voice of Sufis (*ahl al-tasawwuf*) and does not say Amen to their prayers is inscribed before God among the heedless” (as cited in Anjum, 2006, p. 226). Sarraj says that the word Sufi was used for people of excellence and virtue in pre-Islamic days, but with specific connotation of *tasawwuf* it gained common currency during the times of *tabi’in* (the Successors of the Companions of the Prophet) and *taba tabi’in* (the Successors of these Successors). According to al-Qushayri (d. 465/1072), prior to the eighth century, the term *ahl al-tasawwuf* was already being employed for specific individuals and groups having proximity with God (Hasan, 1970, p. 21).

Abu Hashim al-Kufi (d. 159/776) is regarded to be the first person who was named as Sufi (Sharif, 2001). In fact, many Companions of the Holy Prophet (peace be on him) did have what might be termed a Sufi bent of mind, and they fervently devoted themselves

to prayers and worship, which is considered to be one of the characteristics of Sufis. However, for these Companions, including *ahl al-suffah* (People of the Platform), the title or epithet of Sufi was never specifically used in its present connotation (Hasan, 1970, p. 21). Referring to Al-Qushayri, Anjum (2006) explains that the Companions of the Prophet were called *sahabah* because no epithet could be more respectable for a person than being a *sahabi* or Companion of the Prophet (PBUH). This view has been supported by ‘Abd al-Rahman Jami (d. 898/1492) as well as others. Therefore, the earliest Muslims in the time of the Prophet with Sufic tastes were not called Sufis. Ibn Khaldun (732-808/1332-1406) states that in the initial three generations of Islam, Sufism was too widely diffused to have a specific name. However, later when worldliness became common and materialism crept among Muslims, those who dedicated themselves to the worship of God were distinguished from the rest by the titles of *Sufiyah* and *Mutasawwifah* (Rosenthal, 1958).

### **2.2.1 Sufism, Mysticism and Spiritualism**

Concerning how the term came into use, Ernst (1997) points out that the term *Sufism* was first used by British soldier-scholars such as Sir John Malcolm and William Graham in the early 1800s or in 1811 (pp. 8-18). Khalil and Sheikh (2014) in their article write about the first comprehensive study of *Sufism* written by a German missionary and theologian Friedrich August Tholuck (d. 1877) a decade after that of Graham (p. 357). From that time onwards, the Western scholars have been calling the study of Islamic mysticism as Sufism, and in Islam, the study is known as “Irfaan”- the knowledge of your own self or “Tasawwuf” - the depth of the knowledge of the Divine (Peeran, 2016, pp. 12-13).

Secondly, defining the term is in itself a problem. In the context of defining Sufism in Arabic and Persian works, Nicholson notes an interesting point that the chief importance of these works lies in showing that Sufism is “undefinable” (Nicholson, 1979, p. 25). Nicholson further states that Sufism is “a subject so vast and many-sided that several large volumes would be required to do it anything like justice” (p. 1).

Modern scholars of Sufism, however, attempt to define it. Various scholars define and explain the meaning and salient characteristics of Sufism in different ways and what follows is a selection of few definitions by renowned authors on the subject. Titus (1930),

for instance, defines Sufism as “an attitude of mind and heart toward God and the problems of life” (p.111). Trimmingham (1998) defines mysticism as a specific method of approaching reality by making use of intuitive and emotional spiritual faculties. These faculties are generally dormant but they can be called into play through training under guidance (p. 1). Schimmel (1975) defines the term in a wider sense and holds that it is the consciousness of the one reality that can be called Wisdom, Light, Love or nothing. Mysticism is the love of the Absolute--- for the power that separates true mysticism from mere asceticism is love (p. 4).

For Burckhardt (2008), *Tasawwuf* or Sufism is an expression of the inward or esoteric aspect of Islam, as distinguished from its outward or exoteric aspect. It designates the “whole of the contemplative ways founded on the sacred forms of Islam” (p. 3). In the view of A. J. Arberry (1979), Sufism is the mystical movement within Islam, whereas a Sufi, the one who associates himself with this movement, is an individual who is devoted to an inner quest for mystical union with his Creator. It also involves a “personal trafficking with God” (as cited in Anjum, 2006, p. 228). Nasr (2010) states, “Sufism is a kind of mysticism, and mysticism by definition is concerned above all with the mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven” (p. 275). Nicholson (1914), maintains: “Sufism, the religious philosophy of Islam, is described in the oldest extant definition as the apprehension of divine realities” (p. 1).

In seeking the philosophic if not precisely the spiritual lineage of Sufism, some scholars trace its origin in the Greek philosophy, Platonic in particular; some others attempt to find it in Buddhism, Yogism or to the Hermetic Christianity of the Gnostics of the late Roman Empire. Ernst (1996) holds that the “quest for the ‘origins’ of Sufism, which were variously-and fruitlessly-sought in the doctrines of Christian monasticism, Buddhism, shamanism, or yoga” (p. 9). In his view, its birth comes through Islamic teachings and through our beloved Prophet (PBUH).

Schuon (1985) gives three significant dimensions of Islam: (1) Islam (outward works of the religion), (2) *Iman* (faith) and (3) *Ihsan* (virtue & perfection) in view of the famous hadith of Gabriel. In Schuon’s view, *Ihsan*--the third dimension which literally means beautiful activity, embellishment, right-acting or some charitable activity, is basically an esoteric notion, and it is “quintessential esoterism.” *Ihsan* is an operative virtue, which

confers upon believing and doing the qualities that make them perfect, and intensify and deepen both faith and works (p. 228). Chittick (2000) also gives the above three dimensions, and ascertains the third element, *ihsan*, to be connected with depth, or the inward attitude. He argues with reference to the Quranic use of the word *Ihsan* which he says, is not only an external or ethical good but also the internal, moral and spiritual good (pp. 2-5, 10-12).

The theme that underlies the above definitions is the idea of unveiling the divine sentiments which lie hidden in one's heart. It is an overall attitude of one's self--mind, heart, soul that brings forth one's direct relationship with God, with a profound understanding of the Absolute Truth. The method involved in this inner advancement is meditative rather than pedagogic. The self is purified through the Sufi practices which help further regulate and direct the spiritual aspects of one's life. Generally, Sufis believe in three complementary and corresponding spheres of Sufism: *Shariah*, *Tariqah* and *Haqiqah*. *Shariah* is the revealed/prescribed law in Islam meant to regulate the conduct of the human beings. *Tariqah* is the method which guides a (spiritual) traveler on the path of Sufism and *Haqiqah*, seeking the ultimate truth or knowledge of and nearness to God, is the goal of a Sufi's life.

The terms mysticism or Islamic mysticism and Sufism are used interchangeably particularly in the studies done in non-oriental languages which at times become confusing. Various authors attempt to highlight the possible reasons for the general tendency in the usage of the terms. Anjum (2006) clarifies that western scholars of Sufism and the orientalisists have generally shown tendency to interpret Sufi doctrines and practices through the prism of Christian concepts, which at times, make it confusing (p. 222). Angha holds that sometimes it is also the language barrier or may be the bias of the interpreters which could have caused these confusions among Sufi scholars.

Chittick, in the foreword of *Introduction to Sufi Doctrine* by Burckhardt (2008), writes that literature available on Sufism is remarkably diverse. Often the academic works on the subject have the advantage of being aware of Sufism's roots in the Islamic tradition. The books written by many scholars vary in that some enthusiasts give no reason to differentiate Sufism from Kabbalah, Christian mysticism, or a New Age concoction

whereas others claim to present the teachings of traditional Sufi orders, and many of them do, but sometimes a great deal is lost in translation-by which I mean not only the movement from one language to another, but also the transition from one cultural matrix to another (p. ix).

The scholars cited above put forth the reasons behind the confused interpretation of the term Sufism. Language is certainly a barrier and while translating the terms, the personal bias of the translator or scholar may also intervene but, in any case, it is the conceptual lens with which a scholar interprets a specific discourse such as Sufism which causes a confused outcome. This tendency, for instance, is evident in many writings having used terminology carrying specific Christian connotations to describe and explain Sufi concepts. Anjum (2006), not only cites some examples in this regard but also elucidates terms used in parallel in Christian and Islamic mysticism. For instance, “sainthood” and “saint” which have distinctive meanings in the Christian religious traditions are at times used by writers to describe and explain Sufi concepts also. The reader is likely to confuse the concept of sainthood with the concept of a Sufi Sheikh, for instance, without knowing that there is no such practice in Islam because unlike a saint whose holy status is instituted by the Roman Catholic Church, a Sufi Sheikh needs no formal recognition of his spirituality by any institution. The issue of equivalence in a translated text perhaps becomes a barrier but it is the lens of a writer which confuses or elucidates a term since the equivalent meaning in its original context may be given in end notes or in brackets as many authors avail this option. Similarly, the usage of Max Weber’s term “charisma” -- a concept generally used in sociology but also mistakenly employed as an English equivalent for *Barakah* (spiritual powers of Sufi Sheikhs) which is reductive in meaning and, therefore, inadequate (p. 222).

Similarly, the term mysticism which is used interchangeably with Sufism also needs to be explicated. “Mysticism” is a generic term used to refer to some basic principles of spirituality shared by the mystical traditions of the great religions of the world like Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Hellenism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. This entails that all traditions believe in any individual’s capacity to attain a direct consciousness of God, comprehend the Divine Truth and develop his or her intuitive faculties. Hence,

“mysticism” implies to bring out something which is mysterious or hidden. The word as it is evident, comes from “mystic” and “mystery” which have etymological roots in the Greek word “myein” meaning “to close the eyes” (Schimmel, 1975, p. 3).

Sufism or *Taşawwuf* (Arabic) is essentially esoteric (*Bāṭin*) in contrast to what is merely exoteric (*Zāhir*) (Burckhardt, 2008, p. 3). It is the mystical or inward aspect of Islam as stated earlier and a Sufi is a seeker of *Hadayat* (insight) and draws on Quran and the teachings of the Prophet. Everything that forms an integral part of the spiritual method of Sufism is constantly and of necessity drawn out of the Quran and from the teachings of the Prophet (Burckhardt, 2008, p. 5). Hence a Sufi is more concerned about the Archetypal traditions, the symbols and signs suggestive of the Higher Self or more precisely with “the mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven” (Lings, 2005). Whether it is the wearing of a rough wool (dress of a Dervish), remembrance of God (*Dzīkr*) or reciting of poetry (highly philosophical verses) or ecstatic whirling (Sufi’s dance), these are signs for celestial conversing with the Divine and the Sacred Self. This discourse indeed is not a search for a truncated aspect of reality or which is confined only to the external phenomenon of senses.

### **2.3 *Dhikr* and *Sama* in Sufism**

In Sufism, there are two sound-based spiritual techniques: (1) *Sama* and (2) *Dhikr* which are employed as necessary tools to draw nearer to God and to experience His Love. *Sama* falls under the musical genre which is specifically used in Sufism as a means to encounter God. *Dhikr* is a Quranic term, from *Dhikr Allah*-- the “remembrance of God,” mentioned in various Surahs of the Holy Quran, e.g., Al-Maeda (Verse, 4); Al-Anam (Verse, 118); Al-Muzammil (Verse, 8). “*Dhikr* is the chanting of the names of God with the intent of infusing the spirit of the devotee with thoughts of God” (Paterson, 2007, p. 41).

Often the word *ism* (name) is employed in connection with *Dhikr Allah* which means that the *Dhikr* (remembrance) of God involves a repetitive calling of His names. Early Sufis, e.g., Abu Yazid al-Bistami (d. 234/848) and Mansur al-Hallaj (d. 309/922), considered the *Dhikr Allah* to be a common “form of prayer and a means to knowledge that was superior to reflection” (Singh, 2003, pp. 153-154). The *Dhikr* became one of the central principles of the Sufi tradition by the 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> century CE when it was formally structured. By this phase, the concept of *Dhikr* was examined in contrast to thinking or

reflection and thereby regarded to be the means to knowledge. To Al-Qushayri, *Dhikr* was the “foundation of Sufism” and the only door to gain knowledge for any aspirant saint (as cited in Singh, 2003).

*Sama* is a specific term used in the Sufi praxis which means “listening” but its significance moves beyond mere hearing. Not only *Sama* has specific connotations, it has to have a real context as Lawrence (1983) notes to be “where, when, how and by whom” it was heard (p. 72). Lawrence in his essay on “The Early Chishti Approach to *Sama*,” differentiates the term from a simple act of hearing. He explains the concept as under:

The technical word for Islamic mystical music, *Sama*, applies mainly to corporate performances for the spiritual benefit of a gathered group of Sufis. Rather than merely ‘hearing,’ it ought to be defined as ‘hearing chanted verse (with or without accompanying instruments) in the company of others also seeking to participate in the dynamic dialogue between a human lover and the Divine Beloved. (p. 72)

Two aspects are significant here; one that “hearing” in this particular context is or has to be a method and a means of learning or attaining knowledge. Two key concepts used here are, hearing and knowledge. Hearing is symbolic in the Sufi assemblies of *Sama* which is interpreted as listening to God’s eternal voice (*Saut-e Sarmadi*) calling man unto Himself and this Divine calling has been there since eternity. Learning how to listen to the Divine voice is knowledge and it comes through the experience of *Sama*.

Mystical knowledge is based on the concept of *ma’rifa* which is a quintessential notion in Sufism. Renard (2004) states that *marifa* -- often inadequately translated as “gnosis” is suggestive of much more than mere intellectual knowing. It means have an “access to the divine presence, perhaps even an invasion or being overcome by the reality of God. It includes both the experiential dimension and knowing in a way that “gnosis” cannot quite convey (p. 11).

Scholars also differentiate between ‘*ilm* and *ma’rifa*, e.g., Al-Qushayri (2007) and Chittick (2000) consider the latter as equivalent to “direct knowledge” attained through *kashf* or “true (er) knowledge,” whereas *ilm* is something which is learnt through intellect or *aql*’s agency (as cited in Singh, 2003 p. 38-39). Hujwiri enlightens us with three types



of knowledge (*ilm*): first, knowledge from God (including all of the Revealed Law); second, knowledge with God (presupposing the experience of the spiritual stations and arising to the level of God's Friends); third, knowledge of God which he calls *ma'rifat* (Persian transliteration) and *ma'rifa* (p. 37).

Abu Talib al-Makki (d. 368/996), a highly influential Muslim writer of early medieval period (10<sup>th</sup> century) and known for his monumental treatise on Sufism, *The Sustenance of Hearts*. He treats the significance of knowledge in one's spiritual life in a rather unconventional way. Unlike his contemporary, Sarraj, he does not focus on epistemological concerns within his work. He focuses more on exploring the subtlest details of the spiritual life and motivation and less on simply reporting a range of opinions of the ancient Sufis.

In his view, the practices of prayer and fasting are a must in every seeker's life besides the aspects of strict self-scrutiny. He regards a full engagement in the five pillars of faith, the "basics," but the engagement, in no way, should be merely presumed rather it be a result of considerable progress on spiritual path. Therefore, he critiques those Sufis whose practices, he noticed, did not match with the Revealed Law and the Prophetic example. His concern with knowledge as a model of practice clearly finds its roots in the Holy Quran and Sunnah. Makki believed that the true knowledge which is worth seeking is the knowledge of God which comes through hearing and not seeing (as cited in Renard, 2004, p. 36-37).

This concept of hearing is fundamental in Sufi audition discussed in the section below but prior to it, the term Sufi music- generally a popular term and a key concept in the present study, is defined.

## **2.4 Sufi Music**

From the remote past, music is said to resonate with the magical, the spiritual, the sacred, and the inexplicable root of things. The power of music and of human voice has been a subject of serious inquiry among scholars of religion, morality, mysticism and other branches of human knowledge. Music is a science of harmony and has been approached

through various perspectives, e.g., ethical, therapeutic and cosmological as did many ancient Sufi scholars, e.g., an eminent Arab philosopher Al-Kindi (d. 870).

Concerning the word “music”, two terms “mausiqi” and “ghina” with similar connotations are used as various scholars dig out. Rouget (1985), for instance, writes that the “word *mausiqi* denoted the rules or the art of music but not music itself as a product of that art” (p. 256). In Islamic Peripatetic philosophy, *mausiqi* denotes strictly the theory of music which is recognized to be of Greek origin; defined as the science of the composition of melodies, it is contrasted to “ghina” which means song or musical practice (Wright, 1993, p. 681).

Değirmenci (2013) elucidates the term “Sufi music” which, he says is problematic (pp. 83-84). “The practices constituting the term *music* in Western literature are called *Sama* in Islamic literature and are associated with worship practices” (p. 83). In his view, Sufi music falls in the category of “non-music” whereas *ghina* refers to “secular art music, performance and music-making that mainly takes place in the urban sphere” (p. 84). Many literary works also differentiate cantus (*ghina*) from Sufi music (*sema*) which is conceived as “non-music.” Moreover, *ghina* was typically banished by most authors as Shiloah (1997), a renowned scholar of Arabic and Jewish music, points out (pp. 143-4). Thus “music or *Sama* connote the use of music in worship practices rather than music itself ... *Sama* involves listening or hearing God’s word, as opposed to music with a secular focus” (2013, pp. 83-84).

Shiloah (1995) also explicates the term “ghina” as well as “lhn” another word with similar meaning. He explains that *ghina* (art song & music) is derived from “gny” which signifies “to sing and also to prolong the voice in psalmody and chant, to enrich or to romance. The root *Ihn* derived from *lahn* (melody, rhythm and mode), also means “to chant in a manner pleasant to listener’s ear” (p. 22).

Since the terms “mausiqi” and “ghina” both connote art song and music, Rouget (1985) points out referring to Abu Hamid al-Ghazali and al-Tusi how both of them rarely use the word “music” in their writings. Al-Tusi, for instance, uses the term only once whereas Ghazali seems to deliberately avoid using the word *mausiqi* in his book on the *Right Usages of Audition and Ecstasy (Kitab adab al-Sama, wa’l-wajd)*. Rouget further

points out that Ghazali was well familiar with the word but being an advocate of *Sama*, perhaps he avoided to use the term “music” with the purpose not to mix up any music or art song with spiritual singing (*Sama*) and thus be able to “defend, a profession as suspect in the eyes of the faith as that of the musician.” For Ghazali, it was essential to find a moral justification for *Sama* and the distinction between the two kinds of music can be drawn further by using the terms “light” music and “serious” music. Only the latter is lawful. It would be aberration to confuse the two kinds or cover both by using the same term (pp. 256-57).

Lewisohn (1997) elucidates the kind of singing which is lawful: (1) the cantillation of the Quran (2) sung poetry, on the condition that its sentiments and thoughts were sufficiently elevated, (3) accompanied song, provided that the musical instruments utilized were permitted, which is to say instruments that were never associated with blameworthy musical practices (p. 13). There is yet another restriction, states Lewisohn, “It is permissible to hear only that which one hears when one is oneself in a certain state of inner purity. It is not only what is sung or played that counts; it is also the disposition of the listener.” This restriction, i.e., of the listener’s disposition or intention is precisely what is conveyed by the word *Sama*. This conceptional patterning of reality to which it corresponds is comparable to no other and certainly not to that of the word “music” (p. 13).

The power of singing (lawful) and the power of beautiful human voice has been another aspect of the scholarly inquiry though knowing the secrets of voice became a concern for both sacred and secular music as points out Shiloah. For Arab authors, the voice was a representative symbol of the life force and a “reflection of the human soul’s mysteries and feelings” (Shiloah, 1995, p. 15). For mystics, the voice “symbolizes divine life and puts man in vibrating resonance with the celestial and universal. A rich palette of timbres enables the musician’s voice to express his diverse moods and the subtlety of his being.” This approach or point of view found specific emphasis in the frequent discussions and definition of the “beautiful” voice (*al-sawt al-hasan*) in literature, both sacred and secular music (p. 15).

*Epistle on Music* of the *Ikhwan al-Safa* (the Brethren of Purity), emphasizes that music reflects the symphonic beauty of the universe. Getting aware of the basic laws of

harmony and beauty of this universe would mean to be able to transcend the material existence and know the secrets of creation. It reads as below:

Musical harmony conceived according to the laws of the well-ordered universe helps man in his attempt to achieve a spiritual and philosophical equilibrium. It refines his desires and rouses his courage, propels him toward balanced behavior, generosity, clemency and renunciation. In short, it acts to create inner harmony among the contradictory forces of man's soul. In the same way the proper use of music at the right time has a healing influence on the body. (p. 50)

Regarding the moral effects of music or its spiritual meaning, Hunayn Ibn Ishaq (d. 873) in his book *Kitab Adab al-falsifa* (Book of the aphorisms of philosophers) narrates an event concerning King Heraclius on a wedding feast he hosted. At the end of the festivity enacted by the musicians, Heraclius asked philosophers present at the occasion to discuss music, its meaning and its educational value. What they replied was all in the form of aphorisms. The maximum (41) sayings referred to “the moral and therapeutic effects of music; its spiritual meaning as opposed to its intoxicating influence; cosmological associations of the four strings of *ud* and so forth,” as reports Siloah (pp. 47-48).

Furthermore, voices, sounds and bodily movements have functions that correspond to the symbolic universe and doctrine of every Sufi order (*tariqa*). However diverse Sufism might be, particular elements within the doctrines of those religious congregations allow us to label all of them “Sufi” for theoretical purposes.

#### **2.4.1 Various Sufi Music Traditions**

Although music forms a huge part of most of the ritualistic traditions of different spiritual or religious systems of the world, music, other than the reciting the Holy Quran and *Adhan* (Islamic call to worship), holds no place in the Islamic performance of rituals. And yet, music plays a central role in Sufism, esoteric or mystical aspect of Islam. Various Sufi orders, however, vary in their attitudes to music: for example, while the Hanafi order does not approve of music and dance; for the Chishti and Mevlevi Orders, music and dance are essential elements in their assemblies.

Different Sufi orders are found in the whole Muslim world, particularly in the South and Central Asia, from Turkey, Iran through northern, eastern and western Africa. From region to region, Sufis perform the musical rituals and traditions in a variety of styles in their assemblies but what connects them all is the philosophy that underpins these traditions. Regardless of different music traditions, there are three concepts common to all Sufi sects in their way to appreciate music.

First, *Dhikr* which in Arabic, means recollection and remembrance. Habib Touma mentions that *Dhikr* in Sufi ceremony often includes music and it may also contain recitation, singing, instrumental music, dance, costumes, incense, meditation, ecstasy, and trance (2003, p. 162). *Dhikr* tradition is also a method of meditating on past verities and on the Superior being of God, the philosophy on which Sufism is grounded in order to probe the higher consciousness, engage with spiritual forces coming into a personal encounter with God as an outcome (Waugh, 2004, p.180). Walter Feldman pinpoints three main kinds of *Dhikr* postures which include standing, whirling and sitting or kneeling as the key positions for worship (1992, pp.196-97).

Second, *wajd* which Sufis explain as the state that the spirit manifests while in ecstasy (Khan, 1991, p.57). *Wajd* enables a seeker to undergo a state of self-denial in order to see the Divine bounties and rewards unto him.

Third is *Sema*, a key concept in the Sufi philosophy whereby the music is appreciated for the symbolic meaning that underlies it. *Sama* means listening or hearing in Arabic and the term *audition* also refers to the same. In Sufism, it refers to listening to music or singing, and chanting in the form of measured recitation intended to evoke religious emotions and ecstasy. *Sema* as states Yondemli (2007) also refers to nonmusical phenomena such as spiritual knowledge, divine wisdom, and silence (p. 342). In Sufi traditions, religious ecstasy accomplished through music is thought to enable the soul to connect or communicate directly with God.

The Arabic word *Sama* means “sky” and the Holy Quran calls it a symbol of the heavenly abode. In Turkish whirling of dervishes, *Sama* or worship ceremony connotes the same meaning. Since the activity is a symbolic representation of union with God, it expresses the belief that after one dies, one’s soul will reach God or His abode-the sky.

*Sema* means a hearing with an attitude of veneration towards the mystical or singing of Sufi poetry not just with ears but with the “ear of the heart.” It is a kind of physical meditation (repetitive spinning of body) intended to focus on melody with or without instruments, and mystical songs (During, 1988, p.13). The underlying idea is to listen to seek an awareness and a much-enhanced understanding of the Divine. During (1988) also says that a true Sufi is the one who is able to interpret even the most mundane type of melodies as “music of the spheres,” hearing through it the Divine call to meet the primordial covenant, and he further explains that the musical form is ancillary to the actual performance in the Sufi gatherings. The *Sama* worship is practiced by the Sufi Dervishes of the Mevlevi order and other orders such as the Rifa’i-Maruf.

Clarke and Beyer (2009) write about the various Sufi music traditions and their concept of music and dance. The followers of Mevlevi Order, for instance, adopted dance as a support for *Dhikr* and most probably the influence came from Rumi’s mentor Shams al-din Tabrizi. In Rumi’s view, music was a form of invocation and the physical movements of dance worked as a ladder to achieve spiritual enlightenment. In overall, Sufi dance can be understood as a manifestation of a specific spiritual state or trance produced by song and music.

Different from the Mevlevi dance, is the musical invocation of the two orders, Qadiriyya and Shadhiliyya, where the members move in rows facing each other or form concentric circles. The two orders restrain themselves to simple rhythmic movements in the *Sama* assemblies but usually there is a singer with accompaniments such as drum or flute. The same goes for the Sufi songs known as *Qawwali* s popularized by the Chishtiya order from the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

The Qadiriyya order is a typical urban order noted for its philanthropy, virtue and humility. In Mesopotamia, the Rifa’iyya order founded by Ahmad Rif’ai also grew out of it though it later became independent. It is known for its extreme ways of self-mortification and extravagant practices such as fire-walking and glass-eating and for this reason, it is also known in the West as the “Howling Dervishes” on account of its loud style of invocation. Two other influential orders were the Suhrawardiyya and the Shadhiliyya.

Suhrawardiyya order was founded by Abu al-Najib's nephew abu Hafs Umar Suhrawardi (d. 1234) who framed a code of behavior for his pupils. Baha al-din Zakariyya was among his most eminent disciples who spread the order to India and to Saadi Shirazi, the celebrated Persian poet. Many of its adherents were outstanding scholars of the science of Prophetic sayings (ilm al-hadith). Shadhiliyya was founded by Abu al-Hasan Shadhili (d. 1258) who was born in Morocco and studied in Fez. Accompanied by a number of followers he travelled to Egypt and founded monasteries in Alexandria and Tunis.

Among the famous disciples of Shadhili, was Ibn Ata Allah Iskandari (d. 1309) who wrote *Kitab al-Hikma* (Book of Wisdom), a book famous for its collection of Sufi aphorisms in addition to his compilation of the sayings of his master. A large number of sub-orders in conjunction with Qadiriyya grew out of this order. These two orders, Suhrawardiyya and the Shadhiliyya are regarded to be the most influential and had a wider influence and the orders that grew within the last 700 years are sub branches of the two. The most well-known are the Isawiyya, the Darqawiyya and in the modern times, the more famous is Maryamiyya.

Among the Turks and Mongols, Sufism came into close contact with Shamanism and had to reckon with deeply rooted Central Asian customs. The oldest Turkish speaking Sufi order was the rural Yasawiyya order founded by Ahmad Yasawi (d. 1166). Another rural order among Ottoman Turks in Eastern Europe and Anatolia was the Bektashiyya which was founded by Hajj Bektash (d. 1338). The principal urban order among the Ottoman Turks was the Maulawiyya, founded by Sultan Walad (d. 1312) the son of the Persian poet jalal al-din Rumi. Many of the greatest Turkish musicians and calligraphers were connected to the order and the convents more or less functioned as a kind of art academy as well as a center for the practice of Sufi rituals. The most characteristic feature of them is the whirling dance performed by the disciples in the spiritual concert as an outward support for their invocation. In the West, the members of the order are known as "whirling dervishes."

One of the most renowned orders in India, the Chishtiya, which originated in Sistan in eastern Persia, was founded by Mu'in al-Din Chishti (d. 1236) whose tomb at Ajmer is one of the greatest shrines in the Indian subcontinent, is revered by Muslims as well as Hindus. He did not compose any books but the order has a very rich literature in Persian

and Hindi. It had a far-reaching influence on Mughal society and one of its renowned associates was the theologian Shah Wali Allah of Delhi (d. 1762). Another important Order in India is the Naqshbandiys founded in central Asia by Baha al-din Naqshband of Bukhara (d. 1389). He summarized the main teachings of the order in eleven sacred aphorisms (kalimat-I qudsiyya). It avoids the custom of loud *Dhikr* and listening to music but recommends silent *Dhikr* and simple adherence to the Sunnah of the Prophet. Because of its distinctive rejection of dance and music it was celebrated by the Indian Sufi master and reviver Ahamd Sirhandi (d. 1624) as superior to other orders.

*Sema* or audition, as said earlier, is one of the key concepts in the Sufi philosophy whereby the music is appreciated for symbolic meaning that underlies it. But what is conceived as spiritual music and whether “music” is permissible in Islam, or whether “music is legitimate even if used for religious purposes as in Sufi ritual orders,” this has been throughout a topic of debate in Islamic literature as states Değirmenci (2013, p. 83). The discussion to follow covers the topic, both for and against.

## 2.5 Sufi Audition

The practice of *Sama* or listening to music (audition) is a highly contested topic among Sufi theologians. The more foundational sources available through translations come from Sufi writings of 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, e.g., Al-Kalabadi’s *The Doctrine of Sufis* (Trans.1935); Al-Hujwiri’s *The Revelation of the Mystery* (Trans. 2001) and al-Qushayri’s *Epistle on Sufism* (Trans. 2007). Among the three, Hujwiri provides a detailed account covering the etiquettes of *Sama* and ritual behavior in the last chapter “The Uncovering of the Eleventh Veil: Concerning Audition or *Sama*” of his book. All approve of *Sama* assemblies but grant the permission under strict terms and conditions. In some later researches, however, the attention is also drawn towards how the concept of *Sama* is considered illegal by some Sufi orders who oppose it in the light of Quran and Hadith. There are some insightful discussions regarding what actually are the topics of controversy provided by renowned scholars such as Bruce Lawrence (1983), Arthur Gribetz (1991) and Robert Rozechnal (2007). Their articles are reviewed in the discussion to follow.

The controversy on the topic of *Sama* begins as early as the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century but more vigorously debated from the 6<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> century onwards. The dispute lies in various aspects



of the ritual ranging from the issue of legality of listening to music to the question of who is to be permitted to attend a *Sama* assembly. Other aspects such as dance/whirling or the religious ecstasy one could get through *Sama*, the types of musical instruments and the attendant actions such as clapping the hands, stamping the feet or rending the clothing in the ritual also involve controversy. In addition, the use of erotic poetry in the depiction of the Sufi's love for God and the partaking of unbearded youths in the ceremony. As far as the argument both for and against Sufi music is concerned, there are three possible viewpoints among the Sufi orders which range from "exuberant practice, to cautious acceptance, to complete rejection" as Gribetz (1991) in his article "The *Sama* Controversy: Sufi vs. Legalist" rightly points out. These three viewpoints, in fact, form two groups, Sufis and legalists; among the Sufi groups, there is a tendency ranging from strong to mild approval for *Sama*, whereas the latter, the legalists, (Sufis or non-Sufi) outlaw *Sama*, since, to them, it is prohibited in Islam.

### **2.5.1 Legalists vs. the Sufis**

Gribetz (1991) in his article "The *Sama* Controversy: Sufi vs. Legalist" mainly focuses on the topics of *Sama* which cause controversy between the legalists and the Sufis. He points out how both groups use two sources, namely Quran and tradition to support their respective arguments. Gribetz provides an exhausting overview of both for and against the *Sama* ritual by the Hanbalites and Ghazali school of thought. Whereas Al-Jawazi (d. 597/120) and Ibn Taymiya (d. 728/1328) as the opponents and Ahmad al-Ghazali (d. 520/1121) and Abu Nasr al-Sarraj (d. 378/988) as proponents seem to hold strong opinions proving it to be a (un)lawful activity in the light of Quran and Hadith. Hujwiri as well as al-Sarraj choose to abstain from *Sama* as Gribetz (1991) points it out in his article (p. 56).

Nicholson (1914) in the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter "Illumination and Ecstasy" of his book *The Mystics of Islam* also mentions the same about Hujwiri adopting the middle view, falling neither in opposition nor favor. What he believed is aptly expressed in a saying of Dhu'l-Nun the famous Egyptian Sufi: "Music is a divine influence which stirs the heart to seek God: those who listen to it spiritually attain unto God, and those who listen to it sensually fall into unbelief" (p. 65). He seemed to believe that audition is neither good nor bad, and

must be judged, in effect, by its results. The similar explanation was given by Ibn Jurayi on the inquiry of a person about music and Qushayri (2007) quotes his words as, “Neither among the good, nor among the evil” (p. 343). Al-Shafi also did not fully approve of music although he did not prohibit it and considered it to be reprehensible for the common folk implying that he took up a careful middle path. Qushayri (2007) cites a number of foundational references to establish the point that many adopted the middle path. It seems that the ancient Muslims or Sufis were on guard and the underlying idea seemed to be to approach this subject very carefully and in a case such assembly is conducted, the attention should be paid on the end result or the learning outcome.

Interestingly scholars, both for and against, utilize sources from Quran and some representative types of traditions that are either connected to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) or to his Companions. The interpretations thus provided by both groups seem subjective, i.e., what they understand to be correct and true, and hence the controversy is never conclusively resolved. The discussion that follows gives a glimpse of how both groups argue for their respective viewpoint. The discussion is based on a review of the articles mentioned earlier, i.e., Lawrence (1983), Gribetz (1991) and Rozehnal (2007), last chapter LXXV “Of Audition” from Kalabadhi’s *The Doctrine of Sufis* (1935), last chapter “Concerning Audition” from Hujwiri’s *The Revelation of the Mystery* (2001) and Qushayri’s 4<sup>th</sup> last section “Listening to music (*Sama*)” from 3rd chapter of his *Epistle on Sufism* (2007) with an addition of Quranic sources as well as articles of other reputed scholars for cross-referencing.

The opponents cite the Quranic references which suggest the illegality of listening to music. For instance, verses from Surah Ash-Shuaraa, “the poets-the perverse follow them; have you not seen how they wander in every valley and how they say that which they do not” (Verses, 224-226). Here music is equated with poetry and hence not permissible. Like poetry which in most of the cases has no purpose, music is largely a form of amusement and sport and so is an undesirable practice. Another reference from the Quran, e.g., chapter 25 (Surah al-Furqan) “And [they are] those who do not testify to falsehood [zoora], and when they pass near ill speech, they pass by with dignity” (Verse, 72). Al-Jawzi (d. 597/1200), for instance, cites verses from the Quran which allegedly establish disapproval

of singing: “There are some men who buy diverting talk to lead astray from the way of God” (Surah, 31, V, 5); “wasting your (precious) lifetime in pastime and amusements (singing, etc.)” (wa-antum samiduna, i.e., amuse yourselves) (Surah, 53, V, 61); “and excite any of them whom you can with your voice” (Surah, 17, V, 64). The word “zooraa” in Al-Furqan is equated with *ghina* (another word for music) and “Samiduna” in Surah An-Najm with singing and music. Al-Jawzi and Al-Adfuwi (d. 748/1347) in *al-Imta’* support the references with traditions (as cited in Gribetz, 1991, pp. 45-46).

Ahmad al-Ghazali (d. 520/1121), on the other hand, gives a different interpretation of the texts to build his case in favor of *Sama*. In parallel to “sportive talk,” he speaks of “true talk” which in his view, may be from Quran or poetry. He supports this further by citing a tradition which reads that in poetry there is wisdom (Robson, pp. 148-149). The same tradition is also cited by Abu Nasr al-Sarraj (d. 378/988), in his work *Kitab al-luma*, (1960, p. 276) and by Abu Hamid al-Ghazali in *Ihya* (Trans. 2008) as well as in Hujwiri’s *Kasf al-Mahjub* with reference to the Holy Prophet and his companions that it is “permissible to hear poetry” ...the Apostle said, “Some poetry is wisdom” (p. 502). A Quranic verse often quoted in the defense of *Sama* is taken from Surah Al-Zumr reading as, “So give good tidings to My servants who listen to the Word (al qawl) and follow the fairest of it” (Verse, 17-18). The word “al-qawl” is thought by some to refer to *ghina* or music and relating it to another Quranic verse, 119 of Surah Al-Anam which states, “He has distinguished for you that which He has forbidden you.” And the explanation given is that since there is no mention in the Quran of the illegality of music, this second verse appears to justify its legality (as cited in Gribetz, 1991, p. 45).

Both groups cite references from traditions but often draw opposite conclusions out of the same source. A tradition related by al-Bukhari and Muslim about Abu Bakr coming into Aisha’s presence and finding two girls singing while the Holy Prophet is resting. When Abu Bakr tries to rebuke the girls, Muhammad (PBUH) “intervenes and permits them to continue, since it is a holiday” (as cited in Gribetz, 1991, p. 46). Ahmad al-Ghazzali and the group, e.g., al-Suhrawardi (d. 632/1234), founder of the “Suhrawardiyya Path,” al-Anqarawi (d. 1042/1636), the shaykh of the Mevlevis in Galata and other Sufis use this story as proof that singing is permissible. In contrast, Ibn Taymiya, Ibn al-Jawzi, and Ibn

al-Hajj (b. 737/1336), a Maliki jurist, draw different conclusions from the same tradition. Ibn Taymiya claims that listening to music was clearly neither a practice of the Prophet nor of his Companions. He cites Abu Bakr who called music “the commotion of the devil.” Ibn al-Jawzi is not in favor of using this tradition as a license for all kinds of singing. He believes that the context regarding the use of *Sama* should also be taken into account. His words are as under:

The mufti should weigh the conditions just as the doctor should weigh time, the patient’s age, the location and prescribe accordingly. What relation has the singing of the Helpers on the Day of *Bu'ath* to that of some handsome beardless boys accompanied by melodious instruments, and performed with skill which attracts desire to it, and erotic odes which mention the gazelle, the sun, the beauty mark, the cheek, the body, and the well-proportioned form? (Ibn al-Jawzi, pp. 237-238)

Ibn al-Hajj (1929) in his book *Kitab al-madkhal*, views the term “singing” in a slightly different way as, “to raise the voice in the recital of poetry” which does not suggest any illegality. What is prohibited is the singing that “causes joy and rouses the heart.” As far as the Holy Prophet’s approval of song on the “Day of Bua’th” is concerned, it cannot be taken as a permission for all kinds of singing, the opponents argue whereas the Sufis quote it to justify singing (pp. 106-111). Another tradition associated with Ibn Umar who while travelling with Nafi, plugs his ears with his fingers and rides his horse away when he hears a shepherd singing a reed pipe and he explained that since he saw Prophet Muhammad doing so, he followed. Ibn al-Jawzi and Ibn Taymiya cite this tradition as a proof against *Sama*.

Two popular traditions cited to attack *Sama* include one as, “singing is the spell for fornication” that is attributed to Fudail Ibn Iyad by Ibn Abi'l-Dunya (d. 281/894) as well as by Shihab al-Din al-Suhrawardi, Ibn al-Jawzi, and Ibn al-Hajj. This same tradition is also attributed to Ibn Masud by Ibn Taymiya. The second is ascribed to Ibn Mas’ud as, “Singing causes hypocrisy to grow in the heart, just as water makes vegetables grow.” Ibn al-Hajj credits a shorter version of this tradition to Ibn Masud as “singing causes hypocrisy to grow in the heart” (p. 118) and attributes the full tradition to al-Hukm Ibn 'Uyayna. Abu

Hamid al-Ghazzali in reply to the first reference says that it refers only to the singing of the lustful youths. The explanation for the second tradition comes from Abu Hamid al-Ghazzali and al-Anqarawi who regard that the statement refers to only the professional singers who will go to all means to become popular.

The defenders of *Sama* also use humanistic aspects to justify their ground, for instance, by saying that since “God created man with a pleasing voice in order for it to be enjoyed” and hence the melodious singing of the camel rider and that of a mother to soothe a weeping child is permissible. Ibn Taymiya refutes it saying that “pleasure does not provide lawfulness” and more God also created man with a beautiful appearance, yet it is unlawful to flaunt it freely (Ibn al-Jawzi, p. 236). In fact, the different opinions of the Islamic scholars regarding the *Sama* ritual, as Arthur Gritbetz contends, “can be viewed as part of a larger controversy that exists between the Sufis and the legalists, namely Sufi support of the Neoplatonic ‘eros’ doctrine and the Hanbalite-orthodox support of the ‘nomos’ doctrine” (as cited in Degirmenci, 2013, p. 83). Ibn al-Jawzi strongly rejects the eros- *ishq* doctrine. The “eros” group espouses that the soul is divine and is therefore man’s connection to God. The soul enables man to “long” for God. Ultimate redemption occurs through the re-ascent of the soul to God (Bell, 1979, pp. 201-202). Related to the eros doctrine is the Pythagorean and Platonic belief that music makes the soul remember celestial harmonies which it heard before being separated from God when it comes to the world as the soul of a living creature (Nicholson, 2003, p. 64). These doctrines are apparent in the Sufis’ description of listening to music. Abu Hamid al-Ghazali explains that musical tones cause one’s soul to “long,” yet one does not know what the object of the longing is.

What one can gather from the above discussion is that listening to Quranic recitation in a gathering as used to be the case with earliest Sufis is beyond any debate and the issue of legitimacy arises when it is poetic text or any other text which speaks of the Divine in terms of secular metaphors. And from this point discussion moves to one step higher- to two fundamental questions of (a) who qualifies for a music assembly, recitation of poetry in particular, and (b) at which stage of the spiritual journey (if any) a person may be permitted to attend it. Sufis refer to specific spiritual conditions in this regard, discussed below as sacred spaces.

## 2.6 Sacred Space(s)

Sacred- the power, being, or realm as understood by religious persons to be at the basis of human life, has a transformative effect on their lives. Other terms such as divine, holy, transcendent, ultimate reality, perfection and purity are used for this domain (Streng, July 21, 2017).

The concept of the sacred became dominant in the comparative study of religions from around the first quarter of 20th century. In 1914, the Swedish scholar, Nathan Söderblom, asserted in his book *Gudstrons uppkomst* (The origin of belief in God) that it is the idea of holiness than the idea of God, which stands at the center in all religious thoughts (Jonson, 2016, p. 179). A more influential study was Rudolf Otto's *Heilige* (*The Idea of the Holy*) which appeared 1917 with its emphasis that "holiness" could not be derived from anything other than a priori sacred reality (Jones, 2017, p. 1). Among other scholars who used the notion of sacred as an important interpretive term during this period, include the French sociologist Émile Durkheim, and the German psychologist-philosopher Max Scheler. Nasr, a leading Islamic philosopher of 20<sup>th</sup> century, speaks of the "Sacred" as the sacred science whereby one is able to perceive and understand God as Reality. This sacred science or what we may call *Scientia sacra* (Latin term) is attainable via the intellect (not reason), which he calls "the supernaturally natural faculty" with which all human beings are endowed (Nasr, 2001, pp. 1-2).

In the Sufi assemblies of *Sama*, the element of sacred or what Otto calls holy, has a specific significance concerning the code of behavior of the participants, as advised by Sufi masters. From the earliest days of Sufism, it has been regarded necessary to observe specific code of behavior in *Sama* gatherings. The concept of spiritual music is grounded in both physical (time & place) and spiritual conditions to be earnestly taken into account by both the performer (s) and listeners in *Sama* assemblies. While physical conditions such as stillness, silence and correct behavior are necessary to observe, even more important is to attend *Sama* ceremony with an appropriate inner state, of mind as well as of senses to be able to contemplate on the Divine. This implies that when mind is unconcerned with any kind of worldly matters, the inner being becomes unaffectedly engaged in the music, hearing it on a deeper level so as to make the spiritual experience truly fulfilling.

In terms of the physical requisites, the general consensus among Sufis is to maintain silence during the ceremony, unless the urge to express one's state of *wajd* appears naturally upon a follower. Though *wajd* is regarded to be the fruit of *Sama*, it is not necessary for ecstasy to be articulated in loud gestures, since *Sama* is not meant to disturb "the inward silence, self-control and contemplative sobriety of the Sufi" (Lewisohn, 1997, p. 8). Further conditions in terms of physical and spiritual realms are described as (1) correct time, (2) place and (3) company. As they are to be observed on both levels, they can help understand the inter-relation of music and the sacred in Sufi *Sama*.

### 2.6.1 Right Time

The first category which Tusi and Ghazali both define is the "right time" for *Sama*. The right time for *Sama*, they state, is when the hearts of the seekers enjoy purity so that they desire to fully concentrate on their goal of seeking their Beloved's goodwill. Tusi continues to explain to us further as follows:

Sufis in order to divest their outer being of sensual characteristics and release their inner being from attachment to attaining high spiritual degrees or stations, so as to collect their transconscious selves (asrar) [to be receptive to] the infusions of the breaths of divine mercy. (Tusi, as cited in Lewisohn, 1997, p.8)

As the definition above indicates, Tusi's explanation of the right "time" for *Sama* is largely not concerned with the visible realm or temporal reality, but rather indicates it as the proper "spiritual mood" or "mystical state" (*hal*) possessed by the Sufi, the proper conditions or time which will enable him to enter a fittingly genuine musical trance, a time of the heart or soul than a specific temporal reality/realm of the body. Tusi further highlights, "during such a time when they [Sufis] assemble, the illumination which graces the hearts of certain of them is reflected onto the hearts of others, so by the gathering, the general light, revelation, clarity and cheer is increased" (Tusi, as cited in Lewisohn, p. 9). Thus "time" is interpreted as a metaphysical space and its arrow should strike at the Sufi's heart before it goes to touch the body. Abu Hamid al-Ghazali also emphasizes the same metaphysical attitude regarding the "correct time for musical audition" (p. 9) by further specifying that the time would not be the right for *Sama*: (1) when one's heart is engaged

in worldly matters, (2) when it is time for prayer (*namaz*) (3) when the time is scheduled for eating. Moreover, it is not necessary that everyone may be able to attain the same benefits from *Sama* as says Mavlana Rumi in one of famous verses, “Not every man attains the *Sama* true and pure, Nor every bird may feed on figs” (1997, p. 9).

### 2.6.2 Right Place

Another condition, as argued by Ghazali and Tusi, concerns the settings or places most befitting for the ritual of *Sama* in order to evoke the Sacred. Tusi (1938) argues that the places best for *Sama* include *zawiyahs*, (Arabic: assembly, group—a kind of equivalent term to Madrasa), *khanaqahs* (hospices) and mosques. Mosque, in his view, was founded for the sake of attaining peace of mind and bodily devotion and heart made for the purpose of realizing the divine gnosis and the theophany therein (pp.123-24). The point to be noted here is that just as the “right time” refers mainly to a metaphysical condition which basically means that the heart is to be detached from material things, a literal interpretation of the condition of “place” must also be avoided. Thus, the “place” in the literal sense implies “no-place” but a place of heart and “place” becomes sacred only on account of the heart’s presence there rather than its presence upon the physical locus of the body (as cited Lewisohn, 1997, p. 9).

...So, when the brethren of purity (*ahl al-safa'*) assemble in a place of worship wishing that the light enjoyed by the hearts of some be conveyed unto the hearts of others so that their mutual illumination increase and that the purity of their souls be amplified, their souls become fortified by the *light of that place*, heightening their mystical states and perfecting their innate character. (Tusi, 1938, Trans. by Lewisohn, 1997, pp. 9-10)

“Light of that place” here refers to the modesty and propriety of “place” which is contingent to a spiritual prerequisite of enlightenment. Heart, in reality, does find an inner illumination within the sacred atmosphere of the mosque, but the mosque also is illumined by the heart(s) of the celebrants present there. Nevertheless, as Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (1940) states that the actual physical place is also significant in that *Sama* must never be conducted in a “dark and unpleasant place, nor in the home of despotic folk where all the time one feels aggrieved and vexed” (as cited in Lewisohn, 1997, pp. 9-10).



### 2.6.3 Right Company

Ghazali and Tusi both speak about the damaging effect on the Sufi assembly of those who abandon *Sama* while pretentiously presenting their piety, being insolent to the “refined sentiment of the heart” as states Tusi (1938, p. 124). Tusi describes the Sufi gathering as an event to evoke rousing of the spirit by listening to superb realities in delicate poems and being pulled to the spiritual stages (*manazil*), with an emphatic note that “the instrument of obtaining these lights is the association of the Sufi brethren and the seeking of help from God” (p. 124). Since *Sama* is esoteric in nature, it demands a superior degree of understanding on part of the listener, it is usually regarded to be appropriate ceremony for “members only” and for which the uninitiated do not qualify. Ghazali also does not consider the novices in Sufism fit for *Sama* ceremonies since they possess neither the “taste” nor the ability to understand the mysteries involved in *Sama* and they better devote their time in *Dhikr* and service (*khidmat*) on the Path (Ghazali, n.d., pp. 265-66).

It may be noted that that the opinions of Persian Sufi shaykhs varied regarding the permissibility of *Sama* for novices and for intermediary adepts on the path. Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (n.d., p. 266), for instance, absolutely denied this permission for beginners on account of their being more attracted towards sensual pleasures. Other Persian masters such as Shaykh Abu Sa'id ibn Abi'l-Khayr (357/967-440/1048), who maintained that *Sama* is highly beneficial to spiritual improvement and illumination for the beginners also (Nicholson, 1980, p. 58). However, among the ancient Persian Sufis, there is a general tendency of not permitting the beginners to attend the mystic concert (*dhawq al-Sama*). Sufis such as Abu Nasr Sarraj of Tus (d. 378/988) in his *Kitab al-luma*, Abul-Qasim al-Qushayri (d. 465/1072) in his *Al-Risala fi' ilm al-tasawwuf*, and Ali b. Uthman Jullabi Hujwiri (d. 463/1071) in his *Kashf al-mahjub* accord with Ghazali's view. Hussaini (1983) cites Shaykh Abi 'Ali Daqqaq (d. 407/1016) to have noted that *Sama* is forbidden for the common folk (al-'awam) because of the persistence of [the passions of] their carnal nature; permitted for ascetics for having realized their spiritual struggles and allowable to Sufis because of their quickened hearts (p.113).

Lewisohn (1995) opines that the more liberal views of Abu Sa'id came to prevail in later Sufism in Iran while in the Persianate culture of Mughal India the institutionalization

of *Sama* became an important tool in the popularization of the Sufi orders in the non-Islamic environment of the Subcontinent (p. 77). Moreover, Rumi's endorsement of the usefulness of *Sama* for both commoners and Sufi adepts through his works came to be known throughout the Persian-speaking world, the high status of *Sama* in the later Sufi traditions was established (p. 11). As Ahmad (1969, p. 143) pinpoints: "Music is perhaps the only art in which something like a synthesis between the Muslim and Hindu artistic traditions was achieved, though not without a series of tensions." (Also, Hussaini, 1983; Rizvi, 1941, pp. 331-40).

After the commoners, the second category is of more advanced Sufis, whom Tusi (1938) terms as the "brethren of disciplic devotion and love." Despite their limited spiritual capacity, these members may be permitted so that "grace" may be sifted down to the common folk (p. 126). Lastly, come "the brethren of purity and ecstatic consciousness, gnostic sciences, seclusion, heart-savor, yearning and perfection. These are brethren in truth" (pp. 125-6). According to Tusi, *Sama* is beneficial to all whereas in Ghazali's view, the practice is harmful to all except the advanced adepts in Sufism.

The discussion above illustrates the view point of the two renowned Sufis who also give a brilliant explanation of the ontological primacy of the Sacred in *Sama* ceremonies. Despite their various opinions in terms of the permissibility of music assembly for beginners, it is obvious that all speak about the sacred preludes and preconditions which eventually define the ambience of the Sufi audition. Without the Sacred, there is no *Sama*. Ghazali notes as follows:

If it so happens that a proud and worldly person be present, or the singer has profane motives, or some pretentious person be continually dancing and feigning ecstatic experience or a group of people heedless of God be attending who practice *Sama* to indulge in their own vain humors or make small talk, staring about in all directions without any sense of reverence, or else a group of women onlookers be present there mixing with a group of young men so that each group is meditating on the other sex, such *Sama* is to no avail. (as cited in Lewisohn, 1997, p. 12)

All classical treatises stress the necessity of observing *adaab* or a proper code of conduct in the Sufi musical assemblies and emphasize “how inseparable the practice of *Sama* is from the ambience of its ritual “sacred” discipline-- the Sufi tariqa” (p. 7). There are a number of classical writings and to name a few such as *Kitab al-Luma* by Abi Nasr al-Sarrij (d. 378/988); *Ta'arruf* by Al-Kalabadhi (d. 385/995); *Risala* (Treatise on Sufism) by al-Qushayri (d. 465/1072) and *Kashf al-mahjub* by Hujwiri (d. 465/1072) which contain sections or chapters regarding the rules and manners or certain “pre-conditions” of *Sama*. Taken together, the “three conditions of time, place and brethren,” say Uyar and Beşiroğlu (2012), “constitute the psychological, liturgical and sociological substructure of the Sufi *adaab* of *Sama*” (p. 12). The observance of the conditions opens the gateway to “listen” to music and be led to a state of spiritual consciousness.

For Sufis, also, words are not adequate in themselves and like windows, they serve a purpose and become vehicles of communicating the Transcendental. Through audition or listening to music with the “ear of the heart,” the seekers attempt to deliberate on the mystical references of Sufi poetry, hearing the “hidden melody within sound and the secrets within the silent intervals as well as the notes of the music” (pp. 15-16). The ritual of *Sama* is thus essentially imbued with a sacred ambience and even the instruments used in the Sufi assemblies have sacred connotations. Lewisohn (1997) further cites al-Tusi (1938) as emphasizing the symbolic significance of the instruments used in Sufi *Sama*. His words are as under:

Each instrument has an archetypal meaning (ma'na) which it incarnates and expresses. The large tambourine (daf) refers to the cycle of all created beings. The hide on the tambourine refers to the descent of divine visitations (waridaat) from the innermost arcana upon general existence. Even the jangling bells on the tambourine have spiritual significance. (Tusi as cited in and trans. by Lewisohn, 1997, 13)

In *Sama*, even listening earnestly to the voice of the singer brings up another meditative experience, i.e., hearing and recalling the Divine which thereby descends upon the spirits, the hearts of the seekers and the consciences. The flute refers to “the human essences and the breath blown into the flute alludes to the divine light penetrating the seed

of man's essence" (p. 13). These elucidations bring to light an "interiorized reality of *Sama*" (p. 13) which might be compared with what Henry Corbin (1990) has termed "a visionary geography" (p. 16). Geographical features, mountains for instance, are here no longer merely physical features; they have a significance for the soul; they are psycho-cosmic aspects. The events that take place there consist in the very seeing of these aspects; they are psychic events. In the same way, audition in the Sufi tradition is not done with the ear of mundane consciousness but rather "with a consciousness anchored in the imaginal world" (Mitchell, 1986, p. 99). From the Muslim mystic's theocentric perspective, God is the sole Creative Force, Who in every moment creates both Concert, Music and Audition perpetually anew. *Sama* is thus a musical experience whose aesthetic depth leads to metaphysical penetration; the notes reflect, indeed, become, the divine harmony - (Lewisohn, 1997, p. 15). Such metaphysical reflections lead us as a matter of course to examine the specifically aesthetic nature of *Sama*, that is: mystical poetry.

## **2.7 Poetry and *Sama***

Besides the triadic conditions of the time, place and company of the Sufis, another important element and part of the contemplative experience of *Sama* is poetry. As far as poetic words are concerned, they themselves are very inadequate but Sufis regard them as vehicles to communicate the Transcendental. Music, for them, is the only mode which can bridge the gap between the literal and symbolic levels of meaning. Moreover, the density of symbolic meanings and emotions underlying any Sufi poem can get expressed only within the sacred ambience of the *Sama* gathering. Music is perhaps "the vertical dimension of *Sama*" which forms the poem's "emotional body of water; the poem-fish is born and swims in the ocean of *Sama*-for without music, the poem expires on the dry land of literal and horizontal meanings" (Lewisohn, 1997, p. 15).

Muhammad al-Tusi (1938), in the introduction of his book *Bawariq al-ilma*,<sup>7</sup> emphasizes the close liaison between poetry and *Sama*, interpreting the *Sama* rites as carrying a specific thought experience via the poetic composition (song) which a pure music is not capable of doing. He reiterates as under:

The audition of this group (the Sufis) consists in mystical reflection over the mysteries concealed within the highly refined poetry (al-ash 'ar al-

raqiqa) which are sung by the cantor (qawwal) and when touched by ecstasy, are realized by the intent heart of the gnostic. Such audition induces them to set aside resistance and get drawn to the Almighty Being to become aware of spiritual subtleties and spiritualities. (trans. from Arabic by Lewisohn, 1997, p. 15)

Tusi obviously highlights that the mystic audits “the hidden mysteries” within the poetry. Listening to music in *Sama*, therefore, does not merely refer to an aesthetic experience which requires intent on words and music, it is rather a meditation “on the symbolic correspondences and mystical references of Sufi poetry with the ear of the heart; an audition to the “hidden” melody within sound, to the secrets within the silent intervals as well as the notes of the music” (1995, p. 16).

Approaching the subject of poetry and music from a more theological perspective, Abu Hamid al-Ghazali gives the list of some seven occasions when poetry, as per tradition, is allowed, at times even obligatory upon the believers to use. Some, for instance include (1) the singing of pilgrims; (2) the inspiring of soldiers for war; (3) for the lovers of God (Macdonald, 1901, pp. 220-235). It is this last category which relates to the discussion of sacred music in Islam. Reflecting about this mystic concert, Ghazali asserts all *Sama* (meaning both “listening” and the Sufi music assembly) that a Sufi sees and hears everything in His context and hence the gathering further augments his yearning and love of God. These ceremonies, therefore, have a deep purifying and cleansing impact on the soul and, in turn, induce various kinds of ineffable contemplative experience, which are regarded to be “the ultimate fruit of all pious works” and are known only to those who have gone through these experiences directly.

Concerning the fruits of *Sama* in the context of Sufi visionary states, he further underlines how the mystic “encounters in himself states which he had not encountered before he listened to the music” (p. 17). His experience of states such as the music experience is, however, ineffable:

The cause of those states appearing in the heart through listening to music (*Sama*) is a divine mystery (sirr Allah) found within the harmonious relationship of measured tones [of music] to the [human] spirits and in the

spirits becoming overcome by these melodies and stirred by them-whether to longing, joy, grief, expansion or contraction. But the knowledge of the cause as to why spirits are affected through sounds is one of the mystical subtleties of the sciences of visionary experience [known to the Sufis]. (as cited in Macdonald, 1901, p. 230)

As to what poetic material is being sung in *Sama*, Hamid Al-Ghazali emphasizes that it is more the “state of inner purity” on part of the listener which is of foremost importance since it is the listener’s own mystical mood which decides the permissibility matter of the ceremony. Even if the sensual poetry is sung, it may be applied to God since all portrayals of the Beloved’s beauty or bodily descriptions can allude to both metaphysical as well as physical aspects. This, however, may be discerned by only those who are pure in their heart. Ghazali’s view concerning a person with sensual passions is that he must quit, put music and singing (*Sama*) aside for good (as cited in Macdonald, 1901, pp. 237-39). This entails that a person who is overcome by the love of created things or beings must guard him/herself against singing and music (*Sama*) in any type of expression it appears in. But the one who is engrossed by love of God Almighty, will not get deviated by any verbal or poetic expression and instead be able to capture only the sublime underpinning language by sifting each idea through the stream of his noble aspirations.

This forms the central notion in the mystical use of poetry, emphasizing that it is the listener’s state of mind--or rather the proper “tune” of his soul--which is a must to determine the effect of music and poetry on him. Such explanations are criticized as “purely subjective...vague, indefinite,” as Macdonald (1901, p. 77) maintains, and the awakened emotional states as only the product of “the hyperactivity of a set of neurovegetative functions” (Rouget, 1985, p. 301). To Lewisohn (1997), it needs not be forgotten that it is a “mystical subject who hears the voice of God in the hawker selling wild thyme and discerns the threat of His wrath in poetry which to others is naught but a flight of poetic fancy at best and morbid fantasy at worst” (p. 15). Moreover, it must be remembered that this “mystical subject” is the one who already underwent an ascetic discipline, observation, understanding and applied the spiritual pre-qualifications of *Sama*. It is, therefore, possible as Ghazali argues, that his rapturous experiences are “genuine and true” and those who

deny the validity of these experiences are perhaps unaware of the musical taste and tend to overlook the relationship of poetry and music with the Sacred in Islamic culture.

## 2.8 Prophetic vs. Poetic Audition

Ghazali cites various examples of spiritualists, scholars and even common folk finding themselves held by rapture (*wajd*) upon audition of the Quran (Macdonald, 1901, pp. 732-38). *Sama* according to him, may even cause death. Upon hearing the verses, “O soul at peace! Return to your Lord, well pleased and well-pleasing,” (Chapter 89, Verses, 27-30) one of the Sufis, Ghazali states, went to ecstasy (*tawajjud*), uttered a loud cry and his soul departed (Ghazali, n.d., p. 262; Macdonald, 1901, p. 736)

Ghazali also gives many reasons why listening to poetry is spiritually more profitable than the Quranic audition and the sum of what he says is that since the Muslims have become too accustomed to reciting or hearing the Quran, there is less chance to get motivated into further ecstasies by it. Ghazali maintains that ecstasy is but Truth (*wajd al-haqq*) which arises out of the abundant love of God and a true longing to encounter Him. It may be induced by the Quranic audition too but the one who is unable to benefit is but “absorbed in fondness for creation and love of what is created” (as cited in Lewisohn, 1997, p. 20).

In Ghazali’s view, since the Quranic cantillation has its own system, it applies restrictions other than its use in a highly specific manner. Cantillation of the Quranic verses through music is not permitted. Thus, using the “profane” medium of poetry to gain access to the Sacred is easier and hence it would be easy for some people to “call attention to ideas that are remote through things that are near” (as cited in Macdonald, 1901, pp. 739-40). Moreover, language of poetry “has power through poetic taste of making an impression on the soul, in so far as a pleasant voice with measure is not like a pleasant voice without measure; and measure is what is found in poetry as opposed to the verses of the Quran” (1901, pp. 741-42). In poetry singing, it is permissible to improvise the musical measure, rhythm, poetic meter and various vocal ornaments, e.g., lengthening and shortening of syllables, but for Quranic recitation, any improvisation is prohibited. The rhythms of poetry complemented with musical instruments in particular, are effective in stimulating the ecstatic emotions. Many people who disapprove of these rhythms saying that it is idle

jesting and sport while some others consider this form of music as ridiculous, it is apparent that by associating “the speech of God with poetic jest or musical sport,” these people enact an immoral breach of civility (Lewisohn, 1997, p. 20).

Music and poetry, mystics agree, are preeminently human and created as compared to the Divine which is uncreated and hence will incite the heart with fervor than the Quranic recitation. Muhammad al-Tusi (1938) also highlights the fruitful effect which poetry’s musical harmonies put on the soul of the listener. It reads as follows:

When many melodic arrangements and spiritual harmonies are evoked within someone, his nature come to prefer them over all else. Thus, when a person listens to harmonious melodies which allude to those archetypal meanings relating to heart-savor and realities of the divine Unity, his whole being inclines to these things, each limb receiving its own individual delight. Hence, while the ear hearkens to the subtleties of the harmonies of the Infinite, the eye apprehends the harmonies of movement, the heart the subtleties of ideas, and reason (aql) knows rapture of the harmonies of the Infinite. (Trans. From Arabic by Lewisohn, 1997, p. 21)

In conclusion, in Persian Sufism, poetry with musical accompaniment establishes the most fundamental part of the mystical soul. As St. Teresa of Avila pronounced, “Even the greatest contemplatives cannot bear to live without poetry” (as cited in Lewisohn, 1997, p. 21).

## **2.9 Sufi Music Today**

Sufi music, as the discussion above reveals, is underpinned with the notion of the sacred. It has, therefore, pedagogical targets for those who seek to experience it in that way. The singing content used in the Sufi assemblies serves the purpose of communicating the Transcendental. However, in the contemporary modern times, Sufi music has largely ceased to be a symbolic discourse of the transmission of meaning. For instance, *Qawwali* -the form of Sufi music in the Indian subcontinent and Pakistan has lost much of its traditional form and purpose. Similarly, Sufi music enacted in various forms in countries such as Turkey, Morocco, Syria and East Africa, is largely secularized. The studies



reviewed in this section serve to explore: (1) Sufi music as a site whereby the sacred and the profane intermingle (2) the singers seem to be driven by material benefits, fame and visibility in the World Market and thereby the text, Sufi or any sacred content they employ in their songs, is only a representational relic (3) on account of the sacred-profane version of Sufi singing, a new form of Sufi spirituality is in the process of invention, but with the risk no less than to corrupt and diminish the very elements that constitute the identity of the performers in their Muslim context.

### **2.9.1 Sufi Music no more a Symbolic Sign**

Regula Qureshi (1986) in *Sufi Music of India and Pakistan: Sound, Context and Meaning in Qawwali* mentions *Qawwali* in the South Asian context particularly. *Qawwali*, she argues is the “authentic spiritual song that transports the mystic toward union with God” (p. 1) and the Sufi communities in South Asia have, for centuries, sustained this tradition as the central ritual in their assemblies (*mehfil-e-Sama*). The ritual follows certain ethics ranging from the order of seating to the selection of poetic content or music composition as per the instructions of the spiritual master. Musicians present in songs a rich collection of poems meant to “articulate and evoke the gamut of mystical experience for the spiritual benefit of their audience” (1986, p. 1). Qureshi explicitly focuses on the power of sound that a *Qawwali* singing exerts on the listeners who “listen” to recall and revive their spiritual lineage; link to their immediate guide, the departed saints and ultimately to God. By providing a listening (*Sama*) experience to the devotees, *Qawwali*, therefore, enacts as a symbolic sign for them to transcend their conscious striving—a state leading on to a symbolic death of oneself and be transported to a state of ecstasy-- a mystical station of union with God. Parallel to the whole discussion, Qureshi proclaims that the versions of *Qawwali* rated highly popular in the present times are devoid of the symbolic significance the traditional *Qawwali* was imbued with. The reason being that they are rather the adaptations of the original form of singing with the purpose to entertain, “*Qawwali* in its popular version adapted for entertainment in clubs and on the screen...” (p. 1).

In another article, Qureshi (1999) moves on to trace the singing of *Qawwali* in terms of how it was originally situated in its live context in contrast to its new virtual context-the

recorded version. She states that *Qawwali*, “a religious genre with a powerful semantic capacity rooted in its function” (p. 66), “stands out against the much-lamented destructive effect of recording on traditional secular idioms” (p. 93). This entails how the devotional sounds are taken out of their live context and re-used for the purpose of commodification without taking into account the functional aspect for which *Qawwali* was meant originally. In her view, *Qawwali* in its secular context may represent to a certain extent but can never “replace live *Qawwali* in a Sufi assembly” (p. 93). It seems Qureshi locates *Qawwali* in two contexts separately, religious as well as secular. Speaking in the specific Indian context, she emphasizes the role that technology is playing to produce new forms of recording and very rightly asserts, “No modern communication medium is more intrusive in modern Indian life than recorded and electronically amplified sound” (Babb as cited in Qureshi, 1999, p. 10). She notes that technology with its discursive intrusion via the other broadcast media has left an impact as the voice of the continuing centralized structures of power in both India and Pakistan. Live *Qawwali* being under the religious and feudal hegemony of South Asian Muslims for long though retains some of its religious reference from the live ceremony today, it has resulted “in a musical idiom that conveys to its listeners functionally composite and portable experience of entertainment” (p. 93). The ritual is there as well as the name but not its symbolic significance. Qureshi relates this new type of representation of “Muslim identity and devotional Islam all in one --- a musical style-package by and for the now emancipated ‘subculture’ of Indic Islam.” Going a step further than what Hebdige said, she comments that this “represents a manifestation of hegemony rather than religion, through the assertion of style” (p. 93). By subcultures, she means the more “Western-oriented younger generation that identifies with local cultures and languages as well as a Westernization of musical taste” (p. 93) in comparison with their elder generation—the immigrants from India who identified with Urdu and South Asian Sufism. The younger group have their own ways of seeing and influencing the society and “spirituality” attracts them as far as it is something exotic or elusive — spirituality as a generic notion and not as a specific religious notion and what Qureshi refers to as “spiritual cosmopolitanism” (66).

Newell (2007) also agrees that *Qawwali* like other forms of devotional practices of different religions of the world, has lost much of its traditional form and purpose. *Qawwali*,

in its present form seems more like a construct meant to induce a “sense” of spirituality among the participants through mediated sounds than a naturally inspirational activity whereby the listeners get moved into active meditation via the power of sound and meaning. Islamic music or *Sama*, therefore, enacts as a symbolic gateway for believers to seek unity with the Beloved whereas the newer discourse of *Qawwali* highlights only “style” whereby no purification of baser emotions can occur and hence no ecstasy. *Qawwali* in its particular South Asian context has lost most of its symbolic representation and so is the case with other contexts, for instance, Turkey.

### **2.9.2 Sufi Music Commodified**

Amira El-Zein (2010) takes into account the phenomenon of “New Sufism,” its emergence in the United States and its consequent impact on the religious traditions of the world, Sufism in particular. She underscores how the work of Rumi, for instance, is being utilized by the followers of New Sufism to sell products or treat despair and depression, and how the people of America, in general, have a tendency to make a “play” of the traditions of other religions and communities. El-Zein remains focused on how the Americans treat the great works of Jalal al-Din Rumi and what is currently in fashion is that his work is taken out of the Islamic Sufi tradition into an obscure sort of spiritual movement now termed as “New Sufism.”

Uyar and Beşiroğlu (2012) in their article, take into account the music ritual of the Whirling Dervishes of Turkey. Their paper focuses on “how the performance and reception of “Mevlevi music” has changed with the influence of the commodification process” (p. 137). As music is one of the main components of the Whirling Dervishes like many other orders of Sufism, this seems to have awfully attracted the world music markets which devise strategies to commodify these performances. However, it would be equally valid to say that since the Whirling Dervishes rituals are enacted as public demonstrations or cultural shows for the tourists, they make a tremendous appeal to the neo-liberal agencies or music industries which, in turn, use the rituals in their own ways, using the banner of “Sufi music” or by simply “rebranding their products” (Craig & Porter, 2006, p. 137). Uyar and Beşiroğlu compare the traditional with the recent music albums which used the title of “Mevlevi music.” The traditional music, they note, is strongly connected with the Turkish

music tradition called *makam* but the music accompanying the Whirling rituals is called *Ayin-i Şerif*--a form of the *makam* music. The traditional Mevlevi ceremony has a specific set of theoretical rules in “tonality, rhythmic structure and melodic contour” (p. 137). On the other hand, the tracks that the authors examine for instance, “For Love” and “Drop,” make a fusion of electronic sounds with *ney* being promoted as “Mevlevi Music.” They further note that “the only common reference to Mevlevi music and culture is the use of the *ney*. In addition, there are albums, which have “Mevlevi” in their titles but have no connection with Mevlevi music. Whirling dervishes feature on many CD covers of so-called “Sufi” music recordings from Turkey” (p. 146). Similar is the case with Coke Studio in Pakistan using the title of “Sufi music.”

Lueg (2010) examines one of the most celebrated Turkish Mevlevi Ceremony in the context of a secularized Turkish Republic after the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the consequent socio-political changes taking place there. Like Qureshi (1986), he also draws a comparison between the traditional and modern musical rites held in Turkey by the Mevlevi Order. Referring specifically to “place” which is one of the sacred spaces recommended by the ancient Sufis, Lueg notes how “the Mevlevi Ceremony has been affected by its transfer from the original function as a religious ritual within the intimate environment of the Mevlevi lodge to the platform of government-controlled public performance in the secular environment” (para, 3). Lueg, in fact, problematizes the concept of “place” used in the original Mevlevi discourse and its shift to newer spaces, visible or invisible. The first shift, for instance, is seen from the conduction of ceremony under a strict spiritual discipline of a Sheikh to an open activity of public performance or amusement. This refers to the unsettling of the very notion underlying the traditional Mevlevi ceremony. Secondly it has been turned into an activity of political bargain or commodification to be used for global transactions. Lastly, it has become a secular activity lacking in any kind of intimate environment of teaching and learning meant for spiritual improvement. Lueg thus critically examines the impact of the secular adaptation of a devotional practice in the particular context of the Mevlevi Ayin Ceremony in the Turkish Republic.

Rozehnal's (2007) article deals with *Qawwali* --a distinctly South Asian variety of *Sama* which can be called a "ritualized performance of ecstatic Sufi poetry accompanied by music" (p. 657). *Qawwali* is a unique genre of religious expression nurtured by the Chishti order in particular since the twelfth century in the Indian Subcontinent. In the context of the Sufi path, "*Sama* is first and foremost a pedagogical tool — a ritual technology for the molding and shaping of a moral, virtuous self" (p. 657). The article focuses on how the Chishti Sabiris distinguish their musical assemblies from the public gatherings held at Sufi shrines in Pakistan or the pop-star *Qawwali* s. What makes their music ritual sacred is due to what they call Sufi ambience, i.e., the observance of three rules, i.e., place, time and company. The Chishti disciples criticize the "popular *Qawwali*" in that it "reduces mass-produced music to a form of commercialized entertainment ... and which is often insensitive to the Sufi tradition" (p. 668). The ambience of the Chishti assemblies is maintained and regulated by their spiritual teachers while the disciples sit together and contemplate over what the singers perform out of poetic verses (*kalam*) usually accompanied by the hand-clapping, drums (*tabla*), and harmonium. The Chishtis also believe that *kalam* is inherently powerful and has its own aesthetics. Sufis link the sequence of the poetic verses (*kalam*) with the stages of the Sufi path known as *suluk*. The essence of *suluk* is as follows:

In the beginning, man is in a state of duality (maqam-i dui). The mind of the seeker of truth struggles to overcome this. With the blessings of *mujahada*, the signs and secrets of divine unity (tawhid) begin to be revealed and the seeker traverses the stages of true love. The result is ultimately union with God (wasil bi Allah). After this, he returns to the state of servitude (maqam-I abdiyat) which is the reward for permanence in God (baqa bi Allah). (2007, pp. 668-69)

Citing from Zauqi Shah's book *Tarbiyat al-ushshaq*, the scholar Rozehnal says that *Sama* is a part of *suluk* rather the essence of *suluk*. The *kalam*, therefore, must be matching with the stages of *suluk* itself. In the contemporary scene it is observed as the scholar views, "these days the *Qawwali* s are often ignorant of these matters" (p. 668).

Rozehnal further observes that for Chishtis, “loud drumming and theatrical gestures” are totally discouraged in their musical gatherings. Similarly, “pandering to popular tastes by playing “*filmi Qawwali*” is strictly prohibited” (p. 671). A senior Chishti Sabiri disciple offers a critique of popular *Qawwali* that he often heard repeated among murids:

*Qawwali [filmi]* is not *Sama*. With these Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan types . . . there is always lots of talk about wine, and the [drum] beats go up [in intensity]. It is a different taste and they [the *Qawwali* s] play to the gallery. We do not allow them to use loud *tabla*. They must come to us for the blessings of our shaykhs and not for the money. (p. 671)

While the Chishti disciples do respect the pop singers for their musical ability in general, they do not approve of those who “commercialize and commodify Sufi music.” Most of the singers are no longer trained regarding the ritual etiquettes and the mystical intricacies of the poetic verses. *Sama*, they insist, “is not a form of entertainment. It is a powerful spiritual catalyst that should be used only in the presence of a spiritual master who understands its power” (pp. 671-672). For the Chishti adepts, “poetry and music are merely a medium for a higher goal: the inner concentration on the mystical quest” (p. 669).

Lewisohn (1997) in his article “The Sacred Music of Islam: *Sama* in the Persian Sufi Tradition” examines the significance of the *Sama* ritual and the ambience that it has to have as a prior element. The modern art, however, is free of these essential elements and warrants complete freedom of expression to the artist since any formal discipline might “stifle the artist’s creative genius” (1997, p. 7) and thus puts itself in direct contrast to the concept underpinning the Islamic art. His comment that “a strange condition has occurred in which modern man no longer beholds the Sacred to be prior-ontologically prior--to Art” (1997, p. 6) provides food for thought. Similarly, Nasr (2010) pinpoints the shift of focus regarding how art is being perceived in the modern times. The modern art, he says, is a random collection of diverse ideas which are not grounded in any specific culture or religion. Underpinning this view is the modern belief in an individual’s expression that is free of any restraint or limit. What is being defined under the appellation of art needs to be questioned and examined as does Nasr by highlighting the nature of modern art in a succinct manner and thus he argues, “Well, this is art . . . What is the difference between,

let us say, the people who go to the junkyard and pick up a few pieces ... Well, this is art” (pp. 57-58). He further highlights the downgrading effect that the New Age modernization has made on the sacred and traditional music and rituals reducing their original ambience to secular shows as, for instance, Coke Studio enacts in our Pakistani context. Nasr states as follows:

Modernization means for the most part the destruction of these traditional arts and their banishment to the margin of society, to museums, to memories similar to the banishment of live sacred and traditional music from the everyday texture of life and its relegation to the concert hall. (Nasr, 2010, pp. 57-58)

Uyar and Beşiroğlu’s (2012) article reviewed earlier bring to light how the modern cultural shows in Turkey reduce some of the essential components of the Mevlevi rituals as they desire and hence relegate the sacred. The Mevlevi ceremony of *Ayin-i Şerif*, the authors highlight, has a specific set of theoretical rules and the organization of ceremony into four parts. For instance, it has to open with (1) *Naat-i Şerif*, honoring the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and close with a reading from the Quran (p. 142). On the other hand, the modern ceremonies use the “Mevlevi music” only as a label to make their demonstrations a success in the global market as the author makes it evident through the study of music tracks (p. 147).

Be it the Turkish or South Asian context, “the Sacred preludes, preconditions encompass and, ultimately, define the ambience of the Sufi’s audition...In the absence of the Sacred, there is no *Sama*” (p. 12) as asserts Lewisohn (1997). The very same path, as notes Rozehnal’s (2007), has to be followed in *Qawwali* as well, as the Chishti Sabris insist. *Qawwali* has to commence with (*na’t sharif*) recitation honoring the Prophet (PBUH), followed by songs in praise of the saints of that Order (silsila) and next comes the devotional singing of poetry or words of love to warm the hearts of the seekers and arouse their desire of unity with God. Hearing the poetic verses thus, the devotees get attuned to slowly move to the effacement of their individual self (*muraqaba-i fana*) and “become overwhelmed with the state of Divine union” (p. 669).

All classical treatises talk about the necessity of observing *adab* or a proper code of conduct in the Sufi musical assemblies and emphasize “how inseparable the practice of *Sama* is from the ambience of its ritual “sacred” discipline-- the Sufi tariqa” (p. 7). There are a number of classical writings and to name a few such as *Kitab al-Luma* by Abi Nasr al-Sarrij (d. 378/988); *Ta'arruf* by Al-Kalabadhi (d. 385/995); *Risala* (Treatise on Sufism) by al- Qushayri (d. 465/1072) and *Kashfal-mahjub* by Hujwiri (d. 465/1072) which contain sections or chapters regarding the rules and manners or certain “pre-conditions” of *Sama*. Taken together, the “three conditions of time, place and brethren,” says Uyar and Beşiroğlu’s (2012), “constitute the psychological, liturgical and sociological substructure of the Sufi *adab* of *Sama* (p. 12). The observance of the conditions opens the gateway to “listen” to music and be led to a state of spiritual consciousness. *Sama*, in fact, provides the ladder or the medium to reach that state as was well understood by the English visionary poet William Blake, who said: “I would no more question my eye than I would question a window concerning a sight. I look through it, not with it” (as cited in Raine, 1979, p. 39).

For, Sufis, words are not adequate in themselves and like windows, they serve a purpose and become vehicles of communicating the Transcendental. Through audition or listening to music with the “ear of the heart,” the seekers attempt to deliberate on the mystical references of Sufi poetry, hearing the “hidden melody within sound and the secrets within the silent intervals as well as the notes of the music” (pp. 15-16). The ritual of *Sama* is thus essentially imbued with a sacred ambience and even the instruments used in the Sufi assemblies have sacred connotations. According to Muhammad al-Tusi, each instrument has an “archetypal meaning (*ma'na*) which it incarnates and expresses.” The large tambourine (*daf*) refers to the cycle of all created beings” (as cited in Lewisohn, 1997, 13). Similarly, the hide on the tambourine refers to “the descent of divine visitations from the innermost arcana upon general existence...” (ibid.). Even the jangling bells on the tambourine have spiritual significance. Listening to the voice of the singer in *Sama* itself evinces another contemplative experience: recalling “the divine life which descends from the inner most arcana to the levels of the spirits, the hearts, and the consciences” (ibid.). The flute refers to “the human essences” and the breath blown into the flute alludes to the “divine light penetrating the seed of man’s essence” (ibid.)



### 2.9.3 Exotic as an Alternative Spiritual Sign

Degirmenci (2013) in chapter three of his book traces this new concept of spirituality from the perspective of the Western audience who is bored with the mainstream Western music and looks for “alternative sounds, the stranger and vaguer such sounds are, the more spiritual and exotic they seem to the audience” (p. 82). Spirituality, therefore, seems to have become an elusive term in 21<sup>st</sup> century and is not easy to define. It seems a kind of freely chosen, a pick ‘n mix ensemble of ideas and practices from across cultures and religions, as says Mattichak (2011) in an online article posted. The New Age spirituality in his view is as under:

A conglomerate of borrowed ideas and practices chosen almost ad hoc at the traditional religions of the world are picked apart and reassembled into mix and match *isms* that are marketed to a growing consumer base who are avaricious for the next spiritual high from an exotic culture. Driven almost entirely by celebrity pop culture, new age spirituality has acquired Hollywood chic in its 50 years of over hyped development. (Para, 3)

Mattichak’s (2011) comment in his article “Spirituality: The New Religion for the New Age” is thought-provoking in that it also focuses on “the newly liberated seekers of enlightenment” regarding the ways they employ to seek “spiritual fulfillment.” Mattichak, too, speaks of what Qureshi calls “spiritual cosmopolitanism” and underscores that the New Age spirituality is free of any religiosity and it tends to connect itself to a cosmopolitanism culture which implies that it belongs to neither one culture nor religion. His concern whether the New Age trends offer an insightful understanding of what spirituality is or what people generally assume to be something spiritual is simply a worthless bargain “for a meaningless five and dime selection of spiritually empty amusements” (p. 2), forms the central thought of his article sharing thus one of the concerns the present study is focused on, namely, the invention of a new form of spirituality by the Coke Studio singers in Pakistan.

What makes the whole scenario more complicated is that most of us are subject to these newer trends with the resultant dismissal of the traditional faith. The underlying thought behind this dismissal seems to be that the traditional faith is outdated and hence

invalid in today's modern world. It seems most of us have been taken in by "spiritualism that has been packaged into a marketable product by an increasingly secular world," (para, 2) as Mattichak argues. This emerging spiritualism is based on pick and mix formula as mentioned earlier. This kind of spiritualism is what Peter Pannke (German writer and musician) calls "new-age nonsense" in his lecture on Sufism and Sufi music delivered at the Goethe Institute Karachi and reported by *The Dawn* newspaper on November 8, 2012. He said the 12th and 13th centuries saw the peak of Sufism and after which a decline was witnessed because no serious attempt was made to study the subject. Hassanali's (2010) concern is to understand the emerging new forms of spirituality within the context of the Sufi philosophy itself. Sufism, he argues, though enacts as a symbolic capital of Pakistan as well as of the majority of Muslim countries, the philosophy it offers is not free of ambiguity. On account of its vague structure, the question may be posed whether "Sufism is an eclectic form of New Age spirituality or as a form of religious practice, is it the mystical essence of Islam?" (p. 43).

#### **2.9.4 Digital Sampling and its Impact on Sufi Music**

Writing in the context of Turkish Mevlevi music, Uyar and Beşiroğlu (2012) state that the Mevlevi Music, originally a spiritual genre of music, is gaining currency in a newer way, as a music of the New Age market. The spiritual ascriptions, i.e., the non-musical aspects of Sufi music of the Mevlevi Order are being used as a tool in the promotion of the secular art music of Turkey. This implies that the spiritual base of the Mevlevi Music is lifted out of its traditional context to be customized and shaped for the new market trends and to fit in the more flexible slot of the New Age "religiosity." Not only the spiritual content is trimmed but the spiritual depth and the ineffable in Sufi music that was traditionally conveyed through silent actions and movements (Sufi whirling) is presented with focus on the external form and style tending to treat Sufi music as a fancy, enjoyable item, turning it into a commodifying show. In performances meant for tourists, it is seen that the *Ayin-i Şerif*, traditionally one-hour long, is reduced into pieces and some of its sections are intermixed with the whirling ceremony. Instead of opting for traditional musical *makams* (modes), the performers employ modes such as *Rast* and *Buselik* which are in proximity with European art and music tonal system.

How the act of appropriation regarding music and mystical sounds occurs, rather becomes highly complex via the use of digital sampling is what Degirmenci (2013) elucidates in chapter 3 of his book, “Sufi music as a spiritual journey, the commodification of the Rumi image in World music markets,” while analyzing particularly a hit album “Rhythm of the Saints” (1990) by Paul Simon, an American music composer, Degirmenci underscores how the process of digital sampling takes place and the level of appropriation is made possible with this process. Sampling occurs, he says, as a result of the borrowing of a sound (s) from one context and employing it in a different context for some other purpose via the use of either digital or analog samplers.

Sampling includes the reproduction of musical instruments or other sounds (e.g., sounds of nature) by digitally processing them and either looping or programming to play them through other means than that by which they were originally played such as keyboards or sequencers. In this sense, sampling is an art of appropriation, especially in world music sampling where the suppliers of pre-recorded samples infuse the material with cultural significance and authenticity. Producing and selling sounds has become something of its own industry over the last few decades—the sounds are commodified fragmented and decontextualized so that musicians may use them in their own records. (p. 99)

Referring to Theberge’s (2003) article, “Ethnic Sounds,” Degirmenci further elaborates the sampling technique, i.e., Instrument sampling (multi-samples) and phrase sampling: while the former helps artists create their “own melodies, harmonies and rhythms,” the phrases enable them “to infuse and incorporate authentic live performances” into their own music (as cited in Degirmenci, 2013, p. 99). Regarding the impact of the sampling music on the listener, Theberge (2003) adds that in world music sampling, samples are supposed to possess “primal powers” that can have strong effects on the listener (p. 99). This entails that digital sampling is a tool used by music production companies of global market to appropriate sounds picked randomly from various contexts and re-use them for their marketing purposes. This also implies that sampling which is generally understood to be simple task of incorporating specific music corpus, turns out to

be a very “complicated process than it is in other aspects of music production. In some cases, very brief samples—even mere milliseconds long--- are threaded into music after being processed through samplers. In this case, “the sound itself is commodified to represent some cultural significance and authenticity” (p. 99). The sound adaptation, therefore, is meant to customize or reshape the data as well as develop new systems of representation in the new globalized scene. Taylor (2014) pays attention to what underlies musical practices as well social, cultural and historical issues surrounding these practices. The focus is also made on “corporate practices, advertising, marketing and how these shape representations” and, of course, sounds. Corporate agencies pick up the “sounds” from various contexts, reshape them and present them as exotic, a term being used parallel to “religiosity.” Taylor further states that the category of “world music was juxtaposed with the New Age chart in 1990—the same person organizes both charts. Regarding the New Age Movement, the coalescence with an eclectic notion of religiosity is apparent.” The movement, therefore, combines many pseudo or quasi-religious strands, intermixing, for instance, many Eastern and Christian traditions with occult and magic practices (pp. 5-6). As a consequence, the traditional elements exhaust drop by drop and are finally lost or regarded to be only meaningless items as is being observed as a consequence of the New Age notions which do not match with any mainstream religious beliefs, be it Christianity or Islam and instead promote secular ideas. Expressing the similar kind of concern, Mattichak in his article reads: “As Western societies across the globe abandon traditional Christian values the Church warns us of the creeping evils of becoming a secular world, preaching the message of salvation to a people that no longer fear for their souls...” (2017, para, 1). The New Age concoctions are, therefore, self-contradictory.

In the same vein, Taylor (2014), speaking in the wake of “world musics” and “world beat,” highlights the issues and contradictions surrounding the current movement of people and music(s) worldwide. He examines a number of discourses consumed in and around world music, indicating how the central notion of authenticity is used by bands, musicians, fans, and other viewers or listeners, and examines some of the music samples in detail, looking at ways of deploying systems of domination and representation. He further explores how some cross-cultural alliances design new musics and thereby new identities through inventive blends of sounds and styles. These blends come forth with distortions of

various kinds and the same is pinpointed by Piatt (2014) in his PhD thesis, in the context of *Dhikr* events held in Damascus, Syria. He notes how some new categories which he calls “distortions” of the traditional ways of doing *Dhikr*, were deployed in the events. Interviewing many of the participants, he came to know about these “radical transformations” visited upon the Syrian society “along lines established by Western modernity and its norms.” He observes the changes enacted by the modern Syrian state upon the society for about the half-century or more. His research, therefore, explores the “ways that certain modern Western framings of spirituality, mysticism, music, and art, which in many ways serve within liberal sensibilities” (p. 20). This research implicates how the systems of domination enact discursively and play a role in the construction of local identities, be it new forms of sociality or religiosity. Thus, the global trends enact as signs of dominance to be consumed by the youth in various cultures in the form of new ways of thinking or inspiration. Shannon (2003), also writes in the context of the global music phenomenon. In his analysis of Sufi music in Syria, he finds that only a few local people went to listen to Rumi and Sufi *Dhikr*; elements of the Sufi music tradition were easily found at international shows and in restaurants, i.e., they were presented for global consumption as world music. It is via their entry onto the World Stage or through enacting and staging in global performance contexts that they obtain their authenticity and locality (p. 267).

Kerr (2014) in his PhD Thesis also examines the global circulation of signs and their impact at local level (Tanzania) and the construction of new forms of sociality by the youth. He observes how the literature on youth underscores their tendency to “draw on global signs as a way of constituting themselves” with the outcome of the tendencies of conflicts and moral dilemmas among youth at the local level (p. 7). Furthermore, other researchers also note how the media genres created at remote places often in foreign languages, become a medium to influence the local audiences and exert power on them in various ways (Fair, 2009 & Larkin, 2004). It has also been observed in various cross-cultural settings or across the globe that consumption is also a means of production (Behrend, 2002, pp. 47-48; Miller, 1992, p. 164; Weiss, 2009, pp.18-19). It is evident that new genres, digital in particular, play a role to manipulate various ways of consumption and production as points out Kerr that what is being received by the local audiences or “reception” becomes,

therefore, central to understandings of the creation of identity, in a world of increased circulation of global goods (pp. 7-8).

A rapid circulation of global signs via digital means and their reception by audiences in various contexts who in turn fashion their own selves accordingly, has been noted. For instance, such studies done by Weiss, (2009) in Arusha and Biaya (2005, p. 220) in Kinshasa wherein the foreign material gradually gets indigenized (Magubane, 2006, p. 208) and the same concern is expressed by Kerr (2014) in his PhD thesis, as stated earlier. His research is significant in that it examines how the appropriation of elements of global musical style is important to the study of rapping in *Dar es Salaam*. His focus on “rapping as a form of production: a form of production which draws on the global order of signs but, more importantly, on local registers of meaning” and how they use the newly emerging global discourses in the creation of their texts and the constitution of their selves (pp. 7-8).

Writing in the Moroccan context, Lovesey (2011) provides another picture of the adaptation of the folk art for world music market, for instance, by bands such Beatles and Incredible String Band (ISB) music which come up with “culturally-threatening” material (p. 128). Whereas the ISB earlier subscribed to the folk tropes of authenticity and to its ethos that folk music could quietly transform consciousness and change society. The ISB de-emphasized their own virtuosity as musicians and the division between audience and performers. They democratized the band’s structure (sometimes welcoming audience members on stage to accompany performances, at least once including a youthful Salman Rushdie), making the band itself an extension of their social lives with the entry and exit of girlfriends, actors and musicians, subscribing to a Do-It-Yourself aesthetic (p. 128).

### **2.9.5 Signs as Empty Signifiers**

The 21<sup>st</sup> century with its focus on merely the ‘style’ than substance/purpose (Tasker, 2013) began its voyage in a direction which either has displaced the reality of signs or substituted them with fake copies. This phenomenon which values more the titles and brands may be better understood in Loytard’s (2001) words as the crisis of “legitimation” which is said to have begun in the last quarter of 20<sup>th</sup> century and entered a more critical phase at the turn of 21<sup>st</sup> century and after 9/11 in particular. This shift of representation is what Malpas (2012) calls the “moves from a representational to a simulation-focused

epistemology” (p. 15). The simulation is nothing but penumbra and fantasy (Farjeon, 2010) and is the defining characteristic of the present times since the yardstick for measuring truth and reality is based on nothing but shams and counterfeits.

The signs which represented traditions, values and beliefs have lost their reality in the contemporary free market of simulacra. Farjeon (2010) in the first chapter of his book further elaborates this concept of simulation or penumbra by stating that this (*The Vampires of 9/11*) is the work of and for shadows since “we are now shrouded in its penumbra ...we who disseminate fantasy” (p. 1). In fact, 9/11 incident in itself is a sign of simulacra which proffered numbers and digits disregarding the liaison between signs and values and substituted the spiritual meaning with the material. This is how a new spectacle which is rightly termed by Berger (2012) as “transhuman”- the culture which transcends human barriers and is shorn of context and history since its locus is the “spontaneous personal fulfillment” (Braidotti, 2011, p. 17). This desire for personal fulfillment is satiated in Jameson’s words through the “marketing of images, lifestyles, and modes of being” or “forging” of personalities and commodification of knowledge, culture and even religion (pp. 17-18).

The new discourse engages people in empty signifiers such as “trendy ringtones for mobile telephones that are designed less to inform us that we have a call than to tell those around us how cool we are and which cultural clique we have bought our way into” (as cited in Braidotti, 2010, pp. 17-18). Jameson further states that “Commodities are no longer simply objects; they are brands, identities, ways (signs) of forging personalities and communities in a world that has lost touch with traditional senses of being ...” (pp. 17-18). Berger (2010) pinpoints the act of forgery in another way by differentiating between signs of truth and falsehood. Citing Umberto Eco, he writes how “people can and often do lie with signs,” e.g., men and women who cross dress or who dye their black or brown hair as blond (p. 12). Ekman focuses on facial expressions as signs and defines some categories e.g., anger, disgust, fear or surprise but in the present consumer culture, these signs are often simulated to represent what they are not in reality (Berger, 2010). Similarly, Baudrillard (2010) traces signs which have lost their substance and are divested of their symbolic value and he relates it to the present scenario. Baudrillard uses the term

“simulacra” and elaborates it as well. The sign, he says, “masks the absence of a profound reality; it has not relation to any reality whatsoever: it is its own pure simulacrum” (p.6).

Other scholars talk about the ways how these simulated signs are being used to manipulate and exploit reality and fundamental beliefs and values. McLuhan (1999) elaborates the idea through his discussions and analysis of comic strips, the front page of newspapers and a number of advertisements. He pinpoints the complexity of the matter and the signs which people use to achieve their desired ends. In his analysis, he deconstructs how, for instance, the advertisers manipulate people and capitalize upon their basic values in order to sell their products (as cited in Berger, 2010, p. 12).

### **2.9.6 Loss of Spiritual Meaning**

Not only the print but the new digital media is deploying signs to achieve certain ends such as creating a spectacle of pure entertainment for the viewers particularly in the current scenario. The same has been observed in various enactments of Coke Studio Sufi singing. Bhattacharjee and Alam (2012) trace the origin of Sufi philosophy via the singing of *Qawwali* - form of *Sama*- which was practiced in the sub-continent. Talking about the modern adaptations of *Qawwali* like *Filmi* and *Techno Qawwalis*, the researchers pinpoint a “new breed of professional performers of Sufi music and *Qawwali*” and these singers encash Sufi music using it as a “cultural commodity” for the audience “who neither know the differences between the genres nor care” since their interest lies in fun and entertainment.

Researches done by Bageshree (2005) and Jawed (2005) are significant regarding their focus on new trends to intermingle genres and the example they quote is that of *Junoon*- a Pakistani band who did the task by combining elements of modern hard rock and traditional folk music (secular) with Sufi poetry (sacred) to *invent* the Sufi rock. Ironically a Sufi rock song, called *Bullah Ki Jaana* released by Rabbi Shergill in 2005 became “a chart topper in India and Pakistan” (Bageshree, 2005; Jawed, 2005). What these studies dig out is how values are being commodified and even spiritual signs are being used to no other end but entertainment and hence signs are important in that they are signs and not what they stand for and their value is measured only in terms of materiality. Hence the modern “aestheticization” is merely “empty pastiche” in Frederic Jameson’s words



which has turned art and aesthetics into mechanical objects and art is what “mixes and matches elements and fragments of everyday life without any sense of critical engagement” (as cited in Malpas, 2010, p. 17).

Digital technology is the new effigy being adored and the search for “a new vision of the Universe, a clearer insight into the fundamentals of ethics and religion” (Arberry, 1978) has been substituted with a phenomenon which draws on signs divested of any signified meaning. The perennial quest of mankind for a transcendental reality which seemed to have been revived as a consequence of the two World Wars got drowned in the flood of materialism and hi-tech culture in 2-3 decades reaching its zenith at the turn of 21<sup>st</sup> century and 9/11 in particular. In today’s techno-cultural phenomenon, the signs themselves are of primary value in that they have attained almost the status of worship as has been observed through the very prominent and striking neon sign of Coca Cola bottle in all videos of Sufi songs under study.

### **2.9.7 Coca Cola Discourse**

Sinno’s (2015) article on Chreiteh’s *Dayman Coca-Cola*, a story written in Beirut context, talks of the global discourses and their marked impact on religion, culture and self-perceptions of the local people and their new subjectivities and inclination towards materiality. Sinno presents Beirut as a place of contention which is shedding off its traditions and values under the influence of the intrusive global discourses: there seems an open conflict, accepting the domination via the intrusive global discourses which quietly turn them into new subjectivities. The article implicates that amidst other newly emerging trends or signs, Coca Cola appears to be the sign of desire of the young generation, a sign of new taste, modernity, freedom and an absolute space which accommodates all kinds of heterogeneous elements, e.g., religion, culture and esteemed values belonging to specific cultures.

In another article, Coca Cola itself is characterized as a “sacred object” (Chidester, 1996, p. 744) carrying religious power and perhaps religion itself. Chidester in his article makes an exciting comment by one of the advertising directors of Coca Cola in the wake of introducing a “New Coke” formula in 1985. The public response, he says, was more like a “religious devotion to the drink” and seeing the huge public outcry, the remark that he

made reads as, “They talk as if Coca-Cola had just killed God” (p. 750). The Coca Cola image was thus made adorable rather consecrated gradually and a product which was introduced as a patent medicine got developed into a unique “sacred formula.” With its “Hobbleskirt” bottle and the canny use of advertising, Coca Cola permeated “every aspect of American life” and eventually became globally popular.

Speaking in Baudrillard’s (2010) terms, the Coca Cola image seems more a sign of simulation than a product which journeys various degrees of concealment, causing annihilation of the real image in the last stage and itself becomes “real” and as said earlier, by replacing religion. This is precisely what Baudrillard (2010) defines as simulacra which in the view of this specific instance, is the simulation of faith and religion resulting in the loss of the real signified, i.e., fuzzy Coke replaces a profound reality. Initially launched as a medicine, Coke rises to be the dominant consumer beverage, later turns into the most recognized trademark in the world and finally becomes “The Real Thing,” representing an “all-inclusive world view” including religion (Chidester, p. 744).

Chidester (1996) in his article highlights how the “Coca-Cola religion” as was described by Clifford Geertz and Mark Pendergrast in their account of new “religious symbolism” initially founded in America but became global eventually. Pendergrast (2000) in his popular book, *For God, Country, and Coca-Cola*, remarks as follows:

... the fizzy, caramel-colored sugar water stands as a “sacred symbol” that induces “worshipful” moods that animate an “all-inclusive world view espousing perennial values such as love, peace, and universal brotherhood.  
(as cited in Chidester, p. 744)

Reading the above remarks, it becomes clear that it is these “sacred symbols” that credit the world with meaning and values and not religion or any mystical faith. Pendergrast argues, it is Coca-Cola--the sacred name, the sacred formula, the sacred image, the sacred object-which has been the fetish at the center of a popular American system of religious symbolism (p. 744). Throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of twentieth century the Coca-Cola religion inspired a kind of missionary spirit. In the early 1950s, Delony Sledge, one of the advertising directors of Coca-Cola pronounced, “Our work is a religion rather than a business” (as cited in Ryan, 2017). Earlier in 1938, in the similar kind of profoundly

religious manner, the editor W. Allen White observed, Coca-Cola has become a potent symbol of the “sublimated essence of America” and thereby the term “Coca-colonization” of the world seems apt here (pp. 750-51). Chidester (1996), in his article further notes as under:

Here we find Coca-Cola as a sacred sign, a sign subject to local misreading, perhaps, but nevertheless the fetish of a global religion, an icon of the West, a symbol that can mark an initiatory entry into modernity. Through massive global exchanges and specific local effects, the religion of Coca-Cola has placed its sacred fetish “within arm’s reach of desire” all over the world. ... In the best tradition of American advertising, the Coca-Cola Company has created the desire for a product that no one needs. (p. 750)

The creation of Coca Cola desire among the masses world-wide is suggestive of how American “cultural imperialism” functions in the realm of a global consumer-unconscious as pointed out by Higginson (2011) in his article. He writes how Cola-Cola plays with the “ur-signifier of American global domination.” In addition, it reminds us that the essentially American drink fuses two ingredients that were discovered during the Western expansion, namely, coca leaf from South America and cola nut from Africa. The “neologism Cola-Cola thus visually underscores the continuous double exploitation in which culturally meaningful products (not unexploited raw materials) are removed from their context of production/consumption and returned as pure signifiers of a victorious and voracious capitalism” (pp. 93-94).

Foster (2007) in his article underscores how the Coca-Cola desire is constructed via launching a new kind of value system, i.e., refreshing a new generation of consumers. The semiotics of these values come out, for instance, of its funding of television programs of “American Idol,” to its marketing of nightclubs in Europe, the company pursues ways “to forge deep connections with teens and young adults, ways to speak to them on their terms- and on their turf ... underlying these various initiatives is a single goal: to create experiences for young consumers that are rewarding, unexpected and true to the Coca Cola brand” (p. 709). Daft as cited in Foster (2007) identifies the active relationships between companies and consumers and this connection is mediated by brands which play integral

role to enact new value (s) (p. 709). Citing Tyler and his views on the brand image approach and its strengths, Grudin (2010) in his article “A Sign of Good Taste: Andy Warhol and the Rise of Brand Image Advertising,” writes as follows:

This is advertising that sells by implanting a literal image in the consumer’s mind. A visual image. A picture... The lettering on the Colgate toothpaste carton says Colgate so distinctively that the word needs not be read. These are visual images that are branded into people’s mind. (p. 215)

Be it the Colgate Toothpaste or Coca Cola advertisement, the visual imagery is of such design as helps implant the brand significance in the mind of the viewers. In case of Coca-Cola, the brand consciousness is enacted cross-culturally and through various discursive means. For instance, one very effective way of doing it is to situate itself in a number of contexts, online digital agencies in particular, as it has done in the case of CS, Pakistan.

## **2.10 Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter has reviewed the theories and studies thematically in order to cover aspects most relevant to the present work. Section one began with tracing how semiotics has been closely linked with the study of truth and thereby an apt tool to explore the mystic reality underlying Sufism and Sufi music. The ground for this discussion is sought through the views of various Sufi scholars known for their erudition and scholarship in this area. Section two of the review focused on Sufism and its difference from other related terms, hearing vs listening, Sufi music and its various traditions, controversy between Sufis and legalists, sacred spaces of *Sama*, poetry and *Sama* and the role of ragas and instrumentation involved in this singing and their mystical depth and meaning as upheld by eminent Sufi scholars. Third section reviewed the studies concerning how and why Sufi music has emerged out to be more a sign of materiality particularly from the last quarter of 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## **2.11 Present Study**

The studies reviewed in the 3rd section, Sufi music today, highlight how in the contemporary modern times, Sufi music has ceased to be a symbolic discourse of the

transmission of meaning. For instance, *Qawwali* -the form of Sufi music in the Indian subcontinent and Pakistan has lost much of its traditional form and purpose. Similarly, Sufi music enacted in various forms in countries such as Turkey, Morocco, Syria and East Africa, is largely secularized. The studies thereby indicate that words in themselves (surface/ physicality of signifiers or words) are of significance and not what they stand for or the symbolic discourse they are grounded in. The theme of the displacement of meaning as far as Sufi music is concerned, therefore, seems to have moved to a direction whereby simulation is taking the place of meaning. The present study being focused on this aspect contributes to develop it further in the Pakistani context. CS- a popular forum of musical fusions in Pakistan which seems to have made forays in the genre of Sufi music, has hardly been worked on and limited research is available on the subject.

Other studies carried out in the area of Sufism/Sufi poetry/Sufi practices used different lens- in terms of the context (historical, cultural, religious etc.), sample, theoretical and methodological frameworks. For instance, one PhD research did hermeneutic study of Bulleh Shah's poetry. Another PhD research analyzed discursive elements in Schimmel's analysis of Sufi poetry by applying CDA. One article traces how *Qawwali* has evolved from a sacred ritual to entertainment. Another article explores Sufi shrines and yet another examines contemporary formats of Sufi poetry in Pakistan from the perspective of religious differences. While work in this area is available, researchers have hardly touched upon Sufi music particularly in its newer context or its rebranded form enacted by CS singers. Although the article mentioned above on *Qawwali* (a form of Sufi singing) is carried out within the historical context, to some extent it shares one of the concerns of my research (entertainment) that the authors uncover before and towards the concluding discussion. However, my study diverges from this work in every other aspect- context, sample, theoretical and methodological frameworks.

My study, therefore, is significant in that it addresses this gap and argues for its (CS Sufi singing) being a serious issue. The study, using the lens of semiotics, critically examines sign and traces it as predominantly a simulation or a sign which is free of reference/meaning. As no study has been carried out from this perspective, it is new and

different. It, therefore, makes a considerable contribution to the existing body of scholarship.

CS Sufi singing and the discourse that it represents is layered with questions and ambiguities though seen through the lens of the wider public opinion, it is one of the most popular entertainment forums in the music industry of Pakistan. The forum, with its tremendous score of popularity in few years, has even surprised the Google team. Moreover, this Cola-sponsored CS singing is romanticized by the majority in print and social media for its various fusions and blend of contrasting signs such as music, genre, style, culture and spirituality. The same features make it problematic also (my stance). Even more problematic is the playful treatment that CS singers give to the Sufi lyrics they enact in a multi-semiotic space of their Studio. CS singing is a discourse within a discourse in that it ventures to introduce a newer version of Sufi music which, in actuality, should be seen situated in the New Age spirituality, the present study argues. Concerned with this emerging CS singing phenomenon whereby the real and unreal signs are fused in a way that downplays the meaning of Sufi lyrics used by the singers and in the view that this aspect within the particular context of CS singing has hardly engaged academia, the present study without making any exhaustive claims, is a significant attempt to contribute new insights, thoughtfulness and useful knowledge in the existing scholarship. The chapters to follow are meant to argue for and examine CS Sufi singing as a layered discourse by devising theoretical and methodological frameworks and answer the questions of the study.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being or substance. It is a generation by models of a real without origin or reality: hyperreal.

Jean Baudrillard

This chapter sets up methodological preliminaries of Coke Studio Sufi singing by assimilating three theoretical concepts. I use Baudrillard's theory of hyperreality as a basic frame of reference to trace how sign in the CS Sufi singing is more important than what it stands for. Eco's theory of signs is used to reiterate the same philosophical underpinning of my work and to expand my reading of the CS singing as a play-acting of simulation and pretense. Thirdly Dyer's theory of entertainment is incorporated with the intent to use his term "showbiz" as a noteworthy sign in the CS performance- a sign which elicits other signs such as desire, fantasy and pleasure. Dyer's taxonomy of signs provides me with a useful tool to devise a workable method of the study of signs. I thus draw on some of the insight of the three theoretical concepts using them in a way that each corroborates the other.

The chapter also gives a brief discussion on the selection of the method of inquiry for the study, rationale for the choice of exploratory design of research, sampling technique(s) and units of analysis. Lastly, it states the limitations of the work and ethical concerns which have been taken into account during the process of research.

Prior to the discussion on theories and their main theoretical concepts I draw on for my analysis of signs of CS singing, it is necessary to discuss semiotics, its brief history and how it is understood in the present context of the digital discourse whereby the notion of sign itself is problematic.

### 3.1 Science of Signs

In recent years, semiotics has been used to analyze a range of issues in areas such as advertising, fashion, food, entertainment, music, everyday discourses and possessions (Arackal, 2015, p. 2). It is re-emerging as a useful framework to study issues of symbolism and meaning within a wider context and, in particular, to explore the underlying meanings of every-day communication vehicles such as fashion, food, clothing, music and advertising (Mick, Burroughs, Hetzel, & Brannen, 2004). In the new age media discourse where signs are multilayered and fast-evolving with abundant use of the exotic signs (Dasgupta, 2015), semiotics is well-suited to study producer/consumer behavior in media and marketing and the way brands draw on popular structures—myths, symbols, icons-- in order to create their brand value such as Coca Cola or other brands enact. Semiotics is, therefore, mainly concerned with two questions: (a) how is meaning generated within a phenomenon of communication or a specific context such as CS singing (b) how is it communicated through various modes of representation? [Concerns in the context of present study also]. This implies that contemporary semiotics studies signs as part of semiotic ‘sign systems’ (medium or genre, e.g.,) and not signs in isolation. Hence it is concerned with “how meanings are made: as such, being concerned not only with communication but also with the construction and maintenance of reality” (Chandler, 2003, p. 8). Mick, Burroughs, Hetzel, & Brannen view semiotics as a “flexible construct that is applicable to many physical or non-physical stimulus impinging on any of the human senses or faculties” (2004, pp. 53-54).

Semiotics may be defined as the science of signs and their meaning (Caesar, 1999, p. 55). In this instance, a sign is anything that can be taken to represent something else (Eco, 1976). As to what purpose semiotics has, Manning (1987) explains as “to uncover rules that govern the conventions of signification.” An alternate term ‘semiology’ is also used and though both terms are synonymous today, they are generally used as a method to identify two different traditions within the field. ‘Semiology’ refers to the linguistic tradition of Saussure, Hjelmslev, Barthes, Umberto Eco, Baudrillard and, Richard Dyer whereas the term ‘semiotics’ defines the theory of signs offered by Peirce, Morris, Jakobson and Sebeok among others. Most of the researches, however, do not draw a line



between these traditions and interweave them (as cited in Mick, Burroughs, Hetzel, & Brannen, 2004, p. 6).

The history of semiotics starts from the Greeks with their interest and study of medical symptoms. Early precursors of semiotics include Plato, Aristotle and Hippocrates (classical) and John Locke from the medieval era. North, (1990) purports that physicians such as ‘Galen of Pergamum’ refer to diagnosis as a process of ‘semeiosis’ (as cited in Sebeok, 2001, p. 6). By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Europe had adopted a variety of derivatives of this word to describe the doctrine of symptoms. Words such as semiotica, semiotique, and semiotik were all used commonly to correspond to symptomology (Ogilvie, 2005, p. 53).

The modern-day semiotics can be traced from 20<sup>th</sup> century with two theorists, the Swiss linguist Saussure (1857-1913) and Peirce (1839 -1914) who developed sign philosophies from their own perspectives. Afterwards, a variety of semioticians expanded these schools of thought and, over the years, critically examined the sign and its varying aspects and created a plethora of theories offering methods and strategies to explore the codes and language of signs in today’s society (North, 1990 & Gottdeiner, 1995). The discussion on all or even most of them is beyond the scope of this study, so only those that provide insights for the work are discussed in the sections to follow.

Modern day semiotics, as said earlier, starting with Saussure and Peirce provides the point of departure whereby the study of semiotics flourishes and is seen applied in areas like film, theater, arts, anthropology, psychology, medicine, architecture, zoology, and a host of other disciplines that are concerned with communication and the transfer of information or meaning (Berger, 2012, pp. 4-5). From 1960s onwards, semiotics came to be regarded a major approach to cultural studies under the influence of Barthes’ work. He took in “images, gestures, musical sounds, objects, and the complex associations of all of these, which form the content of ritual, convention or public entertainment” as system of signs (1967, p. 9). This also refers to the verbal and visual modes which work in combination as Kres and van Leewun (2006) theorize in their work *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. On account of its wide application, semiotics is acknowledged to be “the queen of the interpretive sciences, the key that unlocks the meanings of all things great and small” (Berger, 2012, p. 5).

Not only in the present times but since the ancient Greeks, the study of signs and their referential relation has been a crucial subject of study and with the turn of 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, the area has turned out to be rather ubiquitous. New perspectives and turns, e.g., the linguistic, the visual and digital turns have broadened the horizon of semiotics turning it to be one of the most engaging scholarships within applied linguistics. Important work has been done in Prague and Russia early in the 20th century and later in France and Italy where Roland Barthes, Umberto Eco, Baudrillard and many others have made significant contributions at both theoretical and applied levels.

A significant theoretical turn (linguistic) can be traced with Saussure's definition of semiotics. His statement that a "science that studies the life of signs within society is conceivable; it would be a part of social psychology and consequently of general psychology; I shall call it semiology" (p. 16) provided scholars with the linguistic model for the analysis of signs. This turn is radical since it initiated a number of debates, e.g., the relation between signifier and the signified and critical avenues of thought. It provided the semioticians a ground to treat all kinds of phenomenon, linguistic and non-linguistic, as texts or signs and not simply the language itself. This statement was further reinforced by Peirce's statement that this world is perfused with signs and hence signs could take up a number of forms, for instance, words, gestures, images, carved wood, lighting, color, paint, and other materials. Similarly, music, sound and visual effects (films, plays, videos etc.) could be studied as signs since they are used to create specific responses in audiences. Even objects and artifacts as is the case in the present materialistic age, have turned out to be significant signs, e.g., hair style, clothing, body ornaments and furniture etc. In other words, things or signs themselves have become significant. Berger (2012) points out the same by saying that "objects and artifacts or the things that make up what is known as material culture also serve as signs and can convey a great deal" (p. 11).

Signs of the modern times particularly from the last few decades of 20<sup>th</sup> century, seem to have become less mimetic (i.e., representational/referential or informative) and more multi-layered, rhetorical or sympractic (i.e., stylized, complex, and involving) (Kloepfer, 1987). Similarly, Goldman and Papsen (1996) have maintained that advertisers now intermix all sorts of signs as they rapidly develop new campaigns, constantly seeking

to fracture existing codes in order to differentiate their brands as well as to give preferred reading (as cited in Kloepper, 1987, p. 126). In an Italian pasta advertisement, Barthes notes how the ingredients in the photograph are represented as uniquely 'Italian,' and hence of 'excellent quality.' The message encoded here in Barthes' view is that ethnic connotation of the name (Italian) is particularly effective as a marketing tool to create desire/demand for the product by establishing a thematically meaningful context for the audience (Trifonas, 2001, p. 7). Similarly, analyzing the logo (image of a lion symbol) of the Hollywood Studio System, Barthes reads it as, "the lion signifies the power of the Hollywood Studio," in contrast to what he calls a naïve interpretation which would read as, "No, it's just a cute logo" (as cited in Cobley & Jansz, 2000, p. 50). The advertisers in the media industries seem to play with verbal and visual signs in more unexpected ways to make consumers perceive brand meanings that the marketer prefers, as says Pedersen's (2002) in doing the analysis of the multi-layered meanings of breakfast cereal ads. As a result, a crisis in sign value is alleged to have risen in which the bond between signifier and signified has disintegrated to the point where connections to any real and identifiable referent have been severed (as cited in Mick et al., 2004, pp. 26-27).

With this split of binding between signifier and signified, emerged the notion of false signs. Peirce and later Eco discussed the likelihood of false signs, a concept that is relevant to the present study. False signs ensue when the inter-relationship between language and extra linguistic signs deceive others and the one who initiates them. Merrell (2000) purports that these include "language and extralinguistic signs collaborated interdependently and interrelatedly to bring about the act of deception" (p. 112). 'Deception,' he explains, may include where people mistake appearance for reality. For instance, if a woman wears make-up and ventures to believe that her 'made-up' face is the true identity she has. The idea is similar to the self-deceit of a person who while telling a lie to others, actually believes it. As Merrell states, "deception and self-deception emerge from the most basic of signs, signs of feeling, imaging, sensing and awaring, that eventually create the idea and the expression of something that is not as if it were" (2000, p. 115).

In the present capitalist culture wherein materiality of signs and not their substance or symbolic worth is of prime importance, semioticians pay more attention to "read"

people, their body language, their gestures, facial expressions and the way people use their voices in order to “gain some insights into their truthfulness, temperaments, personalities, and values” (Berger, 2012, pp. 11-12). The underlying implication is that people do hide, simulate and pretend and use signs for that purpose.

Umberto Eco pointed out that signs are being used to lie and to mislead. Similarly, Baudrillard said that signs no more stand for any symbolic exchange of meaning or reality and are bereft of any signification and hence not real for which he uses the term hyperreal. Signs, he said, present only a spectacle of *signness* (Trifonas, 2015, p. 8) or at the most an artificial discourse. Another theorist Richard Dyer reiterated the same idea by saying that signs represent an element of mere entertainment and sensual pleasure. His theory deals particularly with the semiotic study of the showbiz or the world of entertainment and offers significant tools of analysis and the present study being an inquiry of the showbiz media (CS singing) finds it useful and relevant in addition to using some insights from Eco and Baudrillard’s theories.

While the present study is mainly informed by theoretical insights of the theorists mentioned below (3.2-3.4), it also employs/incorporates some insights from Saussure, Peirce and Barthes’s semiotic theories in terms of their relevance in analyzing signs (CS singing)- linguistic aspect of the signs in particular, lyrics, for instance. In addition, where relevant, various theoretical perspectives have been integrated in the analysis with the purpose to use them as a specific lens in their immediate context and to reflect profoundly and critically in the study of signs such as music, costume, gaze, color and the like. [Chapters 4 & 5]. Moreover, as said earlier in Chapter1, the present study employs Imam Ghazali’s views on Sufi music and its relation with the Sacred as a point of reference to analyze Sufi discourse in CS singing (Chapter 2, 2.4-2.8 for detail on Sufi music).

### **3.2 Baudrillard’s Theory**

Jean Baudrillard (1929-2007) is an eminent French philosopher and cultural theorist. He is hailed as one of the most influential critics on the postmodern plight and the new consumerist mind. His published work emerged as part of a generation of French philosophers including Gilles Deleuze, Jean-François Lyotard, Foucault, Lacan and

Derrida who all shared interest in semiotics. He is often regarded to be a part of the poststructuralist school of thought and his arguments like many post-structuralists, as Wolny (2017) pinpoints, “consistently draw upon the notion that signification and meaning are both only understandable in terms of how particular words or signs interrelate (if they relate) (p. 76). Keeping in view the growth of mass consumption in the contemporary world, Baudrillard questions the possibility or even the relevance of the imitation of reality in our representations or artistic endeavors.

Baudrillard considers simulacra as “hyperreality” produced by media images and electronic simulations in postmodern or post capitalist societies. In Jameson’s conception, simulacra are the “identical copy for which no original has ever existed” (2003, p. 18). Therefore, to Baudrillard, simulacra are not unreal, but more real than real--hyperreal (Heryanto, 2006, p. 12).

### 3.2.1 Simulacrum

The *Oxford Online English Dictionary* (2015) dates the word simulacrum in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century tracing its origin in the Latin *similare*. The dictionary defines simulacrum as, “An unsatisfactory imitation or substitute.” Lawlor (2006) in *A Dictionary of Continental Philosophy* traces the Greek equivalent *eidolon* of Latin verb *similare*, which means to feign or to be similar. It also has the sense of “likewise” or “at the same time” and hence “simul-taneous.” *Eidolon*, he explains, is etymologically related to the term *eidos*, which comes from the verb *horao*, “to see.” Thus, *eidolon* is the look of something or something which is seen. But like “simulacrum,” the word *eidolon* also suggests something feigned or false like phantasm; hence the English word “idol.” Thus, we find Plato in the *Republic* placing the poets third from the truth since they produce nothing but *eidola*, image of things, which are themselves images of the *eide* or ideas or forms (p. 539).

The term simulacrum which later developed from reflections on Heidegger and Nietzsche is central to the French anti-Platonism of the 1960s. It concerns with various ways of perceiving the relation of image and original. The philosophers associated with French anti-Platonism such as Derrida, Foucault and Deleuze exploit the term carrying all resonances mentioned above, namely, copy, imitation, or something which is manufactured, artificial or feigned. But for these philosophers, the most basic sense of

“simulacrum” is repetition, though this repetitive imitation has its own resonance which, as they call it, “power of the false” and which manufactures the “original” and “truth.” Baudrillard’s simulacrum, however, is more in the traditional sense “as a false image lacking all reality” or “original-less image” (Lawlor, 2006, p. 540). Baudrillard’s *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981) and *Simulations* (1983) contain his orders of simulacra, a generic term he uses to explain any “relation of original to copy in which the copy substitutes itself for the original from which it becomes thereby indistinguishable” (541-42). Tracing the term from 16th century when it entered the English lexicon, it was used to denote a representation of superior kind but later at the close of 19th century, its meaning largely deteriorated suggesting an inferior image lacking in the quality of original. Though the Platonic tradition of hierarchical opposition of nature and civilization or real/ ideal and its image continued to prevail in the European thought and philosophy till long but from the last quarter of 19<sup>th</sup> century, new questions arose. But when the real is no longer what it used to be and instead, there is proliferation of the myths of origin and signs of reality, of second-hand truth and authenticity, a confused state prevails and both real and the fabricated collapse into each other. This is how simulation appears in the phase that concerns us: a strategy of the real, neo-real and hyperreal, whose universal double is a strategy of deterrence (Wolny, 2017, p. 78).

Baudrillard’s use of the term though is in the particular context of the United States of America and its neo-capitalistic setting in the twentieth Century but it is generally applicable and relevant in any context. While relating the concept of simulacra via his own tailored fairyland Disneyland to America, Baudrillard suggestively points out how things/objects/representations (signs) we believe to be fake are used to conceal or simulate the reality and, in his view, believing in any kind of reality has become questionable and no reality is reality anymore. In his theory of signs, Eco also questions the nature of reality in his own way by saying that signs are being used to lie which implies that either signs are fake or they are being deployed to delude others. It is the fake which is replacing what is real and what was symbolically significant some time back. In the same vein, Baudrillard points out that signs no more stand for any symbolic exchange of meaning or reality and are bereft of any signification and he relates it to the present context in particular. In his theories of simulacra and hyperreality, Baudrillard states that since signs do not represent

any symbolic exchange of meaning, they are no more real for which he uses the term hyperreal.

Before I focus in detail on the two central concepts, i.e., simulacrum and hyperreality in Baudrillard's theory, it would be pertinent to simplify a few terms which he makes use of so as to make them viable in the context of my study and analysis of the CS video songs.

Firstly, the term "real," has a philosophical grounding for Baudrillard in that it is something which exists as it is and does not exist as an emblem of a potential existence. However, I will use the term "real" to refer to the traditional Sufi discourse and secondly to refer to the term in contrast to what is hyper-real. Another related term I use is "spiritual signified," which refers to "a priori sacred/Divine reality" that Sufi poetry is grounded in and by using the "message/meaning" I mean the same. Secondly Baudrillard uses another term "phantasm" referring to it many times in his theory. His use of the term implies as something which exists in the imagination only. For him, the domain of hyperreality is a network of signs which relates to that which is within imagination as opposed to the real. "Phantasm, thus, is the presence of the imaginary manifest, or imprinted, within reality" (2010, p. 6). Thirdly, in his view, the impact of simulacrum or the imaginary on the real is notable in that simulation eventually and unavoidably leads to the annihilation of the traditional/real. Baudrillard (2010) defines simulacra as a four-step process.

It is the reflection of a profound reality; it masks and denatures a profound reality; it masks the absence of a profound reality; it has no relation to any reality whatsoever: it is its own pure simulacrum. (p.6)

And how the simulation of an image results in the loss of the original signified, the stages reveal the degree of concealment and masquerading which gets intense at each stage in Baudrillard's view.

At the first stage, the simulation of an image shows a better reflection of the reality being imitated although already a reflection or copy. The second level suggests a deeper penetration of the simulated image with the consequence that the original reality is perverted and defaced beyond recognition. The third phase marks the basic reality as totally eclipsed and shows the simulated image enacting as the real. It enables the fake to come to

the forefront, celebrate itself so as to mask any indication referring to the original reality. Consequently, the absence of the reality is not seen missing. This phase denotes the “simulation’s own act of disguising itself as the real” and its outgrowth and conversion into the real leaving no scope for us to grasp the fundamental reality it once belonged to.

The fourth stage says that the simulated image has no relation to any reality whatsoever, “it is its own pure simulacrum”. In this seemingly final stage, the replicated image is seen far removed from its origin; it is no longer a part of its own self, its own simulation rather; it grows itself into a new reality. The simulacrum thus assumes the power of the real as a new reality and solely possesses the realm with no mark of reference to anything other than itself. It turns into an autonomous simulacrum, a self-contained sign which exists within and by itself and Baudrillard rightly calls it “Hyper-Real” because it is neither real nor unreal but a perfect simulation, a new reality. In his theory, Baudrillard, in fact, questions the notion of emerging reality(s) and if seen within the new digital context, his theory of simulacra and hyperreality provides the researchers with a good point of departure. Hyperreality is not a reality which exists to separate the simulated from the real in our mundane surroundings, it, in fact, is a medium of distraction and diversion from the basic reality which in itself is growing into unreal and fake.

A simple example may further highlight Baudrillard’s four-staged simulacra. For instance, an elf or alien self comes, sits by the gate of a house (step 1), steps inside on seeing the door opened (step 2), befriends with the owner, gradually makes its presence essential and visible so as the owner is largely displaced (step 3), and at the fourth stage, it becomes the owner, the only reality, the only center to look up to.

Here I would trace the phenomenon of reality and simulation with reference to what Ali Hajweri, renowned Sufi of 11<sup>th</sup> century and also known as Data Ganj Bukhsh stated. Sufism, he said, had formerly been a reality without any name and now a name without reality (as cited in Malik, 2013, p. 16). Two aspects come to the forefront in the light of what Hajweri spoke, i.e., reality and appearance. The former signifies the soul and substance of something or meaning that turns an object into a signified reality, for example, the meaning we assign to Ka’aba (Arabic: الكعبة al-Ka’bah “The Cube”: The most sacred site in Islam) turns its cuboid structure into a representation of a transcendental reality or a



unit which stands for a symbolic meaning else it would have been simply a form, shape or an empty structure (appearance). In the latter case, it would not only lose its symbolic meaning but become an easy prey to various interpretation (s) and thereby cause delusion in the way to perceive real reality and hence simulation in Baudrillard's view would occur.

The notion of "reality" that Ali Hajweri refers to and which underpins the Sufi philosophy is based on two archetypal signs: Allah who is the "Hidden Treasure" as the archetype of all creation is in God Himself (Nasr, 2007, p. xv), and the Prophet Mohammad, "the eternal unchanging Form, the archetype of the manifested material thing" (Nasr, 1997, p. 5). This reality forms the whole discourse, the soul and substance of what Sufi poets are concerned with and this is what they use language for-language as a tool to express their love for the real signified. However, the second part of what Hajweri stated implies that "reality" which was once the basis of Sufism is largely consumed by a newer "version" of Sufism whereby spirituality is enacting an agentive role for people to do material things. A number of writings are suggestive of the same. For instance, El-Zein (2000) states how the work of Rumi is currently used by the "New Sufism" for purposes like curing the ailments or depressions or to "sell products" and how Americans in general have a tendency to "play" with the religious traditions of the world. Sinno's (2015) article on Chreiteh's *Dayman Coca-Cola*, a story written in Beirut context, similarly talks of the global discourses and their marked impact on religion, culture and self-perceptions of the local people (Beirut here) and their new subjectivities and inclination towards materiality.

Hajweri's words, therefore, seem more relevant in the present context whereby the concept of "new Sufism" (El-Zein, 2000) has emerged which is an imitation that is far removed from the real Sufi discourse which in his view did not need any formal identification or naming in the past. What exists now is only the "play" of spirituality or its enactment as a popular currency in the market of simulacra and the same is traced in the case of CS. CS presents a singing discourse which simulates the real Sufi music in various forms. For instance, by deploying Sufi poetry in their performance, the Coke singers do convey this message that they tend to cling to the spiritual traditions in their own way whatsoever. At the level of text selection, reality does have some reflection. However, simulation is seen in its intense form at the level of performance which lacks seriousness

and devotion required for this kind of singing. Moreover, it is the lurid setting of CS, heavy instrumentation, digital play of light and color that let the fantastic/simulacra take over and come in the way to perceive truth or meaning embedded within the text. The discourse in this way becomes a performative account of pleasure and excitement and not a focus on meaning. Words remain empty signifiers and thereby enact more distraction from signified meaning. The more the distraction, the more simulacra governs larger space for itself and reality foiled. Ernst (1997) cites a few more words with reference to Ali Hajvari who said that in our times this science [Sufism] has been in reality eliminated because people are all occupied with pleasure and have turned away from satisfying God. This statement reinforces the same idea how the only reality which is adored and acknowledged as “reality” is pleasure and quest for iconic meanings is no more a prime concern in the present times.

Being a discourse of fun and pleasure, CS voices a new version (simulation) of Sufi singing implying that every subjective or idiosyncratic interpretation of the esoteric is adequate. The new idea is to make Sufi singing as attractive as possible via the use of “fusion” and “innovation”, that is, to intermix the text as well as styles of singing and thereby oversimplify the notion of Sufi singing. By doing so, however, the Studio upends any difference between the Sufi singing and any other kind of singing meant solely for pleasure and fun. By reducing the text into a verbal plaything, the singers enact simulation than a devotional performance and this way they represent largely a culture of simulation and escape. Their attempt seems to promote a perfect Disney Land wherein people tend to forget the real world they belong to. Baudrillard’s simulacra therefore becomes an important tool in my study to interpret the CS discourse of Sufi singing and to trace how it reflects, manifests and governs itself at various levels.

### **3.2.2 Hyperreality**

Baudrillard’s theory of hyperreality is significant in that it underscores the delusive nature of reality which surrounds us in the neo-capitalistic environment. Things that we believe to be false are, in his view, used to disrupt or to hide the reality and hence there is no reality left in our life. He uses the terms such as “simulacra” and “simulation” to denote the same phenomenon which is haunting our lives with its spectral existence. The new

world that we live in is driven by its cybernetic ends and dialectics of materialism. Amidst this profusion of signs, high-tech as well as material, the question of how and where to anchor our ends, endeavors and artistic representations seems crucial. Consequently, the concept of a corresponding reality or signifiers in terms of their signified meaning has itself become frail, fuzzy and questionable. This, in terms of Baudrillard, is obfuscating the matter and turning “reality” into something “whose nature we are less and less able to grasp” (1984, p. 13). In his essay “The Evil Demon of Images,” he makes us understand how we have lost the ability to distinguish between reality and simulation. Contemporary media (television, internet, films, magazines, billboards) are engaged not just in imparting information but in making us see the world around us and interpret our most private selves through the lens of these media images which, in Baudrillard’s view, is “diabolical seduction of images” (p. 13). We, therefore, no longer purchase goods because we need them but because of the desires that are continuously defined by these commercials and commercialized images, which keep us one step distant from the reality of our bodies or of the world around us. On account of this delusive nature of reality, signs exist in an empty chain of absurdity, i.e., their state is to refer, defer and create the illusion of freedom, fascination and self-indulgent pleasure.

The absurdity underlies the fabric of our life as a whole and be it any area or mode of representation, media, fiction and politics, it envelops us. The more we get tuned to the absurdist frame or the ludicrous stance of the New Age, the more we are alienated from meaning in its coherent form or a transcendental frame of reality and thereby prepare the ground for ludicrous to emerge, flourish and to replace the truthful form of reality. The Reality thus slips away and we are left with nothing but the metonymic fragments which penetrate within and around us and which may be defined as hyperreal in Baudrillard’s terms. In his view, the hyperreal signs are characterized as cozy, pleasing and more engaging, relaxing which warrant only immediate sensual pleasure. To elaborate the concept further, an instance from an advertisement, say, of toothpaste may be taken. Seen as a product of daily use, toothpaste of a certain brand (Colgate, e.g.) is meant for brushing and cleaning one’s teeth. But the way the advertising agency markets the item, it entails a chain of signifiers, for instance, shining, white teeth, fresh and breezy air of breath with more expected consequences such as sexy and attractive face, an air of confidence, self-

prestige, happiness or a feeling of being secure and safe. The consequent signifying features will be added to the brand over a certain period of time through advertisement. Thus, a chain of images is what a simple product would potentially involve which goes beyond the otherwise matter-of-fact kind of logic a toothpaste advertisement yields. The embedded notion of reality/realities would, therefore, impact the viewers with new and imagined affordances and make them suspend their previous perceptions of the reality involved with a simple product of daily use. The newly-perceived notion of reality by the users of that brand when held in totality will assure them with a safe landing in a cozy world of imagination culminating with erotic pleasure, sense of pride and a feel-good notion which finally becomes a hyper-reality for them.

Whether signs are hyperreal or material, they both indicate disruption or loss of meaning and this is what Eco and Baudrillard are concerned with. Referring to Perry (1998), Stubbs explains their concern which is as follows:

Umberto Eco (1987) uses the term hyperreality to invoke what he understands as those specific situations in which the copy comes first, whereas for Jean Baudrillard (1983b), it corresponds to a more general contemporary condition in which both “representation and reality have been displaced by simulacra” (defined as copies without originals). (2011, p. 2)

To further explain this notion of displacement of reality and representation, Baudrillard calls it a separation of the s-ignifier from the signified and uses the term “simulacrum” for this (Klages, 2006, p. 170). His use of the term “hyperreality” suggests that the sign is now more important than what it stands for. Peter Brooker (1999) provides context for this term saying that it may be associated with the effects of mass production and reproduction. This implies that an object, event, experience so reproduced replaces or is preferred to its original; the copy is “more real than real.” In Baudrillard’s discussion, hyperreality is synonymous with the most developed form of *Simulation* --the autonomous simulacra which is free from all reference to the real (pp. 121–122).

Baudrillard uses Disneyland as a metaphor to explain his point. Simulations (e.g., Disneyland) eventually become more real for people than the reality they were designed to express or imitate. He suggests that Disneyland is now the ultimate reality and the United

States is an imitation of it. Baudrillard defines the “hyperreal” within the context of a Borges fable *On Exactitude in Science*. The fable is about a map that was so detailed that it replicated the territory it represented and eventually covered it totally. As the map rotted away, it was the real, not the simulation that remained (as cited in Stubbs, 2011, p. 9). In the present capitalistic and consumer-driven societies, where the designer label/brand is accepted as reality whereas its functionality given a secondary consideration, the notion of simulacra/hyperreality is not hard to understand (2011).

### 3.3 Eco’s Theory of Signs

Umberto Eco (1932-2016) was a renowned Italian novelist, philosopher, literary critic and semiotician. He is best known for his novel *The Name of the Rose* (1980), a fictional work which involves history, semiotics, medieval studies, biblical analysis and literary theory. Eco in his book *A Theory of Semiotics* (1976) suggested that since signs can/may be used to tell the truth, they can also be used to lie. He argued that If something cannot be used to tell a lie, logically it cannot be used to express the truth as well; rather it cannot be used “to tell” anything at all. His statement is as under:

Semiotics is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign. A sign is everything which can be taken as significantly substituting for something else. This something else does not necessarily have to exist or to actually be somewhere at the moment in which a sign stands for it. Thus, semiotics is in principle the discipline studying everything which can be used in order to lie. (1976, p. 7)

Berger (2012) a renowned theorist, elaborates Eco’s theory of signs by specifying and defining ten broader areas of signs which people use to pretend, to simulate and to mislead others. For instance, (1) Impersonation is a sign used by people to pretend to be someone else or steal identity, (2) Impostors are the signs people use to pretend, e.g., pretending to be doctors or lawyers etc. (3) Theater used to pretend to have feelings, beliefs, and the like (4) Words are the signs used for white lies. Other areas include (5) Wigs, (6) Elevator shoes, (7) Dyed hair, (8) Falsies, (9) Food and (10) Malingering.

Eco's theory of signs is significant in that it is suggestive of a wider scenario in the present times wherein the sham prevails as a predominant sign. Fakery, fraud, simulation and deception are some of the ways people use to lie and mislead others. The explanation that Berger provides regarding Eco's theory is useful in that it makes any reader see its relevance to our routine discourses and we see people lying not only to hide their identities but to simulate and pretend to have specific beliefs and feelings which he calls theater (Chapters 4 & 5 for analysis). In CS singing, for instance, the performance of most of the singers is not underpinned by a sense of the tradition and the words they sing (Sufi poetry) do not co-match with their bodily discourse, i.e., it lacks spiritual depth and devotion. I define this incongruity in the CS singing performance by using Eco's term "theater" (Berger, 2004). It is also useful to relate it to another term "kitsch" (Cambridge Dictionary, 2018) normally used in the painting genre, which refers to the same sort of inconsistency in a piece of literature, art or performance. A work or performance which, despite its lack of artistic depth, becomes powerfully appealing among the public is known as kitsch.

Holloran (2012), explains this theatre aspect with reference to the Hollywood film Industry and the role it plays in constructing a "hyper" real cinematic frame for the viewers. Though the industry is aware that what it presents is fake, constructed and simulated, it ventures to stuff every new film with elements which are hyper enough to "thrill" the viewers. It seeks to extract elements from real notions such as beauty, colour, emotion, morality, goodness but trims and cuts (editing) the "prosaic" elements of the realistic stuff via software applications and presents them with the "prefix of hyper" for the pleasure of the viewers (p.14). Under the cover of doing-good-formula for viewers, what it does for them is to make them escape from reality and hide, simulate and lose faith in the spiritual reality so as to displace it in the subsequent stage. This latter stage obliterates everything which could be termed as real because it is the fake which takes over and becomes real and is accepted as a new reality and it is this last stage of the transformation of reality for which Baudrillard uses the term hyperreality. Hyperreal phenomenon is a product of the new consumer and capitalistic culture which makes people draw on "a novel identity politics" (Berger, p. 33) and using art, literature, music to represent an ideal, fantastic world is a part of this identity politics. This sort of representation in Holloran's (2012) view is the construction of the "9<sup>th</sup> wall which is used as a ploy to dupe the viewer into believing a

didactic truth within a lie. It plays exactly the same role as the pop video used to; the pop video served as an ideal of a particular emotion, an ideal of the real (p. 12). The term “theatre” is useful and relevant to describe the new ways of transgressing reality.

Keeping the digital transgressions in view, the theatrical signs may also be traced in the TV advertisements, e.g., in candy ads. The agencies draw on recognized signs related to fresh fruit and mimic features such as contouring or shape of fruit, their fresh and natural colors and use them as indexes of human vigor and health. In contrast to what the advertisers portray in the ads, what a candy anticipates in the real sense is bad health, deterioration of gums, teeth etc. since it is a nutrient-less item. In the ads, the positive function of sweets is shown as real and a reality it appears out to be, the agencies thus play theater, by making viewers consume the fake as real. Though the viewers do understand these commercial ploys but somehow are made to suspend their disbelief (9<sup>th</sup> wall in Holloran’s terms). The agencies exploit not only recognized signs in these advertisements but also draw on other elements such as human desire, love and fantasy and it is mostly the erotic which is consumed by both the producers and consumers. In the current scenario, not a single ad is free of these embedded notions of pleasure and entertainment and mostly the female agency which is in use as a market ploy and via which an alternative utopian discourse is framed for the viewers and it is in this sense that Richard Dyer uses the term Utopia.

Theater also plays well in the new digital media, television and film. The main purpose is to immerse the viewer into a world coated with hyperreality and simulacra, i.e., reality totally displaced and devoid of its signified meaning. The purpose is to hoodwink the viewer into believing it to be new real, be it the real which lacks substance, any usefulness or intrinsic function. In the new media, no matter whether the icons being imitated are fake since they hardly matter, the cameras doing other things but not shooting, light not for the purpose of lighting and direction an empty enactment but what all this conspires to create is a plaything, an imitation for the sake of imitation. This is how the actors in the current scenario use signs to lie and dupe others. But the embedded implications are not free from the dangers of consequences.

In the same vein, Berger also indicates how lying with signs may entail serious consequences and a seemingly naïve act, for instance, coloring one's hair blonde might connote something stern. In Berger's view, this might convey, for example, an attempt to make sexual appeal for the male or express a desire to steal a female identity having naturally blond hair. "They are using their blonde hair to lie about their sexuality, for men have certain expectations about blondes—they are seen as "sexy" and "fun loving." This idea of the construction of the "self" on this blonde image and the consequent male gaze is suggestive of the atavistic attitudes on part of most of us in the present times, explains Gorney (as cited in Berger, 2004, p. 30).

Masquerading is done in yet another way, that is, by using and substituting one's identity via the use of signs which represent another person's identity. This, in Berger's view, is impersonation which may be exerted by adopting overtly all signs belonging to some other person or may be the other sex, e.g., style or manner of talking, walking and dressing. For instance, Ali Saleem, a renowned Pakistani television actor and host who is known more as Begum Nawazish Ali (*Late Night Show with Begum Nawazish Ali* at Aaj TV, 2005–2007) and who always cross-dressed in his shows on different television channels such as Geo and Aaj TV (Declan, 2006). He is famous for his impersonations of the late Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and he did this by overtly using signs peculiar to her personality. Impersonation may also be done partially which is a common phenomenon currently, e.g., by adopting the hair or dress style of the sex one is simulating or accessorizing in the manner of the opposite sex. Substitution in Berger's view is not a simple or straightforward matter, it has the potential to "displace traditional ethnic and cultural traits" of the society one belongs to (p. 33). The consumer societies as we have currently grown out to be, we make many choices everyday but they all move around our growing brand consciousness. This, in fact, is another kind of impersonation we indulge in since we are becoming accustomed to constructing our identity in terms of brands or branded lifestyles. Berger adds that branded "lifestyles are not merely superficial veneers on deeper identities but have to some degree become substitute identities—forms of acquired character that have the potential to go all the way down to the core" (Berger, p. 33). They displace our cultural traits and traditional ways of thinking we belong to and push us into a world of simulation, fakery and deception wherein only sham prevails.



The categories given above being broad in nature provide enough space to the researchers interested in the study of signs, particularly of material or hyperreal nature and so is the case with the present study.

### 3.4 Dyer's Theory of Entertainment

Richard Dyer (1945- ) is an English scholar who is currently working as a professor of Film Studies at King's College London. His areas of interest include cinema, queer theory, theory of entertainment and how it is represented in relation to sexuality, race and gender in different media. Dyer's significant works on star studies include *Stars* (1979) *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society* (1986) *Only Entertainment* (2000) and *In the Space of a Song: The Uses of Song in Film* (2011). Placing his studies within the wider context of fan culture and stardom, Dyer investigates various ways used in, say, films and musicals in which audiences are made to construct as well as consume a particular star's persona. His analyses of the film musicals, e.g., "Meet me in St. Louis" and "A Star is born" with regard to their being a utopian discourse is highly significant. He uses various lens such as gender, race and sexuality in order to examine the role of stars or songs in films or other genres of representation.

The present study draws on some of the insights based on Dyer's work on utopia and entertainment. In his book *Only Entertainment* (2002), he explores the concept of irreality or utopia which may be termed as one kind of simulation or hyperreality. In chapter five "Entertainment and Utopia", he highlights the term "showbiz" and discusses musicals, e.g., music hall, variety, TV spectaculars, pantomime, etc. – that are usually summed up by the term 'showbiz.' He states that showbiz is "the most thoroughly entertainment-oriented of all types of performance" (Dyer, 2002, p. 20). He then moves on to describe another form of irreality which he calls "escape" that is triggered by these showbiz "musicals". It seems as if he is using the term "showbiz" as a sign which only triggers other signs such as desire, fantasy and pleasure but do not represent any signified reality. He writes as under:

Two of the taken-for-granted descriptions of entertainment, as 'escape' and as 'wish-fulfilment', point to its central thrust, namely, utopianism. Entertainment offers the image of 'something better' to escape into, or something we want deeply that our day-to-day lives don't provide.

Alternatives, hopes, wishes – these are the stuff of utopia, the sense that things could be better, that something other than what is can be imagined and maybe realized. (Dyer, 2002, p. 20)

Hence the hyperreal which is simulated or utopian (Dyer's term) in nature makes the audience suspend their disbelief and voluntarily accept whatever myth is being presented as true and real. Dyer's theory of utopian entertainment endorses the concepts of spectacle, pleasure and willing escape presented by the theorists mentioned earlier.

In Dyer's (2002) view, entertainment in itself is a site of pleasure and fantasy or a notion which is structured on the utopian philosophy; it does not present a model(s) of the utopian as was the case in the classic utopias rather it is an embodied illustration of the utopian and "presents, head-on as it were, what utopia would feel like ... and works at the level of sensibility" (p. 2). It is the use of an "affective code" or formal properties in a piece of entertainment which entails an exotic response in the viewers and in Dyer's view every cultural production or work of art is characterized by an "élan of the musical, the allure of stars" (p. 2), sensuality and the excitement of action and thrill.

The discussion that Dyer (2002) initiates in his essays, "The Sound of Music" and "The Color of Entertainment" regarding the musicals and hit songs/numbers is significant in that it attempts to examine how a song attains a top hit status by questioning what it is which "makes the number lovely" (p. 2). Further he highlights the utopian undercurrents of these hit numbers such as the "lilting drive of the tunes" and "the use of editing to display" glamour stars, musicals, pinups, porn and dance music among many other tropes that are used in any art production. His reference to "actioned expansion in space" underscores the glitzy space that a star or celebrity hankers after and the same captivates the imagination of the viewers with its embedded meaning of pleasure, fantasy and desire to be the same kind of celebrated person. Another aspect that he underscores regarding the celebrated space the female artists are assigned in a cultural production is worth noting. His statement that the "musical is unusual in assigning the experience of expansion to female characters" (p. 2) provides me with a useful insight to develop and broaden the horizon of my discussion of the celebrity space that is assigned to female singers in CS singing.

In many ways, Dyer's theory problematizes the notion of entertainment- the notion which is normally defined in a stereotypical way, in a very simple and straightforward manner. The naivety of the term is thus put to question by the author and instead various dimensions of the same are explored via using a critical and semiotic lens. The theory, therefore, with its semiotic study of the showbiz- the world of entertainment, is relevant to my work since it deals with the study of the showbiz media (CS singing). This aspect allows me to expand my argument from yet another aspect. I intend to use his term "showbiz" as a notable sign in the CS performance- a sign which elicits other signs such as desire, fantasy and pleasure. Further Dyer's taxonomy of signs provides me with a useful tool to devise a workable method of the study of signs.

Dyer's (2002) classification of signs is based on two categories; (1) representational and (2) non-representational signs. He explains both sets of signs but pays more attention to the latter since this category has not been treated significant in its own right in most of the past works. Most of us, he says, tend to concentrate on the representational category of signs since they are traditionally said to function more at the level of comprehension, e.g., plot (narrative, script, lyrics etc.), props, characters (singers/performers) and the costume of the actors/characters. Signs such as colors, texture, movement, lighting, camera angles, rhythm, melody or special effects which function at less concrete level fall in the non-representational category in his view (p. 20).

In Dyer's view, the "nature of non-representational signs is not so different from that of representational" and both are largely iconic, he says by using Peirce's term. He explains the signs in terms of their semblance between the character/actor/artist and the viewer. Representational sign is easy to comprehend by the viewer who can relate to them on the basis of recognizable signs such as their appearance, looks or dress etc. Whereas in the case of the latter, it is one of "resemblance at the level of basic structuration" (2002, pp. 20-21) and Dyer explains his viewpoint via using the analogy of music.

Referring to Langer's (1895-1985) work on the relationship of consciousness and aesthetics, he states that even if we recognize rhythm and melody in music as categories which are less concrete (non-representational), they do have a logical connection with human feelings: toying, flowing, arrest, speed and so on. As a consequence, we are moved

by music even though the connection may not be a palpable one. The traditional concept was “to treat the non-representational as a function of the representational, simply a way of bringing out, emphasizing, aspects of plot, character, situation” (p. 24). Dyer’s contribution in this regard is significant.

Here, it is also useful to visually present the theoretical concepts the study is employing. Fig 1- showing theorists and Fig 2- highlighting the main theoretical concepts used in the analysis.

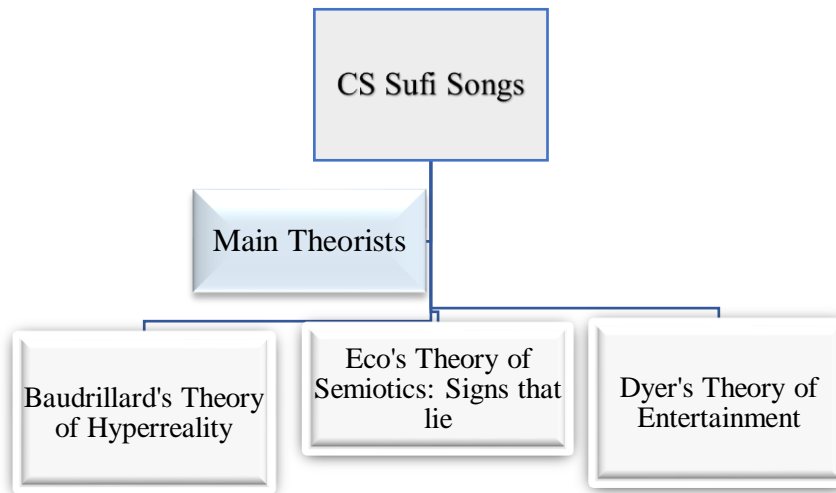


Figure 1. Theoretical framework

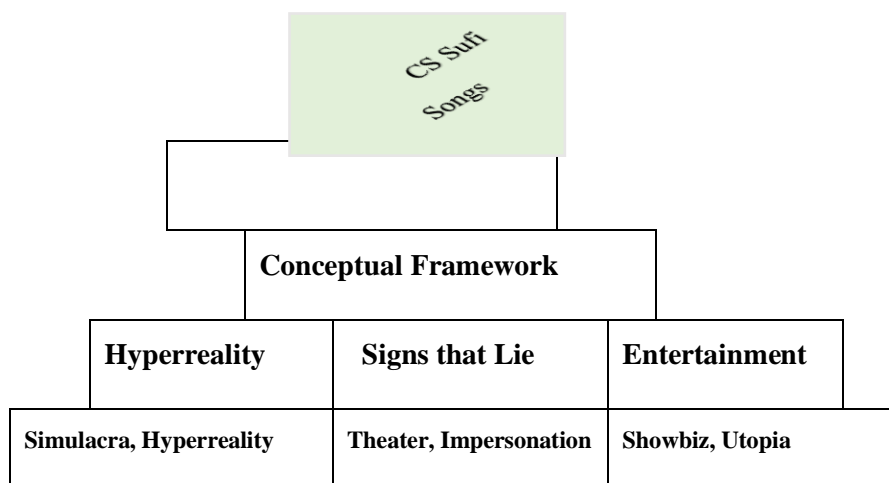


Figure 2. Conceptual framework

### 3.5 Relevance of Theories

The three theoretical views the present study draws on are relevant as they deal with semiotics, media studies and the emerging entertainment culture. Baudrillard and Eco's theories are concerned with the masquerading aspects of reality and both associate these trends with the prevailing cultural tendencies. Umberto Eco's notion that semiotics is the science that deals with our ability to lie and mislead is imbued with thoughtful ideas regarding our lived experiences of daily life wherein we see people who use signs for masquerading. Concealing or hiding one's reality or pretending to be what one is not in reality is made possible by using signs e.g., of costume, hair, glasses or make up accessories etc. People also impersonate or appropriate some other people's identity by using signs of their choice or at times appropriate other's professions by faking their credentials. Even emotions, feelings and beliefs are used as signs to lie or for impersonation which Eco calls Theater (Berger, 2010). Similarly, Baudrillard is concerned with masquerading aspects of reality, a fake copy or mere pretension/simulation of the real which he calls simulacra- the autonomous simulacra which are free from all reference to the real. His concern is to see how reality has been replaced by what he calls hyperreality and how sign is regarded to be more important than what it stands for or the reality it was designed to imitate. Whereas Baudrillard talks of the displacement of reality, Dyer's concern is regarding "escape" from reality which is a natural consequence faced by pleasure-consuming people. The new showbiz industry with its "musicals" unlocks the doors of fantasy, pleasure and escape to people who are already mesmerized by this phenomenon. Dyer uses the term "showbiz" as a sign which only triggers other signs such as desire, fantasy and pleasure and this is what underlies the consumerist discourse in the present scenario. The present study employs some insights of the three theoretical views to qualitatively explore and examine the questions it set out for itself, i.e., its concerns regarding the nature of the spiritual signified, visibility of entertainment signs and digitalized simulation in the selected CS Sufi singing in the Pakistani context.

In analysis chapters 4 and 5, I use significant concepts/terms in my analysis of signs, i.e., putting theory into practice in lieu with the methodological plan devised and mentioned in the subsequent sections.

The sections below cover the strategy or design of the present study and the rationale why the specific approach and design is preferred. Furthermore, sample, sample criterion, time frame and other details such as the issue of reliability, limitations and ethical considerations are given.

### **3.6 Research Design**

Traditionally, works on research design, though mostly in quantitative cases, have understood “design” as a “fixed, standard arrangements of research conditions and methods that have their own coherence and logic, as possible answers to the questions. For instance, a randomized, double-blind experiment is one research design; an interrupted time series design is another” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 214). Beyond these kinds of broad categories such as qualitative interview studies, ethnographies and case studies, qualitative research normally lacks any elaborate typology through which studies can be conducted. Moreover, these typologies usually contain a limited number of features of doing a study and by themselves do little to clarify the actual functioning and interrelationship of the component parts of a design as Maxwell goes on to explain (p. 214). Whereas in a qualitative research, research design or parts of the design might need to be improved or modified at different stages of data analysis or exploration of new variables emerging later in the study. A research design for a qualitative study, therefore, “should be a reflexive process operating through every stage of a project” as explain Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 24) in their article. And they further explain the idea that activities in qualitative type of studies concerning the collection and analysis of data, developing as well as modifying theory, refocusing or elaborating questions and dealing with validity threats, if identified, usually go on simultaneously, each influencing all of the others. Maxwell (2005) employs the term “interactive model” for this type of research (p. 2015). Citing Frederick (1993), Maxwell gives a definition of the qualitative kind of study to further elaborate his point. He states it as, “An underlying scheme that governs functioning, developing, or unfolding” and “the arrangement of elements or details in a product or work of art” (as cited in Maxwell, 2005, p. 215). However, despite the flexibility that underpins this paradigm, it has to have a research design, even though it is a less restrictive kind.

Yin (1994) explains that every type of qualitative research has “an implicit, if not explicit, research design” (p. 19). Therefore, Becker, Geer, Hughes and Strauss (1961), authors of a qualitative research of medical students, write in their chapter titled “Design of the Study” that in the sense of the term “design” implying an elaborate prior planning, their study had no design, i.e., no well-worked-out set of hypotheses to be tested, no data-gathering instruments purposely designed to secure information relevant to these hypotheses, no set of analytic procedures specified in advance (as cited in Maxwell, 2005). The authors further explain as under:

If we take the idea of design in a larger and looser sense, using it to identify those elements of order, system, and consistency, our procedures did exhibit our study had a design. We can say what this was by describing our original view of the problem, our theoretical and methodological commitments, and the way these affected our research and were affected by it as we proceeded.  
(p.17)

Though a qualitative study “does not presuppose any necessary directionality of influence ... it treats research design as a real entity, not simply an abstraction or plan” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 215). The plan may be a little unstructured at the start of work, but a researcher opting for a qualitative paradigm, would devise strategy(s) to deal with various possible factors that might emerge later in study so as to have a better or a “maximum control over factors that may interfere with the validity of the findings” as state Burns and Grove (2003, p. 195). In order to develop a good design, many researchers conduct pilot studies that let them anticipate various components and a good, logical functioning within the selected items and in the present study, the researcher studied some of the selected signs as a pilot work. Moreover, it depends not only on the type (quantitative/qualitative) but also the purpose of research whether it is mainly concerned with exploration, description or explanation (Saunders, 2003, p.10) that a researcher might anticipate a rough plan or pilot testing to be able to later devise a better strategy to answer questions. In qualitative studies though the exploration may continue till the last stages of the project completion, for instance, a researcher might require some new categories, coding or labeling of concepts to clarify, illustrate and elaborate certain points/connections she might have

overlooked earlier and hence would revisit and redesign various sections of the research as has been the case in the present study.

### **3.6.1 Qualitative Design of Present Research**

Each research seeks to answer its questions in various ways and the purpose may vary accordingly. A research, as the present study is, with exploratory purpose aims to identify what is happening, gain new insights, ask questions, and deal with issues of qualitative nature (Saunders, 2003, p. 10). According to Yin (2013), explorative studies are undertaken when a new area is being investigated or when little is known about an area of interest. It is used to investigate the full nature of the phenomenon and other factors related to it. Yin suggests exploratory research to be appropriate in cases where little theorization exists or prior research lacks.

As far as the present study is concerned, its exploration serves mainly two purposes: (1) lack of insight that currently exists regarding CS Sufi singing in its multi-semiotic and digital context (2) lack of any specific model or framework that could be employed to seek answers to questions. The researcher, therefore, after exploring various theoretical insights, and trying their implications to the study of signs, devised a strategy to execute the project undertaken. Secondly, hardly any study was found to be conducted on CS Sufi singing in the Pakistani context particularly, though some studies in other contexts (not directly on CS) did seem to share some of the concerns of my research as reviewed in the second chapter.

The studies reviewed in the second chapter demonstrate that there is limited work available in academic journals concerning CS Sufi singing, this research, therefore, can be regarded as an attempt to address this gap with the purpose of generating ideas and critical insights concerning the problem it is dealing with, rather than testing them, and as such, causing this study to be exploratory. Saunders (2003) state more in this regard: “Exploratory research is a valuable means of finding out, what is happening; to seek new insights; to ask questions and to assess phenomena in a new light” (p. 10). Exploratory research is though flexible and can take a researcher on the voyage of discovery toward new ideas and insights. However, Saunders assert that the innate flexibility of this research (exploratory) does not mean “a lack of direction to the investigation but simply that the



core of the research is broad at the outset and becomes progressively narrower as the research develops” (p. 600).

In order to get a prior understanding of the overall plan of my study, a pilot study was conducted and the detail is to follow in the section below.

### **3.6.2 Pilot Study**

A pilot or so to say a feasibility study is conducted prior to initiating the major work of one’s research. It may be conducted even more than one time to develop, test or refine the overall research design, tools or data analysis strategy which eventually improves the quality of the final product.

I also deemed it necessary to conduct a pilot study for a number of reasons. Since the type of my study was qualitative, the text chosen in the video form and the genre being Sufi music, it seemed an assorted and a little abstract case at the early stage. Three main concerns came to the forefront; to develop an appropriate theoretical framework in lieu with the objectives of my research, to design a method which would allow enough space to deal with (non)linguistic signs in my study of the Sufi video songs and thirdly to select a representative sample of singers out of 9 seasons and 54 episodes of CS singing. Pilot study, therefore, became necessary. Initially I took five songs picked randomly for the semiotic analysis with main focus on singing performance of the artists. During the test-analysis stage, I discovered a number of units which could be analyzed semiotically but still I needed some broad categories of signs and the practical idea came through Dyer’s classification of signs. In addition, I found two more theories, hyperreality and theory of lying with signs which could support the central argument of my study, that is, how sign in the CS Sufi singing is more important than what it stands for. The pilot study with its “trial run” (Polit, 2001, p. 467) thus became a facilitating tool for me to work out and in a way determine certain logistics of my work, e.g., deciding the theory(s), selection of sample, developing and refining method, units of analysis as well as a little experimentation of the description of analysis, a prior understanding of the overall plan of my study, though tentative, all which I deemed necessary as a groundwork for my major study.

### 3.6.3 Sampling

Regarding the sample size in qualitative research particularly, though there are no guidelines in determining the size, still a careful selection of sample can give data which is more representative of the population it is drawn from as sate Holloway and Wheeler (2002). Both the writers, however, assert that the size of sample does not influence the importance or quality of the study (p. 128). Holloway (1997) adds that it is a normal practice that a researcher doing qualitative work, does not normally know the number of entities, items or people in the research beforehand and the sample may change in size or type during the course of research. Sampling goes on until a certain level of saturation has been achieved whereby new information is added (p. 142). As in the case of present study, the initial sample of 10 songs of 7 seasons grew in that more data came from later CS seasons in the while-process of my research. The later sample of 16 (out of 32) Sufi songs from 9 seasons became wider and more representative as it covered 50% of the total population.

The sampling procedure used in the present study is non-probable and purposive with the intention “to represent the particular population” (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007, p. 166). The sample taken from CS website is of 16 songs from 9 seasons. Singers (18) who render these songs (Sufi *Kalaam*) form the population of the sample. The population chosen “purposefully” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 235), is a group of singers which meets a 4-unit criterion designed for the study, in terms of gender, age, professional expertise and popularity. As the table below shows, male and female representation in the selected sample is almost equal whereas the age of singers roughly corresponds to 3 categories: (1) 55 and above, (2) 40-55 and (25-40). The number of singers falling in one group, however, is not equal. Popularity criterion is set at 500-k or above for all singers, male and female on the basis of the average taken from two popular social media sites- YouTube and Sound Cloud. The purpose behind using popularity is to (1) seek objectivity and (2) to understand how masses rate their singers and from which perspective, for instance, singing competence or glamor etc., (3) to measure whether professional competence of singers (as a generally prevailing notion) could possibly be related to higher or lower ranking given to them on these sites. The popularity ratio given in the table below shows that a highly acclaimed singers such

as Perveen or Zahoor do not stand higher in ranking. This is unsettling though. But perhaps linking these two variables directly, professional competence and popularity, might not be useful unless other factors such as who rates and what... etc., are taken into account. These questions are relevant particularly in our Pakistani context where majority is not a net-user, or is deprived of the facility. Though the study does not directly address these questions, it considers this aspect as relatable to its argument concerning the new notions of entertainment and fun. This made me interpret the viewer's assessment scale (likes of the viewers) as a representative sign of the entertainment culture which lacks potential to see beneath the surface and prefers form over meaning and glamour over devotional performance. It thus reflects a situation in which meaning is being replaced by meaninglessness. As a consequence, meaning, truth and reality are gradually being displaced by what Baudrillard calls simulacra. Hence decisions within and about sampling were given specific attention since these are eventually linked to the validity/relatability of findings in a research.

Sampling decisions and issues of choice, namely, how even a single case study involves a choice of some elements than others are regarded significant by researchers. Scholars such as LeCompte and Preissle (1993, pp. 56-85) and Miles and Huberman (1994, pp. 27-34) provide valuable discussions on sampling decisions within and about the case itself. Moreover, views on deciding for purposive sampling are also available. Works on quantitative research generally treat anything other than probability sampling as "convenience sampling," and strongly discourage the latter (Maxwell, p. 235).

Maxwell gives his views on the nature and purpose(s) of sampling in qualitative research. Most sampling in qualitative research is neither probability nor convenience sampling, but falls into a third category: purposeful sampling (p. 235). This strategy helps a researcher to select or choose some particular settings, events or persons, with the intent to garner important information that cannot be gotten from other choices. There are important uses for purposeful sampling in his view, for instance, to achieve representativeness or relative homogeneity or typicality of the individuals, settings or activities selected and may be, to capture the heterogeneity in the selected population. In the latter case, the goal would be to ensure that the conclusions amply represent the

complete range of variation than only the typical members/units or some subset of this range. Third, a sample can be purposefully selected to allow for the examination of cases that are critical for the theories that the study began with or that have subsequently been developed. One should not make sampling decisions in isolation from the rest of the design. They should take into account your research relationship with study participants, the feasibility of data collection and analysis, and validity concerns, as well as the goals and conceptual framework. In addition, feasible sampling decisions often require considerable knowledge of the setting studied, and the researcher will need to alter them as they learn more about what decisions will work best to give the data you need.

The sample of the present study comprises 16 Sufi songs rendered by CS singers within a time frame of 9 years and 9 seasons. First six seasons with their respective episodes were produced by The Coca Cola Company and Rohail Hayat whereas later seasons were produced by Strings Band, with Coca Cola being the executive producer. The total number of CS Sufi songs aired on Pakistani TV channels was found to be 32 out of which 16 are selected on the basis of a four-unit criterion designed for the study, in terms of gender, age, professional expertise and popularity. The rating/popularity taken from two popular social media sites, *You Tube* and *Sound Cloud* is given below.

Table 1:

***Sample Details***

No	Season	Episode	Release	Artist(s)	Song/ <i>Kala'am</i>	Poet	Rating
1	1	4	Aug. 04, 2008	Tufail Ahmad Ali Zafar	<i>Allah Hu</i>	Sultan Baho	1, 167.5
2	2	1	June 14, 2009	Saeen Zahoor	<i>Aik Alif</i>	Bulleh Shah	24, 443
3	2	2	June 28, 2009	Ali Zafar	<i>Daastan-e-Ishq</i>	Bulleh Shah	11, 556.5
4	3	1	June 06, 2010	Arif Lohar Meesha Shafi	<i>Alif Allah Jugni</i>	Sultan Baho	74, 367.5
5	3	1	June 06, 2010	Arieb Azhar	<i>Na Raihndi Ay</i>	Bulleh Shah	788
6	3	5	Aug. 01, 2010	Sanam Marvi	<i>Manzel-e-Sufi</i>	Sachal Sarmast	7,638.5
7	3	5	Aug. 01, 2010	Abida Perveen	<i>Soz-e-Ishq</i>	Sultan Baho Bulleh Shah	1,517.5
8	4	1	May 22, 2011	Sanam Marvi Saeen Zahoor	<i>Sighra Aaween</i> <i>Saanwal Yaar</i>	Sachal Sarmast Sultan Baho	545
9	5	1	May 13, 2012	Hadiqa Kiyani	<i>Kamli</i>	Bulleh Shah	1,272.5

10	5	2	May 27, 2012	Atif Aslam Umair Jaswal	<i>Charkha</i> <i>Neolakha</i>	Bulleh Shah	13,500.5
11	6	1	Oct. 14, 2013	Fareeha Pervez	<i>Jogi Mairy Naal</i>	Bulleh Shah	8, 264
12	6	2	Oct. 24, 2013	Abrar-ul-Haq	<i>Ishq di Booti</i>	Sultan Baho	7,970.5
13	7	1	Sep. 21, 2014	Abida Perveen	<i>Mein Sufi Hun</i>	Bulleh Shah	23, 506
14	9	3	Aug. 27, 2016	Ahmed Jahanzeb Umair Jaswal	<i>Khaki Banda</i>	Bulleh Shah	22, 501.5
15	9	6	Sep. 17, 2016	Saeen Zahoor Sanam Marvi	<i>Chall Mele Noon</i> <i>Challiye</i>	Waris Shah	39,003
16	9	6	Sep. 17, 2016	Rizwan Butt Sara Haider	<i>Meri Meri</i>	Bulleh Shah	8,033

*Note.* The table above shows the sample detail as well as rating (average) of the selected CS songs collected from two social media sites. See Appendices Q1 & Q2 (pp. 424-425).



In addition to sample selection, some categories are also required to form a methodical discussion in Chapter 4, in sections two and three particularly. Sub Categories have been devised keeping in view the shared features in the singing performance as well as the dress behavior of singers. The sub sections for Music and Singing Performance include: (1) Meditative Singing: Perveen and Zahoor (2) Sacred Text, Secular Performance (3) Funk, Groove and Female Singing (4) Jazz Sensation in Sufi Singing. The sub categories for Costume of Singers include: (1) Modesty-the Color of Attire (2) Funk, Fantasy and Cross-Dressing (3) Female Glamor and Stylized Outfit (4) Crisp Icon Style (see 4.3 & 4.4). This strategy is useful for me to develop a comprehensive discussion regarding the outlook and music performance of the singers. It serves mainly two purposes: functional since it becomes more reader-friendly and logical in terms of the intra and inter-referencing structure.

### 3.6.4 Units of Analysis

Research design holds a pivotal place in a research project which binds all elements of a research such as theory, method, sample and the treatment of sample together. It provides a systematic guideline to a researcher at every step of writing. At the level of the sample treatment or analysis, a researcher needs to develop a kind of micro strategy for analysis and here comes the need to form sub-categories known as the units of analysis. These units of course vary from one case to another and a researcher decides upon them

after a lot of deliberation and one chapter of analysis may include many units depending on the nature of work and the requirement which a researcher deems necessary. It helps devising a strategy which converts an abstract entity into concrete, comprehensible and reader-friendly work.

The units of analysis which I have deliberated upon include the division of analysis into two main chapters. Chapter 4 which deals with representational category of signs contain three units of analysis whereas Chapter 5 includes the analysis of non-representational category of signs with four main units of analysis since all were important. Units of analysis in both the chapters are as under:

- (1) Representational Signs  Lyrics, Music & Performance of Singers, Costume of Singers
- (2) Non-Representational Signs  Set Design, Colors, Lighting, Camerawork

Representational signs (see Chapter 4) have been subdivided into three units of analysis: (1) lyrics (2) music and performance of singers and (3) costume of singers. A brief description is as under:

- (1) Unit 1, Lyrics, i.e., Sufi songs or the content used in the CS singing is analyzed and the main focus is to underscore how Sufi poets use symbolic language to articulate the spiritual signified in their poetry. For them, poetic language (form) is not simply a form but a vehicle to communicate the transcendental reality. Sufi text thus in no way represents a split of the signifier and signified in contrast to, say, any (post)modern poetic text of the New Age whereby meaning is deferred and keeps afloat onto a chain of signifiers and which may be performed in whatsoever feigning manner. The first unit, therefore, sets a frame of reference or yardstick against which the CS singing discourse is interpreted in the subsequent sections of analysis.
- (2) In unit 2, music and performance, the point to explore is whether how far form and meaning correlate in the CS Sufi singing. Whether words and actions (bodily performance) relate to each other or else what discourse do they call forth. What

does their singing performance represent via its foregrounded elements such as music, instrumentation, rhythm, beat and the like?

- (3) The third unit moves the discussion on to another significant aspect of the CS discourse, i.e., what do the costumes of singers signify or if there is any discursive element which lies underneath their appearance and which needs to be uncovered and interpreted within the mystic and religious lens also? The three units are thus significant representative signs and do have a logical connection.

Non-Representational signs (see Chapter 5) are subdivided into four units of analysis: (1) set design (2) colors (3) lighting (4) camerawork. All four units were noted as significant signs in terms of their relation to the overall CS Sufi singing. The analysis done in this chapter focuses on some main categories of non-linguistic representation of the CS discourse.

In the set design of all videos, coca cola sign (bottle image) is traced as the central sign around which the whole discourse seems to have revolved. Moreover, an attempt is made to explore the meaning encoded in the stylistic representation of the Studio singing, e.g., their appearance with in-ear monitors, huge instrumentation and digital effects etc. Other non-linguistic features, that is, RGB colors, 3D lighting and camerawork with its deep and shallow focus are traced to further contribute to the digital effects. The analysis of all these non-linguistic signs underscore how they contribute to creating a simulated and hyperreal effect in the CS Sufi singing and thereby turn it into a discourse which elicits signs of fantasy, desire and pleasure.

### **3.6.5 Reliability and Validity**

The term ‘Reliability’ is generally used for testing quantitative research but the concept is often employed in all kinds of research. In qualitative research, what may be tested, is the quality of the work as Golafshani says, “If we see the idea of testing as a way of information elicitation, then the most important test of any qualitative study is its quality” (2003, p. 601). A good qualitative research can help us “understand a situation that would otherwise be enigmatic or confusing” (Eisner, 1991, p. 58). This relates to the concept of reliability to evaluate quality in quantitative study with a “purpose of explaining” while quality in qualitative study has the purpose of “generating

understanding” (as cited in Golafshani, 2003, p. 601). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest validity and reliability as important criteria to judge the quality of any qualitative research. This, however, relates to the question, “How can an inquirer persuade his/her audiences that the research findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to?” (As cited in Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290). Healy and Perry (2000) state that the quality of a study in each paradigm should be judged within its own terms. While the terms reliability and validity are necessary to judge the quality in quantitative paradigms, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest credibility, dependability and applicability as essential notions to judge qualitative studies. They specifically use “dependability” for qualitative research which closely corresponds to the notion of “reliability” in quantitative research (p. 300).

As far as the concept of validity in qualitative studies is concerned, many researchers question the relevance of the term. But at the same time, they are concerned about devising some kind of qualifying measure or check for qualitative research. Moreover, as Creswell and Miller (2000) argue, validity is also affected by the researcher’s own view of validity in the study and the paradigm assumption that he/she has. In lieu of this, many researchers have presented their own concepts of validity and have often adopted what they consider to be more applicable terms, such as, rigor, quality and trustworthiness (as cited in Golafshani, 2003, p. 602). Scholars like Tobin and Begley (2004, pp. 388-389) Huberman and Miles (2002, p. 38) are of the view that it is inapt to transfer terminology across paradigms or various types of research. They suggest alternate ways to establish validity outside the confines of the quantitative paradigm. According to them, the concept of rigor is more applicable to ensure reliability in the qualitative research (Tobin & Begley, 2004).

Rigor refers to how integrity and competence are demonstrated in qualitative research by adhering to the principles of accuracy and detail. This entails that the researcher ensures trustworthiness of the research process that starts from research problem to the collection, interpretation or analysis of data. However, the issue of trustworthiness is delicate in qualitative research as the researcher is a researcher as well as participant in the phenomenon under study and cannot completely distance from it. Therefore, the possibility of bias, subjectivity or interpretation cannot be negated. Many scholars suggest certain measures to control this factor at some level. Parahoo (1997, p. 292), suggests reflexivity



or being self-critical whereby a researcher could reflect on his/his preconceived values while interacting with and interpreting the phenomenon under study. Holloway and Wheeler (2002, p. 263) add that researchers by following reflexivity, i.e., by reflecting on their own actions, feelings or conflicts that they might experience during the process of research, may tackle the issue of bias.

Another strategy that qualitative researchers use to improve rigor and to reduce bias in their work is bracketing. Parahoo (1997) defines bracketing as “suspension of the researcher’s preconceptions, prejudices, and beliefs so that they do not interfere with or influence the participants’ experience” (p. 45). Burns and Grove (2003, p. 380) explain that bracketing means that the researcher puts or lays aside what s/he knows about the phenomenon or experience being researched. Streubert and Carpenter (1999) affirm that bracketing means not only distancing oneself from the phenomenon but also avoiding being judgmental or too much subjective concerning what was heard or observed at an initial level of study and remaining open to data as it is revealed (p. 12).

In the present study, the researcher followed a self-critical or reflexive strategy while studying the data and critically reflected a number of times on the interpreted material, making a conscious effort to re-view vocabulary items or words which seemed a little judgmental or showed inclination towards bias and thereby attempted to control this issue. At the same, the researcher came to realize that such kind of strategies are though helpful in keeping a check on one’s subjectivity or may help in evaluating rigor in a research work, “they do not in themselves ensure rigor” as affirm Morse, Barrett and Mayan (2002, p. 9). Moreover, they are formulaic and even if they ensure some objectivity in one’s work, the matter of credibility or trustworthiness would still be hard to measure. Therefore, many scholars suggest that the rigor or quality of a qualitative study, needs to transcend these prescriptive standards. The quality of qualitative research, as Maxwell argues, cannot be determined by following prescribed formulas. Rather its quality lies in the power of its language to display a picture of the world in which we discover something about ourselves and our common humanity (p. 9).

Rigor in any qualitative study ultimately resides with the quality of the researcher’s purpose and the unique depth of the views that s/he confers on their research experience.

If a research is reduced to technical procedures, this might involve the risk of making the document an overly prescriptive that is run by these fixes in the manner of the tail wagging the dog. As a matter of fact, none of the technical procedures in themselves confer rigor. They can, however, build the rigor of a qualitative work if they are linked and grounded in a broad understanding of the qualitative research design and data analysis, else there will be the risk of compromising the unique contribution that a researcher attempts to make in the existing body of knowledge. There is the third feature of this discussion as points out Fox (2017) which highlights the need for social scientists to be reflexive about their interpretative work, i.e., to aspire to detachment and at the same time accept its ultimate impossibility (p. 662). Fox, in his online discussion on the issue of bias in research, suggests that instead of avoiding bias, one should celebrate and acknowledge it.

### **3.6.6 Limitations**

As mentioned in Section 3.5.5, the analysis has been done under two main categories of signs which further split into units of analysis. There could be some other units of analysis in addition to those the study deals with but as is the case with every project, it is inevitable to leave out some aspects which one deems a little less important or which could not be covered within the scope of one project or study. The study leaves out some units in the second category of analysis, non-representational signs. Props, for instance, have not been treated as a single entity in the analysis though they are touched as an inclusive unit under the set design. In the cinematographic elements editing and duration of shots have been precluded. Though slightly touched, depth of field has not been focused on in detail. Various camera movements, e.g., tracking, pan and tilt shots and cuts (editing) fast cuts, straight cuts, jump cuts, cross cutting, fade ins and outs have been slightly touched. Moreover, the aspect ratio and tonality have been left out.

Another limitation that the study faces is the lack of any standard translation of the song texts (Sufi lyrics) and in the context of the present study, the main reason for this lack is that the CS singers have made admixtures of the famous Sufi lyrics and other poetic texts- self-written or borrowed from various sources- in their songs. The researcher has therefore, translated either herself or relied on available internet resources and a few books such as *Our Legendary Intellectuals* by Sajjad Sheikh (n.d.) [Publication: Punjab Institute

of Language, Art & Culture (PILAC) and *Masterworks of Punjabi Sufi Poetry-Within Reach Series* by Muzaffar A. Ghaffar (2005/2007) [Publication: Ferozsons].

### **3.6.7 Ethical Considerations**

The present study is purely an academic work which is conducted to describe, explore and interpret a phenomenon, that is, the CS Sufi singing in the Pakistani context. The study does not aim to undermine the popularity of any of the CS singers or to mar the rating of the CS as a music forum. In the presentation of the main argument of my study, if I appear out to be a little stern of the CS Sufi singing, that may not be considered the researcher's bias or an opinion garnered by some external agency. Or my critique may be taken the other way round-a candid attempt to point out the outgrowth of the signs of pretense and simulation in our society- the structure which CS refers back to and subsequent disruption of the symbolic exchange of meaning. This is possible only when a researcher goes against the grain.

## CHAPTER 4

### SEMIOTICS OF REPRESENTATIONAL SIGNS IN THE SELECTED CS VIDEO SONGS

The angel... touched the walls which opened wide apart and she saw the organ which was pealing forth; ... and the congregation sitting in the polished chairs and singing from their hymn-books. *The church itself had come to the poor girl in her narrow room, or the room had gone to the church.* She sat in the pew with the rest of the pastor's household and when they had finished the hymn and looked up, they nodded and said, "It was right of you to come, Karen." "It was mercy," said she.

The lines cited above are taken from Hans Christian Anderson's [Danish author, 1805-18075] famous tale *The Red Shoes* written in 1845. The story narrated though in a fairy tale mode carries highly suggestive meanings. It presents an emblem (sign) of a person's spiritual journey of union with the Divine. The tantalizing material desires or the *signs* of temptation such as the "red shoes" may dance in front of us, entice and lure us away from the Divine path and yet a seeker who is true in her/his quest reaches a station where the path is set aright and the heart gains new insights. Karen does the same by *re-signing* the previous signs and eventually *becomes* what she longed for. The new enterprise which is transformational in nature is worth-desiring since Karen, the *seeker*, gets united and becomes one with the Divine, the *sought*. This experience of *Ishq* (loving) and becoming forms the locus of Punjabi Sufi literature expressed mostly through the use of the metaphoric sign of journey whereby the seeker's struggle for self-transformation is expressed. Sufi poets, however, draw on folk-poetic traditions and talk of the Divine Reality by employing the indigenous folk tales and romances (signs from folk life). Whatever the medium, whether narrative or poetic, the message if truly mystic in nature, exudes out of the text for the enlightenment of the reader/listener and is not even bound within time, space, genre/structure or cultural limits.

In the English poetic tradition, Hopkins (1844-89) is also singled out as one of the most celebrated poets who wrote mystic and meditative poetry. The mystic concern that he

raises in most of his poems such as “God’s Grandeur” (1877) or “The Windhover” (1877) is very much akin to the loving, seeking phenomenon mentioned above (Ballinger, 2000, p. 234). His concern is also to show that the seeker’s goal is not easy to reach and an unremitting struggle, passion and meditation to counter dark, worldly and vicious desires are required. Punjabi Sufi poets such as Shah Husain (1538-1599), Sultan Bahoo (1630-1691), Bulleh Shah (1680-1757), Waris Shah (1706-1798) or Sachal Sarmast (1739-1829) among others, all endeavor to describe a phenomenon of spiritual/esoteric struggle on part of the seeker of the Divine Reality in their poetry. They do so by using commonplace similes and metaphors such as ploughing, weaving, seeding or planting which come from the folk culture and are believed to be closer to nature since times back. Hopkins also tends to use analogies and signs from the world of nature: of birds with their flights and flares, of flowers with their scents and smells. He draws on the nature phenomenon to center on his theory of human meditation or *inscape*, the term he himself coined (2000, p. 210). This philosophy of meditation seems akin to that of *Ishq* (love) and the seeker in the Sufi philosophy struggles and resists against “brute beauty,” dress and grandeur as does Karen in Anderson’s “The Red Shoes” and the same goes for Hopkins’ Kestrel who travels through the “stronger wind” in “The Windhover.” Karen and Kestrel, therefore, act as signs of strong will and mystic seeking who struggle against worldly jerks. In fact, every mystic writing unreels numerous sites of meditation for its reader and the purpose is to cultivate the desire for Divine Love in their hearts.

For a mystic poet, Bulleh Shah, for instance, the fragrant seed of God’s Love can only be sown in the seeker’s heart by keeping a continuous vigil of the *nafs* (sign of the lower self) because *nafs*, he says, is an underhand thief and is not an easy combat. Desires of flesh and bone, of wealth, riches and repute may creep alongside to drive us unwittingly to a path other than that of God. Hence an incessant *tafakkur* (meditation) is mandatory for a seeker of Allah’s path. Meditation or deep reflection is possible only when one struggles to get rid of “greed, anger, lust and delusion, including self-delusion,” reflects Ghaffar (2007, p. 11) in his book *Sultan Bahoo Within Reach*. Both aspects of meditation, esoteric and exoteric have to be coupled or put simply, meditation has to be done within the innermost recesses of one’s heart and in the outside world of nature. This is the only way to be guided to pious actions, get salvation by entering the Divine Kingdom.

This contemplative struggle/action of the seeker of *Hadayat* (Allah's path) may be better explained in terms of a musical harp which never ceases or a harmonica which continues producing both inhale and exhale notes. The journey oriented towards self-transformation passes through motley colors (inhales & exhales) and discourses of inscape and introspection. To express the same experience, what Hopkins said is worthy to be quoted here. "End of March and beginning of April—this is the time to study inscape in the spraying of trees, in these sprays at all events, there is a new world of inscape" (as cited in Sobolev, 2011, p. 60).

All mystic writers have an idiom of their own whereby they translate humble and rustic themes lying usually in the periphery into an inspiring discourse. In other words, they use commonplace and ordinary signs only to turn them into signs of extraordinary worth. They are the visionary who rake the subtext of these ordinary events to explore gems of thought and pearls of wisdom. Be it the withering of flowers, thundering of clouds or weaving of yarn, the mystic dwells deep and graces up various in-depth insights, a network of meanings or semiosis. Hopkins, for instance, sees "the horned violet" as a pretty thing which is gracefully lashed. For him, "Even in withering" the flower runs through "beautiful inscapes by the screwing up of the petals into straight little barrels or tubes" (as cited in Sobolev, 2011, p. 60). Similarly, Khawaja Farid (1173-1266) one of the great Punjabi mystic poets, greets the noise of clouds when they "thunder on the burning Rohi" and uses it as a poetic analogy to express the intensity of heart-longing for the Divine Truth (Bhutta, 2008, p. 227).

The point to be emphasized here is that mystics' concern is not to juggle with words or use expressionistic language merely for the sake of poetic embellishment and to venture for a pseudo intellectual product. The concern which underlies every mystic writing is to use words as a medium to trace, express and elaborate the ultimate purpose and meaning of life or to use language as a metaphoric tool/sign to navigate the Omnipresence of the Divine Reality. The signification, the meaning exists already in things all around (prior truth/structures) and words are significant in that they provide the medium to express that discourse, that truth. And a mystic yearns to reveal this discourse or ontology of words. The words here are not empty signifiers or floppy, insipid expressions which end up in nothingness, they are instead expressive and hermeneutic in nature. They relate to and stand

for the Ultimate Truth or an alethic Reality which is the essence of every meaning, beyond which exists no truth, no meaning.

The metaphor of journey as mentioned in the beginning of this chapter is used as the central sign in the Punjabi mystic poetry. However, readers who are well-versed in this area, must be aware that this journey is esoteric or inward which means that it is basically the affairs of heart that Sufi poets deal with. Hence in this metaphoric journey, the seeker's heart is the land which also needs ploughing to turn over the dull soil (signs of lethargy) and to prepare it for the sowing of fresh nutrients/seeds of Divine Love (re-signing of signs). The hope for flowering of these seeds cannot be materialized unless the plantation is made in the right way followed by a continuous watering of the soil of heart with humility, devotion and good deeds.

Punjabi Sufi poetry in general and in the particular context of the present study, therefore, interweaves its own semiosis or a network of meanings via the use of metaphoric signs and analogies. Here words are not words, they are signs which become more and more suggestive and open up like petals of a flower for a person who fertilizes them with conscious meditation and deep thinking. Here “symbols grow” (Rauch, 1999, p. 8) and the more they expand and grow the stronger they become ontologically for those who seek for the *grace*. Their ontology as signs of truth, truth woven around “Ikko Alif/One Alif” (Bulleh Shah), gives the vantage point to the seeker of seeing beyond the veil of materiality. The importance of signs for communicating truth, therefore, has been recognized since ages. Downing (2012) focuses upon semiosis/network of signs that nurture the growth of truth. She puts it, “just as a tree grows through osmosis—the absorption of nutrients in earth, light and rain, so our understanding of truth grows through semiosis, the absorption of knowledge as signs” (p. 329).

The metaphor of “growth” forms a recurrent symbolic pattern in Punjabi Sufi poetry as the analysis of selected Sufi songs in Section 4.2 below elaborates further. The *kalaam* (Sufi songs) under study written by four poets, i.e., Sultan Bahoo, Bulleh Shah, Waris Shah and Sachal Sarmast is significant in that it employs this metaphor as a continuous process of seeding, nurturing and growing in the wider context of soul-making. The metaphor thus stands for an experiential journey of the lover of God in addition to its function as a linguistic element. Put it simply, the metaphoric language in Punjabi mystic poetry

facilitates the reader to dig out the meaning of an otherwise ungraspable spiritual experience. For instance, metaphor of marriage is commonly used in Sufi literature which is referred to as “bridal mysticism,” or “betrothal to God”, suggestively evoking the idea of spiritual marriage (Anjum, 2017, p. 28). However, the functional value of symbols and unusual metaphors in Sufi poetry should not be overstated, maintains Anjum. The point is that it is through symbols and concrete images of external world that Sufis make intricate or abstract concepts and subjective experiences of Divine love easy to grasp for common folk. It is important to understand that in Sufi poetry, a symbolic thing or the signifier is less real, while what it signifies or the signified is more real (p. 26). What lies behind the external form of words and letters is the face of Truth that Sufis attempt to unveil.

There are three broad poetic techniques in the view of Matilal (2004) that Sufi poets of India employ to express their mystic experience. In his book *The Word and the World* he refers to them as: (1) employment of unique and unusual metaphors and symbols that facilitate transcendence, (2) use of incongruous statements to arrest the attention of the reader to probe into the ineffable, and (3) the use of negative dialectics or *neti neti* method (as cited in Sadarangani, 2004, p. 102). Though Sadarangani (2004) cites Matilal with particular reference to the poetic techniques employed by Kabir (1440-1518) and Nanak (1469-1539), the two great mystic poets of India, the same is true to the poetic tropes used by Punjabi/Sindhi mystic poets such as Sultan Bahoo, Bulleh Shah, Sachal Sarmast and others.

On account of the symbolic/metaphoric mode of expression, Punjabi Sufi poetry is rightly considered as an insignia or representation of the perennial human desire to seek Divine Love. The present study as it deals with the singing of Sufi poetry by CS singers, it analyses in the section below the Sufi text of selected songs under various themes, focusing on the inner meaning of words or what Abou-Bakr (1992) calls the “vertical downward movement of digging into the implications of the text” (p. 44). Moreover, being a semiotic study, the analysis deals with both linguistic and non-linguistic signs in CS Sufi singing discourse. There are certain signs which are traditionally considered more representative, e.g., language or dress in contrast to some others which represent conceptual or abstract objects such as color or camera angles. Signs which are traditionally said to function at the level of comprehension such as plot (narrative, script, lyrics etc.), props, characters



(singers/performers) costume and the like are placed under the representational category of signs by Richard Dyer (3. 4). Signs such as colors, lightening, camera angles, rhythm or special effects which function at less concrete level fall in the non-representational category in his view.

#### **4.1 Representational Signs**

This chapter deals with a trio of representational signs selected for semiotic study of 16 Sufi songs of CS singers. As to why these categories or these specific units of analysis, the reason is twofold: (1) these three are the main representational signs in Dyer's suggested model, (2) in Sufi literature and in the particular context of Sufi music, the three aspects, namely, lyrics/poetic words as the message-carrier; how lyrics are musically performed and by whom, i.e., the emphasis on the outlook of performers, are considered highly significant. The three categories of signs selected are given under:

1. Sufi Lyrics/*Kalaam* (selected CS Sufi songs)
2. Music and Performance of Singers
3. Costume of Singers

#### **4.2 Sufi Lyrics in the Selected CS Songs**

The sample of the present study comprises 16 Sufi songs (Sufi *kalaam*) rendered by CS singers within a time frame of 9 years and 9 seasons (See Section 3.6.3). Bulleh Shah's songs, or properly naming the genre *kafi* in which he writes, are predominantly used in CS Sufi singing. *Kafi*, a distinct literary genre of Punjabi and Sindhi vernacular poetry, in the words of Singh (2012) is a "monorhyme stanzaic verse form usually set to music" (p.1132). Asani (1988) maintains it "as a form in which one basic verse announces the rhyme and tune and is then repeated after each verse." Defining *Siharfi*, which Sultan Bahoo used as his verse form, Asani says, "It is a letter from the Perso-Arabic alphabet which is used at the beginning of each verse" (1988, p. 92). The songs by other two poets, Waris Shah and Sachal Sarmast, whose lyrics are used by CS singers in the songs under study are also in the genre of *kafi*.

More than the genre in which Sufi poets write, the beauty of their poetry lies in the themes they explore such as the quest for God in all His manifestations or the study and examination of one's own self. In their exploration, Sufi poets use language as a semiotic

resource, using various signs or poetic tropes, images, metaphors and love archetypes in order to express the otherwise ineffable signified meaning. Their quest thereby centers on the theme of the seeker (signifier) and the sought (signified) in the tradition of Punjabi Sufi poetry. Be it the use of meter or rhyme scheme or linguistic items such as verbs, adjectives and predicates, language is a tool for these poets to delve deep into a discourse of affinity with the Divine. Hence their poetic compositions are interlaced with meaning, affinity and relationship with the Divine as the analysis of selected Sufi lyrics/songs demonstrates below.

### **4.3 Theme of Divine Love in the Songs**

Sufi lyrics or songs rendered by CS singers in songs selected for the present study form the first part of analysis under representational category of signs. Viewing Sufi *Kalam* as a symbolic representation of the love of the Divine signified, it is the theme of Divine love which is predominantly traced in the songs rendered by CS singers and the same theme is prevalent in the Punjabi/Sindhi Sufi poetry in general. The discussion in the subsequent sections is linked to how Sufi poets use language to explore this notion of affinity with the Divine with reference to the selected songs or *kalaam* used in CS singing. In purely semiotic/linguistic terms, these signs fit in more under Peirce's version of signification and have an "in-built dynamism" (Cobley & Jansz, 2000, p. 25).

Concerning the theme of love as a general notion is no less than a riddle which has forever haunted human life. The question why it confuses us is whether love is an abstract concept, an emotion or experience or all-in-one. Scholars and Seers have tried to express a number of particularities of this notion. Arab lexicographers, for instance, have noted about seventy equivalents or quasi-synonyms of the word "love" or in Arabic *hubb*. The range recorded varies from mere affection, friendship, tenderness to ardent desire of nuptial union and to *mahabba* (mystic love) which is ineffable in the view of the mystics. Love whether human or divine, is intricate and perplexing in nature. In spite of being intricate, one thing which is easy to figure out is that love entails some peculiar discourse, some kind of relation or interaction whatever mystery it warrants otherwise. Moreover, this discourse is beyond any measurement or scientific calculation. Its semiotics, its logic and course of occurrence, whether psychological or physical, remain allusive resisting any coherent articulation.

Scholars use various analogies and metaphoric expressions to capture the feeling of love despite its allusiveness. Most of them describe love as some kind of inward emotion with a gradual timeline growth or development despite its occurrence as a sudden onset. Ali bin Haytham describes love as unlimited and in his view, it (love):

seeps into the heart and spreads within it as rainwater from the clouds into the pores of the earth; or as if a cloud, [love] flows like rain on the hearts; it sows trouble and brings out the fruit of sorrow. (As cited in Feodorov, 2002, p. 50)

Gasset (2002) posits love as a suddenly “sprung rhythm” which is instant and ravishing that the first thing a woman experiences is a fabulous, irresistible and overwhelming (as cited in Feodorov, pp. 142-143). Hisham bin Hakim speaks of another manifestation of love and notices that the feeling of love is firstly aroused by the “beauty of form” but in its later stage, it may change its shape, “as that when the king becomes servant, the master becomes slave, humbling himself before the lowest of his servants” (p. 50).

Hakim’s words pinpoint another kind of love which is humble and mystic in nature. The term used in Arabic for mystic love, is *hubb* which is used to express the love of the Creator and is considered as an incessant, “state of purity connected to the faith in God.” Ibn-e Arabi’s rendering of this feeling is significant in this regard. He maintains, “Love (*hubb*) flows through the body like blood in the veins and the flesh. It penetrates all the joints in the body” (as cited in Feodorov, 2002, p. 50). In contrast, worldly love (*hawa* in Arabic) as described earlier as “falling in love” which implies to fall upon something on account of its formal beauty or visual/aural attraction. This kind of love seems to occur as an event or a sudden onset of something which occupies the senses of lover(s) though it lacks in depth or penetration.

Like Ibn-e Arabi’s rendition of mystic love which is potent and forceful enough to move across the flesh and veins of the body of the seeker, the expression of spiritual love by Punjabi Sufi poets is passionate too. They vehemently express Allah’s Love or *hubb* in their poetic renditions. Their use of language is very peculiar in this regard. Since this mystic love is intense in nature, they employ powerful visual imagery to convey some sense of this ineffable experience. In addition, the verbs they use generally in their poetry

and in the context of present study include such as *to flow, to circulate, to sow, to grow, to spread, to invade and penetrate or to pierce and to drink and dance. Verbs such as to mesmerize, captivate, to seize or to cast a spell, to scent and smell* are also used.

#### 4.3.1 Use of Evocative Verbs

Sultan Bahoo's (1630-1691) use of diction, verbs in particular, is a note-worthy sign in his poetic compositions. Etymologically, the word 'evocative' originates from the Latin word *evocare*, which means to "call out/forth" or to "vocalize" (Online Vocabulary Dictionary). Evocative language makes you "think of or remember a strong image or feeling" (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries). Heidegger identifies evocative as the "essential being of language," its "saying" power, its capacity to "speak" by pointing to and showing us something. He further explains that the "saying power of language is what enables any discourse to give expression to things that call for attention" (as cited in Sloane, 2001, p. 334).

Bahoo's use of diction is remarkable in this regard as many of his verses analyzed below provide evidence. The couplet given below is incorporated in songs such as "Allah Hu" (Song 1) rendered by Tufail Ahmad, "Jugni" (Song 4) by Arif Lohar and Meesha Shafi, "Sighra Aaween Saawal Yar" (Song 8) by Sanam Marvi, "Ishq Di Booti" (Song 12) by Abrar-ul Haq (See Section 3.6.3). The couplet is highly suggestive in terms of its visual depiction of an intimate relationship between God and His lover. More importantly, two verbs in the second line are significant in that they carry the essence, the fragrance and the power of the suggestiveness of Divine Love and its spell and impact on the beholder. Verbs such as to sow, to grow, to spread, invade and to penetrate significantly add to meaning making process that Sultan Bahoo intends to focus on. While Peirce says, "One sign triggers a chain of associations" (as cited in Cobley & Jansz, 2000, p. 27), but at the level of what he calls "secondness," they build a frame of signified reference, for instance symbolic. In Sufi lyrics, language enacts in the same way. For a Sufi poet, language thus becomes a tool, a carrier and a vehicle to express the Divine signified or to unveil the veiled. Sultan Bahoo's verses are as below:

الف اللہ جیسے دی بوٹی مرشد من و جان لائی ہو  
اندر بوٹی مشک مچایا جاں پھلن تے آئی ہو

*Alif*: Allah-scented Jasmine that *Murshad* planted in my heart  
 Its scent has filled my heart to the core and blossomed my whole being  
 (Trans. Kalsoom Qaisar)

To understand the signified Beauty or the fragrance of Divine Love being suggested in the verses, one needs to keep in mind one of the central postulates of Sufism, that is, mystical ecstasy attained through unity with the Divine. All Sufi poets maintain that God manifests His love in various ways to those who attain acumen and insight to experience it and thereby see the reflection of this Reality in the “mirror of the non-real” (Lal, 2001, p. 4202). By using the analogy of flower and the scent, Bahoo expresses the ineffable in almost a calligraphic way. The word Allah has five *petals* whether written in Arabic or Punjabi and so does the fragrant flower, Jasmine. Allah’s name is thereby given a sweet fragrance through this image. God is usually represented through a glowing light as in the example to follow but “Bahoo is perhaps the only poet who uses the ‘physicality’ of fragrance for God and Godly concepts” (Ghaffar, 2007, p. 25). A great mystic scholar Abdul Karim Jili (1365-1428) used the analogy of ice and water: ice is the condensed form of water. In essence, both are one and yet different as are flower and its scent. Reality of God is also expressed by Sufis through the metaphor of sun.

God is sun, world is water. One can see the ripples of sun in water which is always changing because of the ripples in it but the sun remains steadfast and immutable. (Lal, 2001, p. 4202)

God is “steadfast” and so is His Love. In order to be blessed by His grace and Love, one has to stop clinging to the transient and unreal. The hurdle in our way to see the Real is our ego which, in the view of Sufis, is the root cause of our sufferings. Since the Sufi way is esoteric, all Sufi poets speak of the self’s liberation from ego and therefore they struggle to expose anger, egotism, lust and self-delusion and ask for “taming of the bestial self” (Anjum, 2013, p. 4). Bahoo’s verses in “Alif Allah Jugni” (Song 4) read as under:

ہر رگے ہر جانی ہو

In each vein, each pore, Huu ...

Bulleh Shah’s verses in “Dastan-e Ishq” (Song 3) sung by Ali Zafar echo the same, “You are inside me, you outside of me/You are every bit of me.” The aspect peculiar to

Sultan Bahoo's *Abiyaat* or *Siharfi* which earned him a distinct place in Punjabi lore and literature, is that each verse ends with *Huu* as the lyrics above demonstrate. His verse thereby is sung with a special draw on *Huu* which some singers amazingly elongate in their renditions. The use of *Huu* ending every verse though disturbs the meter a little but it does give an "absorbing ambience to the verse," as posits Ghaffar (2007, p. 20). Celebrated Sufi singers such as Pathane Khan, Saen Zahoor and Abida Perveen render Bahoo's verses in a way that neither music layered in the structure of quatrains or in words is disturbed nor is meaning affected. In Bahoo's verses, "music intermeshes with words, so does meaning" (p. 20).

Likewise, Bulleh Shah employs powerful diction, word-pictures to express Divine Love in his poetry, for instance, the use of action verbs to evoke a continuous process of spiritual ascension and purification is highly significant. To penetrate intricacies of mysticism, he uses traditional imagery in the manner of other mystics, for example, *guru* (spiritual guide), *gandhan* (knots) *loi* (blanket) *khasam* (husband) *bansi* (flute), *piala* (bowl) *sharab* (wine), *chaman* (garden), *bulbul* (nightingale) and many local names in various contexts of his *kafis* which add in the words of Sheikh (n.d.), depth of thought and vision, intensity of passion and excellence that surpasses art and craft (p. 210). His language is though simple, his poetic thoughts which underpin make it eloquent. For emphasis, he, at times, repeats words using imperative form which carries a touch of intimacy for the reader. His mastery over the use of verbs is amazing which unveils deeper thought and meanings for the reader.

Bulleh Shah's use of verbs is emphatic such as to sow, to culture, to water, to plough and to dance which abound in his poetry. In grammar, verb as a part of speech is significant in that it tells or asserts something about a person or thing. Shah's use of this kind of lexicon assertively paints a rustic imagery via three main categories, that is, gardening, ploughing and dancing. Likewise, Bahoo's verses abound in the same kind of imagery by the use of verb. See, for instance, the ending verses of "Ishq di Booti" (Song 12) by Abrar-ul Haq which draw on Sultan Bahoo's poetry and read as under:

چھبے والی بوٹی بیج لے  
حق والی بوٹی بیج لے

Sow the seed of the Jasmine flower/Sow the seed of Truth

And in another stanza of the same composition, action of dancing is expressed and for emphasis, is said twice: *نچ نچ یار منالے* (Dance, Dance and Coax the Beloved). In the song “Na Raindee Hai” (Song 5) rendered by Arieib Azhar, Bulleh Shah uses diction which draws on both common and classical style of writing, *Naachut hoon mein prem say, Jaisoon piya nachaat*/I dance in a trance of love, the way my Beloved wishes (Trans. Arieib Azhar). *Nachaat* or *Nach* is not simply a linguistic string, it is laced with music, rhythm and meaning and even portrays physiological picture of a person fully engrossed in that moment of transformation wherein comes *wajd* or fusion with God. The concept behind is the Sufi way of absolute surrender of one’s will before Allah’s Will. Dance is a metaphor which implicates whirling of the interior self around one thought, i.e., *fana fillah* or the desire to “fuse into the limitless Spirit or God” (Ghaffar, 2007, p. 11). In Sufi philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wujood* (Unity of Being), “the spirit of man is sourced in, and detached from, the single Spirit which pervades the universe and transcends it ... this thought is different from bhakti pantheism which says that everything is God and God is identical with the universe. “Poetry transforms the moment,” defines Ghaffar (p. 21) for the enlightenment of the reader which is relevant in the context of this discussion.

Shah’s mastery over words to create a visual picture and words, for him, are tools to express a whole cultural phenomenon, various rhythms, patterns, actions and meanings that underlie this construction. Remaining within the ambit of time and space, his words thus act like signs which speak volumes of cultural and mystic meanings. Woven on the fabric of Shah’s poetry, these signs produce a discourse of icons, indexes and symbols- a discourse needed to dig out meanings embedded in the Sufi philosophy of Divine Love. Bulleh Shah’s poetry thus provides enough food for thought and enlightens those who are keen to read lessons from the syllabi of God’s Love.

Let us understand the three linguistic categories of gardening, ploughing and dancing as processes and assess them through the prism of semiotics. I am once again reminded of what Downing (2012) postulated that we understand truth and reality if we think of words and knowledge in terms of “signs.” Consider, for example gardening as a sign. Prior to

beginning with the work, we need to undo some previous signs, for example, if there are weeds lying all across the land, they will definitely be removed. Again, before we proceed to *resign new signs* we have to consider, for example, (1) fertility of land, accessibility of water, sunlight (prior signs), (2) to take care of the bedding, rowing or xeriscaping principles (while-signs) (3) and lastly, we have to be continuously vigilant enough to make the toil a success (post-signs). It is this process of meaning-making which Barthes calls “system of signification” and which in his view “binds the signifier and the signified, an act whose product is the sign” (Barthes, 1978, p. 111). So, gardening as a sign involves a chain of signifiers (process) to probe the signified meaning.

#### **4.3.2 Predicates for Mystic Meditation**

A clause contains the subject as well as the predicate. The predicate is one of the two main parts of a sentence, the other being the subject which the predicate modifies (Merriam Webster, 2004, p. 566). In other words, subject is the topic of the sentence and predicate is what happens to the subject or what it says about the subject. (Nelson, 2015, para, 1). Most modern theories of grammar and syntax see predicates as relations or functions over arguments. The predicate “serves either to assign a property to a singular term argument or to relate two or more arguments to each other” (Carnie (2007, p. 51). Predicates may be simple or complex depending on whether the complexity comes out of the lexical, phrase level or syntactic complementation. Scholars, however, argue over the term ‘complex,’ such as Alsina and Butt (n.d., para, 3), state that in complex predicates, the small independent syntactic structures are merged through some “some kind of argument fusion mechanism.” Butt (1993) also suggests that complex predicate formation must take place at argument structure, and not at phrase structure” (p. 35). Hale and Keyser, however, are of the view that many surface monomorphemic verbs in the lexicon are internally complex (e.g., ‘clean (the house)’ ‘make clean’), and therefore, complex predicates are the norm, rather than defining some special area (as cited in Butt, 1993, p. 42). Many scholars (Matsumoto 1992, Mohanan 1995, Bresnan and Mchombo 1995), also address the issue of the boundary between lexicon and syntax, and whether the borderline between the two can usefully be drawn at all. The idea that a word may be a functional unit at one level, syntactically complex at another and a prosodic component at yet another level



(the levels even overlap) has also been argued over. Mohanan's (1995) idea is based on a multi-dimensional analysis, arguing for generalizations at different linguistic levels. This idea gets further clarified through what Sells (1998) calls "lexically governed" complex predicates and further, "complex predicates can be single words" (pp. 1-2) which reinforce what Hale and Keyser highlight.

Bulleh Shah's use of predicates in his songs (kafis) is very striking in that it unfolds subtle thoughts and layers of meaning. The songs also reveal instances of simple to complex range of predicates. "Jogi Mairy Naal" (Song 11) rendered by Fareeha Pervez, carries brilliant examples. For instance, the stanza given below is of four lines comprising unrhymed two couplets. Each of the two verses forms a couplet on the basis of their semantic relationship. Moreover, the first two verses become a complete structure if placed horizontally and thereby function as the subject of the latter being formed by the second couplet which thus becomes a predicate. What makes this whole structure/stanza rather unusual is the startling jump of thought which creates a kind of semantic gap between the two sub-structures/couplets reminding us of what Matilal (2004) stated about how Sufi poets make use of unusual symbols and metaphors and the use of negative dialectics. In verses cited below, Bulleh Shah adds to it in that it is the use of predicate which is unique and which unfolds a mystic idea by employing the seemingly negative elements. The verses are as under:

چلے کیجے پر رب نہ ملیا / لینا کی چٹیاں و سچ وڑ کے (۱)  
 بلھیا جاگ بناؤ دھ نہیں کڑھدا / بھانویں لال ہووے کڑھ کڑھ کے (۲)

- (1) You performed all your rituals, but you didn't find God/what good will observing such rituals do?  
 (2) Bulleh Shah! you can't curdle milk without rennet/ Even if you make it turn red through hard trying

The imagery used in the above verses is very striking though a kind of schism has been manipulated which certainly serves some artistic purposes. Firstly, it makes the reader think critically assuming the poetic text to be a game of cards and s/he be the player to juggle with every card firstly de-placing and then re-placing each card on its right slot of

the structural frame. The task is therefore, no less than to identify the “internal visual structure of an image” (Beebe, 2006, p. 1). Moreover, the tone/voice the poet uses in the two couplets varies: it is narrative with ironical tinge in the first and obliquely instructive with an undertone of warning in the second verse. Meaning here is being “generated through sign relations as a form of transfer from one type of sign [irony-warning] to another,” as says Peirce (as cited in Caunce, 2013, p. 4). This implies that in these verses, the meaning is so profound that it cannot depend on a simple configuration of the signifier/signified as one can perceive through Saussure’s theory. Bulleh Shah thus spins subtle thoughts in his poetry through the linguistic and narrative strategies. As far as the text as a philosophic construction is concerned, the two verses co-relate but at implicit level, else they remain distinct entities.

When we co-relate the two verses/poetic structures given above, the lexical items such as nouns and adjectives which contribute to the predicative effect also need to be analyzed. It is the noun “chilla/ritual” which is the topic of the subject/argument in the first verse (verse 1) چلے کیے پر رب نہ ملے and /performed, کیے is the verb-only predicate. The clause 1, is, however, one syntactic part of the complete verse joined with the dependent clause 2 through a پر conjunction. Seen in connection with clause 1, the 2<sup>nd</sup> clause is acting more like a matrix predicate as it is modifying/giving continual information about the previous clause (noun+verb). When the two structures (clause 1 & 2) are merged into one, their relationship enables the reader understand the topic of the argument, namely, a mere ritualistic performance of the religion does not suffice or it is a futile activity. On further digging, the verse rather becomes an inquiry, a probing of the self or even a warning. And the inquiry posed is, “why to continuously engage in a ritualistic activity if it cannot lead us to win God’s love”? The 2<sup>nd</sup> verse of the couplet (clause 1) in which /rennet is the topic, جاگ بناؤ دھنیں کڑھدا provides the explanation, by using an analogy and clause 2 when joined with /even if, forms complex predicate. This predicate in turn takes up more semantic burden also. Seen the couplet in totality, it is the noun “chilla” which remains the topic of the couplet emphasizing that a mere conventional and ritualistic conduct does not suffice unless we reach a state of inner tranquility wherein the meaning of true wakefulness dawns upon us.

The word “chilla” as a semantic item also needs specific attention as this is also employed in contexts other than religion or mysticism such as music. *Chilla katna* or simply *chilla* is a kind of rigorous/spiritual training done by a person in complete isolation. In the Indian classical music, it is a ritual or a kind of drill which a music student undergoes, living in isolation and for music only. For some musicians, *chilla* may be of varying degrees but for some others it may span for 40 days as is the general tradition. This training in seclusion is said to have transformative power and hence a great impact on the music career of the student. Punjab *gharana* (school) of *tabla* (a small drum or pair of drums) playing is said to have developed the ritual of *chilla* times back in the Punjab region in 19<sup>th</sup> century. Jamkhandi (January 26, 2011) in the *Times of India*, writes about another school, Kirana *Gharana* with reference to a famous singer, Karim Khan. *Ustad* (master) Abdul Karim Khan (1872 – 1937) termed *chilla* as “lighting a fire” under one’s life. He further said, “You either cook or you burn. If you cook, everyone can enjoy your flavor – otherwise, you’ll be a mass of cinders, a heap of ash.” The word *chilla* has also its common use and refers to a period of fasting and worship as well as getting quarantined in the general sense. The time period, however, may vary in different contexts. This word also refers to the forty days a woman spends after childbirth.

Apart from the common implications of the word, it has mystical and religious connotations as well. Apart from the gatherings of *Sama* and *Dhikr* conducted regularly in the Sufi praxis, there used to be one more practice, a rather “ubiquitous a form of mystico-ascetic praxis” (Ridgeon, 2015, p. 70), enacted by Sufis in the pre-modern Islamic societies. To use Ridgeon’s terms, it was known as *khalwa* or solitary spiritual retreat. As far as the number forty is concerned, *khalwa* has a number of instances in the Judeo-Christian and Islamic valuations. Moses, for instance, stayed for forty days on Mountain Sinai; Jesus remained in vigil in the desert for forty days and Muhammad’s (PBUH) prophethood which was enunciated in the 40th year of his life. The word *chilla* is the denominative for *Khalwa* in Persian which means to remain in isolation, usually for forty days.

If we interpret Bulleh Shah’s verses in the light of the above discussion, we notice the depth of the notion in these lines cited earlier in this section also.

بلھیا جاگ بناؤ دھ نہیں کڑھدا / بھانویں لال ہووے کڑھ کڑھ کے

Bulleh Shah! you can't curdle milk without rennet/ Even if you make it turn red through hard trying

The purpose of *chilla* or *khalwa* is to create a space for oneself wholly devoted to prayer and meditation, away from worldly enragers. It refers to a spiritual endeavor of the seeker to focus on an “unconditioned source” (Roy, 1998, p. 35), or remain completely attached to the idea of the Transcendent with the hope to gain truer insight of his/her own bigoted self. If all this activity turns out to be simply a drill, a tale full of “sound and fury” and the retreatant a player who “struts and frets his hour upon the stage” (Shakespeare) without having been able to unravel the “ultimate mystery of things emanating from a Transcendent source” (p. 35), this is a loss- a loss beyond any recuperation. Bulleh Shah's language thus has the tinge of revelation and contemplative apprehension of human existence. He seems aware that “language must be used to study language from within” (Coward & Raja, 1999, p. 34). What Shah underscores in the verses is that a mere conventional and ritualistic conduct does not suffice unless we reach a state of inner tranquility wherein the meaning of true wakefulness dawns upon us.

#### 4.4 Images of Divine Fragrance

An image is the reproduction in the mind of a sensation produced by a physical perception. For example, if a person's eye perceives a specific color, s/he will register an “image” of that color in the mind (Preminger, 2016, p. 363). In literary usage, imagery refers to images formed in the mind by language, whose words may refer either to experiences which could produce physical perceptions such as a person feels/touches a flower with his fingers or to the sense-impressions such as perceiving the image of a specific color. An Image, depending on its motivational level, yields impact on human imagination and, therefore, is an entity which is symbolic or representative. Fogle refers to an image as, “the sensuous element in poetry” or “a picture made out of words,” as defines Lewis (as cited in Preminger, p. 363). Spurgeon expands it as, “I use the term ‘image’ as the only available word to cover every kind of simile, as well as every kind of what is really compressed simile ---metaphor.” And similarly, to Downey, “The image must not be

conceived as a material copy or thing but as the content of a thought in which attention is centered on sensory quality of some sort” (2016, p. 363). In linguistics, the content or thought process is concerned with paradigmatic axis whereas words (form/positioning) used to build an image deal with syntagmatic (Chandler, 2007, p. 86).

Bulleh Shah and Sultan Bahoo both employ various images which are highly evocative and can most often be analysed on paradigmatic level. For instance, both of them use a significant noun phrase “Chambe di Booti” or “Chambe wali Booti,” in songs such as “Allah Hu” (Song 1), “Alif Allah Jugni” (Song 4), “Sighra Aaween Saanwal Yaar” (Song 8) and “Ishq Di Booti” (Song 12). For both the poets, it is important to take good care of the plant or the seed one is sowing in heart. Remember it has to be none other than “Chambe/Piyar/Haq wali Booti.” Each first word/noun of the whole phrase is serving the synonym function to reinforce one and the same idea, that is, plant of Allah’s Love. Flowers like jasmine (*chambe di booti*), rose or hyacinth are employed by mystic writers as signs to suggest love and spiritual longing. Jasmine flower or *chambe di booti* has been adored in various ways in the history of humankind. It is said to have originated from the northwestern mountain region of India though it is grown now in other parts of the world also. Greeks, Persians, Chinese and Indians including others are reported to have used this flower for the purpose of wooing and romancing (Cleopatra, e.g.,) or to venerate and honor (on weddings) or to symbolically show one’s commitment, union and the like.

Other mystic poets use imagery from nature such as flowers, birds, mountains and valleys in order to convey various shades of mystical meanings. Lalan, the famous poet of Bengal, turns to the countryside and world of nature for symbols, from the swan which is said to have a keen discerning taste for only pure pearls to the papiha bird which continually cries out *piu kahan piu kahan* (Hindi), “where is the beloved, where is the beloved” (Schimmel, 1982, pp. 144-45). Moreover, he employs the bumble bee which in Indian lore is famed for its attraction to the lotus flower. This flower itself symbolized the preservation of purity in the midst of an uncongenial, dirty environment, explains Asani (1988, p. 88). The Indian poet Aurobindo (1872-1950) in his poem “Rose of God” (1934), uses rose as a symbol of various shades of God’s Love for His creatures and his own yearning to see this phenomenal world a place of love and peace. In the last stanza of his poem, the rose of God

becomes the “rose of love which is like a blush of rapture on eternity’s face with a ruby depth and fire-passion of grace.” The poet hopes that the fire-passion of Grace will “triumph over ‘the weariness, the fever and the fret’ of human life and it should redeem man to the divine status” (Kallury, 1989, p. 99). Farid ud-Din Attar (1145-1220), the famous Persian poet in his poem “The Colloquy of the Birds” symbolically portrays the quest of the Birds (symbolizing Sufi pilgrims) for the Simurg (the Lord of Creation). The poem as translated by Masani (2001), describes the seven valleys through which the Sufi pilgrim has to make his way before he reaches the Divine presence (p. xix). The use of nature imagery is therefore imbued with mystical meanings.

Punjabi Sufi poets as said earlier, use jasmine flower to visually and aurally evoke the profundity of the Divine notion, its majestic depth and its all-scented nature. God is but Fragrance (*chambe di booti*), Love (*Piyar*) and Truth (*Haq*) and to express this Reality, jasmine seems the most befitting choice for Sufi poets. The flower itself; its form, shape, color, delicacy, softness and above all fragrance speaks volumes of the Majestic Self. The flower imagery thus acts as a triadic sign under Peirce’s version of signification; index, icon and symbol. These signs thereby have an “in-built dynamism” (Cobley & Jansz, 2000, p. 25). This entails that these signs actively engage the reader and the more one ponders, the more meaningful they become. For instance, here the sign is not exactly an icon in the typical sense, it does provide some feel of the ungraspable Divinity. Indeed, it is a symbol of the Divine inspiration for mystical poets to speak what truth is. In fact, the use of flowers as symbols provide a point of reference to the mystic poets to speak of the Divine Love. It is an emblem of their quest to trace the Sublime as does Wordsworth (1770-1850) by using daffodils which he finds all across and “stretched in never-ending line.” Daffodils thus act as a symbolic sign to attain *Nirwana* or “bliss of solitude,” and to gain the mystic’s sight, “inward eye.”

Sufi poets, Sultan Bahoo and Bulleh Shah express their philosophy of *Wahdat-ul-Wujud* by employing the flower imagery- Jasmine as God-Scented flower. For a true seeker, even the “meanest flower” becomes a metaphoric sign to translate “signs mysterious” or “dark enigmas” that Ibn Ata, a mystic poet also talks about within the same context. By means of using the symbolic, metaphoric language, mystical poets express “so high a truth, whose span /Surpasses human measure” (as cited in Schimmel, 2003, p. 407).

Sufi poetry takes us to a level of insight whereby the heart (like the Sufi's heart) becomes a mirror on which the full perfection of Divinity can be reflected. The traveler on the Path then energizes upon new planes where he sees more clearly, hears more intensely and feels more vividly than before (Masani, 2001, p. xix).

All mystical poetry is concerned with a meaningful discourse which entails the use of words as a carefully gleaned bouquet of flowers in which each petal though unique in its form and fragrance, is yet bound within that whole structure or discourse. Each petal or each word that a Sufi poet posits has its cognitive and referential value. What makes these words truly fragrant is when they are meant to refer to the Divine Being, His Beauty and His Love. Hence the concept of Divine Love is a whole discourse since it defines and explains the love relationship of the human and the Divine Self. It makes us meditate on who we are and the purpose why we have been sent to this world. The discourse of the Divine Love thus turns out to be a dynamic dialogue between the two selves. It invites and engages the reader not only to hear or listen the sacred word of God but also makes us see the various manifestations of the sacred Self. In the same way why the cypress tree grows up as fine straight and strong because it receives a secret whispering of the love song of Divine. Sarmast's use of the mystic expression *Khayal* in his poetry would be relevant to explain this clandestine dialogue between the nature objects and the Divine. In his song titled as "Manzil-e-Sufi" (Song 6), rendered by Sanam Marvi utters, also cited earlier as:

میں تاں کوئی خیال ہاں      ہن ملساں نال خیال دے

I am really just a thought / I can (only) be met with through a thought

To express the nature of the ineffable, use of an abstract noun *Khayal* (thought) is certainly befitting. Sufis such as Bahoo, Shah and Sarmast see nothing but God when they look around. They are all drunk in the intoxication of the *Khayal* of Allah-the absolute Reality. The concept of Oneness (*Wahdat*) forms the very architecture of Sufi poetry. Whether it is the Fragrance, *Khayal* or an act of bodily movement/rhythm, it may be subsumed under one signified meaning of creating a voluntary space within one's heart to make it a befitting place for Divine Love.

#### 4.4.1 Folk Imagery, Mystical Meaning

Imagery is one of the most important literary, and especially, poetic devices. It is regarded as the, “heart and soul of poetry” and a poet should never explain but imply what he means through imagery (Enos, 2013, p. 343). The language used to evoke imagery can be figurative, literal or both. Figurative imagery contains metaphor, simile and other figures of speech such as metonymy, personification and allegory, by means of which one thing (vehicle) is said while another (tenor) is meant. Therefore, figurative images are not just decorative, they serve to reveal various aspects of human experience in a new light. Images that evoke further associations and meanings in ways that go beyond the vehicle-tenor relationship found in metaphor and other figures of speech are called symbols (Morse, 2019, p. 133). Images in a literary work are often patterned in a special way and thereby are invested with symbolic values and become symbolic images (2013, p. 343).

Sufi poets employ though simple but figurative language in their poetry. They conceive of a simple idea, mostly folk, and use it as a sign to create a spiritual space as an underlying theme. Shah, for instance, uses a simple folk analogy in many of his songs. For instance, “Jogi mairy naal” (Song 11) carries this kind of folk imagery but the meaning that it evokes and suggests is highly suggestive. A simple milk-boiling domestic chore evokes myriads of thoughts and meanings. He uses a simple but familiar idea in an unfamiliar way so as to evoke deeper thought streaks. Bullock (2015) calls this streak of unfamiliarity as “other” which, he says, is based on “the paradigmatic axis as it depends on the choices a poet makes.” The word choices of this kind are less logical and more intuitive but no invention in literature can occur without this sense of “otherness” (p. 4). And thereby the task acquires the grand stature of devotional act of love being enacted by a faithful disciple, for the *Murshid*. Verses below are to be noted.

چلے کیجے پر رب نہ ملیا  
 لینا کی چلیاں وچ وڑ کے  
 بلھیا جاگ بناؤ دھ نہیں کڑھدا  
 بھانویں لال ہووے کڑھ کڑھ کے



You performed all your rituals, but you didn't find God, What good will observing such rituals do?

Bulleh Shah! You can't curdle milk without rennet even if you make it turn red through hard trying.

In the verses above, Bulleh Shah's use of pun is interesting to note, the way he plays with the sound as well as the meaning of the word *Jaag* (جاگ). In the Punjabi folk terminology, this word (جاگ) is used as a noun as well as verb: to use culture for milk fermentation in the former and to keep awake or to keep watchfully awake in the latter case. Cow milking and then boiling of milk on slow log heat and the night vigil of the guard are routine matters in the village/folk culture. This meaning, however is literal, or denotative but in Barthes' view, the "denotative sign is also a connotative signifier" (as cited in Cobley & Jansz, 2000 p. 51). The word (جاگ) at connotative level signifies keen attention and vigilance, else milk will be overheated with the loss of flavor, color and certain nutrients. Similarly, if the vigil on part of the guard is not done with sincerity and devotion, precious things/lives would be in risk. Shah's point (connotative) is very subtle in that it emphasizes the need for passion, truthfulness and sincerity in every little task we perform in our daily life for this may become rewarding eventually. Likewise, the aspirant embarked upon the spiritual journey need to be all-awake so as not to let a single word of advice by the *Murshad* go wasted. Shakespeare (1826, p. 67) very truly describes the idea of this vigil in one of his sonnets, he expresses it as below:

It is my love that keeps mine eye awake  
 Mine own true love that doth my rest defeat  
 To play the watchman ever...

Hard work and utmost passion are of paramount importance to keep going in the spiritual journey and this idea lies embedded in all mystical poetry. Herein lies the central point of Sufi rubric and this provides the basis to the spiritual bond between the disciple and preceptor. Shriver's (2013) view endorses it further. He remarks that "the spiritual teacher is a watchman. Doing the watchman's duty is our work. We must keep (disciples) awake and awaken others" (pp. 51-52). To describe the intimacy of the bond between Jiva/Atma (living entity, essence) and brahman/Paramatma, Shriver explains it very vividly

by exemplifying the paddy and husked rice. As long as the husk is there on rice, it cannot be cooked. Similarly, if the husk or barrier remains between the seeker and the sought, their bondage remains faulty. It is only by removing the “veil of ignorance” and keeping a continuous vigil that it be rightly retained.

#### **4.5 Sufi Metaphor in Song-Texts**

We often think of metaphor as a crafty literary device that aligns something abstract with something concrete. Lakoff and Johnson (2008) state that in general, “the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” (p. 5). Metaphor, in its broad sense, is a figure of speech but more importantly a figure of thought also. It is a mode of apprehension and a means of perceiving and expressing something in a radically different way (as cited in Enos, 2013, p. 343). While we appraise some metaphors as more elaborate than others, most of us craft metaphors in our daily language use. This aspect makes language even more complex when we consider that metaphors may reveal conceptual mappings. The locus of metaphor, as Lakoff states, is not in language at all, but in the way we conceptualize one mental domain (source domain) corresponding to another (target domain). The mapping across lexical units will be able to visualize the conceptual processes, which occur in the mind’s neuronal relations (2008, p. 5). Thus, “metaphorical expression” is used to refer to a single linguistic expression or “a surface realization of such a cross-domain mapping.” For example, statements like “Look, how far we’ve come,” is based on the metaphor ‘Love is journey’ where the love relationship is regarded as traveling through space (Abdullah, 2015, p. 203). Understandably, there is a difference in mapping the Goal of one’s journey towards God and life’s Journey as a routine matter.

In Sufi literature, amongst other metaphors, the metaphor of journey has also a special significance. Jakel (2002) notes that focusing on ‘Journey’ metaphor in mystical/religious domains has advantages in that it conceptualizes the idea of a good/moral life, hope, the relation between human beings and God, and most importantly the focus on the ‘Path’ schema. The structure of the path schema includes, “a source of motion,” or the starting point, the path crossed, and a goal or the ending point. This schema also implies a forward motion, progressing in a “certain direction,” distance travelled, the

speed of motion, spatial points such as landmarks, crossroads and the obstacles that the traveler may be faced with (as cited in Abdullah, 2015, p. 160). Other metaphors that Sufi poets such as Bulleh Shah and Sultan Baho, employ is the ‘gardening’ metaphor whereby the seeker’s heart (source domain) is the land which needs ploughing to turn over the dull soil and to prepare it for the sowing of fresh nutrients/seeds of the Divine Love (target domain). Tee (2013) explores the concept further saying that the garden of the soul is the metaphorical arena in which “the Sufi (as gardener) cultivates his mystical love” (p. 4). Similarly, human soul is metaphorically conceptualized “as a bride” in Sufi literature (Anjum, 2013, p. 6). So, these signs involve a chain of signifiers (process) to probe the signified meaning or Barthes calls “system of signification” (Barthes, 1978, p. 111).

Sufi poets under study employ metaphoric language in their poetry and songs, for instance, “Manzil-e Sufi” (Song 6) by Sanam Marvi, “Kamlee” (Song 9) by Hadiqa Kiyani, “Charkha Nolakha” (Song 10) by Atif Aslam and Umair Jaswal, “Jogi maire Naal” (Song 11) by Fareeha Pervez, “Mei Sufi Hun” (Song 13) by Abida Perveen carry a number of instances. They employ metaphors such as ploughing, weaving, seeding, planting and the like which come from folk culture and are believed to be closer to nature since times back. By using the figurative language, the poets endeavor to describe a phenomenon of spiritual/esoteric struggle on part of the seeker of the Divine Reality. In Bullock’s (2015, p. 5) view, the poet, by using techniques such as metaphor or metonymy, shows his/her awareness of a “corresponding spatial lexicon” which lends the poet another level of choice (paradigmatic). This space (word choices) evokes thought patterns of the poet, in a kind of mind-map, creates a particular rhythm/atmosphere, and assists, rather than break down, certain meaningful connections (p. 5). In *Ishq di Booti* (Song 12), Bahoo via using this “spatial lexicon,” express how humankind are caught up in worldly pursuits as pushed by their arrogant self but those who seek the path of Allah, should wage a war against these desires.

In this regard, as Bahoo’s verses below suggest, the first task for the seeker of Allah’s path is to examine her/his heart and struggle utmost to liberate it from worldly frets and fevers. Heart has been located as the seat of soul in the mystic philosophy and hence a place which needs to be consecrated to let Allah’s Love dwell in it. It has to be liberated

from slavish things prescribed by our ego or *nafs*. Bulleh Shah calls it *zaalim nafs* or an underhand thief which leaves no stone unturned to entangle us in the dazzling hues of life and keep stealing the vibrant, pure colors of humility and good deeds. In the poet's view, sowing the seeds of humility and purity in one's heart is a pre-requisite to embark upon the esoteric journey or to be a candidate of Allah's Love. The hope for flowering of these seeds cannot be materialized unless the plantation is made in the right way followed by a continuous watering of the soil of heart with humility, devotion and good deeds. Sultan Bahoo ardently says:

دل دی کھیتی دے وچ پہلاں نیت داہل واہ  
کھوٹ، عداوت، نفرت، جھگڑے سارے مارمکا

First plow up the soil of your heart with sincerity  
And purge it of falseness, hostility, hatred, and strife

نفس جیا دشمن وی کوئی نہی  
زہر دا ٹیکا لا

No enemy is as great as your own egotism and pride  
Do away with them, infix them with poison

(Trans. Kalsoom Qaisar)

In both Bahoo and Bulleh Shah's poetry, the gardening metaphor, as said earlier, plays an important role. If analyzed within the mystical lexicon intended by Bahoo in "Ishq di Booti" (Song 12) it is the seeker's heart which needs to be examined, tossed over and above till the impurities or weeds are fully removed. That is why the poet pinpoints the need for removing illnesses and material desires of heart to prepare it fully for the plantation of the fragrant seed of Divine Love. See the following verses:

عشق دی گوڈی کر کے  
تے ہنجوڑاں دا پانی پا  
تے بوٹی بیج لے  
عجبے والی بوٹی بیج لے  
حق والی بوٹی بیج لے

Cultivate the field of Love  
 And water it with tears  
 And sow the seeds  
 Sow the seeds of Jasmine flower  
 Sow the seeds of Truth

The garden metaphor is also employed by Persian Sufi poets. With reference to Seyfili's poetry, Tee (2013) in her article explores the concept further saying that it is the garden of soul to which the poet refers wherein the seeker enacts the role of a gardener. The garden of the soul is the metaphorical arena in which "the Sufi (as gardener) cultivates his mystical love, and it is also where the ubiquitous Sufi poetic motif of the nightingale and the rose belong" (p. 4). The garden of the soul metaphor is further extended to the "soul bird," another motif used in Sufi poetry and in the Persian context, the precedence for this metaphor was set by Attar in his poem, "Conference of the Birds" (1177). The "soul bird" in the view of Tee (2013) can take various forms but the most ideal being nightingale and its captivation by the rose, represents the beauty and bounty of God. Seyfili's "soul bird" and its flight to high mountains is suggestive of the troubles of the world and the obstacles which the seeker of the path of Allah must overcome in order to attain union with Him. This flight metaphorically takes the bird to "spacious gardens," the abode it gains sustenance from because it is here that love-relationship with God can be cultivated (p. 5).

Like the "soul bird," Allama Iqbal's (1877-1938) *Shaheen* (eagle) metaphor is also suggestive of the higher goals we can reach only after extraordinary struggle. A famous romance poem "Lalla Rookh" (1877) by Moore, with its famous line, "To sit in the roses and hear the bird's song" and Oscar Wild's story "The Nightingale and Rose" (1888) with its "red rose" and the associated imagery of making the rose "red" with one's own heart blood imply the mystical relationship between the bird and the rose. Sufi poets use nature imagery such as garden, flower or bird as signs to observe, trace and find God, His Transcendence and His bounties in the universe we live in and which the Holy Quran speaks of in various contexts. Schimmel's (1982) observation of Islamic folk poetry in general, and its similarity to the high poetry is relevant here: The folk poets followed the Quranic injunction to find God's signs "in the earth and in yourselves – do you not see?" (Surah 51, Verse 21).

#### 4.5.1 Metaphors of Dance and Wedding

Poetry relies heavily on metaphor to create and expand meaning. Frost asserts, “Poetry is simply made of metaphor... Every poem is a new metaphor inside or it is nothing” (as cited in Ostler, 2006, para, 1). Therefore, poetry could be seen as a visual text that uses metaphors to project images in the mind of the reader. In Sufi poetry, the mystical wayfaring is the concept which is metaphorically mapped in various ways to project images in the particular context of the seeker and sought relationship. The journey towards the Divine (sought) keeps the traveler/seeker on toes and in continuous agitation till he sees the signs of His grace in the process of falling upon him. In the various phases of this voyage, the seeker though travels physically (source domain), he does it to be uplifted spiritually (target domain). He consumes more and more physical strength (dance), by stamping his feet on earth which metaphorically signifies a warrior’s spirit to combat material things. Dance and music, therefore, form a meaningful discourse in the traditional Sufi philosophy and literature.

*Dhmal* (dancing) is done to reinforce the singing of verses through the rhythmic motion of body or rotating in specific ways. This is more significant on account of its extralinguistic features in the Sufi ethos. A Sufi dancer consumes bodily strength to gain the spiritual. This dancing phenomenon has a specific air of humility, modesty and lowliness reflected through the dancer’s dress and other accessories. It signifies the humble position of an inferior in front of the Superior, the Almighty. Or at least, this is the way a Sufi dancer presents himself in front of God. The humble servant whirls, whirls and moves in a trance-like rhythm.

In the Sufi ethos, dancing signifies complete submission, surrender of the self and a bellicose pushing away of worldly fumes and fevers. For instance, when the dancer stamps his feet on earth and closes his eyes, it signifies a warrior’s spirit to combat material things. Sufis, therefore, attach great significance to music and dance which they believe “reaches its climax in *Haal*- the stage of ecstasy leading one to the Supreme” (Lal, 2001, p. 4202). Hence it is an attempt of the dancer to “be” in the company of God-the One and the Supreme benefactor of all humankind. The nature of this act, therefore, turns it into a noble and a purely spiritual effort oriented towards the Divine pleasure which is in contrast to ordinary dancing which is amorous and coquettish in nature. This aspect of music and

dance is also imbued in many of the verses being analysed here. For instance, verses below are noteworthy in terms of their formal structure (syntagmatic), their repeated placement of words such as or *thayya, thayya* (dance) and their musical and visual output (paradigmatic). Language indeed, as wording, cannot perform this function and thereby in the words of Bullock, “we extend our conception of language to include the music that fills spaces in order *چُچُ* to ‘say’ more (or sing more) (2015, p. 7). Sachal Sarmast’s lyrics rendered by Sanam Marvi in “Manzil-e Sufi” (Song 6) read as under:

کجھری بن کے ساڈی عزت نہ گھدی  
 ساکوں نچ کہ یار مناون دے  
 جوگن تھیاں یار دے پچھوں  
 ساکوں گل وچ مالھڑاپاؤن دے

Becoming a dancing girl does not cheapen us  
 Let’s cajole our beloved by dancing  
 I’ll become a roaming (female) beggar-mystic in pursuit of my Beloved  
 Let’s wear the devotee’s beads around our neck

Bulleh Shah’s famous *Kalaam* (Your love has made me dance like a mad) also endorses the same. All mystical poets keep this longing of the Divine union intense and alive via the use of symbolic signs in their poetry. This longing provides them the basic foothold or sustenance to trim and cut the outgrowth of carnal desires which come our way to deviate us from the path of the Divine. Bulleh Shah’s verses sung by Abrar-ul Haq (Song 12) suggest the mystic way of doing away with the dazzling paraphernalia which we keep boasting in everyday life. He voices it as follows:

بابا بلھے وانگوں گھنگھر وپالے  
 چُچُ یار منالے

Come on, put on the ankle-bells like Bulleh Shah did  
 Dance and cajole the Beloved

The journey towards the Divine keeps a Sufi on toes and a depressing anxiety keeps him in agitation till he sees the signs of His grace in the process of falling upon him.

Nothing less than this feeling/experience graces him with the Divine intoxication. Music and dance, therefore, form a meaningful discourse in the traditional Sufi formulae since they are meant to invoke active meditation and the idea of Divine musing.

All Sufi poets use the language of signs and symbols to invoke various shades and hues of Divine Love. Out of all hues, the most fragrant hue that mesmerizes the Sufi poets and forms the very texture of their poetry is *sibghatallah*--the Color of Allah. Variant forms of this Color of Divine Love are seen broadcast in the fabric of their poetic compositions. In fact, it is the love of the Holy Prophet and love of the *Murshad* which are seen sprinkled as the two most adorable shades in their Sufi poetry. Moreover, it is the love of the Holy Prophet which works as a prism to crystalize even the covert hues of the sunlight color of Allah's Love. *Murshad* is the person who has truly dyed himself in the Color of Allah, attained Ma'rifat and thereby is capable to guide his followers onto the same path--the path of Divine Love. Sultan Bahoo's verses sung by Tufail Ahmad (Song 1), for instance, reads as follows:

الف اللہ جیسے دی بوٹی مرشد من وچ لائی ھو

My Murshad (my Guide) has planted this Jasmine plant (i.e., concept of Allah) in my heart.

سیئے ہزار کتاباں پڑھیاں پر ظالم نفس نہ مردا ھو  
باہجہ فقیراں کوئی نہ مارے باھو، ایہو چورا ندر دا ھو

The study of thousands of books (of the worldly knowledge) fails to crush the tyrant "self" (or egotistic self-glorification)/ This inner thief (self) cannot be killed except by the saintly people

Sufi poets (Punjabi/Saraiki) employ music/dance as a sign to appropriate the stereotypical notions typically attached to the expression. By placing in the term/expression in a newer context, they attempt to re-configure it within the ambit of spirituality. Dance thus wears unique dimensions in Sufi poetry. To Sarmast, for instance, it is meant to woo and to entreat God which entails a complete renunciation of one's bodily and mental/intellectual strength on part of the dancer in the court of God.

Moreover, it the feminine voice that Sufi poets use to express the feelings of separation from the Beloved or to woo and entreat Him. This certainly is not uncommon



in world's other mystical traditions and can be traced back in both the Old and New Testaments. In Catholicism, human soul is conceived of as the bride of God. The famous German philosopher and mystic Nicolaus of Cusa also portrays God as the Bridegroom of the human soul, which he characterizes as a feminine Bride in his work *The Vision of God* (1453). Similarly, Jewish mystical literature, too, refers to the human soul as a bride (Anjum, 2013, p. 6). Another term “Virahini” (a woman parted from her husband/ beloved and longing to be united with him) is also used in Sufi literature and in many songs under study, it seems to have been employed.

In songs rendered by CS singers, such as “Kamli” (Song 9) by Hadiqa Kiyani and “Jogi Mery Naal” (Song 11) by Fareeha Pervez, “Soz-e Ishq” (Song 7) and “Mein Sufi Hun” (Song 13) by Abida Perveen, “Manzil-e Sufi” (Song 6) and “Sighra Aaween Sanwal Yaar” (Song 8) by Sanam Marvi, “Charkha Nolakha” (Song 10) by Atif Aslam and “Chal Mele Noon Chaliye” (Song 15) by Saen Zahoor and Marvi which is a combination of Sindhi and Punjabi (Waris Shah & Bulleh Shah lyrics), *Virahini* as well as bride-to-be symbols are employed by Sufi poets to express an intense yearning and longing for the Divine union, via the female voice. The female speaker voices in an intensely loving way as: آجا ہر چرخے دے / کدی آنتڑی دے ویہڑے / Come to the courtyard of the one who longs for you or آجا ہر چرخے دے / نی میں کملی آن / O! I am awfully Crazy” and more so, گھیرے / Come with every turn of the wheel” or like a bride / کنیں مندرن پا کے / wearing heavy earrings, / متھے تلک لگا کے / adorning my brow with the bridal mark” yearning to be wedded with *Jogi* or *Piya* (Beloved), *Saanwal Mithra* (Sweet Beloved), / کیسریا بالما او نی بدھارو / Handsome Beloved, Come to us).

The imagery is visually striking with dense implications of mystical meaning but also with some tinge of sensual and ordinary feeling of romance and love. Placed within the context of the whole song with its key lines, (the جیوں جیوں کئی جاواں ہوں پیاں گنیاں / عشق دا چرخہ کماں دیاں پونیاں spindle of love, the unspun fibers of sorrow/ The more I spin, the more they seem to increase), آنتڑی دے ویہڑے / کدی آنتڑی دے ویہڑے / Come to the courtyard of the one who longs for you, the yearning of the female acquires purely a Sufi color which fits more in the genre of “Sufi romance” or “prem-kahani/love story” developed by Sufi poets writing in Awadhi language (Eastern Hindi) termed as “Sufi romances” by modern critics (Anjum, 2017, p. 219). Baba Farid, 13<sup>th</sup> century Sufi poet is said to be the earliest exponent of the idea of

“bride of God” in Punjabi Sufi poetry (Anjum, p. 34). In his poetic verses, he evokes the bridal metaphor for describing the relationship between the human soul and God (Dalawari, 1999, pp. 8-11). He employs the concepts of *suhagan* (a happily married woman enjoying marital bliss), as well as terms like *shauh*, *khasam*, and *pirr* for husband. In one of his couplets, for instance, he writes that everyone could fall in love (*paraim*) but it is the privilege of the Husband (*khasam*) to reciprocate it or not (Khan, 1978, p. 156). It symbolizes that all human souls are bound to love God, as promised by them on the eve of the Primordial Covenant (Anjum, 2017, p. 34).

In the South Asian context, the use of feminine voice by Sufi poets can be linked back to early Urdu poetry composed in Deccan, *Rekhti* ghazals (love songs) from Lucknow and in Sindhi and Punjabi traditions of poetry. In many poems, the woman is taken as a symbol of human soul. Moreover, Sufi poets employed the motif of *virahini* in their poetry borrowing it from Hindi-Sanskrit literary traditions. *Virahini* (a woman parted from her husband/ beloved and longing to be united with him), as a poetic trope was meant to symbolize the yearning of human soul for the Divine unity. Sufi poets employed it in varied forms in their own context and thereby “indigenized their poetry to the literary tastes of their local Indian audiences” (Asani, 2014, p. 140). In doing so, they kept in mind the linguistic as well as phonetic features of local languages in their compositions. Yusuf Husain maintains, “The meters used by them [the Sufis] are mostly Hindi, and occasionally Persian. The rhyming of all words, whether of Hindi or Arab or Persian origin, is based on their similarity of sound, as they are pronounced by the inhabitants of this country” (1962, p. 108). Whether meter, rhyme or local idiom, Sufi poets used them to convey their mystical thoughts in familiar terms and accessible for common folk. As far as the motifs such as *Virahini*, or the bride symbol is concerned, it was used to represent the *haqiqi* or allegorical interpretation of love through the language and the use of the term *majazi* or temporal for human love (Anjum, 2013, p. 15).

#### **4.6 Alif and Nukta in Sufi Verses of Songs**

*Alif* as a Sign of Divine Love lies in the center of Punjabi and Sindhi mystical poetry. The CS songs “Allah Hu” by Tufail Ahmad, “Aik Alif” rendered by Saeen Zahoor and Noori, “Alif Allah Jugni” by Arif Lohar & Meesha Shafi and “Ishq di Booti” by Abrar-ul

Haq all share one theme- theme of Alif (ل). A number of Bulleh Shah's famous songs (*kafis*) are centered on the theme of oneness of God -symbolized by the letter "alif" (Sheikh, n.d., p. 262). Some of his oft-quoted verses include, *Kady sachi gal vi ruk di ey/ Ik Nukte vich gal muk di ey* (Can real truth be hidden (by people)/Only One Alif is needed to decide any riddle), another couplet, *Ik Alif Parho/Es Alif da Nukta Niyara Ey* (Recite only One Alif/the *Nukta* of this *Alif* is unique) and verses, *Alif-Allah Dil Rata Mera* (*Alif* -Allah Who has dyed my heart).

Another song "Na Raihndi Ay" rendered by Areib Azhar contains Bulleh Shah's lyrics and the couplet, *اساں پڑھیا علم تحقیق اے اوتھے اک حرف حقیقی اے* (we have studied the knowledge of research/only one (alphabetical) letter (or word) is real, as translates Sheikh (n.d.), p. 262) in his book *Our Legendry Intellectuals*. Bulleh Shah maintains that knowledge, research and worldly *علموں بس کریں اویار* wisdom is superfluous which cannot help us see the difference between truth and falsehood, rather it pushes us in the whirlpool of doubt and skepticism since its purpose to gain material benefits. It is the real knowledge, i.e., knowledge intended for the purpose of knowing God and His universe can enlighten us and make us learn the lessons of humility and indifference to materialism. And the Murshad can help one out in gaining true knowledge, in finding and moving safely towards the destination. Bulleh Shah reminds us time and again in his poems that all else is nothing or other than *alif* or Allah, there is nothing, superfluous and unwanted. Nonetheless, his verses, Friend! Enough of this knowledge, stop it (Sheikh, n.d., p. 247).

*Alif* as a Sign of Divine Love lies in the center of Punjabi and Sindhi mystical poetry. Sufi poets employ it in their writing in such a way that it unfolds the ineffable mystery to those who truly seek to travel the path of Divine Love. For them, *Alif* sign enacts as a guiding star without which nothing stands in itself and hence the notion lies embedded in the poetic text of Sufis. In other words, *Alif* is characterized by what Peirce calls, "in-built dynamism" (as cited in Copley & Jansz, 2000, p. 25). This entails that the sign actively engages the reader and the more one ponders, the more meaningful it becomes. Sultan Bahoo and Bulleh Shah both use *Alif* as a sign which is a uniquely rich expression and evokes depth of meaning at both syntactic and semantic levels. Bulleh Shah's use of *Alif* (ل) in his *kafis* is unique such as under:

علموں بس کریں ادویار  
اک الف تیرے درکار

Enough of outward knowledge, my friend!

‘The One’ is all you need to know/discover

Historically, *Alif* (ا) is the first letter in the Perso-Arabic alphabet; it is unique in orthography- a slender, single vertical line and is transcribed as *alif*. It is the first alphabet with which the Holy Quran begins and “Al-Fatiha,” the first Quranic chapter, also begins with it. *Al-Fatiha* means that which begins the Book and this Surah is known as the “mother of the book” in that it sums up what lies ahead in detail in the Holy Quran. In the same way, *Alif*, the letter with which the Quran begins is also regarded to be a miniaturized form of the details given in the Holy Quran. As Akkach (2005) writes, “The first letter of the Arabic alphabet, the *alif*, presents in the presence of the word the traces of the universal realities and order of Being as revealed in the Divine presence” (p. 100). The point to be noted that mystic scholars have the insight to express the ineffable via the use of human language, a tool which is considered inadequate by many postmodern writers since they interpret language within the confines of structure. For a structural linguist, for instance, the word *khayal* or *nukta* might be simply linguistic strings or signifiers constituted solely by differences in terms of their sound pattern. To Saussure, “language is a form, not a substance” (1983, p. 111). For Sufis, however, since the abode of the meanings resides in the Reality, i.e., words are the carrier of a prior meaning and hence appropriate vehicle to express and communicate the Higher Truth.

*Nukta* (نقطہ / نکتہ) of Alif as puts Bulleh Shah, *Es Alif da Nukta Niyara Ey* (the *Nukta* of this *Alif* is unique) or *Ik Nukte vich gal muk di ey* (Only Alif is needed to decide any riddle) or *Ik nukta Yaar Parahya Ey* (*Nukta* that my master taught me) or *Phar Nukta Chor Hisaban Nun* (keep connected to *Nukta*, leave all aside), again carries dense meanings in the particular context of Punjabi Sufi poetry. The word *nukta* (نقطہ / نکتہ) might be considered one among the agreed set of symbols, a glyph, or one of the punctuation marks called full stop/ baseline dot in English and used in various writing conventions. For Sufis, however, since the abode of the meanings resides in the Reality and hence for them the meaning of

words is not enchaind in the orthography or words in the physiological form, rather words are the vehicle or the carrier of the Higher Truth. Musakhodjaevich (2017) in his article explains  $\dot{\text{ن}}$  or (.) with reference to what Sheikh Najmuddin Kubra of 13<sup>th</sup> century spoke of. The Sheikh said that the changes taking place in a human's state of mind occur in different shapes like dot, stain, circle and colors. Shapes, for instance, *circle* – the revolving of the universe, *stain* – a symbol of the universe, *dot* – *vahdat* (derived from Arabic – unity). As a circle revolves around its axis, it continuously tries towards the dot, which is why a human conceives the importance of a sacred world by recognizing the importance of a dot (p. 40).

In Urdu, *nukta* (نقطہ / نکتہ) is written in two ways as is being shown here. In both cases, it is rich in meaning and a powerful expression. *Farhang-e-Asfiya* compiled by Dehlvi (2011) is considered to be an authentic Urdu dictionary. It defines both the words, *nukta* (نکتہ) and *nukta* (نقطہ): the former is defined as something very subtle, unfathomed mystery, something ineffable in nature or intriguing, whereas the latter as the center, the zenith point of an alphabet, a catalyst, an entity which does not accept any multiplicity or dilution though it may suggest or refer to it. Seen in this context, Bulleh Shah's use of the word *nukta* transcends the linguistico-structural boundaries and becomes the basic manifestation of God as *aum* does with Brahma. *Aum*, as maintains Dogra (2006) is the “most sacred symbol of Hinduism, it is the divine sound from which life has emerged” (p. 7). *Nukta*, even if explained in terms of the English dot (.) known as full stop, the meaning conveyed is equally representative of God since it is with Him that everything begins and ends. With full stop, a sentence is completed and hence it warrants the beginning of a new sentence. Many mystic poets from the Indian context, Mira (16<sup>th</sup> century) and Tagore (20<sup>th</sup> century) talk about the “coming and going of someone” (Sadarangani, 2004, p. 34).

Sufi poets also use images in an abstract fashion which is another way to deal with the ineffable. Schal Sarmast's use of the expression *Khayaal* (thought) is a significant mystical marker in that it evokes an abstract imagery and the idea of a Higher Being which is beyond the grasp of speech or writing. The point, in fact, is intriguing. Something which is ineffable and unspeakable is still being said or at least an attempt is being made to grasp this reality. In fact, all mystical writings describe language as being at the apex of the universe and trace its real abode in the Ultimate Reality or God/Brahman. A great part of

language remains hidden in the unknown, they say. Hence to see Reality manifested in language is but accessible by the seers and mystics. By evoking the idea of Reality via abstract expression, Sachal Sarmast in the couplet taken from “Manzil-e Sufi” (Song 6) rendered by Sanam Marvi, seems more a seer and visionary. The glimpse of the expression is as below:

میں تان کوئی خیال ہاں  
ہن ملساں نال خیال دے

I am really just a thought

I can only be met with through a thought

In another song “Chal Maile Nun Chaliye” (Song 15) rendered by Saeen Zahoor and Sanam Marvi, the poet Waris Shah, employs red-color imagery in seemingly abstract fashion but underpinning it is the Sufi color and thought (khayal). See the following couplet:

لالی میرے لال کی / جت دیکھوں نت لال

Any place I turn, I see the breath-taking color (of my Beloved)

Here I am reminded of a lengthy *kafi* by Shah Husayn, which is centered on the theme of a *salo*- a red-dyed embellished cloth usually worn by the brides. The poet here weaves a breath-taking imagery via the color and the cloth *salo* which does not retain its color and gradually fades away. Moreover, this cloth as a tradition belongs only to the bride and cannot be shared with or even borrowed from anyone. The imagery unfolds before us the transformative journey whereby the seeker unfixes her own color to get dyed in the color of the Beloved. Moreover, what Anjum (2017) reminds may help us to see yet another dimension of the idea. As a matter of tradition, yarn of the *salo* is spun by the bride-to-be and later is also embroidered by her own self. Seen this way, spinning here symbolizes good deeds that a person earns during his/her lifetime and like a *salo*, these good deeds cannot be taken away or borrowed by anyone. With the end of life, the opportunity to earn good deeds also comes to a close (Anjum, 2017, p. 38). The metaphor highlights the Sufi view that human beings have the ability and capacity to improve their life and make it

meaningful. In the song, Charkha Nolakha sung by Atif, Bulleh Shah reiterates this thought in verse, “the more I spin, the more they seem to increase,” implying the capacity and scope for improvement. Ghaffaar (2005) suggests that just like cotton that can be spun into yarn, woven into cloth and made into garments to be worn, life can also be altogether transformed (p. 382).

#### 4.7 Theme of Introspection in Songs

For mystical poets, human self is like a book which is complex in nature. Every book has its lexicon, formal structures and a number of literary devices employed by the author. A book thus contains a number of meaning patterns at both overt and covert levels. Human self may be better defined via this analogy which Sufi poets employ in their verses. For them to critically examine one’s own self is far more beneficial than mulling over scholarly works. In the song “Aik Alif” (Song 2) rendered by Saeen Zahoor, Bulleh Shah pinpoints the same as below:

پڑھ پڑھ علم تے فاضل ہو یا  
تے کدی اپنے آپ نوں پڑھیا نہیں

You may have mastered all knowledge  
Yet awfully ignorant of your own self

(Trans. Kalsoom Qaisar)

Unless self is examined in its various ways of working and the need for its spiritual health is realized, the study ceases to be a true learning. The questions what self (*nafs*) is and whether self and spirit (soul/*ruh*) are the same or different entities, have been/are continuously argued over by philosophers, theorists and religious scholars. Alongside, there has always been a talk regarding the training, (re)shaping or nurturing of one’s self and this aspect of the discussion points out that there is something wild or unrestrained within ourselves which needs training as is being identified in Shah’s verses above. What the Sufi poet means is that shaping or training of self is possible only when we keep arranging serious parlance with it, examine it and study its ways of working.

There have been serious debates on the issue of self in the philosophical and religious history of humankind. There have been divergent opinions regarding self /soul or *nafs/ruh* issue. Among the ancient Greeks, Homer proponed that even if soul departs from the body,

it remains present in the underworld as a shadow of the dead. Before the Christian era, around 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, thinkers and scholars used the term “soul” in terms of the faculty which makes it possible for human beings to express their vices, virtues, thought, emotions, reasoning and the like. For instance, to be able to express pleasure that one gains from drink, food, friendship or any kind of infatuation. Dalhat (2015) traces the doctrine of self/soul with reference to Socrates and Plato. Socrates considered soul to be an immortal entity which he said, is characterized by intellectual and cognitive features. Plato proposed the doctrine of the plurality of soul and said that body/self and soul are different entities. To him, soul is of various kinds; rational soul which is located in the head, the zealous or passionate soul which resides in one’s breast and lastly the appetitive soul which has its seat in the abdomen (pp. 432-33). Soul, in Aristotle’s view, is not a distinct dweller of the body, it is rather a principle or informed matter which causes the body to live (2015, p. 433). To modern philosophers, soul equates with mind which is the source of rational thinking.

In the Islamic traditions, usually the “reality of soul is referred to as *nafs*. In Arabic language, *Nafs* (self) and *Ruh* (soul) are used as synonyms” (Aydin, 2010, p. 3). In the Holy Quran, self and soul have been used as synonymous at most of the places. The Holy Quran also underscores various functions or uses of self, for instance, *Nafs* as soul (Surah 39, Ayah 42); *Nafs* as a source of evil (Surah 12, Ayah 53), *Nafs* as *zaat* (entity) (Surah 5, Ayah 116), *Nafs* as a means of reprimanding evil (Surah 75, Ayah 2) and *Nafs* as a receptor and guardian of tranquility and serenity. For those who reach a stage of *Nafs-e-Mutmainna* or acquire a self which is not only a receptor of Divine purity and Love but also has the insight to guard and possess His Love, Allah promises a blessed abode for them. In Surah *Al-Fajr*, it is declared as under: “O serene soul! Return to thy Lord, well pleased and pleasing (to your Lord). So, enter among My (righteous) servants and enter My Paradise” (Surah 89, Verses 27-30).

In contrast, *Nafs-e-Ammarah* or self which is the source of all foul and evil things settles down to the nature of human body and makes it corrupt and diluted. It controls and commands unscrupulous and bad actions. The Quran asks for turning this false self into enlightened peaceful soul (*nafs-e-Mutmainna*) through the continuous presence and remembrance of God (*zhikr*) in the heart (*qulb*) which draws the light of spirit into the



heart, from where it is distributed to the psyche as a whole (Perveen & Ahmad, 2011). This self is even more dangerous than our real enemy, Satan and Sufi poets warn us about the vile actions it provokes in us as does Bulleh Shah in the couplet below from the song “Aik Alif” (Song 2) rendered by Saeen Zahoor.

لڑنا ایس روز شیطان دے نال  
تے کدی نفس اپنے تل لڑیا نہیں

Thou rebuke Satan every now and then

But no combat against the Satan of thy self

(Trans. Kalsoom Qaisar)

What Sufi poets point out is that *nafs* is wild and if it goes unchecked, it may act as a serpent, traverse upon one’s soul making it all dark. On account of its sneaky tropes, human beings are/have been cautioned against its temptations.

Sufis poets writing in various contexts, use motifs and symbols to let us reflect over the tricks played by our false self. Shah Abdul Latif from Sindh and Bulleh Shah from Punjab, for instance, use even Radha-Krisna motif taken from the Hindu devotional poetry and even “refined the technique of reading mystical meaning into local romances such as Hir-Ranjha, Sassui-Punhun, Sohni-Mehwar” (Asani, 1988, p. 85). The heroine in their poetic narratives is the one who searches for her lost Beloved (virahini motif) and either she finds him or dies in the mountains out of thirst and heat or drowns in the Indus River. She, therefore, becomes a parable of the soul seeking for the Beloved and on her way to the mystical quest, endures pains and tribulations to have a pure, cleansing soul apt to see the Beloved.

Shah Abdul Latif (d. 1752), the celebrated poet of Sind, demonstrates in his poetry the spinning woman as the soul occupied with the remembrance of God. With reference to a chapter that he entitled *kapa’iti*, Asani (1988) reminds us how Shah Latif while speaking of the old folk tunes that women use during their spinning process, ingeniously weaves in the Quranic imagery of God as the purchaser of the soul, (Surah 9, Verse 111), just as the thread has to be finely spun to fetch a good price from the buyer, so the human heart has

to be refined and prepared with utmost care before the merchant-God can purchase it (p. 85).

Moreover, it is amazing to see how the Sufi poets, particularly Latif and Shah cleverly endow the heroines of their narratives with readings that are much in keeping with the Quranic verses (Surah 2, Verse 151), “Verily from God we are and to Him we return,” or the Quranic notions such as the primordial pledge between each soul and God (Surah 7, Verse 171). Schimmel (1976) interprets the Sufi ideas of the transformation of the lower self in terms of what the characters in their poetic stories symbolize, i.e., a wealth of mystic meanings. Sassi the heroine in Sindhi and Balochi folklores is employed in Latif’s seven stories/romances as a *Virahini* motif. Schimmel notes that Sassi whose much-loved Punhu was kidnapped while she was asleep, represents the soul in the *khwab-e ghqflat*, “the sleep of negligence,” – the soul tangled in the material world and oblivious of the Lord. In the adroit hands of the folk-poets, the heroine becomes so sublime that her physical and external quest for the Beloved is transformed into a spiritual and internal one (pp. 155-58).

What the Sufi poet Bulleh Shah means to convey is to struggle hard to overcome the whisperings of the heart ignited by Satan. The point to be noted is that *Nafs-e-Ammarah* provokes worldly desires and keeps us engaged in their fulfilment. This prepares the ground for Satan to take over and to overpower our consciousness, weaken our will oriented towards righteous things. Satan adds plenty of fuel to the fire, paints a dazzling picture of worldly things making us go astray from the path of goodness and piety. Words uttered by Satan in Surah Al-Araf are noteworthy: “I shall come upon them from the front and behind, right and left” (Verse, 17). For this reason, Satan has been called as “slinking prompter” or the “avowed enemy” at many places of Surah.

In the Sufi praxis, *nafs* is equal to *Nafsi-e-Ammar* and has been seen as the biggest enemy to man and a wayfarer struggles hard against it. (The struggle is termed as red death.) Based on what the Prophet (PBUH) said, “Die before you die,” Najmuddin Kubra, 13<sup>th</sup> century Sheikh, developed the four- staged theory of “death.” The first stage, is regarded to be *red death*, whereby a human overcomes his feelings of lust; the other three stages being *white death* (overcoming of hunger); *green death*, (overcoming the desire of new clothes) and the fourth stage is *black death*, (undergoing of patience through the bad deeds of the public). So, Najmuddin’s theory of “death” is rather moral and aimed at

explaining to humans to refrain from material comforts and by using colors, he expressed his views by associating them with a human's psychology and insight (Musakhodjaevich, 2017, p. 40).

More than the genre in which Sufi poets write, the beauty of their poetry lies in the themes they explore such as the quest for God in all His manifestations or the study and examination of one's own self. In their exploration, they use language as a semiotic resource, using various signs- poetic tropes, images, metaphors and love archetypes in order to express the otherwise ineffable signified meaning or the "plane of content" (Chandler, p. 37). Their quest thereby centers on the theme of the seeker (signifier) and the sought (signified) in the tradition of Punjabi Sufi poetry. Be it the use of meter or rhyme scheme or linguistic items such as verbs, adjectives and predicates, language here is not based on a simple configuration of the signifier/signified (Saussure's concept). It is instead a process of meaning-making which Barthes calls "system of signification" and which in his view "binds the signifier and the signified" (Barthes, 1978, p. 111). For Sufi poets, therefore, language is a tool to delve deep into a discourse of affinity with the Divine.

#### **4.8 Summary- Unit 1**

To summarize the discussion in Unit 1 above on Sufi lyrics as representational signs, it is easy to infer that Punjabi/Sindhi Sufi poets use linguistic items as signs which are imbued with mystical meanings centering on *Alif--Allah*. For Sufi poets, language (form) is not simply a form or a split of the signifier and signified but a vehicle to communicate the transcendental reality. In songs/lyrics analyzed, words used as symbols or signifiers are less real while what they signify is more real. What lies behind the external form of words and letters is the face of Truth that Sufis attempt to unveil.

Language for Sufi poets, is loaded with prior meanings and it is the abode of God/Brahman which they use as a tool to grasp the otherwise ineffable notion of the Divine. Hence the words they use in their poetic discourse, are not simply external forms or letters, they are like petals which unveil a host of more petals fragrant with mystical meanings, love and Divinity once we see into them. With love, they speak to us, and make us see and turn over the dull soil (signs of lethargy) of our hearts and let us prepare it for the sowing of fresh nutrients/seeds of Divine Love (re-signing of signs). That is why they pinpoint the

need for removing illnesses and material desires of heart to prepare it fully for the plantation of the fragrant seed of Divine Love.

Unit 1 above, therefore, sets a frame of reference or yardstick against which the CS singing discourse is interpreted in the subsequent sections of analysis.

In unit 2 below, music and performance, the analysis explores how far form and meaning correlate in the CS Sufi singing. Whether words and actions/performance (body language) relate to each other or else what discourse do they call forth. What does the CS singing performance represent through its foregrounded elements such as music, instrumentation, rhythm, beat and the like?

#### **4.9 Music and Performance of Singers**

The man that hath no music in himself,  
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,  
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils  
(The Merchant of Venice, Act 5, Scene 1).

Shakespeare's (1564-1616) verses cited above are from his play *The Merchant of Venice* (1596) spoken by one of his famous characters, Lorenzo. Shakespeare's artistry to express a range of human emotions in his verses is a distinctive quality for which he is celebrated by most of us. Be it the emotion of love or be it music, he deals with it in a profoundly eloquent manner. Since music was central to the Elizabethans, it almost abounds in a number of plays he authored. Shakespeare treats music as a significant sign in his plays varying between a continuum of shades: from worldly, playful to romantic and even to the "music of the spheres" or "most heavenly music" as he states in *Pericles* (Act 5, Sc.1). In *Henry 1V*, for instance, he distinguishes music from mere "noise" and says in Act 4 of his play, "Let there be no noise made, my gentle friends" (Sc. 5). In *Anthony and Cleopatra*, music is the "moody food/Of us that trade in love," (Act 2, Sc. 5) whereas in *Twelfth Night*, music becomes the "food of love" (Act 1, Sc.1). In *Richard II*, even sweet music becomes "sour" (Act 5, Sc.5). In *Measure for Measure*, Act 4, Shakespeare seems to highlight an old-long debate of good vs. bad music by saying, "Music oft hath such a charm/To make bad good, and good provoke to harm (Sc.1).

As to why this section begins with Shakespearean references, the reason is twofold: (1) it covers almost every shade of meaning associated with music-- from secular to spiritual to “heavenly” and therefore, makes an apt beginning for the subsequent sections which take up the debate and (2) it initiates the discussion on the effect that music has on its listeners/audience, i.e., good and bad music dichotomy which is a significant aspect of the present study and of the discussion below. The following section begins the debate on music with reference to the Greek philosophers followed by a review of the Indian philosophy of classical music on which Sufi music draws itself.

#### **4.9.1 Music: Various Perspectives**

The debate whether music is good or bad was initiated by the ancient Greeks in their discussions of the mimetic arts such as music, poetry, drama, painting and the like. The discussion was, in fact, regarding the nature and function of the mimetic arts. Plato regarded poetic imitation to be an inferior act or a sham representation of the ideal reality (Evanson, 1989, pp. 2-3). Aristotle, however, viewed imitation as a creative process and an imaginative re-creation of the ideal reality as well as a medium of finding the spiritual meaning (ultimate reality) which is shared by both the creator and the viewer/participant. However, the point to which both agreed was that the aesthetic acts produce sensual pleasure but they differed in their interpretation of this pleasurable experience. Plato said that poetic pleasure has a morally corrupting effect on human psyche whereas Aristotle, in keeping with his biological model, interpreted this sensory delight as healthy, spiritually cathartic and psychologically purifying for humans. More fittingly, he compared poetry with music and termed both as superior kind of representations of the inner reality of human life (1989, p. 4).

Music is said to be the finest of fine arts. Music, the English word, has been derived from the French word muse, writes Prajnanand (1973) in his book *Historical Development of Indian Music* (as cited in Lata, 2013, p. 1). In Latin, however, the term used is *musica*. Dickinson (1909) defines *mousikas*, from which our word “music” derives, as an “intimate union of melody, verse, and dance” (p. 217). Down the ages, people have been in awe of music and its potential to arouse strong reactions. The *Harvard Dictionary of Music* (1972) records the origin of the term as:

The term is derived from Greek, muse, more specifically from the art (technique) of the Muses. Originally this term included all the cultural endeavors represented by nine Muses but later it became associated with Polyhymnia, the muse of “many songs.

Among the Greeks, music has been associated with art and harmony, morality and spirituality in diverse disciplines such as medicine, psychology or mathematics etcetera. The Greek poet Homer (850 B.C.) interpreted health as the harmony of the body and soul and thereby viewed disease as disharmony. He advised music to treat sorrow, anger, fatigue, fear and to uplift soul (Pelosi, 2010, p. 70). Plato (427-347 B.C.), in *Timaeus*, indicates the “educative remedy in music to lead the soul back to its original movements” (p. 79). He proposed that music is not meant for any irrational pleasure; it is an intelligent use of art meant to restore any kind of disequilibrium within us because harmony is “akin to the orbits in our soul.” He thereby credited music with the power to influence our psyche and our morals (p. 65).

Similarly, in *Republic*, Book III, Plato emphasizes the musical training or which he calls the “true education of the inner being” to be able to perceive most shrewdly the omissions or faults in art and while he (listener/receiver) praises and rejoices over and receives into his soul, the good... he will justly blame and hate the bad” (p. 289). Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) also believed in the power of music which would alter the character of those who listen closely giving them a feel of inner harmony and else (if listening to the wrong type of music) might result in serious bad effects (as cited in Schmor, 1998, p. 12).

In the Renaissance, the therapeutic value of music was also noted for hypnotic effects on patients and associated with the sense of living, recuperation of order and harmony by even politicians such as the 18<sup>th</sup> century Thomas Jafferson (Bonny, 1973, p. 16). Nietzsche (1844-1900), the German philosopher termed music as a way of ordering the human experience. Hindemith (1895-1963), the German composer said that music can be manipulative and destructive also (Mansukhani, 2010).

In 1941, Ira Altshuler- the Director of Group and Music Therapy at Wayne County General Hospital- stated that music on account of its subtle and primitive quality is appealing at wide level. He determined through his clinical experiences that rhythm in music corresponds with rhythm in inspiration, heartbeat, speech and gait and this is why it

prompts responses such as beating or tapping, swaying the body or nodding the head (Mansukhani, 2010, p. 15). While working with depressed patients, Altshuler noticed that sad music (in minor keys) will capture their mood and help establish rapport with the therapist more effectively than does “upbeat” music (in a major key) which will irritate the patient. Also relevant to the use of music as therapy, is the tone color and the kind of instrument being played. Altshuler argued that stringed instruments because of their soothing tone, should be used while treating depressed patients whereas brass instrument can be distressing particularly to patients who are sensitive to noise and are patients of anxiety (p. 15).

From ancient times, the meaning assigned to music in almost all cultures and civilizations is of healing, harmony, benevolence and power which can be rightly called godly or magical. Inside music, sways this element of power which is concealed and clandestine and hence carries mystery. For instance, the emblem used for the Greek Muse (one out of 9 Muses) for hymns is veil or flowers and wreaths suggesting mystery, sanctity (veil), depth and fragrance and a host of deeper meanings. The one emblem used for the Muse of songs and poetry is the musical instrument panpipe which is named after the name of god Pan. The Indian Classical music (*Sudh Sangeet*) is said to carry the power of calling forth the sunshine, rain or thunderstorms on account of the sacred *nada* (sound) or other-worldly assigned to it by their gods.

#### **4.9.2 Indian *Sangeet* (Music)**

The origin of the Indian music goes back to the Vedic Age (2500 B.C. to A.D. 200) whereby the arts of vocal and instrumental music as well as dance were popular and common people having some knowledge of these arts, offered musical prayers to their deities, in the morning and evening. Instruments like *ban* (akin to veena), *karkari* (a kind of lyre), *nadi* (flute) and *aghati* (cymbals) were used as accompaniments to vocal music (2010, p. 10). The art of music that was regarded to be holy, was handed down orally from the guru to the *shishya* (disciple) at that time. It was called *sangeet*, i.e., vocal music, instrumental music and dance. Sung devotionally, the music could take man towards God and give him inner bliss, peace and self-realization. Afterwards this art branched off into three separate streams: vocal music (*geet*), instrumental music (*vadya*) and dancing (*nirtya*)

(Mansukhani, p. 1). Music, sacred in origin in the Indian philosophy, seems to have incorporated influences from various mystico-religious traditions, such as Sufism. In the view of Pradhan (2016), various forms of music like *Khayal* have incorporated elements from *Qawwali* and *dhrupad*- music which is devotional in theme and content. Similarly, Amir Khusrau (1253–1325) who created the *Qawwali* genre, fused the Persian melody and beat on a *dhrupad*-like structure in this genre (Bhattachargee & Alam, 2012, p. 210). There are many song-texts that reveal imagery peculiar to Sufism. Likewise, Sufism as practiced in the Indian subcontinent has embraced motifs and imagery from the Indian Classical music (Pradhan, 2016). The Indian subcontinent, prior to partition in 1947, includes Pakistan, India and Bangladesh, but today, they are the three independent countries and nations.

Ghaffar (2007), a prolific Pakistani writer of history, heritage, poetry and Sufi tradition, speaks about the Indian Classical music (*Sudh Sangeet*) in terms of what is unique in its compositions from the Western style of music. In his view, the Indian Classical music follows a fully oral tradition:

It is melodic. It moves at one level and is meant primarily for vocalization. Western music is harmonic. It moves at several levels at the same time and is primarily orchestral. Western music is usually played by several musicians on several, often overlapping instruments, thus having a written score in front is most important. (pp. 7-8)

In Sanskrit, words such as *gana*, *giti* or *sangeet* are used for music. In her first of a series of lectures on *Basics of Indian Classical Music*, Kamat (June 16, 2014) defines *sangeet*, a Sanskrit word, as a combination of *sam* (along with) and *geet* (lyrics/words/poetry). In Hindi language, the word *sang* replaces *sam*. Explaining further, Kamat says in her video lecture that *sangeet* includes three aspects, that is, (1) vocals, (2) instrumental and (3) dance and, therefore, it can only be a loosely used term for music.

In the Indian philosophy of *sangeet*, two theories, that is, *raga* and *rasa* are particularly important to understand and analyze the melodic aspect of the video songs under study. *Raga* is an umbrella term which is defined and explained in various ways. In both North and South Indian traditions, *raga* is pivotal but it is something which transcends the berries or assistance of musical elements. The word *raga* literally means hue, color,



beauty or melody. The concept is highly poignant which involves structure (combination of musical notes), sound, vibration, melody, mood, idealism, philosophy and a meditative experience. Pandit Jasraj, an Indian classical vocalist from the Mewati *gharna* in her *Art Talk Series* on Youtube, describes the meaning of Raga as “love.” “A raga acts as a fluid musical representation flowing between philosophical and melodic interpretations” (Cohoon, 2012, p. 21). The same musical *svara*/notes (12) and *shrutis*/microtones (22) provide the structure to all singers to build on and to improvise or to venture for stylistic effects within the known *alankars*/musical ornamentations.

Alif Laila, the famous *sitarist* of the Indian classical music says that a raga is something “to yearn for... each raga takes you through the universe in different ways.” Raga has a very definite mood about it, the way the singer *aalaps* (starts) and the speed that it has, e.g., the slower speed or higher/faster *taan* (tempo), it exerts power on the listeners/audience in various ways and by creating a range of experiences and flavors. Laila further notes that it depends on how the melody is played in structure and how a singer turns a performance into a spiritual rendition through his/her “full devotion to that experience, to that raga, to that mood in that moment” (as cited in Cohoon, p. 53). For Sufis also, music is or becomes spiritual to those in particular who have “an ear made for listening to music.” The art of music, Sufis say, is essentially based on harmony of the melodic modes. A mode (*maqam* in Arabic) is a type of melody that is expressed by a series of well-defined sounds but first and foremost a mode is made up of a “pre-existing pattern” of sound or the primordial *Kun* (Michon, 2007, pp.169-170).

*Raga*, in fact, is one of the most important melodic concepts in the Indian classical tradition of music. A singer employs a series of five to nine *svaras* or musical notes to construct a melody. The way a singer treats these notes or renders them in musical phrases to create a specific mood is of paramount importance in defining a *raga*. Holroyde (1972) explains the inner meaning of this concept. He says:

A raga is not a horizontal plane packed with dense chords travelling sideways, but moves forwards and backwards within a cone, endlessly in tension due to its own centrifugal pull. (as cited in Cohoon, 2012, p. 250)

There are two concepts that are of fundamental importance within the *raga* theory, that is, *svara* and *sruti*. *Svara* or musical notes can be termed as tones or pitches to construct

scales (e.g., higher/lower), *ragas* (e.g., *Bhupali/Khyal*) and melodies. The notes or *swaras* have a range of microtones called *shrutis* (twenty-two in number) in the Indian classical music. The basic scale of *swaras* is given below (one octave) while its Western equivalent discussed afterwards.



Figure 3. Basic scale of notes in the Indian classical music

The Western scale includes: Do, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, La, Ti, and Do and it uses the equal-temperament tuning system whereas the Indian music uses the just intonation tuning (Danielou, 1995, p. 30). The conventional way of a classical singing is that it has a specific beginning, middle and end. The start is more serious, *vilambit* (slow) section, the start of a *raga* which warrants the singer with some space to improvise also. It foreshadows the basic structure of melody, notes to be more emphasized, line of ascent and descent, intonation, ornaments and the like. The middle part of the song usually has *madhya* (medium) pitch/tone/voice and the closing part is *drut* (fast) which is usually in the *tappa* or *thumri* (lighter, semi-classical form of music) style of singing.

Broadly speaking, Indian music can be divided into two categories: classical and popular. Classical music having two variants- Hindustani music which is largely prevalent in North and central India and Carnatic which is popular in the south of India. Each variety has several genres. For example, *Dhrupad*, *Khayal*, *Tarana* are the classical and *Thumri*, *Dadra*, *Tappa*, *Bhajan* as semi-classical genres in Hindustani music. Popular music draws on various folk genres based on the region, film music and *adhunik* (modern music) which is influenced by a number of Indian and Western genres (Day & Joshi, 1982). Whereas the (semi)classical genres are based on *raga*, popular Indian music can have tonal elements that might deviate from the traditionally accepted classical norms. The Indian music is largely based on melody, i.e., single notes played in a given order. Western music has a harmonic content- a group of notes (chords) played concurrently. In contrast to the Indian tonal system, the Western tonal system divides the octave into twelve equal parts.

Indian classical music is based on melody but it is not characterized by any major harmonic structure. It has basically seven notes but five are half- notes and thereby has a 12note scale. Unlike the classical music which has three main characteristics: *raga* (melodic aspect), *taal* (cycle of fixed number of beats repeated over and over) and a drone (a sustained note), Indian popular music has the melodic (though not raga) and *taal*/beat components but does not usually have the drone (Danielou, 1995, p. 31). Among the Indian genres of music are: Hindustani, Carnatic, Ghazal, Folk and Indian western, Sufi rock, jazz and Blues. Before partition in 1947, the Indian subcontinent, as said earlier, included Pakistan, India and Bangladesh, but presently, the three are independent countries and nations.

Emerging in the early 1990s, Sufi rock became one of the leading genres in the Pakistani popular music. The music ensemble it uses comes from the traditional Sufi instruments such as *tabla*, *dhol*, *sitar* and the electric and bass guitars and drums from the rock band format. Using Sufi lyrics and imagery as inspiration, the bands often employ Hindustani Classical Music styles such as *Qawwali* and *Khayal* and sing in Urdu, Punjabi and Sindhi. The famous bands like *Fuzon* and *Mekaal Hasan* carried its popularity into the new millennium both locally and abroad. The genre remains a mainstay in South Asian pop culture influencing both popular Urdu pop Rock artists as well as Bollywood soundtracks. From 1960 onwards, however, there seems to be a significant alteration on the scale usage pattern due to the gradually increasing influence of folk, rock, pop and blues on this genre (Paracha, 2004).

The concept of raga and other related concepts used in the Indian Classical music genre, as briefly discussed above, are relevant in the present discussion since Sufi singing style is also said to be rooted in it. In Ghaffar's words, "Sufi poets were well-versed in *Sudh sangeet*," and he further enlightens us saying that the work of remarkable poets that has survived demonstrate that they worked on words, meters and music in the verse (p. 6). Often chanted like a song, *kafi* has been a popular genre of verse amongst many Sufi poets. Though the word *kafi* is defined in various ways, it is derived from the Arabic *kafa* meaning a group (Sen, 1997, p. 133). *Kafi* is a traditional form in Punjabi poetry in which the first or the second-- at times both lines together-- serve as the refrain. The refrain is composed to be sung and usually its meter is different from that of the intervening verses. Though

following the rhyme scheme of the *kafi*, the refrain can be and is composed in music with words which may be juggled. *kafi* is generally sung by *qawwals*, a group of singers who at times get so deeply involved in the singing that they become a part of the chorus. In the singing of this genre of Sufi poetry, another term *Sufiana Kalaam* is also commonly used. “*Kalaam* is the name given to a Sufi text which is sung or narrated, usually at ritualistic gatherings” (Abbas, 2002, p. 17). And it is “*Sufiana/Sufi*” because its content is about the Sufi saints of the Muslim world as well as the life of the prophet Muhammad and his family ... [and it is valued] in Islamic societies that integrate religion into almost every aspect of social life” (p. 2). Qureshi (1995), a renowned scholar also views Sufi *Qawwali /Kalaam* as the “authentic spiritual song that transports the mystic toward union with God.” In her view, the genre of Sufi poetry/*kalaam*/song is mainly for religious purposes and hence she excludes “the popular version of *Qawwali* adapted for entertainment in clubs and on the screen” from her analyses (p. 23).

The tradition of Punjabi Sufi poetry integrates words and music presenting them as inextricably intertwined. The *kafi* form is only found in sister languages: Sindhi and all forms of languages/dialects used in the Punjab. Usually, a *kafi* has a single theme and often it also moves at the level of metaphor. The language is that of common folk, the imagery is drawn from the experience of public. Usually, meters which have existed for centuries in Sindh and Punjab, are used. The art of prosody is well advanced in Punjabi. This prosody and meter are shared with Hindi which is also a sister language. It may be mentioned here that other musical meters are also measured in *maatras* (minutes, musical or prosodical instants). This is the same system with which the *sur* (note) and *taal* (timing-rhythm) of our music are metered (Ghaffar, pp. 8-9). Sufi poets such as Shah Abdul Latif recommended certain ragas for their songs and so did Shah Husain. Similarly, Khawaja Farid composed his *kafis* in certain ragas (Shackle, n.d., p. 8).

#### **4.9.3 Structure of the Analysis of Songs**

Before I proceed to analyze the selected songs and the singing performance of CS singers, it is essential to pinpoint that music and dance form a meaningful discourse in the traditional Sufi formulae since they are meant to invoke active meditation and the idea of divine musing. A Sufi vocalist voices vehemently what is the ultimate Truth/*Haq* by

reciting, e.g., Allah's sacred names or at times Sufi verses. Dancing or *Dhmal* is done to reinforce the singing of verses through the rhythmic motion of body. This is more significant on account of its extralinguistic features in the Sufi ethos. It has its semiotic richness and is considered to be a Sufi way to directly reach and experience God and seek His benevolence. A Sufi dancer consumes bodily strength to gain the spiritual. This dancing phenomenon has a specific air of humility, modesty and lowliness reflected through the dancer's dress and other accessories. As language with all its literary tropes provides a Sufi with a medium to express and experience the Higher Reality, likewise singing with its rhythm and melody provides a way to experience the same Reality in another way. The present study also takes into account this Sufi ethos while analyzing the CS Sufi singing discourse.

In most of the singing performances in the Indian/Pakistani singing context, melody and rhythm form two main components as stated in the beginning of this section. Melodic aspect is Usually, related to the singing attempt of the vocalist though the melodic effect is certainly created/enhanced via the musical accompaniments also. The rhythm is mainly created through various instruments, for instance, drum, *tabla*, flute, keyboard and the like. Instruments such as drums and percussions create more rhythmic patterns of sound and contribute towards the rhythm. Some of the musical instruments particularly with sympathetic strings such as *sitar* (plucked stringed instrument), *sarod* (lute-like stringed instrument with deep, introspective sound; a fretless instrument able to produce *meend* which are continuous slides between notes), *sarangi* (bowed, short-necked string instrument), is said to resemble the sound of human voice, able to imitate vocal ornaments such as *gamaks* (shakes) and *meend* (sliding movements), among others to create special resonance and melody and thereby are used to create that effect. The harmonic line, namely, playing of simultaneous notes or sounds in the background is also a part of the CS singing as the singers combine Eastern and Western tunes- (semi)classical, folk, jazz, pop riffs and tunes. As said earlier, Western musical scale is harmonic which includes harmonies and counterpoints, i.e., the relationship between voices that are harmonically interdependent yet independent in rhythm and contour. Melodic, rhythmic, or heavily rhythmic hip hop, edgy rock or fancy folk singing features form a part of the analysis of

CS Sufi songs under study. Some tracks are highly rhythmic and loud, others are melodic and seriously intoned with the Sufi verses being sung.

The analysis goes in line with the format of the songs, i.e., intro, bridge (middle) and the outro parts, slightly touching the verse-to-chorus structure, if relevant. The role of male and female vocal ensemble (backing vocals/chorus) in the singing and if a specifically predominant role is assigned to any musical instrument in a song such as *sitar* in Abida Perveen's song "Main Sufi Hun" (2014) in addition to the musical ensemble of CS, are taken into account.

The analysis of the songs begins from the intro sections. It is significant in that it not only provides a logical beginning for the analysis, it also indicates the melodic line, the tone and mood-the overall discourse of the songs and Usually, from this point, an interactive wave length gets adjusted between the performer and the audience. If the initial rendition, vocal or instrumental, is engaging as a devotional or spiritual rendering or else extravagant entailing fun, that has to have an effect on the audience accordingly. The latter may appear to be more thrilling, innovative and more in keeping with the modern pragmatics and sensually more pleasing.

But two questions may be raised here: how far the serious text or say Sufi poetry is matched with the thrill, pop and jazz musical accompaniments and second whether this kind of singing is focused on the articulation of meaning or in some way is a serious attempt to create the Sufi ambiance. The former may not be in keeping with the modern discourse of music but is more focused on the relationship between form and meaning.

The analysis of the songs is done keeping in mind the two aspects primarily: song as an aesthetics rendition in general and second, how far it is compatible with the Sufi ethos of singing wherein form (signifier) and meaning (signified) are blended. The analysis below is sub-divided thematically in four sections and not in the chronological order of songs as shown in the sample in Chapter 3 (Section 3.6.3). Themes are assigned to each group of singers in view of the similar nature or characteristics of their singing performance. They go as: (1) Meditative Singing: Perveen and Zahoor (2) Sacred Text, Secular Performance (3) Funk, Groove and Female Singing (4) Jazz Sensation in Sufi Singing.

## 4.10 Meditative Singing: Perveen and Zahoor

Abida Perveen and Saen Zahoor are the two most celebrated Pakistani Sufi singers whose singing is regarded to be an exterior manifestation of the interior state, i.e., it makes us meditate over the meanings and mystical realities embedded in Sufi verses that they render. Their singing is not only a great artistic endeavor but richly colored with the Sufi ambiance.

### 4.10.1 Abida Perveen

<b>Song #</b>	13
<b>Title</b>	<i>Mein Sufi Hun</i> (I am an ecstatic Sufi)
<b>Singer</b>	Abida Perveen
<b>Lyrics</b>	Sultan Bahoo, Kabir
<b>Time</b>	00:10:28

#### 4.10.1.1 Theme and Structure of the Song

Abida Perveen's song *Mein Sufi Hun* of CS Season 7, Episode 1, celebrates the worldview of a *Dervish*, a Sufi whose path is beyond the ordinary understanding. How a *Dervish* (humble beggar), longing for union with the Beloved, searches for knowledge to awaken the pure self, befitting to see Him, forms the central idea of the song. It is his maddening pursuit of love for the Divine which makes him shun away the worldly pleasures.

The song contains 5 stanzas of varying length and a refrain- a rhymed couplet that is repeated after each stanza. The refrain gives unity to the structure of song.

#### 4.10.1.2 Singing Performance

The video song *Mein Sufi Hun* begins in a very serious and solemn manner with the pitch bends played on *sitar* by the maestro Ustad Raees Khan. An expert of *sitar* as he is, Ustad plays the melody perfectly fine; the move is from a short melodic syllable to a longer phrase or note. The two sounds played on *sitar* form a kind of *asthai* (1<sup>st</sup> verse) and *antra* (2<sup>nd</sup> verse) combination, a span which lasts for about 55 seconds in the song. At the same time, the drone sound as well as music on other instruments such as guitar, drum and

keyboard are played for background effect, for harmony and mood color. The stage is thereby set for the queen Sufi singer, Abida Perveen's performance.

The vocalist Abida Perveen appears precisely at 56<sup>th</sup> second in her usual meditative demeanor to start with the *bandish* (*alap* by using words) though she initiates it without words, i.e., performing *rubato*. She begins in her usual Sufic manner- a measured, slow and gracefully restrained style. The *alaap*/beginning section is accompanied with music on sitar and musical notes in slower pace in other instruments. Using the *madhya saptak* (middle octave) of the musical scale, or at least it seems to be so, she begins the *alap* in her powerful but controlled vocals. She moves on very precisely to construct a raga and gradually builds it up by ingeniously deploying specific vowels and consonants instead of full *svara* (notes), i.e., using pitches in a specific way. It seems as if within this raga, is embedded the refrain of the song *Mein Sufi Hun* (I am a mystic). Almost imperceptibly, she moves on to the key note of her raga, that is, *Sa* and thereby vehemently renders prior to Verse 1: "a... .. ho, Ji Maula" (O, my Lord). Her vocal diction, consonants/vowels, is adorned with emotional color when she vocalizes "Maula" and the musical pitches she draws on evoke the profundity of the Higher Truth that we associate with the word. Her vocals are so powerful that she lets us have almost the "physical feel of words," (Burns, 2005, p. 2) and she makes music and melody subordinate to what she would let come out of them- Truth and supremacy of the Truth. And thereby she makes meaning in music and makes melody a vehicle to express the Higher Reality.

In most of Perveen's Sufi songs, it is Usually, "a" and not the whole note "Sa" which is emphasized and is taken upward or ascended (*aaroha*) to the higher scale (*tar saptak*) in a rather gliding manner. In this song as is in *Soz-e Ishq* (2010), the recital of "a" note has extra weightage since it resonates with the ending "a" sound of the word *Maula* (Lord). She elaborates the note making each syllable of the word harmonize with the pitch and sound it is expressed through, and in various slots of the song, she fills in the hue of "a" sound. The note is thus a significant sign within the musical as well as the semantic structure of the song which makes the listener see what underpins the lyrics.

The vocalist evokes the power through "Maula" and sets a specific mood and thereby she moves on to render lyrics of Stanza 1 which express the motif that the secrets of Divine love cannot be known through ceremonial knowledge- عقل فکر دی جاء نہ کائی /there is no



place for wisdom and thought here [Verse 1]. In a devotional state, she translates the thought underpinning words depending less on melodic elaboration here and bringing in force and body into words through reiteration, variation and swerves of improvisations. Musical sound is thereby molded into a discourse of meaning in Perveen's performance turning it into a "*nada sadhana* or spiritual exercise attained through sound which is the woof and warp of the Indian arts and *Raga Sangita* in particular" (Pudaruth, 2016, p.1).

Perveen concentrates on the text of the song *Mein Sufi Hun Sarmasta/Maira Kon Pichane Rasta* (I am an ecstatic Sufi/Who knows the path of my inward journey), making an outlay of themes through each stanza/strophe, the tonal center of her performance being the spiritual signified that the words, phrases and lyrics are loaded with. Be it the ecstasies or love secrets of Mansoor Alhaj for the Divine [Stanza 4], or the journey towards self-enlightenment [Stanza 2] or self-annihilation [Stanza 5], her singing is impassioned and takes us into a state of interior wakefulness whereby we get open to experiences and the joyous states of mystical union alluded to in the text. Her "husky alto voice," as says Rothstein (1993), her gestural performance, her hands, fingers, palms each an ornamentation in itself and a visual rendition of what she sings. This quality is specifically noted in her performance in both the songs *Mein Sufi Hun* and *Soz-e Ishq*.

In Perveen's singing performance, two expressions- *دھپک*/fire of illumination and *عشق*/Intense love- are worthy to note in terms of their meaning and the manner in which Perveen renders them. In *Mein Sufi Hun* [Stanza 2 & 4] and in *Soz-e Ishq* [Stanza 2, 3 & 4], the words are significant and can better be analyzed within the scheme of mystical thought that begins with the word "Maula"- the pivotal sign in the songs. One can see various shades of this sign interspersed in the songs in the sense that words, phrases, inflections or microtonal syllables – the vocal diction of the singer- carries that love, that intense passion which she vocalizes in the beginning. Even the ostinato or the melody played underneath carries the color of this depth and power turning Perveen's performance a memorable mystical experience. Her vocalization is amazing in that it has the power to evoke the inner meaning of words or as if she has fully perceived what the poet(s) intended to convey. She lets the listener experience the same evocative color through her performance and it seems as if she has shared the "domain of Sufi thought, feeling, and practice which enables a Sufi poet to communicate intensive mystical emotion, through the

medium of language, to a *munshid* (Sufi singer), who perceives the poet's words so strongly as to experience the affective state which engendered them" (Frishkopf, 2001, p. 2)



*Figure 4.* Perveen's gestural performance, her hands, fingers, palms each an ornamentation in itself and a visual rendition of what she sings. She lets the viewer have the physical feel of the word *Hoo*.

Perveen's rendition of *Hoo* ... is another amazing feature of her performance which transports us into a new realm of auditory sensations whereby we hear and we hear with the ear of heart, absorbing what she renders through *Hoo*... meaning, "always or only with He"; or simply 'O He'!" (Ghaffar, 2007, p. 20). Perveen gives a special draw on *Hoo*, elongates it and keeps reciting it for almost 10 seconds in *Main Sufi Hun* [Verse 7] in a fully meditative manner as if under some spell. This lends an air of solemnity to her endeavor, creates a hypnotic effect and gives us the feel as if we have embarked on the spiritual journey to listen to the *Dhikr* of Allah and Allah *Hoo*. Ridgeon (2015) elucidates that the word *Hoo* is a "breathy, plosive utterance which evokes, both phonologically and conceptually, the essence of the original formula," that is, *la ilaha illa llah* (there is no God but Allah) which is the first part of the Islamic declaration of faith, the *Shahada* (p. 69). In the Sufi praxis, *Dhikr* of Allah *Hoo* is relatable to the "meaning-event which was understood to replicate the original giving of *Dhikr* formulae by the Prophet to the elect

amongst his companions, especially to the person of his cousin and son-in-law Ali Abi Talib, the fourth of the rightly guided caliphs of the Sunnis and the first Imam of the Shiites” (p. 69).

The refrain of the song, *Mein Sufi Hun Sarmasta/Maira Kon Pichane Rasta* (I am an ecstatic Sufi/Who knows the path of my inward journey), carries specific resonance in Perveen’s performance. It engages the listener for subtle improvisations that the vocalist uses to render it in three unique ways at the end of each stanza. The repetition certainly adds style, beauty and rhythm but more importantly, it allows space for the listener to deeply reflect over the meaning. The articulation she makes of the word- with round, semi-round and flat lip position- creates a visual image of the “ecstatic Sufi” in our mind; the image of the person who is blessed with a calm and poised heart, a Sufi/*dervish* who is away from the maddening material things and is continuously on the move to please the Divine Beloved. Her performance, therefore, unreels a host of meanings embedded in the Sufi lyrics that she recites. She appears to be more a representative of Sufi philosophy than just an ordinary singer who cannot do justice to such a sublime poetic text or create a world of spiritual quest. Likewise, in her song *Soz-e Ishq* (2010), she draws on the refrain of the song- *Meray ghar aaya piya humra/My Beloved has come to my abode-* and decorates it with various pitches, bends and curves making microtonal improvisations. The stresses are rightly taken in that the melody and music is retained but meaning and the ambiance is not compromised rather emphasized- the festive moment of the union with the sought, the frenzy and the joyfulness of the seeker are emphasized. The moment of festivity expressed in the refrain is further reinforced through deep and intense notes played by the violinist Javed Iqbal. As the refrain suggests, love of the devotee/seeker seems to be akin to fire and as said earlier this theme stands in the center of most of Sufi songs that Perveen sings. Culshaw’s (2018) statement is relevant here that “fire” is a key symbol in Parveen’s songs and Sufis also generally talk of being “on fire” in their quest to find God and self-realization.

Perveen is a singer par excellence in terms of her insight of the Sufi singing and her mastery over ragas which she demonstrates while choosing for embellishments. She does take care of the musical *alankars* (embellishments) but in a way as not to enervate the meaningful discourse she is embarked on in her Sufi singing. While she lays particular

emphasis on key words, she uses musical ornamentations such as *meend* (slides), *khatkas* (jerks), *andolan* (slow oscillation of notes), *gamak* (shadowing of notes) and *murki* (set of notes taken quickly) etc. playing more often with structural words, e.g., *taan* (thus) in Verse 6 of *Main Sufi Hun*, and *kinna* (much) in Verse 8 of *Soz-e Ishq*. She intersperses the *meend* ornament but very delicately in her peculiar style letting the audience taste it as a rare spice.

Perveen's singing style is more in keeping with the Indian classical tradition- singing as well as mannerism, for instance, sitting cross-legged. The intros of her songs, as mentioned earlier, and the latter two sections, namely, *Jor* (*tabla* enters) and *Jhala* (fast ending) follow the same conventions with slight variations. *Alap* provides a slow introduction to Perveen's songs while *tabla* enters (*Jor*) towards the end of Stanza 1 and with its repeated cycle of beats and rhythm (*Taal*) is added in the song which continues till the final section. The rhythm in *Jor* section in the songs, is slow in the start but gains tempo in the ending verses of Stanza 2 onwards, preparing ground for the final faster section, *Jhala* whereby the vocalist renders a rapid succession of notes and the accompanists follow her (Sorrell & Narayan, 1980, p. 110-11). In the final sections, the *raga* and *tala* playing become intense, more complex and more virtuosic which takes the listener to a very high level of commotion amounting to stress but release comes with the final note rendered by the vocalist.

Perveen's singing renditions on the CS forum are unique also in that minimal music and instrumentation have been used. The main accompanists, Ustad Raees Khan (sitarist) and Javed Iqbal (violinist), seamlessly follow the vocalist and bring in evocative mood and thoughtfulness in the notes they play gracefully and thereby keep in line with Perveen's meditative singing. The melody and drone Khan plays on his *sitar* neither dominates nor eclipses the singer's performance or her focus on the articulation of meaning and Iqbal plays emotive notes very well. The vocalist and both these maestros contribute to bring in the *rasa* or the inner taste which in the Indian philosophy of singing is the essence of *raga*. More importantly, it is not only the singer's powerful vocals but her mastery over *ragas* that create this ambiance and space for the spiritual engagement of listeners to meditate over what underlies the poetry being sung or Sufi lyrics. It is this power of the vocalist which keeps the guitar and bass players to use their digital tunes/notes/music in line with the vocalist. Moreover, no vocal ensemble or chorus is used in these songs which makes a

listener keep focused on the main melody and explore meaning as well. Perveen is certainly a singer with voice having a knock-out effect (Culshaw, 2018) and via her singing make ecstasy a spiritual as well as a physical condition, (Rothstein, 1993).

#### 4.10.2 Saeen Zahoor

<b>Song #</b>	2
<b>Title</b>	<i>Aik Alif (One Alif)</i>
<b>Singer</b>	Saeen Zahoor and Others
<b>Lyrics</b>	Bulleh Shah
<b>Time</b>	00:07:08
<b>Chorus</b>	Fe/male

##### 4.10.2.1 Theme and Structure of the Song

Saeen Zahoor's song *Aik Alif*, of CS Season 2, Episode 4, focuses on the theme of a deeper and critical study of one's own self. The song gives a piece of advice to the listeners to shed off the evils of the gross world, its speculations or bookish knowledge since none of these is the source of real learning. The Head source of all knowledge lies in turning to God, the One and the All-Knowing.

The song contains 4 stanzas of varying length and a refrain- one verse instead of couplet that is repeated twice as a pre-choral structure in the song. The chorus sings a lyrical phrase, different in structure and rhythm, two times. The main vocalist Zahoor renders a longer set of lyrics (8 lines) and a couplet which is pre-choral and a bridging section. Stanza 3 and 4 are smaller pieces sung by Ali Noor and Ali Hamza, from rock band *Noori*. Pop and traditional forms, melodies different in structure, are used in the song. The outro of the song contains numerous flavors, melodies and chanting of fe/male backing vocals.

##### 4.10.2.2 Singing Performance

The video song *Aik Alif* starts in a little bizarre fashion with a tapping of percussion sticks placed in a row and this consumes almost 6 seconds. At precisely the 7<sup>th</sup> second, appears the maestro Saeen Zahoor with his *alap*. He appears, as is his usual style, in black turban and with *Ektara* (one-string instrument) in his hands.



*Figure 5.* Zahoor’s singing reveals harmony of both oral and musical (notes): his lip movement, right index finger on the strings & his body language, all employed to evoke the power of “ikko alif” for the viewer.

In deep and other-worldly voice, he chants *Hoo ... ..* for 10-12 seconds and thereby engages the listener with an ecstatic rhythm. The rhythm is complemented by a sleek tinkling of notes on his *Ektara* and an almost inaudible tapping of percussions and playing of lowest notes on the harmonium and all this anticipates a mood of tranquility for the audience/listeners. In between this tranquil rhythm, Zahoor muses Bulleh Shah’s lyrics: *parh parh ilam te faazal hoyal/te kadi apne ap nun parihya nei/You have read thousands of books but you have never read your own self [Stanza 1, Verse 1]* with spiritual vigor and passion. He emphasizes each word so as to underscore its mystical implications and the philosophy embedded therein. The theme of Stanza 1 is brought to light, i.e., the need to examine one’s inner self which is our real enemy and which needs to be purified to be able to seek the love of the Divine.

Zahoor’s rendition of lyrics is amazing not only that he brings to light the meaning underpinning them but he sings with a mystical force and voice which has a tinge of other-worldliness and spiritually engages listeners like Perveen. Both these singers have the

potential to cast a spell on the audience, touch them deeply rather touch every string of their body and create an aura of meditation for them which seems akin to the way the sympathetic strings (strings underneath the frets) of a sitar create vibration and resonance under the spell of the frets when played by the *sitarist* though they are not touched physically. This power or metaphysical quality of a singer's voice is beyond any acoustic measurement and is termed as *Anahata Nada* (unstruck sound) in contrast to *Ahata Nada* (struck sound), in the Indian philosophy of music. The former being the object of sense perception and the latter a matter of mystic experience in which sound and light are fused together ... and it makes a continuous sphere of boundless infinite dimensions (Sharma, 2006, pp. 5-6).

Religious and meditative philosophies of the world have also hinted at the mystery or this sublime capacity of human voice. For Yogis, it is *Anahata* whereas Christians have called it the Word. Sikhs know it as *Ahata* and for Sufis the first ever powerful sound has been the Divine (كُن) *kun* (Allah's command for the universe to be). Every philosophy attempts to decipher it in its own way. Guru Nanak, as cited by Mata Mandir Singh, a renowned yogi, on her website, defines it as, "One Gesture and One Word, and the ten thousand rivers of life began to flow. How can I speak or reflect on this power?"

Along with an impassioned voice, Zahoor also has very expressive body language and outlook which contribute to making his performance a truly mystic and meditative experience. Since he has mostly performed at *dargahs* (Sufi shrines) or religious festivals, he seems to have absorbed an utmost level of humility and self-effacement which is a peculiar characteristic of a *dervish* (humble, God-fearing). No matter he is in a high-tech studio or in any performance abroad, he keeps his traditional outlook: long kurta, beads, tightly bound turban on head, *ghungroos* (anklet bells) in his ankles. He keeps playing his *Ektara*, the folk instrument with its three-stringed version which has turned out to be his signature style. It seems as if the three strings of Ektara signify various dimensions of Zahoor's mystical longing; love for Allah, love for his masters (Ustad Raunaq Ali & Saen Marna) and his passion to promote mystical music.



*Figure 6.* Zahoor's rhythmic bodily rotation carries an air of meditation and thoughtfulness for the viewer.

In his singing performance, Zahoor has his own way of expressing the Sufi thoughts and philosophy not only by articulation but also via his body language and his ecstatic swirling in particular [Stanza 2 & 3]. His overall singing style, his mystical voice and his rhythmic bodily rotation all set him apart from most of the stereotypical rockers and pop stars of the time. Each whirling (shot above) that he makes while dancing is imbued with an air of meditation and thoughtfulness. It seems that the rhythm oozes out of his soul or the core of his being and thereby the dance that he performs is of the soul and not body. His bodily rotation in a circular way signifies his longing to experience the oneness of God whereas the thumping sound of his feet is a calling for people to decipher the mystery of



the Divine Love. There is a complete harmony in what he utters and in what he expresses via his facial/eye expressions or put simply his words correspond with their meaning.

The key meaning that the song emphasizes via the refrain, *Ikko alif teray darkaar* /only One Alif is what you need, is sung orally but enhanced more through mute and non-verbal expressions. He showcases a harmonious blend of verbal and non-verbal or his words and actions. The meaning is focused on through right stresses both oral and musical (notes): his lip movement, right index finger which is on the strings, feet in motion and his body in rhythmic motion all convey a discourse, that is, the rotation of a humble self around one center (*Ikko Alif*), one Superior Self, beyond which the human self does not exist. This, in fact, is the message that the poetic text largely focuses on. Hence, in his performance, both form and meaning are played together.

Saeen Zahoor seems to use his art, his music and his dance as a way to reach and experience the divine. He seems to seek inspiration from the mystic philosophy of searching the Divine Love. His art stands in contrast to the modern trends of art, poetry, painting or music which are inspired by concerns such as “What will people say of it?... When inspiration is sacrificed to the material world how can the soul ever dance, for the dance of the body is the death of the soul” (Khan, 2012, pp. 160-165). Zahoor’s ecstatic whirling has no match with any other kind of dance meant for sensual pleasure. At no point of his performance does the Sufi appear to attract people from commercial point of view nor is his art intended towards any desire for starship. Instead, he appears to be more in a state of self-negation and non-being. For him, “music is the nutrition for soul. I can perform all night. Once you start reciting *Sufiana Kalaam*, you forget your physical being,” as he states in an interview published in *The Express Tribune* on 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2015.

Another notable quality of Zahoor’s singing is that while taking the start of any song, he does not seem to initiate just the raga, his *alap* is rather meant to invoke the Higher Self for the right kind of performance as does Abida Perveen. He often uses the word *Haq* (Truth) Usually, with the refrain and recites it in an extremely evocative manner implying that it is only the *Haq/Ikko Alif* which needs to be sought else all learning is futile and worthless. His performance as a Sufi singer is imbued with semiotic richness and his words and actions are the signifiers which do not split from each other, rather they create a signified meaning. *Hoo* is another mystical expression that Zahoor draws on, for instance,

in the *alap* of his famous song, *Aukhey Paindey/Long Roads of Love*, the unique melodic emphasis he uses for it, creates an incredibly amazing impact. With minimalist music in the background, it is only the *Hoo...* which prevails and stays in the center. Zahoor has earned a worldwide fame as a Sufi singer and has a number of songs to his credit as a solo performer.

As a musician, Zahoor has his expertise in *ragas* (musical pitches) but since he learnt the art from the mystic composers, he has his peculiar understanding of the notes and microtones, *swaras* and *shrutis*. He learnt this art from his masters and renowned musicians Ustad Ronaq Ali and Sain Marna. In an interview with Dilshad Husain and Areeba on 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 2009, he told how he was “conferred with the contract of three strings of *Ektara* by his master Saeen Marna.” Sharing his training of the *ragas* he talked about the wording of the raga as: *Tan tan wajda eik tara, eik taray vich raag hazara, wakh wakh aang her her sur nyara, tan tan wajda eik tara, eik taray di zarb hayati, zarb kilyan tay zarb barbaati*. He learnt music for ten years concentrating primarily on three *ragas*: *Bheirvi*, *Pahari* and *Jog*. He was trained by his masters how to recite *Sufi Kalaam*. He used to play *Ektara* at the midnight hours while reciting *la ilaha illalla* (there is no God but Allah), he stated in the same interview.

In his song *Aik Alif*, Zahoor demonstrates his musical skill as well as his devotion for mystical singing. At pre-verse composition stage of the song, he develops his tonal notes drawing on the theme of the song *Ilmo bas krein O yar* followed by his *alap* through the lyrics. The notes he picks to lyricize the track seem to be chosen and hence oscillate between the middle and higher octave (*Madhya* and *Tar Saptak*). His ascending and descending moves (*aaroha* and *avaroha*) are very subtly and artfully structured whereas the *komal* variants are interspersed in an almost imperceptible way. Thus, he shows his complete mastery over the art of modulation, that is, the artistic transition from one note or chord to another. And without modulation, as says Blainville, “there is little music, for a piece derives its true beauty not from the large number of fixed modes which it embraces but rather from the subtle fabric of its modulation” (as cited in Forte, 1979, p. 265). He keeps filling his breathing gaps with the lower notes of his *Ektara* which also provides a bass-line with a little mixing of harmonium and lowest percussion (specific color on *Ektara*). However, his voice is a little overshadowed when more instrumentation and music

steps in, with *ghara* (earthen pitcher), *tabla* (set of 2 drums), *dhol* (double-headed drum), guitars and other percussion instruments. The music ensemble and stylistic fusion in this as well as in his duet song *Chall Mele Noon Challiye* (2016), somehow come in the way, if not overshadow, what his powerful vocals otherwise convey, rather cast a spell when he makes solo performances.

Stanza 3 and 4 are smaller pieces and sung by Ali Noor and Ali Hamza, from rock band *Noori*. The two sections contain some pop and rock elements, fusion of different melodic structures or a polyphonic ensemble in terms of the singing style as well as switching of codes, from Punjabi to Urdu verses. The structure of the song follows harmonic mode which is in keeping with the Western music scale. Heavy music ensemble and instruments such as bass, electric guitar and percussions with intense beats portray a contrast between Zahoor's melody on *Ektara* and that of the rock singers playing on bass and electric guitars. The transition to later sections bring in exciting colors with undercurrents of fun. The switch of codes in the song also break the flow of mystical melody initiated earlier by Zahoor though the lyrics sung here are also serious in thought.

Ali Noor, one of the later singers, keeps musing one-liner part/stanza of the song, *Ni mein jana jogi de naal*/I have to go with Jogi, elongates it in a bending manner and sings it for 01 minute and 20 seconds [Stanza 3]. Though he seems to lyricize the verse in an earnest way, his stresses and intonation or musical pitches lack depth and command as far as the focus on the meaning of words is concerned. In contrast to Zahoor, he ascends/descends the notes in a slightly exaggerated way (*anti-vilambit & anti-drut*) and eventually his singing lacks the peculiar cadence of the earlier part. Zahoor's bodily whirling were circular which has its symbolic significance and Noor moves forward and backward in a rocky manner. Interestingly while he sings/performs in his own way, Zahoor swirls in his peculiar way, none follows the other. The *Noori* singer performs the way he Usually, does in songs, e.g., *Jo Meiray*, (That which is Mine), *Saari Raat* (The whole Night) etc. and no modification as such is seen in the Sufi song. The 3rd singer Hamza performs his part in a rather monotonic way and sings in yet another way making nasal chanting through and through. The outro of the song contains numerous flavors, melodies and chanting of female backing vocals singing a lyrical phrase, Allah, *Saanyan*/Allah-the

only Lord: the choral voices in short, measured syllables and Zahoor vocalizes the same in an impassioned and powerful way.

The overall discourse that this song presents is not that of a one-unit play or a dealing with a coherent whole as was the case in Perveen's song *Mein Sufi Hun*. Being polyphonic and polyrhythmic in nature, the song *Aik Alif* is seen split in three segments, singing styles, voices and even textual fragments selected randomly from Sufi poetry or some other source, typical of the New Agers. The focus is more on the fusion of styles or various structures whereas the message or the signified meaning the lyrics contain is partially conveyed (Zahoor's section mainly) or pushed in the background. Sufi lyrics are treated in a way as if they are signifiers meant for stylistic effect and the inclination of most of the CS singers is more to liberalize the notion of Sufi singing and to use famous Sufi lyrics for commercial purpose and starship.

#### 4.11 Sacred Text, Secular Performance

The text of the songs as it speaks of Allah, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and Sufi saints, is sacred and evokes holiness. It thereby sets a line of thought for the viewers and so expectations from the singers. Many singers, however, treat the text in a way that gives a secular feeling and it seems as if, for them, the content and the manner of its presentation (singing performance) are two separate entities and it matters not what words are being sung and what underlying reality the words suggest. Five singing performances are analyzed under this section.

##### 4.11.1 Arif Lohar and Meesha Shafi

<b>Song #</b>	4
<b>Title</b>	<i>Alif Allah Jugni</i> (radiant love of <i>Alif Allah</i> )
<b>Singer</b>	Arif Lohar & Meesha Shafi
<b>Lyrics</b>	Sultan Bahoo
<b>Time</b>	00:08:40
<b>Chorus</b>	Fe/male

#### **4.11.1.1 Theme and Structure of the Song**

The song *Alif Allah Jugni* Season 3, Episode 1 of CS starts with Sultan Bahoo's verses which talk of the disciple's love for his/her Mentor whose guidance leads the way to God. The rest of the song speaks of the radiant love (*Jugni*) of the Prophet (PBUH), of his companions and of all God-fearing people and the ending lines suggest to seek love of those who sought Allah's Love, since no salvation is possible otherwise.

The song contains 6 stanzas of varying length and a refrain- one stanza followed by a lyrical phrase that are repeated by the chorus at the end of each section of the song. The song is mainly vocalized by Arif Lohar but complimented by Meesha Shafi and female vocal ensemble. The lyrics are not purely a Sufi poetry, but a blend of the Sufi and folk lyrics based on the elusive *Jugni* which was popularized by Alam Lohar-- a famous folk singer from the region of Punjab, formerly British India. The ending verses of the song are borrowed from a famous *Qawwali* track sung earlier by different singers. The song follows a verse-chorus form with *Jugni* providing the central motif, musical variation, style as well as thematic colors.

#### **4.11.1.2 Singing Performance**

Cool music rhythm opens the composition of the song: the clank of *chimta* (tongs which is a percussion instrument) as the distinct sound in fusion with a light, though audible, drum beat and a sleek tinkling of *Ektara* (one-string instrument) by a music player who is clad in green. The rhythm continues and precisely after 21 seconds, Lohar, with *chimta* in hands, clad in dark black *kurta* (loose shirt) and a red stole around his neck, appears. He is clanking the *chimta* in his usual folksy way, in a skilled manner to make a start. He demonstrates some level of seriousness but the undercurrents of what he sings give a feel of funk and groove which in the next few seconds become more evident when the female co-vocalist and the other musical groups join in.

Lohar begins the song with Bahoo's famous verses, *Alif Allah chambe di booti mere murshid mann wich laai – hu/My master has planted the fragrant seeds of love in my heart*, [Stanza 1, Verse 1]. His musical and vocal composition of these verses demonstrate seriousness and focus on the content or emphasis on words makes us reflect over the meaning of words for a while. The seriousness however, does not continue as a viewer

would expect it to be like because the next few seconds reveal the artist in his usual style of performance, i.e., in his usual, a little rowdy and entertaining style, something which one would never see in a serious Sufi singing, for instance, in that of Zahoor or Perveen's songs.



*Figure 7.* Lohar & Shafi singing *Alif Allah Jugni* with an air of jubilation, their gestures & bodily actions demonstrate a contrast with the Sufi lyrics they sing.

In Lohar's case, what he sings, i.e., the lyrics imbued with sacred meanings demonstrate a contrast to what his actions, i.e., his gestures and bodily language imply or speak of and which engage us in some other way leaving little space for us to concentrate on the signified meaning embedded in the verses. With this funny flavor, the song seems more a *Jugni* performance in its typical sense, a display of folk singing and its musical aspects, e.g., rhythm, beat and choral features also fit well into this genre. The vocalist's own outlook, e.g., long, wavy hair in lieu with fashion and style, a peculiar wild smile in eyes, flickering apparel and bodily actions all indicate a bubbly tinge, an air of materiality and a desire for starship that fits into the folk or funk but not Sufi singing. As a consequence, a gap is created between what was supposed to be the intended focus (the signified reality) and the view of reality (materiality) which is being demonstrated. The

signifiers therefore point out a discourse which is not compatible with what is mystical and meditative.

Seen at exoteric level, however, some aspects of Lahor's song seem significant in terms of the meaning that are traditionally assigned to them such as the use of *chimta* or even *Jugni* (spirit/radiance) which has a symbolic and historical significance (Gummi, 1997, p. 151). *Chimta* clanking has been/is associated with our folk traditions and may be regarded as a representation of modest singing and in this very context may be related to Sufi singing as well. Moreover, the green robe as the *Ektara* player [Intro of the song] in the video is clad in, may be interpreted within a wider religious and devotional context. Green, being the dome color (built above the tomb of the Prophet Muhammad, SAW) and also the color used on many Sufi tombs, may perhaps be regarded to be Sufic in nature as well as an emblem of veneration of those who sought Allah's Love. This aspect is good but as all Sufis maintain that the exoteric is only one dimension, the outward or the apparent and unless it comes as a reflection of the esoteric or the inward, it will remain superficial and meaningless. In Lahor's song, the esoteric remains absent. The other aspect *Jugni* which, in simple terms, is a folk song of Punjab (Bai, 2014) but authors such as Gummi (1997), Sidhu (n.d.) and Dutt (2011) trace the origin and definition(s) of the term. Sidhu (n.d.) traces its origin from North India about 2000 years back but Dutt (2011) states that *Jugni* came into being in 1906 as a song of protest against the British imperial rule. These authors trace *Jugni* as an elusive figure which fits into any situation- from literal to allegorical. For instance, a Pakistani Punjabi film titled as *Jugni* (2011), released in 2011, reveals the story of three men seeking love of one woman, "Jugni" -- the heroine of the film. The *jugni* in the film evokes literal meanings- the sexual allure of a woman. In the song under study, it is suggestive of allegorical meanings.

As the lyrics of this song clearly speak, *Jugni* is used as a metaphor of the sacred, namely, it is associated with the Holy Prophet (PBUH), Hazrat Ali (the 4<sup>th</sup> caliph) and Sufi saints and all sacred names are narrated in the song in terms of their radiance/spirit (*Jugni*) in the refrain sung by the chorus [Stanza 1-6]. The lyrics of the song evoke holiness and the meaning is easy to read and this sets a line of thought for the viewers and so expectations from the singers. For instance, the lyrics which are sung time and again by the chorus, *Ae we Nabi Paak di jugni ji, Ae we maula Ali waali jugni ji/* the Spirit of the

Holy Prophet, the spirit of Ali and his followers, it would be natural to expect the vocalists, the musical chords and every outward manifestation in the Studio turning to its lowest or subdued so as to let the esoteric light of the words flow outward and touch the listeners. And that could give a memorable mystical experience to the listeners/viewers. Moreover, the choral singing of the lyrical phrase- *dum gutkoon*/my heart flutters the moment I think of you, my God- could be made a mystically enjoyable experience. Instead, we see fun in the rhythm of *dum gutkoon*, and excitement, thrill in the vocal diction of the female vocalist (Shafi) and other vocal ensemble when they repeat lyrics after Lohar such as “So I recite the *Kalma* when I think of God” (Stanza 2, Verse 2). Words are not meant for any serious reflection in the performance nor do the music and instrumentation direct us towards that.

Choral singing is another feature that is done in two different styles in the song, first by the main vocalists and second by the backing vocals. Other than various contexts, this style is also seen in religious and devotional songs whereby the singing is done in the chanting manner. In this *Alif Allah* song, chorus appears after the “Jugni” with the singing of Verse 4, *Peer meriya jugni ji*/I have the spirit of my guide, followed by a sequence of its repetition in various ways. This element, though adds eloquence and a unique touch to the song nonetheless becomes an explicit sign of glee and excitement evident in the bodily actions of CS singers and not matching with what the “Jugni” itself is speaking, as stated above. This *Jugni* is far from being any symbolic quest for the radiance of the Prophets and Sufis and it is nothing but as the CS singers call a “fusion number ... with the alluring intervention of *Dum Gutkoon*” or simply a narrative device that is in keeping with the age-old narrative style used in Punjabi folk music (Dutt, 2011). Religious symbols of Sufi poetry or of lyrics taken from other sources are consumed by many CS singers for fun and celebration of their singing style, or for projection of the self and starship. The New Age movement as it has given rise to these trends such as the worship of the self which is a form of neo-paganism which appropriates and consumes religious symbolism for its survival. This worship of the self, a progeny of the New Age movement, is a form of Neo-paganism which survives through appropriation and consumption of religious symbolism. The symbols become entities free of any reference or meaning to be used for any purpose (Ghilan, 2014).



In the song under study, it seems as if the content and the manner of its presentation (singing performance) are two separate entities and it matters not what words are being sung and what underlying reality the words suggest. Quite the opposite, for example, when the lyrics talk of this world as an ephemeral place as, *Chad duniya de janjaal/Remove yourselves from worldly concerns* [Stanza 3, Verse 2], the demonstration at every level becomes superficial and even secular: sounds become faster, music heightened, beat and rhythm more intense and the vocalists lead to turn their performance into a sensational event, an experience of fun and entertainment. Again, this is a demonstration of the spiritual in secular terms. The outro of the song “jugni ji” is made in the typical *thumri* (a light romantic form) style, in a very fast tempo and repeated thrice, no less an amusing touch is given to the song, a celebration of the secular through spiritual. This entails that inner and outer signs conflict with each other and the external glaze plays a role to conceal the reality and takes the viewer away from it. Jugni is made to wear a secular robe and is used only as a musical motif or an expressionistic groove to be repeated with variations. “Showbiz” seems the most noteworthy sign in the overall discourse of this song as is the case with CS performance in general. It is a sign which elicits other signs such as fantasy and pleasure and fun.

#### 4.11.2 Rizwan Butt and Sara Haider

<b>Song #</b>	16
<b>Title</b>	<i>Meri Meri</i> (O human, leave off this battle for worldly possessions)
<b>Singer</b>	Rizwan Butt & Sara Haider
<b>Lyrics</b>	Bulleh Shah
<b>Time</b>	00:06:37
<b>Chorus</b>	Fe/male

##### 4.11.2.1 Theme and Structure of the Song

The song *Meri Meri* a CS production Season 9, Episode 6, contains lyrics by Bulleh Shah and speaks of worldly possessions and glitters as futile a battle we are indulged in, since all this will end soon and turn into dust. The central idea of the song is that unless we learn to control our worldly and base desires, spiritual connection with God is not possible.

The song contains 3 stanzas of varying length, each sung twice and a refrain-- couplet with one verse sung a number of times firstly by the male singer and followed by the chorus. The song is a duet performance by Rizwan Butt and Sara Haider who sings almost in the middle but repeats only two verses prior to the bridge part of the song. The outro contains numerous flavors, melodies and chanting of fe/male backing vocals.

#### ***4.11.2.2 Singing Performance***

Steady but cool guitar music opens the composition of song *Meri Meri* by Bulleh Shah and in 13 seconds mixes up with the melodic clinks of a shaker instrument played by a member of the House Band. This musical riff raff leads on to a catchy groove, a set of lively notes sung with speed and colored with various instrumental shades. The catchy note continues for 17 seconds giving pace, rhythm and melody to the track and an air of warmth to the Studio environment [Pre-Verse 1]. The warmth shows up all around touching members of the House Band and a spark of excitement and glee becomes visible through the eyes, facial and bodily gestures of singers, guitarists and backing vocals. The percussion in lower but steady notes, drums, guitar, bass, shakers, hand claps together embody thrilling and amusing upshots which get intense in the coming moments of the track. The groove stays in the centre, brings in fun and also forms musical equivalent to the key verses *Meri, Meri* vocalized by Rizwan through the course of singing the song. Music with its funky beats, disco and rock elements in instrumentation and singing performance, thereby prevails and fills the air.

Rizwan's performance of key phrase, *na kar bandiya meri, meri, meri/O human, leave off this battle for worldly possessions* [Stanza 2] and particularly the last part "meri, meri" is appealing on account of some devotional pull and depth that it seems to carry in the intro section. He is articulate and shows command in voicing words with clarity stressing syllables of the key motif that is repeated in the course of the song through chorus singing.



Figure 8. Sara Haider with her twiggly eyes ... has yet to take over & Rizwan Butt vocalizing in highly intense, exaggerated tones *meri meri* ...

This kind of repetition is meant to give thematic identity to a song and thereby enacts as a unifying element within the formal structure of a song. Moreover, it serves to emotionally hook listeners or viewers making the song catchy and memorable and therefore has a figurative value within the elements of music (Miller, 2005, p.106). Miller further explains that singing too much of the central figure or motif can make it less symmetric and annoying also because it will “bore the listener” (p. 106). Therefore, it needs artistry and masterly skill to perform the hook part to be able to it give an “emotionally satisfying” and pleasurable listening experience to listeners (Levitin, 2007, p. 162).

In Rizwan’s performance of the catch phrase, the kind of repetition that he and the chorus make, somehow creates a dowdy and mechanical effect. The repetitive outthrow of words is hasty, quick and a little over-played, high and loud with overstressed syllables, carried forward through high drum beat and guitar sounds than harmony or at least some sort of a country-swing effect which might help a listener onto a soft, meditative space to reflect over the meaning of the sung note. The motif instead gets redundant than a profound demonstration of the Sufi theme though it contributes to establish thematic structure of the

composition. The treatment that the singers and backing vocals give to this motif, *na ker bandiya meri, meri*, turns it into a sensational element which fills the Studio with an air of superfluity, fun, fantasy and emotional heat than convening the listeners into a channelized spiritual energy and verve to think, reflect of who they are and what level of effort do they need to make a comeback to the Higher Self.

Sara Haider, the co-vocalist who showcases in her stylized outfit at 00: 02:15 of the video track, makes an impressive performance. With glint in eyes and creative spark, she employs a range of vocals, using runs and riffs, soft glides, shakes and jerks and at times ornaments the notes with nasal edges and thereby adds resonance to her part of singing. Improvisations that she makes with notes and syllables and by giving distinct nasal edges she builds the tempo of the song and carries it to the climax admixing jazz and rock elements -from light airy to intense-to- exaggerated and demonstrate a chromatic range of her voice timbre. Though she sings in beauty, flair and chic, she remains calm and composed without being profound and flutters through syllables with ease and eyes closed when she takes over but with the vocalization of words “na teri... na meri” [Stanza 4] in coming few seconds, she demonstrates force and energy; her eyes smile, face aglow, right hand in bracelet moves upward emphatically and thereafter she moves to a higher register. Her singing style seems surrealistic, voice unique which she employs for sizzling and stylish vocal effects and word-plays. More so, the magic that she plays with her twiggy, awesome eyes transforms her singing into something exotic. Her vocals however, become highly intense, exaggerated, honky to the growling extent whereby the exotic is taken over with ding-dong music, explosive beats, loud rhythm and claps which culminates into the singer’s own hopping and dancing.

The show altogether becomes a jovial singing of Sufi lyrics, a site of hilarity and fun to the extent of being a pratfall comedy wherein all, singers, backing vocalists and instrumentalists, consume energy to make it a commercial success. Music loud, overly charged and honky with high percussion beats in particular, a continuous outthrow of jingles, tunes, feminine sizzles and shrieks, smiles, bodily commotion, calypso, hip-hop twisting and in the midst of all this, Rizwan’s vocalization of verses, “*Chall Bulleya, O chal othe challiye, jithe saare anne*/Come, Bulleh Shah, let’s go to a place where everyone is sightless” [Stanza 6] makes little sense; rather inverse is the effect and the impression

that one could gather is of derision, a playful treatment of the Sufi verses by Bulleh Shah. The bridge part of the song is also a site whereby music prevails, music dominates for 1 minute and 10 seconds and remains occupied by the orchestra- the plucks and bows, strums, beats and buzzes, hits and strikes, scrapes and shakes- which is magical and provides food for sensory pleasure and far away from creating any meditative effect. The outro section is again imbued with mechanical voicing of “meri, meri, meri, meri, meri” whereby styles vary and voices overlap.

#### **4.11.3 Umair Jaswal and Ahmad Jahanzeb**

<b>Song #</b>	14
<b>Title</b>	<i>Khaki Banda</i> (Human made of mere clay)
<b>Singer</b>	Ahmad Jahanzeb and Umair Jaswal
<b>Lyrics</b>	Bulleh Shah
<b>Time</b>	00:08:43
<b>Chorus</b>	Fe/male

##### ***4.11.3.1 Theme and Structure of the Song***

The song *Khaki Bandah* a CS production Season 9, Episode 3, centers on the idea of a sincere effort on part of man to adorn the soul through examining the self, solitary vigil and weeping for Allah’s forgiveness while keeping away from the glitters of material world. Man is made of mere clay and the desire to become invincible or godly would be inane. What could save us from conceit and proud willfulness is by travelling the path of spiritual love and keep reflecting of who we are and for what good purpose we have been sent to this ephemeral world.

The song contains 11 stanzas of varying length with 2 used as refrain and sung in various ways. The refrain with specific focus on one couplet is sung by Jahanzeb mainly and repeated by the chorus. The lyrics that Jahanzeb sings are the ones written by Shuja Haider, the director of the song, and interlaced with Bulleh Shah’s verses rendered by Jaswal. The couplet, a rhymed expression which comes from the register of film and also used in famous Indian musical numbers, makes a contrast to the Sufi verses in terms of the density of thought and stanzaic structure. The chorus which enters as a pre-bridge section also enacts various voice effects, whispering and miming for instance, which is not seen in

other songs. Instrumental sections of the song also play various innovative effects. The outro contains numerous flavors: voices, overlapping voice and instrumental effects, mimes and flickers of light and color—the features more often seen in CS singing. The song is an instance of innovative fusions of texts, styles and genres.

#### ***4.11.3.2 Singing Performance***

A guitar strum, cool and rhythmic, opens the composition of the video song *Khaki Banda* and in 2 seconds, is colored with more melodic flair played by Ustad Tanveer Husain on mandolin-- a stringed instrument from the lute family.

In few seconds, this riff raff is developed and shaped into a melodic pattern carrying the rhythm of rain and cheer of sunshine and continues for 56 seconds of the track of more than 8 minutes and 43 seconds (00:08:43). This music pattern establishes the mood, the rhythm and ambience of the song and is mingled with more music and overlapping sounds played on guitars, bass, drums, keyboard, and percussions played by the house band and guest musicians. The string section, however, joins in the coming few moments to fill in the silence in between the singing and add new flairs of music.

Amidst this play of music, beat and rhythm, the posture as well as the manner in which Umair Jaswal moves to and fro in his signature rocky style [See the Figure above], is worthy to note as has been noted earlier in the song *Charkha Nolakha*. The dress Jaswal is clad in is informal- jeans and jacket- but the stole-flowery and silky- knotted from front and loosely woven around his neck gives him a classically stunning outlook. In Eco's words, this wearing of a snug-fitting pair of denims or "tight jeans" puts a man more in touch with his body, i.e., it makes him think in terms of "an epidermic self-awareness" (La Ferla, Feb 25, 1990). At precisely 0:01:10, when he vocalizes verse 1 [Stanza 1] of the song, *khaki banda, kr da phire khudai*/A mere human made of clay, who goes around acting as if he's as invincible as God, equally powerful and energetic are his vocals which make a great appeal also. His style is energetic and delivery of words is lucid and unequivocal,

still what it does not contain is depth and spiritual ambiance that one would look forward while listening to a Sufi track.



Figure 9. Jahanzeb & Jaswal showcase through a *notanki*/hilarious, entertaining singing & bodily swings; Jaswal [on right] moves to and fro in his signature rocky style

The track “Khaki Banda” seen as a whole, i.e., inclusive of Ahmad Jahanzeb’s singing performance as a co-vocalist, seems to acquire even more a secular color. The lyrics that Jahanzeb sings are the ones written by Shuja Haider (director of song) and interlaced with Shah’s poetry in order to make the song innovative and stylistically appealing [Stanza 2, 4, 6, 8, 11]. The inserted parts do have innovative quality but also have the drive to drag the listener away from any meditative thought since they are inherently sensual and come from the register of film and also used in famous Indian musical numbers. They do not fit well with the Punjabi Sufi poetry that is a specific genre on account of lyrical and thematic composition. Punjabi Sufi poetry in the words of Ghaffar (2007), “is rich not only in meaning but also in auditory sensations which make the verse flower ... it is a layered verse and moves at several levels. Music and words, imagery and structure, fuse into an organic, poetic whole” (pp. 1, 9). The fusion of any other text into Sufi poetry would make little sense because it is hard to create poetry which is dense and

a “play with the sounds and meanings of words simultaneously using various tones and pitches of meanings” as argues Ghaffar (p. 9).

Lyrics fused by singers of this song are far from being a text which is dense or is underpinned with thought and meaning. For instance, the structure “*satrangi re*,” part of the refrain, that throbs in the centre of the song, is picked up from a famous Indian musical film *Satrangi* (2012) and employed to hook viewers and listeners and thereby feed them with something memorable. The expression “*satrangi*,” used in rhyme with “*notanki*,” seem to have been adjusted well in the lyrics and attempt is made to assign them spiritual meaning. This, however, is ironical because both words in terms of their common usage, the register they come from and thereby the meaning attached to them, all suggest the worldly flavor they are underpinned with. The lyrics fused this way, per se, communicate giggles, fun and smiles than anything serious or worth-reflective. Moreover, the vocalist, Jahanzeb, has the professional knack to deliver words in a way that would make viewers/listeners read between the lines, i.e., the funk and the lure, sweetness and romance embedded in the novel text. Eventually what the track outthrows is fun and hilarity whereby music becomes more sweet, alluring and frolicsome, sounds whether acoustic or electronic overlap, beats intense and hilarious, flutes jazzy-sweet and strings atmospheric and romantic.

Amidst the virile voices of singers, Ahad Niyani, the drummer and Sajid Ali, the flutist among others [post-bridge sections] get almost supercharged releasing plethora of emotional energy and amidst the magic of amusement, the backing vocals showcase their style through *notanki*/hilarious or entertaining claps and bodily swings. All this is wonderfully mesmerizing, cheerful and imbued with romantic sunshine but far away from any kind of spiritual milieu or the atmosphere a Sufi text is meant for. Sufi poetry as says Ghaffar (2007) wherein, “Music intermeshes with words, so does meaning” (p. 20), whereas the text that singers employ in this song, not only demeans Sufi lyrics being sung in between but also corrupts meaning underlying the verses. Concerning how Punjabi Sufi text has been corrupted, Ghaffar (2007) further highlights as under:

People such as minstrels, bards, and *qawwals* add, deduct and synthesize various poems (often fusing verses by different poets) in order to convey ‘message’ or to fit the verse into the music they have composed. They



sometimes add the products of their own creative urges in their presentations ... its consequence has been the corruption of the original texts” (p. 7).

The track *Khaki Banda* with its innovative pieces, visual dynamics, and overlapping music is certainly a commercial success but in doing so what it attempts to emphasize is the secular and not spiritual that lies embedded in the Sufi lyrics. Their treatment renders the meaningful text ineffective or a plaything to be used at surface level. In this way, what they attempt to do, in line with the New Agers, is to co-match the secular and the spiritual-the signs which essentially diverge from each other. For instance, *satrangi* which connotes romance and heart-fluttering things and may be understood as a sign of materiality and self-indulgence is placed parallel to *khaki banda* which refers to the mortality of human beings and asks for a critical analysis of who we are and keep searching for the path of righteousness.

The bridge section of the song is very musical- an awesome show of sounds, tunes, riffs and runs and improvisations though all is in keeping with the key tone and texture of the track set earlier. Amidst this rush of overlapping musical sounds, the flutist singles out and plays magically. Music is now intense; pace and volume of tunes is accelerated hastening towards the outro of the song whereby both the singers and backing vocals take over. All this is artistically impressive but highly distracting for listeners making it hard for anyone to grasp the inner meaning of the song lyrics. The switch or transition to the outro is seamless and smooth with carefully intricate instrumentation which grabs the attention of viewers, though for a while. The ending of “khaki banda” carries some kind of spiritual pull as it seems to have less affectation and both singers vocalize in their own way though their body language does not actually match with the manner of vocalization. The vocal ensemble makes an interesting mime play which makes it dramatic via the almost dumb voicing of the word, *khaki*. The last touch is also abrupt and dramatic.

#### 4.11.4 Abrar-ul-Haq

<b>Song #</b>	12
<b>Title</b>	<i>Ishq di Booti</i> (Seed of Love)
<b>Singer</b>	Abrar-ul Haq

<b>Lyrics</b>	Sultan Bahoo
<b>Time</b>	00:06:09
<b>Chorus</b>	Female

#### ***4.11.4.1 Theme and Structure of the Song***

The song *Ishq di Booti*, a CS production Season 2, Episode 4, focuses on the theme of death and unveils the reality of this world as a place of enmity, hatred and falsehood. One better search for mystic ways like that of Bulleh Shah to do away with this impure world and instead seek the pure Love of the Divine. It also supplicates God to shower the rain of His mercy on the barren land of our hearts and guide us to His path--the path of *Haq* (Truth).

The song, a solo performance, contains 7 stanzas with differing length and a refrain-stanza which is sung in various ways. The refrain with specific focus on one couplet is sung mainly by the vocalist Abrar ul-Haq and by the chorus at the same time though in lower pitch which is even hard to notice. The song is not purely a Sufi poetry, though it does give the flavor via fusing a few of Sultan Baho's verses within its main body.

#### ***4.11.4.2 Singing Performance***

An overview of the song *Ishq di Booti* gives a feeling of a composition which lacks proportion both at melodic and rhythmic levels. The vocalist Abrar seems to rely more on rhythmic beats and tunes provided through the musical ensemble and less on melodic modes in contrast to Perveen whose rendition of the verses was emphatic, meaningful and melodic. Though the melodic lines do exist but neither do they conform to the classical style of singing nor give a totally rustic impact or even go with an altogether pop and rock or funk genres of singing. On account of this bizarre mixing, the melodic aspect does not appear out to be effective though the singer does combine notes but since they lack in harmony and stylistic blend of *alankars* (ornamentation), the impact is not created. The vocalist Abrar seems to demonstrate a singing which is a usual characteristic of his folkloric tracks he is reputed for with one alteration that he observes seriousness in this case and also struggles to arouse spiritual emotions. He succeeds in doing so as far the delivery of the beginning [Stanza 1] and ending section, دم حق دم / The divine name of

Truth in every breath I draw, of the composition is concerned via presenting a mystical accent. At times, however, his bodily and facial expressions allude to a funky and amusing style [See Shot above] which is more typical of him, for instance, the way he sings an expression ہائے/Haaye [Stanza 1 & 2], is used in many musical numbers and typical folk singing whereby the purpose is to create sensation and romantic emotions among the audience. These kinds of bodily actions do not match with the song instructive in theme and his style thereby causes distraction for the viewer to grasp the meaning underpinning the text.



*Figure 10.* Abrar-ul Haq showcasing through his bodily and facial expressions which allude to a funky and amusing style

The rhythm in Abrar's singing dominates starting with a gentle stroke on keyboard and in few seconds, is fused with an exciting sample of recorded sounds and in the rest of the song, is intermingled with heavy musical ensemble. The peculiar rhythm, mainly of trumpet and *dhol*, which goes through the composition gives a kind of musical backing to the content being sung but makes no contribution to intensify the meaning of words. The trumpet, *dhol*, and percussions all are used as ensemble to produce a high beat music which resembles the modern rock music also. The music gets more intense, rhythm higher with

slide effects when the vocalist sings the refrain lines which carry the central message, چنبے , حق والی بوٹی بیج لے /والی بوٹی بیج لے (sow the seed of the Jasmine flower/sow the seed of Truth).

The musical elements used in the song follow a harmonic structure, for instance, the Moroccan percussion is placed alongside the *dhol*-beat (double-headed drum) of the *Dhol* group while the Serbian String Orchestra plays on melancholy tunes in contrast to the percussion beats of various kinds and they all play tunes different in quality or timber. The performance though musical, lacks depth and a subtle use of the musical modes intended for mystical flavor and pedagogical effect as came through Abida's singing. The impact that Abrar's performance creates at the most, is of rhetorical than of mystical nature. What is foregrounded is a glamorous display of contrasting signs, an ensemble of visual attraction, female body (violinists & backing vocalists), and a setting which overshadows the content and its meaning. The instruments such as trumpets with their typical tunes are a common site in jazz numbers or mostly in concert bands and popular music. Similarly, the bodily sways and actions of the backing females demonstrate superficiality and instead present a show of amusement and pleasure and do not fit well into the genre of singing they are placed in. The song is though lengthy and incorporates various types of structures to make it a Sufi number but it lacks ambiance and meaningful rendition.

#### 4.11.5 Tufail Ahmad and Ali Zafar

<b>Song #</b>	1
<b>Title</b>	<i>Allah Hoo</i>
<b>Singer</b>	Tufail Ahmad and Ali Zafar
<b>Lyrics</b>	Sultan Bahoo
<b>Time</b>	00:07:30
<b>Chorus</b>	Female

##### 4.11.5.1 Theme and Structure of the Song

The song *Allah Hoo*, a Code Studio production Season 1, Episode 4, speaks of the disciple's love for his/her Mentor whose guidance led the way to God, planted Allah's fragrance (Jasmine) in the heart [Verse 1] and the second verse suggests the idea that the fragrance of Allah has blossomed the whole being of the seeker.

The song contains only one couplet which is sung variously by Tufail Ahmad and Ali Zafar who is a co-vocalist. The lyrical phrase “Allah Hoo” is used as a refrain by the singers who draw on Saeen Zahoor’s famous composition in his song *Aukhe Paindey*.

#### **4.11.5.2 Singing Performance**

The study of this song *Allah Hoo* reveals a few striking features worthy to be discussed. The song is only of two verses which are rendered by the singers who complement each other creating a harmonious effect. The song as it starts with a tinkling sound which though is not very audible yet musical and gives an impression as if a kind of ghost note is being played in a specific way, probably on percussion. As a preamble, this music piece seems to build the tempo as well as the bass line which continues as a backdrop rhythm in the song. After 14 seconds, Ali Zafar starts with “Allah Hoo...” and performs for 30 seconds in the middle octave, focusing mainly on *Hoo...* and lengthens it to the optimum. Zafar evidently draws on the singing style of Saeen Zahoor, an eminent Sufi singer and is also known for his celebrated “Hoo ...” note/song which Shoaib Mansoor employed as a theme song in his film *Khuda Key Liye* (2007). Tufail Ahmad takes up “Allah Hoo...” and further develops it with slight variations in notes and via the use of his vocal timbre, but keeping the basic notes. He complements Ali Zafar and by repeating the same in a discernible higher pitch, he adds emphasis and force to the words being sung and thereby heightens the impact. While he moves within the latter part of the middle and higher octave, he employs more the higher one which makes his style distinct from his counterpart. His style of singing seems to fall more in the classical tradition of singing though his body language is a little over-emphatic and not subtle in keeping with a Sufi song.

As far as the composition of the lyrics is concerned, both the vocalists perform well. The song, however, does not make a good appeal since it is not something new and creative in itself because the melodic pattern and even the instrumental music is largely drawn on a

famous track by a maestro in Sufi singing. Though it may be regarded as a tribute to Saen Zahoor and in that sense, it is significant.



*Figure 11.* Tufail Ahmad's performance seems to give an eerie than any kind of spiritual effect-- whereas the gloomy backdrop enhances it further

In Zafar's case, the performance may be even better appreciated in that he coordinates the words he sings and his bodily actions, e.g., when he lifts his index finger while chanting "Allah Hoo...." Even the seriousness of mood and the deliberation with which he sings is also appreciable. The senior artist, however, makes his body language rather over-emphatic which nonetheless belittles the effect of his performance instead of enhancing it. His actions would probably fit well into a kind of performance meant to create some magical effect. Moreover, his outlook seems to carry an eerie touch in keeping with his body language. This strange effect is further enhanced by the backdrop view which is filled with an air of mystery, gloom and evokes almost a surrealistic effect. The vermilion hue with black in the setting and at the back, a ghost-like presence of four persons to clap heightens the mystery and gloom, an air which cannot even evoke the feeling of fun or pleasure as is the case with many other songs of CS. This performance, therefore, seems to fall to the other extreme of the gamut of Coke singing. These surrealistic effects or

signifiers may evoke any other meaning than is intended for, rather they contribute to truncate the Sufi lyrics to these meaningless effects which can in no way motivate the viewer to perceive or trace the meaning underpinning the mystical text.

## 4.12 Funk, Groove and Female Singing

CS Sufi singing, as analyzed in Unit 2, largely appears to be a celebration of the spiritual in a secular way. In some of the songs, it is more a celebration of the *female celebrity space* and thereby more glamor comes in these performances or using Dyer's words, *élan of the musical, the allure of stars*.

### 4.12.1 Fareeha Pervez

<b>Song #</b>	11
<b>Title</b>	<i>Jogi Mery Naal Naal</i> (Jogi is always with me)
<b>Singer</b>	Fareeha Pervez
<b>Lyrics</b>	Bulleh Shah
<b>Time</b>	00:07:03
<b>Chorus</b>	Female

#### 4.12.1.1 Theme and Structure of the Song

The Sufi song *Jogi Mery Naal*, a CS production Season 6, Episode 1, talks of a mystical notion of how the being desires to be connected back to its Essence. The poet, speaking in a female voice, longs for the company of the Mentor (Jogi) and desires to surrender her will to her spiritual authority. The underlying idea is to recognize the Head Source of our love out of the various shades of its worldly manifestations to be able to reach back to it.

The song contains 4 stanzas of differing length with a refrain-a couplet sung by the chorus and a single line that is given special emphasis by Fareeha Pervez as she repeats it a number of times in the bridge section. The bridge of the song contains various effects: vocal by Khan, verse with repetitive focus by Pervez and instrumental with twofold rhythm that come mainly by two instruments trumpet and *dhol*. The song is not precisely a solo but accompanied by Muazzam Ali Khan, a famous Qawwal, with his melodic variations

(singing of notes without words) which he renders in the course of her singing, in bridge and outro sections.

#### 4.12.1.2 Singing Performance

The song *Jogi Mery Naal* vocalized by Fareeha Pervez seems a unique and interesting case to study. It is unique in its lyrical composition: soft, melodic and an articulate singing which is expressive of her professional skill as an artist. Her style though not classical, is definitely rooted in the semi-classical tradition, e.g., *ghazal* singing but she seems good at improvisation and has the knack of doing the funks and grooves of pop music also and her present performance is not an exception. Hence a straightforward labeling for her singing art would not suffice. The air of composure that she presents herself with is peculiar of her shows, a feature she shares with all celebrated classical singers.



*Figure 12.* Fareeha Pervez shows up with the beauty of her singing art- her glides & jerks- but is least expressive in terms of a spiritual performance

In the song under study, Fareeha Pervez appears in the same peculiar style and musical voice. The composition unfolds the beauty of her art, the way she combines notes and their variant sounds into modulations, enhancing the beauty of her melodies with glides, jerks and with pacing up (ascending) or slowing down (descending) of the notes



and gracing the show with the beauty of her art as well as demeanor. Consider, for instance, the beginning of the song, the vocalization of Asthai (Stanza 1, Verse 1) “Ni men jaana Jogi dey naal,” her style is evocative but measured and the pitch and volume of her voice moderately falls between middle and former part of the higher octave (upper Sa in the Indian classical scale) and thus notably good and appealing.

Her skill of improvisation is also noticeable in the ending section of the song where she ventures for a blend of classical and modern *ghazel* style and instead of ending with intense and faster tempo the way as e.g., Abrar does in his song, she makes it likeable and unique. She reverses the order of the theme line, “Ni men jaana /Jogi dey naal” and thus shifts emphasis onto the latter part as shown through the slash, on “Jogi dey naal” and even treating “Jogi dey” as a separate entity repeating it thrice. The meaning is easy to infer that it is none other than “Jogi” whose companionship (naal) is being intended for and who is the object of the speaker’s veneration and love. The vocalist thus elaborates the theme of love, love as an experience of both fulfilment and longing, of beauty and tragedy--a story poignant ever and also makes it appealing and moving for the viewer via its rhythm, music and style. The show, therefore, seems filled with a gusto of stylistic and aesthetic connotations and thereby her singing is likeable to a great extent.

Coming to the rhythmic aspect of Pervez’s performance and what function, if any, it seems to play in the delivery of meanings the lyrics are filled with. As a listener when I closed my eyes and listened to the song just aurally, what I heard was the strokes, the rocking beat and rhythm of the percussion and other musical ensembles which were clearly perceived to be the overpowering feature of the song. On the other hand, when I listened to it with opened eyes, what appealed to me most was the artist herself, her feminine charms, her glamorous outfit and the music of her voice and hence I tended to view it in that way. Musicality and rhythm are the two key words I would use to speak about this song. Music is sensually appealing here and never engages the viewers spiritually rather it diverts their attention away from grasping the realities underpinning the text. It seems a good creative exercise for the singer to explore *swaras* (notes) and improvise on them which contributes to make it good in aesthetic terms or more as a sophisticated piece of entertainment. Her show appears to be more a discourse of glamor, beauty and the

promotion of celebrity culture which in Dyer's (2002) words could be termed as an "élan of the musical, the allure of stars" (p. 2).

In Pervez's show, rhythm stands out as an amusing feature in various ways. For instance, some funky tunes, blend of keyboard, percussion and horn, provide the bass line for the song which nonetheless distract us from focusing on the content. The song starts with a keyboard stroke to let the vocalist take on and then comes in an exciting sample of recorded sounds to be intermixed with various sounds of brass, string and *dhol* instruments forming a full-fledged musical context for the show. Minus the Moroccan, there is the Serbian House Band, three ever-present vocals including the famous Rachel Vacciji who provide backing to the lead vocalist. Last, not the least, the most amusing feature of the show comes around the second half of its composition (bridge) which is highly evocative in terms of the music and rhythm which lasts for about 1 minute, from 00: 02: 42 to 00: 01: 40 out of the total span of the song being 00: 07: 03. The tunes of the musical ensemble, of trumpet and *dhol* in particular form a groovy combination almost to a magical extent so much so that it carries Vacciji, one of the backing vocalists, to dance, or perhaps make her dance to the tune. Caught in a moment of thrill and excitement, she brings in fun and sensation. The musical variations or permutations of Moazzam Khan, the *Qawwal*, do not seem to fit anywhere except that they add an interesting groove in the overall musical setting.

There is yet another aspect of Pervez's performance which indicates that she presents a spiritual text in a style which is very secular. Consider, for instance, her body language, the hand movement in particular which though fits into the classical style of singing is not expressive in terms of a spiritual performance. Hers is a highly stylized way of presentation, a celebration of the "female celebrity space" (2002, p. 2), and used as a sign of pleasure, fantasy and entertainment by the CS itself. Female agency thus plays an important role in the Studio singing and also enacts as a discursive sign for the agency to promote the liberal agenda of the New Age.

Her overall demeanor, posture and particularly her fluid hand movement makes her appear to be a deity who might inspire a poet or a sculptor. She also seems to be engrossed in a sort of meditation and resemble that of the Buddhist art in which the hand movements of the statues entail different kinds of *mudra* (hand & finger gestures) after the fashion of

Buddha. Another subtlety which is imbricated in the singer's postures is that in the Indian tradition of classical dance and *raga*, the hand movements are regarded to be not just movements but melodic actions (Beck, 2013) as they have their own language and are a significant part of kinesthetic vocabulary of a singer or dancer. Nandikesvara (1917), a renowned theorist of stage craft writes in his book *Abhinaya Darpana* (The Mirror of Gesture) that while singing, a singer should use hand and eye gestures to enhance the effect of singing than simply voicing the lyrics. Excitement, mood, flavour and pleasure may be aroused via these actions (p. 13). Fareeha's singing performance brings in the same.

#### 4.12.2 Hadiqa Kiyani

<b>Song #</b>	9
<b>Title</b>	<i>Kamli</i> (Crazy/passionate)
<b>Singer</b>	Hadiqa Kiyani
<b>Lyrics</b>	Bulleh Shah
<b>Time</b>	00:07:49
<b>Chorus</b>	Female

##### 4.12.2.1 Theme and Structure of the Song

The Sufi song *Kamli*, a CS production Season 5, Episode 1, is a solo rendition by Hadiqa Kiyani. It focuses on the theme of a critical evaluation of one's own self and a combat against the evils of heart since God can be found only by those who are pure at heart. The lyrics underscore how materialism and affectation block our vision to understand the real truth.

The song contains 6 stanzas and the first is the lengthiest. The refrain is one verse- *Nein Mein Kamli Aan*/Oh, I'm crazy- which is given specific emphasis by the vocalist and repeated a number of times in the bridge section and the female chorus repeats after her but in a very slow tone.

##### 4.12.2.2 Singing Performance

Kiani's song is another case which may be studied from its melodic aspects, for instance, the beginning [Stanza 1] that she takes is worth noting for its lyrical quality.

Though it is pretty lengthy a start (kind of bandish) spanning more than two minutes [00:02 :33] and hence unexciting also but she plays well with octaves, moving from middle to the former notes of the higher octave and thereby creating a subtle effect also. The aspect which makes it less appealing is not only the length but also skilful improvisation of notes and the musical notes that she combines lack resonance as is the case with Pervez’s performance and does not reach a higher level of inventiveness.



*Figure 13.* Kiyani performing “Kamlee” with loud and vividly marked hand movements

Moreover, Kiyani does not demonstrate the kind of stylistic composure used in this kind of singing such as the maestros do and the viewers are well acquainted with their style. More than playing, it is the celebration of *swaras* (notes) which is valued by the masters in classical singing, as is seen in Abida Perveen’s singing. Even Fareeha Pervez (Song 11) performs a bit of it and with a considerable ease interspersing her singing with a little spice of ornamentation so as not to let the viewers overly taste it. Kiyani makes her music a little more spicy by using, e.g., a number of jerks (*khatkas*) and even with less variation and it seems as if the mute spaces (notes) are also getting consumed and this is how an insipid

impression is created. Sufi singing, I believe, needs not a loud but a subtle use of musical embellishment. May be, the vocalist does it in order to heighten the impact, or to tackle with the phonological power of Punjabi language. Similarly the ending section lacks any innovative stroke or ingenuity to make it even an aesthetically enjoyable experience.

The non-linguistic signs, e.g., facial and bodily expressions are equally unsettling if not crazy though match well with the overall CS setting, the colors, lights and the instrumental tunes. The loud and vividly marked hand movements while repeating the line “Ni men kamli aan” do not contribute to emphasize the underlying meaning of words, rather reduce it to a rhyming effect or a formulaic piece designed to enact a musical exercise. The reason being that the repetitive actions lack subtle quality required to satisfy the aesthetics of music if not mystical renditions. Her bodily actions seem appropriate for a mixed kind of modern musical style or they might fit well into a purely secular concert than Sufi singing which requires a measured use of enthusiasm and energy and a tranquility of mood.

The performance not only lacks subtle power needed to evoke the meaning underneath the verses sung, rather it disrupts the meaning on account of the digital elements in the Studio. Visually powerful as the Studio is, it does evoke sensory pleasure in various ways. In Kiyani’s case, this peculiar feature is centrally present and even a louder form of the fused music, sounds and tunes of various instruments which play a role in downplaying the Sufi lyrics reducing them to an ordinary plaything. The light drone sound using in the intro section [Stanza 1] is later intermixed with heavy jingles, beats, blows and clonks creating an impact so loud that the drone effect is greatly undermined. Moreover this aural mediation of sounds is further heightened with an overly use of visual elements, the mise en scene, the fluid lights do have a visual appeal but not any mystical implication. These, in fact are distracting elements which curtail and do not facilitate any mystical reading of the text, rather the viewer is led to another discourse which is materially appealing or a discourse of pleasure and entertainment.

CS thus vocalizes the idea of entertainment which according to Dyer (2002), is not a straightforward formula of simple fun and enjoyment, it is in itself a site of pleasure and fantasy or a notion which is structured on the utopian philosophy; it does not present a model(s) of the utopian as was the case in the classic utopias rather it is an embodied

illustration of the utopian and “presents, a head-on as it were, what utopia would feel like ... and works at the level of sensibility” (p. 20).

### 4.12.3 Sanam Marvi

<b>Song #</b>	6
<b>Title</b>	<i>Manzel-e-Sufi</i>
<b>Singer</b>	Sanam Marvi
<b>Lyrics</b>	Sachal Sarmast
<b>Time</b>	00:05:51
<b>Chorus</b>	Female

#### 4.12.3.1 Theme and Structure of the Song

The song *Manzel-e-Sufi*, a Code Studio production Season 3, Episode 5, is rendered by Sanam Marvi and the lyrics are written by Sachal Sarmast in Saraiki language. The theme of the song is twofold: the poet’s longing to please the Beloved in various ways and seek His union via a negation of the self and second, never letting the idea of the mystic union fade away, taking care of it like a precious jewel.

The song contains 4 quatrains and a refrain-- couplet sung in various ways and sets of repetition by the vocalist and the female vocal ensemble. The director of this song employs some specific sound techniques, i.e., the use of overdubbed sounds and voice effects particularly in the bridge section which gives a peculiar quality to this song.

#### 4.12.3.2 Singing Performance

Marvi’s singing seen through the aesthetic lens is pleasing and likeable on account of the various melodic features that it carries. Her singing seems rooted in the classical style of rendition as she demonstrates it via the melodic composition of notes in the intro of her song [Stanza 1]. Her expertise to develop the key notes in a highly artistic manner and the transitions she makes show that she is skilled in the art of modulation and thereby makes her singing melodious. A subtle change from one key/note to another is a highly creative exercise which not only adds an element of interest in the singing but also creates and shapes the structure of raga, i.e., combining many pieces into a melodic design. Further she demonstrates harmony through the use of phrases (set of notes) which is the harmonic

set of pitches, i.e., pitches ascending and descending making her singing an enjoyable experience. Being a young artist, she is not as seasoned as Perveen or even Pervez are but the level of ease, simplicity and composure that she retains in her performance without making it overly spicy with ornaments are commendable.



*Figure 14.* Sanam Marvi’s performance in *Manzil-e-Sufi* carries an air of sincerity

The stylistic aspect of Marvi’s singing performance, however, unfolds some unique features not noted so far in the songs analyzed earlier. Two features are more striking, that is, visual imagery and overdubbed sounds which create a kind of surrealistic effect in the song. One notable form of imagery of the Studio is the framing of objects or persons in the minimalist fashion, that is, either a person is indexed in a metonymic way or an object used as a signifier which evokes a perplexing effect. In the beginning part of the song, one shot [Figure 15] which reveals only the hand of the vocalist or perhaps the “hand-in-action” entails a number of interpretations. On probing, the seemingly mute shot reveals a number of traces of the female delicacy, e.g., the shape of the hand, it’s fair, smooth contouring but the metonymic display makes it more than simply a subversive act. What the image invokes may be seen as a simple act to excite or please the viewers or it may arouse even visceral

instincts among them by seeing the female body presented in an apartheid way as goes in gender or racist discourses.



*Figure 15. “hand-in-action” scene*

There is yet another interpretation of the image seen through the lens of the digital employed in the CS. The new digital discourses enact a perspectival change in various artistic expressions of human life which deal with the fetish content as their prime concern and the Studio is not an exception. More problematic among the new stances is the rapidly growing phenomenon of hyperreality or a viewpoint which is esemplastic, fragmentary and illusory in nature and has consequently reduced the sublimity of human self into a digital plaything. As a consequence of this sort of neo-Avant-garde scenario, not only the spiritual and the sublime has been reduced to a digital petite but it has thrown the mankind, so to say, to a transhuman phase.

Another fantastic feature in Marvi’s “Mazil-e-Sufi” is the use of overdubbed sounds. For instance, in the beginning section, the singer’s voice entails crinkling effect particularly when she sings the refrain of song and the effect goes very long like the surging sound of



water. This fancy effect creates a spectacle of hyperreality which would fit more in a jazz-rock song or any experimental singing but not in a mystic rendition. These hyperreal and digital effects distract the viewer from grasping the signified reality embedded in the Sufi lyrics being sung and thereby cause a split between the signifier and the signified. This implies that in Coke singing, the sign is self-contained, an enactment of its own self and not oriented towards any symbolic exchange of meaning. It is focused on itself, on its own reality as a “showbiz” (Dyer, 2000) and communicates the same to the viewers. The incongruity is evident between its claim of Sufi singing and the kind of treatment the singers give to the text. The term “theater” (Dyer) perhaps would be more appropriate to speak about the element of inconsistency and the kind of theatrical enactment the singers are involved in.

### 4.13 Jazz Sensation in Sufi Singing

A peculiar feature of CS singing is its use of heavy instrumentation in many songs and this element becomes visible and more intense in the bridge sections in some tracks whereby the viewers are entertained through a fantastic play of various musical fillers such as the jazz, beats, claps, clonks, slushes, strums and the like.

#### 4.13.1 Atif Aslam

<b>Song #</b>	10
<b>Title</b>	<i>Charkha Nolakha</i> (The Priceless Spindle)
<b>Singer</b>	Atif Aslam & Umair Jaswal
<b>Lyrics</b>	Bulleh Shah
<b>Time</b>	00:06:44
<b>Chorus</b>	Fe/male

#### 4.13.1 Theme and Structure of the Song

The song *Charkha Nolakha* (2012), a Code Studio production Season 5, Episode 2, uses spindle (charkha) as the metaphor to express various shades of love- love as a tale of suffering, separation as well as hope of union with the Beloved.

The song contains 6 stanzas and all are quatrains keeping in view the style of rendition. One verse which explores the key theme is used as a refrain. The rendition of the

song is stylistically unique: in stanza 1 and 2, alternate singing of each verse is made; stanza 3 is rendered by the lead vocalist and repeated by the co-singer and in stanzas 4-6, one stanza is sung by one singer in his own style. The female chorus joins in the repetitive phase of the song, i.e., when stanza 1 and 2 are repeated and their role is mainly to add voice effects in the singing of the key verse with its focus on *aa jaa*/come to me.

The lead vocalist of the song is Atif Aslam and Umair Jaswal from the rock band *Qayaas*, is the co-vocalist. The lyrics by Bulleh Shah were earlier rendered by Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan in the *Qawwali* style and are re-worked by the Coke singers in a new style, a shorter version and in a new order. In addition, Pathene Khan's singing style is followed in stanza 4 by the main singer.

#### ***4.13.1.2 Singing Performance***

The song *Charkha Nolakha* by Atif Aslam is interesting on account of its two contrasting shades of singing, traditional and rock. Apart from his individual style, Aslam draws on the singing style of a great folk and Sufi singer of Pakistan, Pathanay Khan and Jaswal goes for rock singing, a genre originated in the U.S.A in the 1950's. Among other features include the emotional and sensational elements created through the melodies and tunes of romantic and melodramatic nature which tell that the song also carries the elements of pop music. An ever-present phenomenon as it is with Studio, the use of heavy instrumentation, electronic and acoustic both and a huge flow of lights in the backdrop. The sweet and romantic flavor is mostly added through the playing of violin which is a string instrument with higher pitch that resonates in the overall performance.

The main feature, namely, the combination of Sufi and rock highlight that it is the fusion of forms and the styles which are of prime interest to the Coke singers. In this song, for instance, by combining rock with Sufi the Studio singers demonstrate that they are more after catchy constructions, thrills and combinations, even if it needs to involve something as serious as Sufi music, a genre that is symbolic in nature and cannot be used like any simple title. A sign is empty when it is devoid of any symbolic meaning or truth or higher reality and moreover an empty sign elicits many other signs which are merely the traces of a chain of signifiers with no signified meaning. To understand how signs are empty in the Studio singing, it is necessary to trace the history of rock music and Sufi rock in the

Pakistani context. Sufi Rock was introduced in Pakistan in the 1990s and became a popular genre and Coke singers seem to re-work the same as a sign of their popularity. The term Sufi Rock was coined in 1993 to define the Pakistani band *Junoon* (Passion/Craze) which gained a wide popularity in the late 1990's. Interestingly Rock music in itself is a sign borrowed from the genre of popular music that originated as "Rock and Roll" in the USA in 1950's and which came into being under the influence of many other music genres. Hence the Studio singing is itself a sign of popularity which elicits other signs borrowed from other styles and cultures.



*Figure 16.* Atif Aslam: in serious mood; Umair Jaswal in his intense rock singing style via the use of his distinct consonants, stress on specific syllables and growling voice effects

The song makes a good and melodic start with low-pitched but musical notes on guitar which, in a way, work as preamble for the singers to come. Aslam slowly builds the mood of the song in a measured way moving from the lower to middle octave and the instruments go by the same melody [Stanza 1]. He starts with the verses, تیرے بہجوں دل دیا، میرا جونا کھرے چجدہ وے/ محرما وے (O, keeper of my life, what good is my life without you)

in a serious manner, though the voice color he employs is a little husky than being deep. Jaswal makes a cool start with less of his rocky timbre and sings each alternate verse of stanza 1. From the 3<sup>rd</sup> verse onwards, however, he employs his typical vocal diction and give out an intense rock singing impact via the use of his distinct consonants, stress on specific syllables and growling voice effects. The various runs and riffs, slides and bends that he employs in the later sections of the song, match with the jazz style of singing.

From stanza 2 onwards, music gains momentum, beat becomes louder and rhythm splashy which bring the mood of cheerfulness in the overall mood and performance of the song and continues till the end. It is towards the end of this section that the singers add more pace in the already initiated flair of music. The last line of the stanza, *کدی آتري دے* (Come to the courtyard/To the one who longs for you), ends with *آجا* (come to me), that is given emphasis, through reiteration and music, with voices which overlap which make out a hoarse effect. It is funny to see Jaswal demonstrating a literal interpretation of the phrase, *آجا*, through his physical swings and body language, instead of any evocative effect that could be produced by observing the gestural conventions of the genre. A singer who makes a sincere rendition of Sufi poetry, makes use of the right kind of gestures to convey what lies inside the words, their meaning or the message and in that case it is relevant to cite what Burns (2005) says: “every vocal gesture is produced with the singer’s breath, shaded and colored through the singer’s body, thus allowing those elements to be affected by feeling (p. 2-3). Perveen’s performance is one such kind as she gets into the depth of each word of the Sufi lyrics that she sings so as her gestures and bodily actions also get dyed in that color. This singing depth and evocative quality which lacks in most of the performances as discussed earlier, bring the singers in line with the New Agers who remain on the surface in their pursuits.

Stanza 4 which is the pre-bridge section, starts with the lead vocalist singing in Pathane Khan’s style which makes it striking but the co-singer repeats the same in his own style and thereby overshadows it. The ending verse of this section which is layered with metaphoric meaning as Sufi poetry is and it reads, “The spindle of love, the unspun fibers of sorrow/The more I spin, the more they seem to increase” [Verse 2]. The vocalists take pains to deliver the last word *dunniyan/increase*, more effectively and repeat it a number

of times for 53 seconds so that it seems to have been brought out of context amidst the sample of overdubbed sounds. Their performance is good in terms of its stylistic appeal though this aspect is also spoiled when their vocalization reaches its highest pitch with Jaswal's shrilling voice effects and hence taking it far away from being any Sufi rendition. This is followed by a slightly dramatic touch with the lowering of the rhythm and beat to move on to the next phase of the song. Another aspect of their performance is that it is characterized with too fluid and overlapping shifts which at times becomes clumsy. The outro seems to have been designed for the female vocals who bring in their fun and colors with "aa jaa" prevailing and echoing and hence add multiple flavors and styles into their performance.

#### **4.13.2 Ali Zafar**

<b>Song #</b>	3
<b>Title</b>	<i>Daastan-e-Ishq</i> (Tale of Love)
<b>Singer</b>	Ali Zafar
<b>Lyrics</b>	Bulleh Shah, Shah Husain
<b>Time</b>	00:06:09

##### ***4.13.2.1 Theme and Structure of the Song***

The song *Daastan-e-Ishq* from Season 2, Episode 2, of Code Studio speaks of self-negation which can take one to the object of one's utmost adoration or keep nurturing the hope to get complete union with the Beloved. The key motif of the song talks of an intense desire of the seeker to turn his heart into a place worthy for His love.

The song contains 6 stanzas of differing length and a refrain which seems divided in two parts: (1) the ineffable nature of spiritual love and (2) the desire of the seeker to get complete union with the Beloved. The song contains verses by Bulleh Shah and Shah Hussain but some lines have been added by the vocalist, Ali Zafar, himself.

##### ***4.13.2.2 Singing Performance***

The song *Daastan-e-Ishq* is one of Zafar's top hit tracks which earned him fame as a celebrity in a newer context of singing, i.e., singing of Sufi poetry. The beauty of the song

lies in the formal and stylistic harmony expressed through the vocal resonance of the singer and the instrumental sounds complementing the same in an exquisite way.

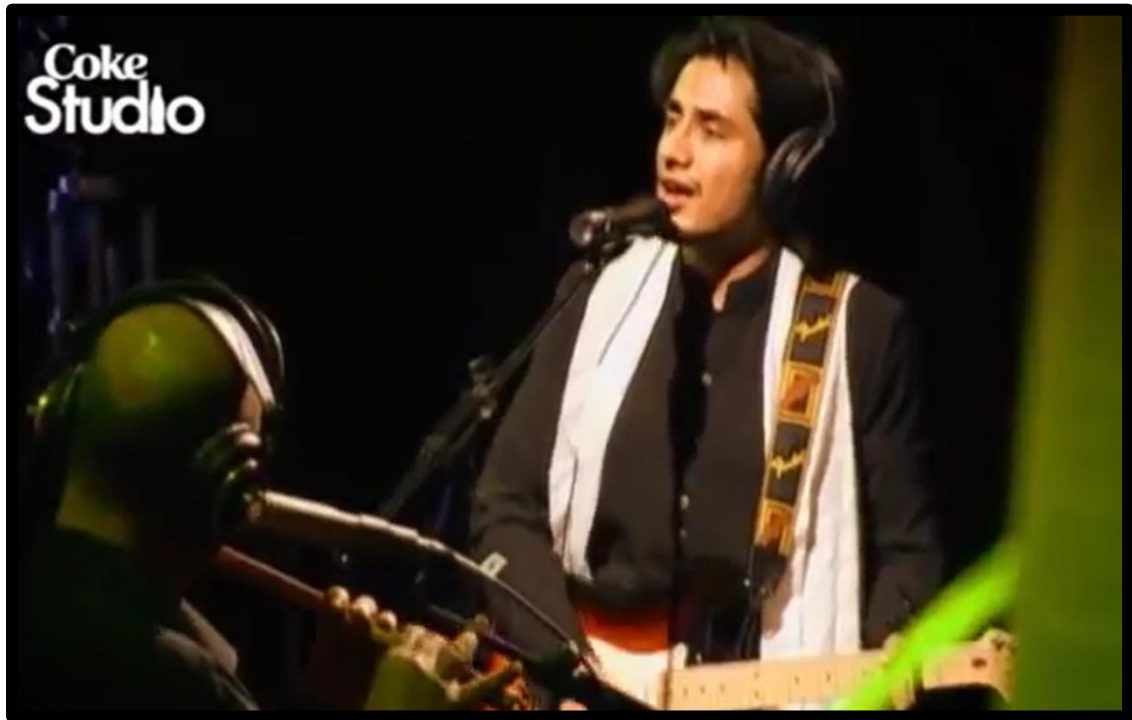


Figure 17. Ali Zafar demonstrates composure & professional expertise in the song, though appears in sad romantic than meditative mood.

The intro of the song begins with a low drone sound to create a monophonic and cool effect combined with *bansuri* (side blown flute) which brings in soft, musical notes onto it. Whereas the total time of the song is six minutes and 9 seconds, [0.06.09], in almost 38 seconds of the melody in start, the vocalist takes up and develops the raga further (without words) and his voice is filled with undertones of melancholy and thereby contains depth and emotional appeal. His vocal timbre seems to be having a natural tinge of sadness which gets emphasized particularly when he elongates “O ... o...” sound for about 13 seconds. The note that he draws on and elongates, however, is not “sa” which is developed, for example, by Abida Perveen in her song *Main Sufi Hun*, the note instead seems a kind of variance or improvisation out of the basic 7 notes or simple tunes mixed up. Two or three melodic accompaniments are also catchy in the sense that they complement his *alaap* or the melodic pattern that the singer sets which also function as loops in the song to create ostinato patterns. The brush sticks used on *ghara* (ghatam) for instance, produce a kind of

slushy groove with creepy sounds added by the electric bass and the violin playing and while all this provides a peculiar rhythm of husky kind, *bansuri* (Hindustani flute) sweetens the flavor.

Zafar's song indicates the music and rhythm in a fine blend. The singer demonstrates his professional expertise in the beginning of the composition, particularly when he sings lyrics which seem to have a tinge of meditation but carefully observed, appear to be rather sad romantic. Whereas a few seconds prior to it, the notes that he develops without words, seem to draw on the tune of a popular romantic song not in keeping with the Sufi song. Similarly, the key motif, *andar aa, phaira paa*/Come inside my being, [Stanza, 3 & 6] which is the catchiest part (hook) is melodic and aesthetically appealing, but it has an undertone of pleasure and fun particularly when it is repeated towards the end or the outro of the song. The bridge part in the second half of the song creates another sensation by making a fantastic play of various musical fillers such as the jazz, beats, claps, clonks, slushes, strums and the like. Other aspects which appear to be more secular is the vocalization of the "O ... o..." note in the beginning and particularly in the end. Though the beginning is made with a seriousness and composure but in the ending section, it seems to be simply something which is superimposed and not without the undertones of glee and fun. The notes such as "O ... o..." or "hy/hi" are kind of hooks employed in many songs discussed earlier to make the song catchy and memorable. Moreover, they are crafted for the sake of seasoning the performance or a strategy to sensually attract the viewers. Towards the end of the song, the vocalist makes a full display of the funky mood hitherto restrained, through his body language. And his glee is further enhanced though the melodic notes played on *bansuri* making the song more opulent. The singer via consuming a tremendous energy succeeds in making the song a commercial success.

#### **4.14 Summary- Unit 2**

The analysis of Unit 2, music and performance, reveals that the CS Sufi singing is largely focused on the exoteric, the form, style and instrumental rhythm. In doing so, the esoteric or the spiritual signified is treated at minimal level or in few songs. Words remain empty forms or soulless items in the secular performance of most of the singers as analyzed above. The outward is considered sufficient in itself, extended by itself- in vocals, music,

beat and style with no bent to the inward because the fusion of texts, codes, genres and styles does not leave space for something which can be seen through the spiritual lens. Consequently appearance (signifier) and reality (signified) go in contrast as traced through the gap between what the Sufi text is intended for and what it conveys through performance, or the dissonance between words and the bodily actions of singers.

The third unit moves the discussion on to another significant aspect of the CS discourse, i.e., what do the costumes of singers signify or if there is any discursive element which lies underneath their appearance and which needs to be uncovered and interpreted within the mystic and religious lens also? The three units are thus significant representative signs and do have a logical connection.

#### **4.15 Costume of the Singers (Dress/Gaze)**

Merriam-Webster dictionary (1999) defines costume/apparel as the things people wear to cover their bodies. This definition alludes to the basic meaning or function served by the human attire. Clothes play a crucial role in the production of the social self and in the creation of identity and have long been studied by anthropologists in particular, as a facet of material culture. More recently, outfits are being perceived as having communicative properties which can be studied like language. McCracken (2013) describes fashion as the study of the expressivity of material culture, and as being charged with semiotic effect and potential. This aspect opens newer dimensions of study on apparel in terms of appearance and bodily attraction and, therefore, many scholars focus on the “role of sight as related to the display of the body,” or emphasis on “looking and appearance” (pp. 10, 15). Another key concept, “gaze” is closely tied to the dress and “display of the body” and has been/is being theorized in various ways.

The term “gaze” is broadly used by media theorists to refer both to the ways in which viewers look at images of people in any visual medium and to the gaze of those depicted in visual texts. (Chandler, 1988). To *gaze* is to look steadily and intently at something, especially at that which excites admiration, curiosity, or interest (Dictionary.com). *To give the gaze* is to perceive that one is looking at an object. *To set oneself at gaze* is to expose oneself to view or display oneself (*Oxford English Dictionary Online*). In either case, gaze is the conscious act of seeing or being seen and carries some specific meanings. For



instance, the concept of the *power of the evil gaze* prevailed in the remote past to which many folklores refer (Lee, 2003, para, 3). The nineteenth century symbolists and impressionists were fascinated by the idea that any visually perceived object was a product of the subjectivity of the artistic vision as well as the objectivity of the external world. The idea persisted in the work of critics of the mid-twentieth century who used formal criteria to interpret such artistic movements. The discourse continued, but was largely replaced by the term “gaze.”

In the early twentieth-century, the German expressionists exploited “the sense of power in images” that gazed at the viewer gruesomely. The allure of the gaze reached its peak through Hitler, who prided himself on his hypnotic gaze. Sartre’s almost paranoid treatment of “*le regard*” (the look) in his treatise, *Being and Nothingness*, depicted the state of being watched as a threat to the self (Olin, 1996, pp. 208-214). In late twentieth century, the interest in the gaze has been largely examined in terms of psychoanalysis for which Lacan’s theory of the gaze provides the basis. In Lacan’s view, the subject’s attempt to view the other/the outside should pass through the intermediary, the “mirror.” In the context of media studies, an analogy is drawn between the screen and the mirror, saying that by identifying with the gaze of the camera, the viewer enacts Lacan’s “the mirror stage,” the moment when a child recognizes its own image in the mirror as an idealized image of itself (Chandler, 2003, p. 32).

Lev Manovich notes that Lacan’s view of the gaze extends beyond the domain of the visible. What lies between the look and the gaze, is anything defined “by the correspondences from one point to another in space,” and that gaze is not only limited to sight but it also functions in other senses (Lacan, 1978, pp. 93-94). McLuhan (1999) also notes that media acts as extensions of the human senses and further he establishes that every technological advancement is an extension of the body’s senses such as clothing is an extension of our skin (pp. 123-4). This theorization may be further linked with “many gazes” as posited by Lutz and Collin’s (1991) as he analyzes a photograph which lies at the intersection of seven types of gazes. Dress, therefore, affords us immense possibilities to encounter with self and different selves around us and at times it provides us with the magic “to display virtually any sense of self we desire to express” and that is the reason why

certain individuals utilize cross-dressing as a way for “distinctive self-expression” (Bolich (2006, p. 37) which means going off the usual track and dressing conventions of society. We attach not merely the symbolic meanings with dress but the physiological encounters as well since “the varying properties of items of dress” elicit sensations such as tactile, visual or auditory as Bolich puts it.

#### **4.15.1 Costume: A Representative Sign**

The behavior that we demonstrate through our dress code on certain occasions, for instance, death is deemed significant. Francis Bacon (1561-1626) in his essay “Of Death,” talks of death as a fearful event since there are groans and convulsions, a discolored face, friends weeping and in blacks. Hence wearing a black costume on death occasions has its symbolic meanings. In bereavement literature, clothes are invested with even an “evocative power” whereby clothing is used to call the dead to mind or a way to “see” their loved ones through the stuff they left behind (Simpson, 2014, p. 2). Clothing thereby demonstrates a number of symbolic meanings and is a powerful representational sign.

Shakespeare (1564-1616) in his plays unveils the symbolic significance of clothing. For instance, in his play *Hamlet*, when Hamlet is all dressed in black or in “suits of solemn black,” this makes his mother perturbed and later when he enacts as an “antic,” he represents himself as a man “with his doublet all unbraced/Not hat upon his head, his stockings fouled” and Shakespeare’s remark in the same play as, “The apparel oft proclaims the man” (Act 1, Scene, 3) highlights the significance of the apparel in the construction of one’s identity as well as representation of the self. In the case of Hamlet, we see that his disheveled appearance and dress signify that he is perhaps banking on the convention that one’s physical attire is a reflection of one’s state of mind. And it works. Ophelia and Polonius are convinced that Hamlet is mad.

In *Macbeth*, another Shakespearean play, when Macbeth changes into a murdering monster after he wears the “borrowed robes” (Act, 1, Scene, 7) and it shows that by simply changing his clothes, he changes his mind and his state of being. Other characters talk about his tyrannical reign and Angus, for instance, remarks that Macbeth’s title “hangs loose about him, like a giant’s robe/upon a dwarfish thief” (Act 5, Scene 2). The idea that one’s dress enacts one’s ideology, school of thought or loyalty or how dress determines one’s

own behavior as well as the onlooker's views, understanding and psychology is also notable in Middleton's play *A Game at Chess* in which he employs white and black dresses to represent allegiance for the kings of England and France. What he implies in the play is that the ability to change one's apparel signifies the vilest of deceptions. In the play, characters from the clergy and even from the royal family who were suspected to change their loyalties are satirized. The example of perfidy attached to the changing of one's apparel can be found in the White King's Pawn who changes sides onstage through the removal of his white upper garment to show black underneath. And the writer's remark that the "masterpiece of darkness/sheltered under a robe of sanctity" (Act, 2, Scene, 2) underscores the fact that the vestments signify darkness where they should signify light.

Clothes may be regarded as visual signs of representation and that is the reason why people from the ancient times till today recognize it as a conscious badge or a sign of one's belonging, allegiance and loyalty. As Jones and Stallybrass note "the material we wear work as inscription upon us" (as cited in Lublin, 2011, p. 176). In the early modern British society, for instance, costume was thought to be a great signature of one's personality and that was the reason why the masses as well as professional theatres and writers considered it to be something crucial as it could influence or change the creation of meaning in performance. Lublin (2011) further notes that an individual's place in the social hierarchy would have been easily identifiable according to the strict rules delineated in the sumptuary decrees issued during the reign of Queen Elizabeth (p. 5). In the 20<sup>th</sup> century Germany, under Adolf Hitler, his party members had dresses, that is, dark pants and jackets or caps with specific haircuts. Alongside garments decorated with gothic letterhead inscriptions of "Berlin" or of the neo-Nazi rock band's insignia, T-shirts featuring the familiar Che Guevara print, with black, red and white combinations blends in with other outfits (Backman & Sakalauskaite, 2008, p. 258).

#### **4.15.2 Costume: Various Theoretical Perspectives**

Clothing or apparel has been/is a significant subject in the history of humankind still it is not easy to determine when clothing was first developed (Wade, 2003). The subject, however, has been under rigorous concern in various fields of human life such as philosophy, psychology, religion, culture, politics and the like. Merriam-Webster

dictionary (1999) defines apparel as “the things people wear to cover their bodies.” This definition alludes to the basic meaning or function served by the human attire. But clothes or dress that one wears articulate a range of meanings, literal as well as metaphorical. At literal, for instance, dress provides covering for one’s body or it protects the wearer from cold or heat whereas it may also imply an altogether a different discourse which the wearer is expected to undergo- an experience ranging from physiological to psychological to spiritual. For instance, it might generate a feeling of pleasure, an experience of power or a sense of fulfilment in the mind of the wearer which may be termed as dress behavior. The meaning of dress, therefore, tends to move beyond what is literal and carries religious, moral, psychological, physiological, sexual, cultural and political meanings to name a few.

Clothing has been a crucial subject and a gender marker in most of the cultures, past and present alike, though trends such as cross-dressing or alternative dressing have also existed alongside. In spite of the dress reform movements launched by the Feminists in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the contemporary unisex clothing trends, or female “power dressing” (Gerrard, 1995, p. 1), dress still is a mark of gender distinction since it speaks volumes of the psyche of either sex.

Apart from being a gender marker, dress has also been associated with modesty and humility in almost all societies and even when nudity was adored as a dress in the ancient world, ancient Greece or Egypt for instance, it was not preferred in day-to-day routine and by common masses. Examples of dress as marker of modesty may be traced in the Victorian England and a woman who daringly raised her skirt by, say, two/three inches to show her ankles was regarded to be a dissolute and hence full-length skirt was considered to be an acceptable choice by most of the women of that era. Dress, therefore, has been/is regarded a representative code and an expression of one’s character and conduct. In addition, the role of sight/gaze or more precisely the ways of seeing and being seen have been considered essential part of one’s appearance over the course of human history. The same view has also been expressed in literature, particularly conduct literature of every era.

Malczyk (2013) examines the notion of modesty with regard to appearance and behavior as represented in the German conduct and romance literature of the Middle Ages. One of her scholarly concerns is to focus “on the role of sight as related to the display of the body,” (p. 10) or emphasis on “looking and appearance” (p. 15). Biernoff also points

how a woman who compromises her “eyes,” puts her modesty and chastity on stake since it is modesty that “becomes a lady” (as cited in Malczyk, 2013, p. 15). The use and meaning of the word “modest,” as given in *OED*, has shifted greatly over time. For early twenty-first century readers, it generally implies a personal attribute, having “a moderate or humble estimate of one’s own abilities or achievements.” The use of the word *modest* in English comes from the Middle French adjective *modeste*, in the sense of: “moderate, free from excess (“modeste, adj.”). The English adjective is first recorded in the mid-sixteenth century, with the related sense of “avoiding extremes of behavior; well-conducted, temperate; not harsh or domineering” (Williams, 2014, p. 135).

There have been four important theories as to the origins of clothing in terms of modesty/immodesty viewpoints (Dunlap, 2010). The modesty theory, as states Dunlap, is linked back to the Mesopotamian legend of the Garden of Eden and Eve’s seduction by the Satan/serpent. It holds that clothing was originally meant to conceal the private organs, from a sense of shame, modesty, embarrassment or some other form of sexual emotion. The theory of immodesty, popularized by Westermarck and Havelock Ellis, maintains that in the beginning, the purpose of clothing was salacious, designed to make the wearer a greater object of sexual interest. This theory was based on the doctrine that familiarity breeds indifference whereas concealment, especially partial concealment or pretended, increases the interest (2010, p. 64). Thirdly, the adornment theory posited that clothing drew on the desire to attract attention or gain supremacy, not necessarily of a direct sexual sort. The clothing in this regard refers to the use of conspicuous ornamentation. Lastly, the theory of utility or protection, i.e., the protection of the body from unpleasant or injurious features of the environment (Dunlap, 2010, pp. 64-65).

Another related doctrine known as “false modesty” is similar to the “theory of immodesty” as mentioned above. It describes a behavior which, by appearing modest, is actually designed to attract attention and applause. In the earlier seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, “false modesty meant feigned virtue, something that was far more morally threatening” (Williams, 2014, p. 146). If examined, the words adornment and modesty, when used in terms of women’s clothing, seem contradictory also but as Stwodah (2016) states in her study, the two terms are rather symbiotic in terms of apparel (p. 12). She constructs her argument within the frame of a recently developed movement “A New

Modesty Movement,” with reference to Yabroff’s article in the *Newsweek* on April 15, 2015. Amongst the various websites, the *Pure Fashion* is the one Yabroff particularly mentions in her article. The website is significant in that it contains an etiquette program for teen girls whose goal is “to show the public it is possible to be cute, stylish and modest” (para 1). Similarly, she reports with reference to the “modest fashion” magazine that women now want “trendy, but not-revealing, clothes.” Most modest-clothing Web sites have religious underpinnings, from Mormon to Christian to Muslim, but attract nonreligious customers as well (para 1). The growing number of websites (e.g., ModestyZone.net) and magazines of this kind correspond to what Wendy Shalit calls a shift from “Girls Gone Wild” to “girls gone mild.” The teens and young women, she says, are rejecting promiscuous “bad girl” roles embodied by Bratz Dolls, Britney Spears and the nameless, shirtless thousands in “Girls Gone Wild” videos (para 2).

Modesty in terms of clothing which is stylish or ornate but not revealing is the new trend which means a balanced and poised use of the items or accessories that are made part of the dress. Dress includes whatever we wear to cover our body as well as the items we wear to enhance the effect of the dress, i.e., the stylistic toning, contrasting etc. It is, therefore, the overall image or silhouette, the visual and conceptual picture that we create through dress is significant and needs to be focused on. Bolich (2006) defines silhouette as “an optical illusion of the clothed body generated by the dress. As such it can be manipulated to achieve a desired effect... we can more generally think of the silhouette as the individual’s complete dressed form seen as though it were a shadow on the wall, an artful illustration meant to depict the body in a certain manner” (p. 152). For instance, in the 50s dress fashion, the narrow waist with full length skirt and svelte fitted pencil skirt were considered to be two main silhouettes and were considered to be suggestive of creating amatory effect. In many of the silent films as well as in James Bond films, silhouettes have been used to create dramatic effect.

What silhouette implies in terms of dress behavior is the same as *Gestalt* a term normally used in psychology. *Gestalt* in Bolich’s (2006) view is the “perceptual whole attendant with value meanings” (p. 152). Both these terms refer to an artful visual representation of a person’s image by the use of dress with the underlying intention to “achieve a desired effect,” as sated earlier. Hence, dress has its language, its own

psychology and speaks for itself and negotiates meaning on both ends; constructing an image, a silhouette in the mind of the wearer as well as which is both an embodied discourse, an experience and negotiation of the self and a medium to transfer the meaning across to the onlooker.

The question regarding what function is served by dress has also been dealt with in a number of ways. Dress connotes or is/has been associated with not only magic, power or beauty but also with modesty and piety as mentioned earlier. The question as to why a dress is needed has been theorized in a number of ways. Bonfante (1989) in her article “Nudity as Costume in Classical Art” talks of five reasons for the use of clothes by humans: (1) for protection against the elements, e.g., cold; (2) for social reasons, e.g., a tribe or a class may be able to distinguish itself; (3) from a sense of shame; (4) for aesthetic reasons, e.g., as decoration or for pleasure, beauty or to attract the opposite sex; (5) for apotropaic reasons, to turn away the effects of magic, sorcery, the evil eye, and hostile spirits. Bonfante (1989), however, does not address moral, religious aspects of attire and other dress inclinations among the humans such as cross-dressing etc.

In addition to dressing, Bolich (2006) does talk about cross-dressing in her book *Dress and Gender: Cross Dressing in Context*. Further she explores very subtle aspects of dressing as a psycho-physiological experience enacted by humans. In her view, dress is not only a bodily experience, it also acts as a mark of identity and a medium to negotiate with ourselves and society. When we dress, we generate a kind of response or a cozy/hued feeling which is what we know as our dress behavior and which acts as a medium between our body, identity and society. Dress, Bolich (2006) says, affords us immense possibilities to encounter with self and different selves around us and at times it provides us with the magic “to display virtually any sense of self we desire to express” and that is the reason why certain individuals utilize cross-dressing as a way for “distinctive self-expression” (p. 37) which means going off the usual track and dressing conventions of society. We attach not merely the symbolic meanings with dress but the physiological encounters as well since “the varying properties of items of dress” elicit sensations such as tactile, visual or auditory as Bolich (2006) puts it.

The proximity between gaze, dress and appearance is deemed highly significant in all religions, be it Judaism, Christianity or Islam. In the Holy Quran, chapter 4, verse 30,

Allah commands the Holy Prophet as, “Say to the believing men that: they should cast down their glances (other than their wives) and guard their secretive parts (by being chaste). This is better for them.” In the very next verse 31, it is the women who are addressed to act in the same manner with an additional instruction “not to expose their adornment.” Both men and women are instructed to observe *hijab* of eyes and strictly monitor their gaze so as to prevent any chance of amoral temptation. It is clear from the Quranic injunctions that the dress is meant to cover one’s body as well as *zinat* (adornment) (Surah, Al-A’raf, Verse, 26). The same instruction regarding the *hijab* of eyes may also be traced in the teachings of Christ as stated in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 5, “I say unto you, that whosoever looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Verse, 28).

On account of this aspect of chastity attached to clothing, Sufis focus on the need to wear a robe which is adorned with spiritual contentment. And this can be sought only when we discard outward beauty we normally attach to our appearance, looks, dress or various accessorizing items meant for gorgeous effect. For Sufis, real adornment is sought not by wearing a beautiful dress but by seeking a character or self which is pristine and pure on account of its inward beauty (Shah, 2017, p. 92). Heart which is the seat of love needs to be purified from worldly taints to be adorned with Allah’s Love. This desire to keep the heart clean and free from contaminations or worldly glitters is known as passing through a state called *green death* in the Sufi terminology and is regarded to be a pre-requisite to keep journeying the mystic path (Hughes, 2001, p. 347). The concept that underlies the philosophy/theory of green death is to keep the seeker on guard against worldly prides and glitters ignited through things such as outward self-adornment or various embellishments one seeks to impress, influence and excite the onlookers also. These worldly embellishments are to be eschewed by the mystic seekers since they contradict with the religious and mystic philosophy. Therefore, the meaning that is attached to dress as well as color in the Sufi praxis is of deeper and symbolic nature.

Various Islamic scholars made significant discoveries in the color science during the medieval era. Al-Kindi, for instance, offered that it is not the medium which produces color, but the object, by blocking light. Ibn Rushd and Ibn al-Haytham expanded the theory by promoting the role of light in terms of relating it to the very object of sight than



interpreting its role as a mere catalyst. And gradually a shift from the classical one-dimensional color order to a two-dimensional order emerged in the writings of Ibn Sina and al-Tusi (Kirchner, 2013). Muslim theories on light and color were used as the basis for many modern theories but they were hardly acknowledged as significant contributions in the making of art and architecture during their time. Scholars of the modern era valued color and light in terms of their decorative use for buildings and art objects. It was only recently that researchers and art historians started paying considerable attention to this field. Schimmel and Soucek were among the earliest scholars to discuss this topic in the early 1990s (Abaza, 2017, p. 15). In the Sufi praxis, colors are used to semantically and metaphorically express various states such as green is associated with death. Schimmel, in her research, focused on the significance of color in the Sufi writings and the implication of different colors such as white, black and red, in the Muslim culture. She explained the spiritual meaning of these colors, e.g., white being the color of purity and goodness and black mostly used to express the state of *not seeing* as in the case of ecstasy where a Sufi may experience a state of enlightenment. Red was normally associated with power and energy but it was also ascribed to the state of divine presence in the Sufi belief, “A red mantled Sufi is one in a divine state” (Schimmel, 1992, pp. 46-48). The green color depicted a high stage on the mystical path, “It is the color that is reached when a Sufi has passed through the “black light” and emerges at the emerald mountain, the symbol of divine proximity and eternal duration, *baqa*” (p. 48).

Clothing indeed “garners significant meaning” Bolich (2006) but apart from what the religious and mystic philosophies hold, the current trend to accessorize dress by both male and female as is seen in most of the video shots in the subsequent sections, also forms a significant aspect of discussion. This aspect has been explored by Bolich (2008) who rigorously hunts what dress in all its accessories means and also explores the concept of dress via the Holy Scriptures such as the Bible, the Holy Quran as well as the Hindu scriptures. Referring to the ancient Hebrew Text she focuses on two terms, that is, *keli* and *simplah*. Various translations that she offers regarding the first term *keli* include: “accessory,” “armor,” “bag,” “clothing,” “jewelry,” “weapons,” and some other words. For *simplah* the English words include: “cloak,” “clothes,” “garment” etc. Citing Gordon, a religious scholar, she highlights the English word “clothing” in a broader sense, that is,

everything associated with man/woman's style, from accessories to armor to weapons, to ornamentation/jewelry, any and all form of male/female-styled garment (p. 28).

Dress is a reality rather a body in itself since it forms the most observable aspect of the human body and "the body constitutes the environment of the self" as notes the sociologist Entwistle and then adds further, "human bodies are dressed bodies" (as cited in Bolich, p. 38). It is through the dress that we interact with our surrounding, the mindsets that we know or desire to inculcate and culture that we own, or belong to physically or imaginatively. That even seemingly "ordinary practices like dress carry religious weight and can be used to signify a group's particular relationship to God. Therefore, members of the group should be careful to dress consonant with their group's identity and not misuse their dress so that it becomes associated with immoral purposes" (2008, p. 28).

#### **4.15.3 Structure of Analysis of the Costume of Singers**

The discussion that follows is though grounded in the theoretical frame already established in chapter 3, it explores various philosophical, theoretical and socio-cultural perspectives on the costume sign, delineated above, as integral to this discussion. This entails a study of the costume of singers and what representation, image, philosophy or outlook (spiritual and secular/material) does it demonstrate. Moreover, how and where does the issue of gaze, as discussed earlier, relate to the discussion below and what the overall sketch is or silhouette that emerges when we read/interpret carefully the costume of the singers within the prism of the various theoretical frames presented in the previous section 4.15.2.

Three aspects of one's costume play significant role in determining the kind of representation that is being demonstrated. The dress, the choice of color and also what function the dress is performing. Secondly, the appearance or the dress behavior, how the singer presents him/herself. Thirdly, how a person enacts his/herself in terms of the gaze since it is the gaze which is the medium of disseminating the deeper or hidden aspects of a person's self. Therefore, the erotic and amoral or spiritual and modest looks and presentation of one's self may be traced through the representation of the dress code of the performers in the analysis of Unit 3 below. Keeping in view the similarities in the dress behavior of singers, they are placed in four groups in the analysis: (1) Modesty-the Color

of Attire (2) Funk, Fantasy and Cross-Dressing (3) Female Glamor and Stylized Outfit (4) Crisp Icon Style.

#### **4.16 Modesty-the Color of Attire**

Modesty is the color that underlies the conduct, manner and dress behavior of the two maestros, Abida Perveen and Saeen Zahoor, the color that resonates well with their performance of CS Sufi singing. The word *modest* comes from French adjective *modeste*, in the sense of “moderate, free from excess.” Modesty means to keep oneself “within measures” (Jennet, 2001) or to “avoid extremes of behaviour” (as cited in Williams, 2014, p. 135), [4.15.2 for modesty & adornment theories]. In Perveen’s case, the color and the style of dress speaks for her being moderate and modest. Zahoor’s overall demeanor is poised and calm and what it reflects is that every part of the dress or accessory he is wearing gets eventually dyed in his Sufic color, the color of spiritual contentment and chastity.

##### **4.16.1 Abida Perveen**

The song *Mein Sufi Hun* (2014) became a widely-famed and one of the top hit songs of CS Season 7, Episode 1, rendered by Abida Perveen who is one of “the world’s greatest mystic singers,” as stated Dutta (2008, p. 56). Apart from a number of awards and honors, Perveen was bestowed with the Hilal-e-Imtiaz award (2012), by the President of Pakistan, as reported by *The Express Tribune* on February 22, 2016.

Perveen’s performance of the Sufi songs, as analyzed in the previous section, is unique and imbued with devotion. Likewise, she has her own clothing style which resonates with her devotional Sufi singing. See Figure 18 below.

As the Figure below reveals, Perveen is clad in silky brownish golden dress, long *kurta* (long tunic/loose shirt), *shalwar* (trousers) and *ajrak* (a kind of shawl/dupatta) with *pulloos* (sides) draped on both shoulders and her bosom. The kurta that she is wearing, with ban and fully buttoned neck, is a full length, loose and hanging down below her knees but slightly above ankles. The shirt is plain, simple and with no pattern, design, motif or embroidery on it. The sleeves are of full length, cuffed and buttoned, pleated from the shoulder and appear to be little puffy. The buttons on neck and cuff are of the color of dress and hence merged perfectly with the overall dress. The *ajrak* shawl, however, gives a look

of contrast though the contrast does not stand out as such or even make it cool and spectacular since it is normally seen a part of Perveen’s dress. Instead, it adds a solemn and modest touch to the silky stuff that she is wearing. Modest dressing, in Perveen’s case, not only presents a contrast to various punk fashions of the day but it portrays her as someone who has agency and who can make her own choices. In Bauck’s view, there is a general fallacy that modest clothing is inherently oppressive but if women in so-called ‘liberated countries’ still choose to cover their bodies, then they have made a choice. They have agency (2016, para 3).



*Figure 18.* Abida Perveen in her traditional dress with a Sindhi print shawl draped over her shoulders & bosom

Perveen’s use of *ajrak* stuff is worthy to note in that it is a part of the Sindhi tradition (Pakistan) as well as rooted in the Sufi culture. Perveen says it comes from the *dargah* (mausoleum) of Sufi Saint Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai. Since *ajrak* is an essential part of the Sindhi attire, Perveen’s use of it is suggestive of her belongingness and spiritual association with the culture. The word *ajrak* is said to originate from the Arabic *azrak*, meaning “blue” and the *ajrak* shawls are block printed mostly in crimson and deep indigo colors with an added touch of white and black meant to define the geometric designs on it and all this

complement each other (Buch, 2008, p. 6). In color psychology, the importance of this becomes clearer when we realize that complementary colors, when put together, present perfect balance (Wright, 1998, p. 45). Cross (2016) divides colors between earthly and spiritual colors, in the latter fall black, white and brown (Figure 18) which represent the unearthly properties of the spirit (as cited in Wright, pp. 58-59). In the view of the color psychology and the color-in-context theory (Elliot & Maier, 2012), one can find a correlation between what Perveen is clad in and what she sings, namely, her Sufi singing.

Like clothes, the color choice and at times the stuff or cloth we choose has its “language” that humans use symbolically to reflect values, aspirations and style (1978, p. 7). In Perveen’s case, the *ajrak* cloth has its particular history and also has its roots in the Sufi culture and most of the *ajrak* making is done in the nearby places of shrines of the interior of Sindh (Cousin, 1989). Perveen is an ardent lover of her culture and is also known for her veneration of Sufi saints whose poetry she loves to sing. She keeps herself above the male/female binary and likes to be acknowledged as a singer with Sufi passion. The male/female binary opposition is also being re-visited which is relevant in this discussion. For instance, Oldehinkel (2017) explains that while the sex binary may be an adequate a classification variable, the gender binary is far from perfect. The dichotomy generally used in research does not do justice to the diversity existing within boys and girls. For Perveen, it is important to explore herself and “concentrate her energies” in one direction -Sufi singing, as she said sharing her views in an interview on July 8, 2013, with Iqbal from *The Guardian*. Iqbal’s words are relevant to cite here regarding Perveen’s specific style of clothing also. This is evident, she remarked, why Perveen does not show up like other female singers and is always “dressed up androgynously with a traditional Sindhi print shawl draped over her chest.” Her singing and attire both represent her Sufi style and demonstrate her unique and strong self as a singer.

Here the female “power dressing,” (Gerrard, 1995, p. 1) and the contemporary unisex clothing trends associated with this female “power,” as the Feminists in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century theorize, can also be problematized. A parallel can be drawn between the power that comes through one’s conviction or belief or the power that depends on looks and appearance. Or may be the difference can be linked to the old debate of substance vs. style. In either case, it depends on how one perceives or identifies something and Sufis believe that color has

its own language. Al-Kirmani (d. 1870), the Iranian philosopher emphasized, “Color is the language of the souls.” He differentiated between “the manifestation of a color (zuhur) and its existence (wujud) based on an integral spiritual realism” (Bloom & Blair, 2011, p. 25). The notion is related here in that Perveen explores her powers in both esoteric and exoteric ways; the one who is possessed with the ability and perception to see “with the eyes of faith,” a phrase Kierkegaard (1997) uses in his *Christian discourses* (p. 40). Al-Kirmani’s emphasis on color being the language of the soul and it only depends how much ability one has to perceive it, corresponds to the color theory postulated by Goethe (d. 1832), as an attempt to refute Newton’s theory of optics. Goethe argued that the way we perceive color depends on our perception. “If the eyes were not sunny, how could we perceive light? If God’s own strength lived not in us, how could we delight in divine things” (as cited in Abaza, 2017, pp. 15-17). This mystic or inward delight can be experienced by those who get dyed in the color of humility and modesty.

The color that dominates in the overall dress code or behavior of the two maestros, Perveen and Zahoor, is the color of modesty and humility which resonates with their overall performance of Sufi singing. In Perveen’s case, neither the color nor the style of dress indicates anything which is out of the tune and against the norms of a woman’s appearance. The only accessorizing item that she seems to have adorned herself with is her faith in the spiritual power of words that she sings. Her style is simple in keeping with her meditative mood and in no way, she appears to be exposing her adornment and though she is not wearing hijab, she presents herself in a very restrained and modest manner. Her appearance or overall silhouette, therefore, does not invoke any kind of amoral pleasure or is reflective of any pretense or simulacra. No embellishment of any kind which suggests worldly pride or is underpinned with any thrill for the onlookers, are seen in her costume. Instead, she remains elegant in her dress behavior. Batten’s (2010) words aptly define Parveen’s elegance which comes through her apparel, “elegance of appearance, adornment, apparel—these are the woman’s badges of honor” (Batten, 2010, p. 154).

#### 4.16.2 Saeen Zahoor

The song *Aik Alif* (Song 2) is another famous song of CS Season 2, Episode 1, rendered by Saeen Zahoor who is a leading Sufi singer of Pakistan and was acknowledged as the “best BBC voice of the year 2006” as reported by Chrysler on BBC home page concerning Music Awards 2006.



Figure 19. Zahoor dressed in his typical attire- black turban & accessories-- beads, stones, *ghungroos*, which, in his view, are the mark of his cultural and Sufic identity

Saeen Zahoor, the celebrated Sufi singer of Pakistan, is also reputed for his unique clothing. As far as the costume that Zahoor is seen wearing in this song (Figure 19), that is, black turban set firmly on his head, multiple beads/stones (garlanded) and rings encrusted with different stones that he is seen wearing in all his fingers including the metal ring to pluck strings of his instrument and *ghungroos* (musical anklets), is the typical way he accessories his attire or his kurta and *shalwar* (trousers). Moreover, his *Ektara*, the musical instrument he uses, is also decorated in a typical floral way. Often his kurta (shirt) and *shalwar* are of white color but in the CS performance, he is clad in purple shirt and perhaps the underlying idea is to make him appear a little modern though his traditional

black turban does not seem fit into the overall demeanor. This is one way how CS creates hybrid combinations or so to say “fusions.”

In Zahoor’s case, the costume he is clad in is representative of his Sufic character and conduct. His black turban, attire and accessories such as beads, stones or *ghungroos*, mark his cultural and Sufi identity. The black color (turban) which does not accept any hue, is indicative of the one who is completely engrossed in only one color, i.e., the color of *Haqq* (Truth). In the view of Sufis, black color is a sign of complete attainment of the realm of *fana* or annihilation (Ansari, 2013, p. 20). In color theory, black communicates elegance and strength and Zahoor consistent use of black turban indicates the strength of his Sufi belief and conviction, i.e., it is the physical demonstration of his mystical thoughts and his desire to be annexed within the realm of the black. Moreover, being an integral part of his costume, the black turban has become the focal point, or the point of attraction for the viewers in the sense of his unique identity. This is called the “Law of Focal Point” in the Gestalt theory of perception (Bradley, 2009). Hence in his case, the accessories do not imply anything other than *faqr* and humility of a Dervish. Even the color of his shirt which is purple or the floral design on the instrument also get subdued since in no way he is showing it off through his style or manner, i.e., no simulacra or pretension of any kind.

Around this focal point, i.e., Zahoor’s modesty, flows a feeling of rhythm or what Soegaard calls “flowing rhythm” (2018, para, 11). The rhythm emerges on account of the fusion of colors: the turban, beads/stones (garlanded), rings, *ghungroos* (musical anklets) and his floral *Ektara*. Each whirling that he makes while dancing is imbued with an air of meditation and thoughtfulness and what enhances its impact, is the polyphonic pattern of colors. Collopy’s (2000) words are insightful in this regard, “When strong colors are used to provide impulse to vivid movement, they are like the accents which give music its life” (p. 357). We see colors which are visually seen and we experience the color of humility and conviction spiritually. Wertheimer in his theory of Gestalt (shape or form) said that we perceive motion when there is a rapid sequence of individual sensory events such as series of lights flashing in sequence (Bradley, 2009). In Zahoor’s dancing movement, we are impacted in this way as if there are light flashes floating in front of our eyes and we get immersed in that rhythmic flow. His bodily rotation in a circular way signifies his longing



to experience the oneness of God, to attain only His color whereas the thumping sound of his feet is a calling for people to decipher the mystery of the Divine Love, i.e., to experience the same color- “the vat of unicoloricity,” referred to by the Quranic term “the coloring of God” (Abaza, 2017, p. 23)

Zahoor’s overall demeanor is poised and calm and we see every part of the dress or accessory he is wearing gets eventually dyed in his Sufi color, the color of spiritual contentment and chastity. This entails that the esoteric reflects as well as impacts the exoteric or outward appearance. In the view of Sufis, dress is the outward reflection of the inner chastity and both inner and outer aspects complement each other. On account of this aspect of chastity attached to one’s dress, to one’s outer appearance, Sufis focus on the need to wear robe which is adorned with spiritual contentment. For a traveler in this path, the completion of the spiritual journey depends upon “freeing the immaterial soul from the microcosm of human existence and reaching the presence of God, thus its representative light lacks color entirely as the black (white as well) is without color” (Safi, 2013, p. 12). The color that dominates in the overall dress behavior of the two maestros, Perveen and Zahoor, is the color of modesty and humility which resonates with their performance of Sufi singing.

#### **4.17 Funk, Fantasy and Cross-Dressing**

Most of the CS singers are seen clad in their celebrity outfits as the video shots attached in various sections of analysis below demonstrate. In this group, three singers in the context of their costume are relevant cases under this section of fun, fashion and cross-dressing. One singer in his fuzzy long hair, strange looking costume and mysterious and even simulated looks is the third case analyzed here.

##### **4.17.1 Meesha Shafi**

The duet song *Alif Allah Jugni* (2010) rendered by Arif Lohar and Meesha Shafi became the hit song of the CS, Season 3, Episode 1 and ranked as the most-liked Sufi track.

Meesha Shafi who started her singing career in 2011 and gained immense popularity on account of “her singing performance in CS with Arif Lohar, the video song that till 2 years later, remained the most watched CS song ever, with over 10 million

views crossed,” stated Mansuri (2012, September 9) from the forum of *The Express Tribune*.



*Figure 20. Shafi (on right) in her rocker chic avatar ... singing Alif Allah Jugni*

Meesha Shafi, the famous female singer on the right, showcases herself as a stylish, modern and a groovy artist as the Figure above reveals. She is clad in in her trendy outfit; skinny jeans with a plain red T-shirt in a higher hemline, tight and making a perfect fit for her body and an equally skimpy black upper on top of it which further adds to the stylistic effect of her overall attire. The slim, brief top with half sleeves is as per the requirement of a celebrity as she is and accentuated with a golden motif on left and is sleekly bordered in golden from collars down to the front hems. A tattoo carved on the upper left arm is but half visible and complements the effect of the brooch on the same side. The tattoo carved on a girl's inner arm is generally conceived to be very exotic and stunning and hence the trend is fancied by a number of female artists, (Condry, 2006, p. 8) though it is equally liked by the male in the show biz as well as common public, the younger lot particularly.

The upper the singer is wearing is meant to conceal though but is revealing the dearly ornamented neckline and frontal gear. The red shirt she is clad in, with its slightly low

neck-lined front accentuates and foregrounds her feminine charm as is the general notion. In color theory, red color is associated with passion and desire and has a high visibility as it advances to the foreground (Bradley, 2009). Though the color red is predominant in Shafi's dress and it is gaining its visibility on account of the contrast with lesser visual weights. A deeper examination of her appearance, however, brings forth one more point that elements of lesser visual weight also dominate (Bradley, 2009, paras, 11-13). Color-in-context theory posits that color associations can be extended to objects in close proximity to the body (e.g., clothes, accessories). Thus, for example, red may not only increase attractiveness when viewed on the face, but also when viewed on a shirt or dress. Therefore, the physical and psychological context in which color is perceived is thought to influence its meaning and, accordingly, responses to it (Elliot, 2015, p. 2). Roberts, Owen and Havlicek in their study took digital photographs of ten participants (male and female) wearing t-shirts of various colors- red, black, green and yellow, to investigate attractiveness judgments of both sexes. Raters awarded highest scores to images in which targets wore red or black. Their results showed that females are influenced by clothing color in judgments of male attractiveness (Kodzoman, 2019, p. 3). Red color, it can be inferred, plays significant role at physiological and socio-psychological levels.

In Shafi's case, the visibility that the red color brings in, is rather glamourized on account of the layered use of jewelry- chokers, golden and pearled chains and necklaces with round and heart-shaped pendants. Other bric-a-brac like bracelets and rings that she is wearing accessorize her outfit all the more. Even more stunning is the bright red color that the damsel is wearing on her lips and round nails, pairing the two with red. Funking the nails in an innovative way is a part of the fun and fashion in the contemporary scene.

Celebrities relate to this aspect of fashion in unique ways. It would be relevant to cite one example of what Whitney Port, the famous American fashion designer, commented in this regard as was reported by *The Dawn* (2012, June 21). For her, painting of nails could uplift one's spirit, adding further Port said, "Yeah, I think nails are just a fun way to accessorize an outfit, like they are the new accessory. It's fun to funk it up a little bit... nails can give your spirits a lift." She herself was noted to have given sporting treatment to her nails, coloring, for instance, her thumb nail with half-gold and half-silver. Bolich's (2006) comment is relevant here as in her view, the dress affords us enormous prospects to

encounter with self and different selves around us and at times it (dress) provides us with the magic “to display virtually any sense of self we desire to express” and that is the reason why certain individuals utilize cross-dressing as a way for “distinctive self-expression” (p. 37) which means going off the usual track and dressing conventions of society. We attach not merely the symbolic meanings with dress but the physiological encounters as well since “the varying properties of items of dress” elicit sensations such as tactile, visual or auditory as Bolich (2006) puts it. Bolich’s words, “to display virtually any sense of self we desire to express,” can be related to what Butler expressed in her theory of performativity which views gender as a creation and product of its performance (para, 11).

#### **4.17.2 Arif Lohar**

The duet song *Alif Allah Jugni* (2010) rendered by Arif Lohar and Meesha Shafi became the hit song of the CS, Season, 3, Episode, 1. The song became the most-liked Sufi track crossing over 10 million views till 2 years after its release (Mansuri, 2012).

Arif Lohar is a Punjabi folk singer who earned fame and honor within and outside the borders of our country (Pakistan). Like his father Alam Lohar, he usually, sings accompanied by a *chimta* (instrument resembling tongs). He earned fame with his *Alif Allah Jugni* (2010) as a CS singer. It was his father who brought *Jugni* to the realm of pop music, he said talking to Lodhi from *The Express Tribune*, on September 26, 2017.

As seen in the shot below, Lohar on left, with *chimta* in hands, is clad in dark blackish brown traditional kurta embroidered in silver, silver motifs are rather sprinkled all over the shirt. Around his neck is loosely wound a stole/dupatta in deep red color which seems more in the *chunri* style. Though a little casual, the way he is draping the stole seems to settle well in his overall wearing and is also enhancing the effect of contrast. As a folk singer, he has in a way adopted this casual and a little rowdy style and hence the tinge reflects in every singing performance he makes.



*Figure 21.* Arif Lohar (on left) in his flickering apparel

His overall outlook, e.g., long, wavy hair, smiling eyes- a wild smile rather, round shiny face, flickering apparel all match well with that bubbly tinge. Among the dress accessories that he is wearing include: (1) a thick silver/gold choker around his neck patently seen through the V-shaped neck of his kurta, (2) rings in both hands enhancing the chic and style of the singer. The dress is in keeping with the sprightly outlook of the singer; bold, exciting and featuring an upbeat thrill. It is relevant to cite what Bolich (2006) says in terms of the possibilities that dress brings to and also the magic “to display virtually any sense of self we desire to express” and that is the reason why certain individuals utilize cross-dressing as a way for “distinctive self-expression” (p. 37) which means leaving aside the dressing conventions of society. As the Figure above reveals, both the singers, Shafi and Lohar, seem to cross over the prevalent trends of our society in terms of their dress style, color choice and accessorizing items. This though fits in their individual styles or fashion tendency but does not match with the kind of singing they render in this particular Sufi song. The adornment theory, however, explains that the conspicuous dressing and ornamentation draw on the desire to attract attention or gain supremacy, though not

necessarily of a direct sexual sort (Dunlap, 2010, pp. 64-65) but the drive in this case is definitely that of starship. Placing this within Lacanian gaze theory, this desire is essentially based on the formula of the void or the lack; the more the desire is satiated, the more the drive. But as this is the “the allure of stars” (Dyer, 2002, p. 2), it continues.

As to why people cross-dress, studies attempt to explain in various ways but the predominant explanation many scholars make is that in cross-dressing people feel free and out of the bounds of society they live in. In the view of McMahon (1994), “a woman often dresses as a man in order to move about freely than custom allows” (p. 233). Another view is that it allows the wearer enough space to create *any sense of self* that means, inventing and contriving any kind of the self or an imagined (simulated) version of the self and which at some later stage is demonstrated as the real as Baudrillard (2010) is of the view. Altenburger (2005) points out, “cross-dressing relies on make-believe,” or it deals with “fantasy identities” (p.172). These fantasies related to the stars or what Barthes (1990) interprets as image/ideas which, in his view, “perform as the dreaming patterns for customers and thus customers think themselves as the Stars of shown models” (as cited in Mustafiz, 2019, p. 2).

We attach, therefore, a number of symbolic meanings with dress but also mean physiological encounters with the idea that “the varying properties of items of dress” elicit sensations such as tactile, visual or auditory as Bolich (2006) puts it and thereby present ourselves as pleasurable items. Due to these pleasure sensations associated with cross-dressing, the trend may be traced since the ancient Greeks though it has never been encouraged by common as well as religious people of various eras. For instance, Howard’s (1988) article traces in the perspective of the Renaissance England-1580-1620- how people crossing over the dress styles of that era were punished by the priests (p. 418).

The contemporary New Age trends as they are based on the pro-individual philosophy, do not tend to put a check concerning trends whereby people like to transgress the set traditions, be it dress, style, or serious matters such as one’s faith or spirituality. Saying that spirituality is also treated like a garment to be chosen out of many and tailored as per one’s need, would not be wrong. The thought underpinning these notions is to transgress or cross over the mainstream trends, norms or beliefs of the society and the trend

is common in the film and music industries whereby every work is characterized by an “élan of the musical, the allure of stars” (Dyer, 2002, p. 2), sensuality and the excitement of action and thrill. In the industries, what the artists primarily consume is the star’s persona or a likeable image amongst the public and enact in that way. And as Barthes points out, public/readers of advertisements imagine themselves as models/likable image. Thus, a reader turns oneself to model (1990, p. 261). In the context of Meesha Shafi’s *Jugni* song with Lohar and her eventual fame, Mansuri (2012, September 9) from *The Express Tribune* stated, “Her androgynous voice coupled with an unabashed sexuality catapulted Shafi into unprecedented fame both in Pakistan and beyond.” Again, sexuality is linked with costume or dress behavior and style and many artists “strengthen their huge personas” as Abida Parveen does with her *ajrak chaddars* and Meesha Shafi via her “rocker chic avatar,” Saeed (2017, May 8) from *The News* commented.

#### **4.17.3 Tufail Ahmad**

The song *Allah Hoo*, a Code Studio production Season 1, Episode 4, contains only one couplet and sung by Tufail Ahmad and Ali Zafar who is a co-vocalist. Below is given a brief analysis of Ahmad’s costume and the mystery and gloom it underlies.

Tufail Ahmad is clad in a traditional *kurta* (shirt) *shalwar* (trousers) with white stole draped down both sides of his shoulders. The color palette of his costume is somber and though tinged with white, it does not make any soft display or any eye-appeal. Color is critical to creating attractiveness or unattractiveness and both genders use color to enhance their visual and aesthetic appearance (Kodzoman, 2019, p. 9). But in this particular case, colors such as dark maroon kurta combined with black *shalwar* makes a peculiar kind of dull and insipid display than any kind of pure feeling or even pleasure for a viewer as is noted in many other cases. Even white which is a vivid color and which is displayed in the embroidery on shirt and stole, does not contribute any pristine effect, it rather adds a kind of surrealistic effect. The accessorizing items as the performer is wearing such as beaded necklaces and a ring in his left hand seem to create the same dull effect. The appearance and costume of the performer dispirit the viewer and give out a dismaying impact.

The backdrop of Studio being in black and black with red combinations is perhaps the main element behind this dispirited impact. One feels ill at ease to note these elements of video and it seems that the Sufic touch that has been tried to create via certain elements, e.g., the beads and hair style of the performer is rather superimposed and unnatural. An individual's body image plays an important role in clothing preferences and attitudes.



Figure 22. Tufail Ahmad in his gloomy outlook

Clothing is an extended dimension of one's bodily self and is used to change the appearance of the body (2019, p. 3). Far from being simple and pure as it could be, it is mysterious, bleak and dismaying and more so, is a simulated one and therefore, does not bring forth any genuine feel of the transmission of meaning underpinning Sufi poetry. The singer's self-portrayal and body language and his fuzzy long hair also seem more a mockery than genuine attempt to sing devotional Sufi verses. His mannerism lacks decency as he keeps quivering his foot and is not reluctant to even touch it and hence appears out to be simply indecent and it is a sheer mockery of the ambience of Sufi assembly which Sufis talk about.



## 4.18 Female Glamor and Stylized Outfit

The CS female singers seem to celebrate their female self, their beauty and glamor via their costume behavior, as the shots attached in many sections demonstrate. In this group, three female singers in the context of their stylized costume are included. Their costumes contribute to make their performance stunning but do not fit within the context of Sufi singing.

### 4.18.1 Fareeha Pervez

The song *Jogi Mery Naal* (2013), of CS, Season, 2, Episode, 1, is rendered by Fareeha Pervez who is an eminent Pakistani singer and is specially known for her Ghazal singing.

Fareeha Pervez as the Figure below shows, is seen wearing a stylized outfit. The bottle green costume she is dressed in is spectacular, eye-catching giving her a honeyed look. She appears to be as she is a glamorous personality, a star and a stunning performer who has the knack to engage the viewers not only by her performance but also by her gorgeous appearance. The emerald green color as she is wearing is an enviably fit and stylized outfit giving her a formal look. The contrasting effect created through copper color adds interest and draws the eye (Bradley, 2009). The shirt is long hanging down the knees and asymmetrical in fashion. The shirt is V-necked with ban, short sleeved and embroidered all over in copper with silver tints, in stylized motifs and patterns. Copper bracelets on both arms of the singer stand out, perfectly accessorizing her costume and giving her an enviable look, to whoever views her. She looks outclass and perfectly cool for every gaze, rather “many gazes” such as photographer’s gaze, viewer’s gaze, our academic gaze and the like (Lutz & Collin, 1994, p. 134). Red, Green, Blue (RGB) light effects of the Studio further contribute to enhance her overall image or silhouette as the shot below unveils.



*Figure 23.* Glamor and style are the two magic words which define Pervez’s dress behavior and her stunning looks

Glamor and style are the two magic words which define Pervez’s dress behavior and her stunning looks. In semiotic terms, her beauty enacts as a signifier which elicits a number of signifiers such as desire, pleasure and other sensory emotions which in Dyer’s (2002) words could be subsumed under one term “showbiz”, a signifier which prompts a chain of signifiers for the pleasure of viewers. Moreover, her glitzy appearance is deemed fit for wedding and the like occasions and not attuned to Sufi singing. It also seems relevant to point out that the singer, via her appearance, attempts to evoke the love imagery of the Sufi song, at literal level, and perhaps portrays the female lover who longs to be united to “Jogi.” Her dress behavior seems to emphasize though in a very subtle way, a narcissistic portrayal of herself and it appears as if the artist herself is celebrating her charms and beauty. Costume thus speaks for ourselves and, at times, plays “theatre,” i.e., it brings to light what we seemingly hide and thereby it is called “an active sign when it is worn by a

performer” (Hecht, 2009, p. 61). It, i.e., visual impression, adds something graphical, as also notes, Saussure (1983), and this affects human imagination. “Masquerade” is another term used to convey an artful use of clothing, accessories, and makeup so as to make the body layered with (deceitful) sartorial signifiers (Raffuse, 2009, p. 145).

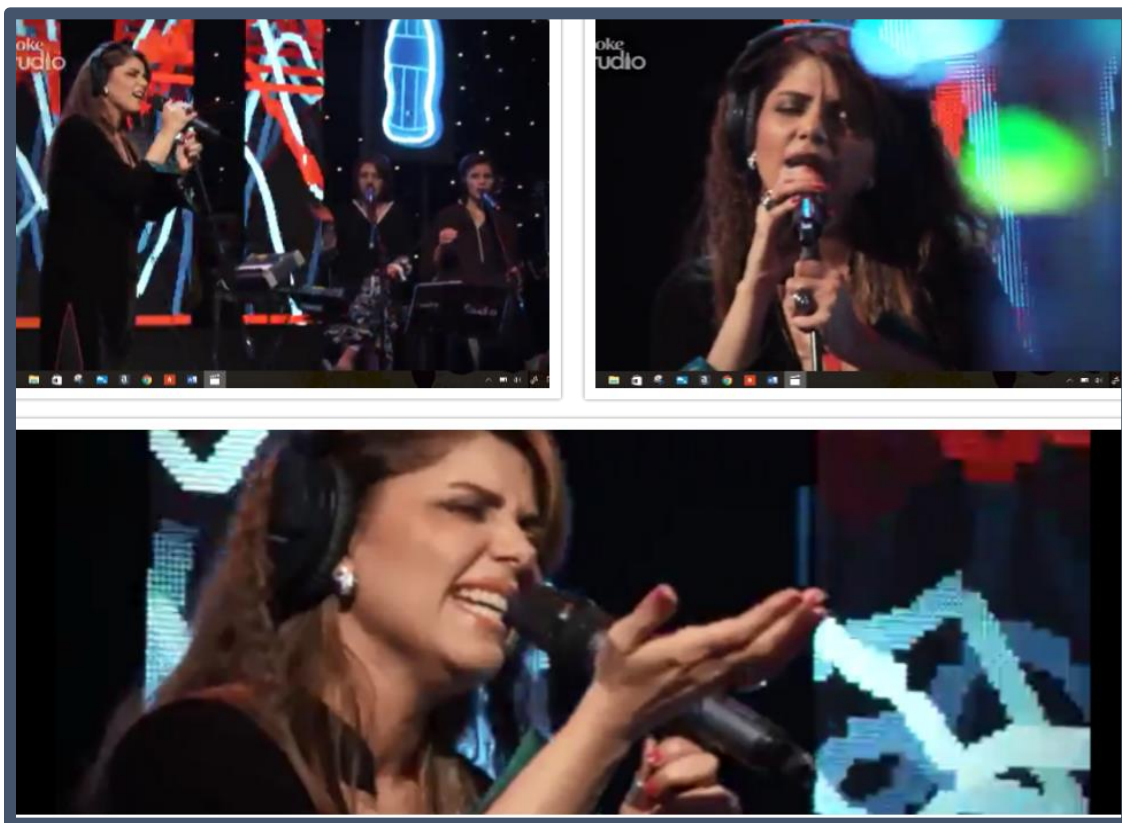
The artist, in her richly-decorated, flamboyant dress and ornate looks also allows the viewer to see it more even a physiological encounter on part of the performer and in this context, very rightly “the varying properties of items of dress” elicit sensations such as tactile, visual or auditory as Bolich (2006) puts it. Like most of the other female artists, Pervez has freed herself from a disciplined dress code adequate for women in our culture and seems to represent an alternative version which is fit only for stars and celebrities who are thought to be privileged to initiate new categories of thought and representation. Clothes, indeed, are visual sings which we wear as a conscious badge of our identity and beliefs. Jones and Stallybrass rightly pinpoint, “the material we wear work as inscription upon us” (as cited in Lublin, 2011, p. 176) and this notion may be taken as a central fit to interpret the costume behavior of the artist shown above.

#### **4.18.2 Hadiqa Kiani**

The song *Kamli* (2013), of CS, Season 5, Episode 1, is rendered by Hadiqa Kiyani who is one of the “the most popular female pop singers” of Pakistan and is viewed to be a “female style icon,” as said *The Express Tribune* of May 23, 2012.

Kiyani’s dress gives her a celebrity look as she is and as the Figure below shows. The black costume she is dressed in is trendy and stylish which bestows on her a grand look worth the type of celeb as she is. The base has a tinge of some other hues nicely placed around the neck, on the hemline and on slits which create style and which perfectly accessorize her outfit. With V-neck and ban, cut in A-line fashion, the shirt is long and hanging down the knees. The sleeves are straight, with slits open having an inlay patch of dark green whereas the V-neck is bordered with a dull golden patch or lace and hence a stylish look added. Ornatly designed, the two rings in both hands of the artist make a lovely display apart from the ear-tops which shine out and are perfectly cool for every gaze

or multiple gazes. RGB digital effects used in the CS setting add to her glamor and enhance the artist's overall image or silhouette.



*Figure 24.* Kiani dressed in a predominantly black- monochromatic with bits of other hues- looks trendy & stylish though a little overbearing also

Trendy and stylish as Kiani is, she seems to go for a free style of clothing and hence deviates from disciplined wearing, i.e., a dress has to be complete in every sense so that it serves the purpose the Holy Quran asks for and all Sufis agree to. What underpins the dress behavior of most of female artists, is the desire to move away even from the cultural traditions of our society following only the celebrity-code. This free style welcomes any new trend, funk and groove that comes our way since it reinforces our desire of self-adoration, the desire to look unique worth the star and the whim to celebrate our female self (see 4.18.3 for Foucault's technologies of the self). And celebration implies ruling out anything which the contemporary discourse of clothing deems unnecessary or which comes in the way to show off and instead demands a modest view of the self, conduct and behavior. This is the typical style of the New Ager. Alarminglly the dress code of most of

us is shrinking day by day but the new fashion jargons allow us space to simulate, talk about them, rather celebrate what we are losing, i.e., our belongings and our cultural riches. Most of our costumes what we call designer wear, are simply labels and brands that we put on to show off and thereby promote the modern clothing as “metaphor of lies.” We, therefore, mask the fundamental reality of our life and move far away from what it should otherwise mean for us.

One stylistic element which is also a little unsettling in Kiani’s case. The dress is predominantly black, i.e., monochromatic with bits of other hues, it seems a little overbearing and particularly when the setting is also dark, it gives the vocalist, at times, a bizarre look in contrast to Fareeha Pervez who stands out against the backdrop. Moreover, her hair cut, longer than the shoulder, slightly fuzzy and few slits on forehead, are eye-catching and give her a glamorous look, not compatible with Sufi singing. Here, Belsey’s remarks with reference to Christian moralists, on women’s hair as “at once a glory and a danger,” capable of both modestly concealing female sexuality and displaying its temptations (as cited in Williams, 2014, p. 150). In more plain words, the notion of “false modesty,” which is designed to attract attention and applause of people around. Williams digs this notion with reference to seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as, “false modesty meant feigned virtue, something that was far more morally threatening” (Williams, 2014, p. 146). This sort of fuzzy and open hair style, as Kiyani has, is generally regarded to be one of the most exciting signs of female beauty which in the folklore and romantic literature is said to have enchanted the male gaze. Jochens notes clothes as important markers of female beauty and more importantly hair as the one natural feature of female beauty (2019). Not the least, Kiyani’s outfit and looks are further accessorized by the groovy shades she has applied on nails and lips. Among other questions, one is crucial to ask whether dress muffles the self, or creates it: if the thesis is that fashion is oppressive, the antithesis is that we find it pleasurable; perhaps no synthesis is possible.” Fashion, thus, remains a site of contention and postmodern ambivalence (Raffuse, 2009, p. 5)

Kiyani’s outfit and style perfectly match with the “showbiz” discourse which is underpinned by the philosophy of “open happiness” and seen in this particular context, seems to en-cash “Sufi” music. In semiotic terms, Kiani’s beauty is a signifier which elicits

signifiers such as desire, pleasure and other sensory emotions which in Dyer's words could be expressed through one term "showbiz."

#### 4.18.3 Sanam Marvi

The song *Manzil-e-Sufi* of CS, Season 3, Episode 5, is rendered by Sanam Marvi who is a Pakistani folk and Sufi singer and sings in Punjabi, Saraiki and Sindhi languages as reported by *The Dawn* (2013, July 21).

Marvi is seen clad in royal blue two-piece attire as the Figure below shows. She stands revealed as a simple, a little traditional but with lovely and admirable looks. Her apparel is in monochromatic color scheme with tones and tints meant to tone down the one-color effect. Her V-necked shirt seems to be of knee-length, with quarter sleeves, straight and open from front, thereby making the accessories such as bracelets or bangles visible. An overview of the color palette of Marvi's costume gives her an air of harmony, serenity and coolness, an air that makes the young demoiselle likeable. In a little traditional manner, embroidered border or may be some trendy lace is seen on sleeves and neck with white and greyish tints meant to down tone the royal blue. Accessories such as ring in her right ring finger and polished nails are in perfect match with the costume color and add a glowing effect as the images below show.

One stylistic aspect that gives Marvi a honeyed look is that her clothes though more on the side of traditional are not complemented with any tippet or *ajrak* shawl which she Usually, wears in her Sufi renditions. Moreover, the videographic elements, camera lights and RGB effects, contribute to present the blue as highly crisp and stunning though the vocalist herself remains poised and calm in her mannerism and dress behavior. Her feminine charms are brought to light through the close-up shots which allow an intimate gaze for the viewership, making a display of the otherwise mute charms of the "fair youth" and as John Keats says, "ye soft pipes, go on" for the unheard is even sweeter.

Costume, therefore, becomes a representative sign of the female charms which in a way may be called female "power dressing" (Gerrard, 1995, p. 1). Apart from this, the color blue is interpreted in various ways, for instance, in psychology, devotional studies and color therapies and it is said to have one essential quality, i.e., that it is inviting and engaging and sticks to human memory for quite long. In Marvi's case, this power of the

color multiples via the digitized elements in the Studio and hence evokes sensual pleasure for the viewers. It nonetheless lacks the capacity to evoke any spiritual meaning embedded in the Sufi poetry that she sings.



*Figure 25.* Marvi clad in royal blue two-piece attire

Though the silhouette or the overall image of the artist seems soft, not spectacular in the manner of Pervez, it is underpinned with the elements of feminine gaze and beauty particularly because the camera frames (camera gaze) her to be so. The explanation of the Lacanian perspective or gaze coming through Manovich, is relevant here. Gaze, he notes, extends beyond the realm of the visible, i.e., it is not limited to sight but also functions in other senses (Lacan, 1978, pp. 93-94). And as clothing is an extension of our skin, every technological advancement is an extension of the body's senses, posits McLuhan (as cited in Lacan, 1978, p. 94). Hence, the idea of “many gazes” propped by Lutz and Collin (1991) also makes sense in the discussion.

Further, Foucault's technologies of power- may help us better understand the power of the gaze in the present scenario. Technologies of the self, he said, permit people to perform certain operations on their own bodies, thoughts and conduct, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness. Technologies of the market, buying and selling of goods, enable us to define who we are, or want to be. The two technologies are not distinct, as both borrow bits of each other from time to time (Foucault, 1988, p. 18). The combination of the two has given rise to what Molloy calls "technology of the female (professional) self" that starts defining herself in view of the market technologies which ask for adjustments in her wardrobe. In this way, she can make herself "more attractive to various types of men," seek for the "top executive" positions and many other prospects such as fame and starship (Molloy, 1988, p. 18). This has led to women's focus on how they look and appear before others and so to a fragmentation of themselves into two parts- "the surveyor and the surveyed... one might simplify this by saying: men act and women appear" (Berger, 2010, pp. 46-47). Both technologies of power are at work as far as the construction of the self on part of the performers of CS and show biz artists in general is concerned. About the female CS singers such as Shafi, Haider, Kiyani or Pervez, the term "wardrobe engineering" (1980, p. 18) would be more relevant as it is being employed for various kinds of material gains.

#### **4.18.4 Sara Haider**

The song *Meri Meri* (2016), a CS production, Season 9, Episode 6, is rendered by Sara Haider as a co-vocalist with Rizwan. She is a versatile singer and her performances range from Jazz and Rock (Western) to the singing of Ghalib's poetry. What makes her style different is that she has a very modern, western style of singing even when she is singing Pakistani songs, as wrote *The Express Tribune* (2014, Feb 3). She won the Lux Style Awards (2015) for "best emerging talent," reported *Daily Times* (2015, October 2).

Like singing, Haider is on the cutting edge of fashion in clothing also and falls for the Western style as the Figure below reveals. She is clad in a gorgeous dress with mini length shirt and trousers. The shirt is sleeveless, mini, of hip-high length, with flairs at the hemline and is given a stylish cut from the waist line which emphasizes her slim waist giving her the look of hourglass silhouette or contour that a garment creates when worn.





*Figure 26.* Sara Haider in mini shirt and trousers-- shirt with a stylish cut from the waist line emphasizes her slim waist giving her the look of hourglass silhouette

The trousers are in loose fit fashion with wide bottom- the fashion which creates “soft power silhouette: an hourglass for a new era.” The dress has a specific shape with sleeveless top and wide trousers, but cut so that they have the same feminine shape, with a high, fitted waist and a loose leg (*The Guardian*, 2017, Feb 28). Haider’s dress is multi-colored and is inlaid with hues such as dark pink and green. Ornatly designed, the dress is elaborated with motifs and silver beads of different shapes which perfectly accessorize her outfit and add to the style. Since the dress is all inlaid with motifs, the use of Jewelry is in the minimalist fashion. The circular ear rings that Haider is seen wearing are in rust gold color and the bracelet of the same hue with a sleek chain, hangs well onto her slender wrist and catches the observing eye (gaze) when the singer moves her hand upward in singing. This in a way creates a peek-a-boo look or gaze (spectator gaze here) that creates an image which is the “reproduction in the mind of a sensation produced by a physical perception (Preminger, Warnke & Jr., 2016, p. 363).

Moreover, since her tops are sleeveless, her youthful, toned arms give her an alluring look and an intimate view for the oglers particularly when she takes her arms upward in singing for emotive purposes. Concerning a sleeveless top, McRoberts, (2005) is of the view that in a female costume, sleeve length not only impacts our figure-flattery but also transforms how a woman's silhouette appears to the viewers. The observing eye sees your arm from shoulder to wrist, with no sleeve constraint (p. 3). Along with this aspect of power dressing and style, Haider's voice with its sizzles and vocal effects and more importantly her gaze- the magic that she plays with her twiggy, awesome eyes transforms her singing into a discourse of puffery and pleasure. It would be relevant to say that the sartorial discourse of power dressing constitutes a new 'technology' of the feminine self (Entwistle, 2017) as well as technology of the market which connects fashion with female power or the power that comes through dressing.

The costume therefore, enacts at the forefront and is a signifier which evokes other signifiers such as pleasure, fun, starship or figure-flattery. In this case, the costume Haider is wearing enacts as the pivotal sign of sensory pleasure turning her performance into a site of female beauty and pulchritude whereby only the simulated can take over the "real" (Sufi singing). The dress plays great role in turning this performance into a site of beauty, as "clothing ripples, flows and creases with every movement of the body." Else, clothes separated from their wearers, are disembodied and dead (Ash & Wilson, 1992, p. 76). Haider's costume flows and moves in the center as if her performance is a plot "where dress starts to become an engine of the plot. This is not the story of single, fixed images, but of dress in movement, metamorphosis, unpredictable and treacherous" (Raffuse, 2009, p. 17).

In the present scenario, the idea of being free to do alterations or cutting the edges anywhere- be it fashion, faith or spirituality, or playing magic and fun by bringing various things out of their context, are the actions which fit into the New Age philosophy. The entire focus is on the creation of "a new concept of beauty," (Waugh 2012, p. 3) be it the apparel, film or music industry. The clothing style unless it is on the cutting edge of fashion and a properly-fit garment which lies smoothly over curves of the female body (Arthur, 2003, pp. 1, 6) is not rated as proper dress. According to an article in the *Nottingham Evening Post* (2003, p. 1), "What makes a great outfit is the cut. If it fits you, you will be

fine.” What lies embedded in one’s outfit or in the subtext of clothing is how to push people into adoration for the stars, singers, artists etc., and the singer Haider, nonetheless does the same through her singing and by using the power clothing. The CS setting, colors, lights, the artist’s glamor, her hip hop singing and her vocals- intense, exaggerated, honky to the growling extent, music with explosive beats, loud rhythm and claps-- the show altogether becomes a jovial singing of Sufi lyrics, a site of hilarity and fun to the extent of being a pratfall comedy wherein all, singers, backing vocalists and instrumentalists, consume energy to make it a commercial success.

#### **4.19 Crisp Icon Style**

Like Kiani, the rockstar Ali Zafar is also famous for a style icon and has the knack to stand out amidst any kind of setting. The male singers are clad in their own stylish way which attracts the gaze of whoever views it. Atif Aslam below looks somewhat traditional but this is how he creates the vogue of a star-- altogether unique, classic and even trendy whereas Jaswal has his own crispy rock style.

##### **4.19.1 Ali Zafar**

The rockstar, Ali Zafar rendered two songs, *Daastan-e-Ishq* (2009) - Season 2, Episode 2, and *Allah Hu* (2008) as a co-vocalist from Season 1, Episode 4 of CS. The spunky and rock singer as he, Zafar is also noted for his “chic, sophisticated and ultra-modern fashion sense,” and hairstyles and at times settles for more retro looks, as reported by *The Tribune* (2015, May 2) on its fashion page.

The Figure below portray Zafar to be “a style icon” or the one who knows how to stand out in any kind of setting. Though his choice of color in both cases/songs seems eco-friendly and in keeping with the general trends of the dress code of our culture, still he has the chic, the elegance, the charm and the visibility of a star. The figured T-shirt on right and the white flouncy top on apparel of the singer in the other two shots (top & left) connote something like a stylized, funky and modern look of the wearer that have an appeal for the eye. Dress, as Bolich (2006) rightly says, affords us immense possibilities “to display virtually any sense of the self we desire to express,” (p. 37) and in the showbiz we see this happening. Theatrically inflected, “costume,” like “masquerade,” suggests disguise and

acting, as writes Raffuse (2009) and the role of costume is, therefore, crucial in creating the desired self or any effect- style, fantasy or theatricality. Madonna practically personifies Butler's suggestion of the created self-hood which is also relevant here (Raffuse, 2009, pp. 16, 94).



*Figure 27.* Ali Zafar's dress in various shots gives him a form-fitting, crisp icon style

Moreover, the figure on Zafar's T-shirt, of shady but crisp white, suggests a masculine look of the wearer and stands out against the black as his youthful body is shown off also. The figure/image though petite yet attracts the gaze since it embellishes the costume, enhances its stylistic appeal and looks of the wearer and attracts the gaze of whoever views it. Moreover, his hair style in this shot also adds to the crisp effect. The same stylized impact is created through the crispy white top that he is wearing on apparel (shots on top & on left) and particularly with one-side decorated border which seems to be a part of the top gives a simple but stunning look. The white crisp gets enhanced with white shoes. This perhaps combines the classic with the crisp. Though loosely draped, it makes

a perfect form-fitting effect while generally this tendency of fitted costumes is more associated with women. The funk, however becomes distinct and not modesty as was the case with the maestros and essentially lacks that Sufic ambience. Above all his guitar is reinforcing the rocky style. His dress style though reflects simplicity but it does have that optic effect which Bolich (2006) defines as “an optical illusion of the clothed body generated by the dress (p. 152). Hence, the focus is on self-portrayal as a trendy, stylish artist. In Zahoor’s case, the mystic color is dominant and even the bold hues get subdued but in contrast, the white becomes crisp and trendy in this case. Moreover, the style presents a fusion of both male and female dressing, though obliquely, since many artists follow these trends. His appearance can in no way engage any viewer mystically as could be assumed in case of Perveen or Zahoor.

#### **4.19.2 Atif Aslam and Umair Jaswal**

The song *Charkha Nolakha* (2012), a CS production- Season 5, Ep. 2, is rendered by two singers- Atif Aslam and Umair Jaswal. Both singers are clad in their own style: Aslam in his frock costume and looks chic though traditional also, and Jaswal has his own rock style costume provide an interesting study. Both create their own fashion personas and styles, distinct styles, tap into statement outfits, taps into her inner rock star.

In the Figure below, Atif Aslam on right is seen clad in his unique dress, i.e., frock shirt, with turban on head and Umair Jaswal on left is dressed in a two-piece suit with a T-shirt under the coat. Aslam is clad in *shalwar* (trousers) suit, frock shirt with ban, sleeves are cuffed and in full length. The dress is all in dark maroon, in monotonic color scheme, with turban in blackish maroon. In the middle of shirt, there is one embroidered part in a slightly upper shade of the base. The shirt looks stylish on account of pleats done from hip to knee and a little above the pleats, the decorated part makes it elegant.

The frock style of Aslam’s costume, is underpinned with various allusions, be it the Mongolian style of costume around the 13<sup>th</sup> century or the later adaptation of the same in Turkey and other areas of the Middle East. It is also rooted in the Victorian (1837-1901) and Edwardian (1901-1910) frock coat which was knee-length and used by men. It also alludes to the long skirt frock that the famous Mevlevi Dervishes of Turkey wear which in their view, is a symbolic representation of their Sufi beliefs. *Kashf al-Mahjub* one of the famous

foundational sources on Sufism mentions the idea of “patched frock” (Ghanem, n.d., p. 15) which again has symbolic meanings. In Sindhi and Balochi folk traditions, such dresses are also seen and the turban Aslam is wearing matches with Sindhi style of turban. Even the turban is so well placed and suits him (Moti, 1973).



*Image 28.* Aslam (on right) in frock style dress and Jaswal (on left) in two-piece suit with yellow T-shirt visible from below his coat

Aslam’s dress, therefore, has a number of historical, cultural and Sufic allusions though undoubtedly it has been given modern touch and keeping in view the personality of the artist, color and design and a touch of embroidery have been constructed. In reality he does look altogether unique, classic and even trendy since it is the vogue of stars. Stars as they are, they are perceived, received or using Barthes’ (1978) words, they are “read” like “signs,” i.e., read consciously by the public (public gaze) that consumes them as idealized versions of their own selves (p. 19).

Umair Jaswal on left of Aslam presents a glaring contrast with him, via his two-piece suit with yellow T-shirt visible from below his coat. Yellow shirt makes a fine combination with black brown suit but since it is a casual wear, it also dampens the overall formal look. The funk and groove come through a male image drawn onto the front of the shirt but it cannot be accurately guessed since we get only the glimpse of it and not a whole view. It

may possibly be a real celebrity of pop or rock kind or just an image, some sort of digitally printed picture. It is, however, meant to create the desired funk suiting the style of a rock star as he is. It is gaudy, informal, casual sort of a thing, creating a hybrid impact in the typical of postmodern style which has gained currency in the present times. It is obvious that male singers are no less conscious about their appearance and their clothing also draws on the desire to attract attention, if we analyze it through the lens of the adornment theory (Dunlap, 2010, p. 65).

#### **4.20 Summary-Unit 3**

The analysis of this section reveals that whereas the color of modesty and humility dominates in the overall dress behavior of the two maestros, Perveen and Zahoor, it is funk, style and female “power dressing” that represent the rest of the singers. Apart from self-portrayal and gaze of the artists, female in particular, the color of costumes multiplies via the digitized elements in the Studio and contribute in evoking sensory pleasure for the viewers. Even if the costume of some of the artists seems a little traditional, the silhouette or the overall image of the some of the artist is no less spectacular and is underpinned in the case of female singers particularly with the elements of feminine gaze and beauty because the camera frames them to be so. It nonetheless lacks the capacity to evoke any spiritual meaning embedded in the Sufi poetry that they sing. In the case of male, say, Atif Aslam whose style of singing and wearing both can be accredited as traditional in some sense and appeal as well, but seen in the context of overall singing, this view gets disrupted. Aggregated, their singing is but a demonstration of style, the focus on form or exoteric only. Jaswal’s rocky style may be compatible with any singing other than this Sufi rendition where action and funk and loud exteriorization of music would make sense. This performance might be a commercial hit but how far it justifies itself as a Sufi performance, this is a question which has been brought to serious consideration.

#### **4.21 Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter deals with representational signs containing three units of analysis: (1) lyrics (2) music and performance of singers and (3) costume of singers.

Sufi lyrics or the content used in CS singing is analyzed and the main focus has been to highlight how Sufi poets use symbolic language to articulate the spiritual signified in

their poetry. For them, as the analysis reveals, poetic language (form) is not merely a form (signifier) but a vehicle to communicate the transcendental reality (signified). Sufi text thus in no way represents a split of the signifier and signified in contrast to, say, any postmodern poetic text whereby meaning is deferred and keeps floating onto a chain of signifiers and which may be performed in whatsoever superficial way. The first unit, therefore, sets a frame of reference or yardstick against which the CS singing discourse is interpreted in the subsequent sections of analysis.

In unit 2, music and performance, the point which has been explored is how far form and meaning correlate in the CS Sufi singing. Whether words and actions (body language) relate to each other or else what discourse do they call forth. What does their singing performance represent via its foregrounded elements such as music, instrumentation, rhythm, beat and the like? The analysis above reveals that the singing is largely focused on the exoteric, the form, style and instrumental rhythm though there are exceptions as well, e.g., Perveen and Zahoor, since their singing contains the elements of spirituality. Overall, CS Sufi singing discourse seems directed towards materiality or the pursuing of starship than a sincere attempt to communicate the true philosophy of Sufi singing.

The third unit moves the discussion on to another significant aspect of CS discourse, i.e., what do the costumes of singers signify or if there is any discursive element which lies underneath their appearance and which needs to be uncovered and interpreted within the mystic and religious lens also? The analysis of this section reveals that whereas the color of modesty and humility dominates in the overall dress behavior of the two maestros, Abida Perveen and Saen Zahoor, it is funk, style and female power dressing that represent the rest of the singers. Apart from self- portrayal and gaze of the artists, female in particular, the color of costumes multiplies via the digitized elements in the Studio and contribute in evoking sensory pleasure for the viewers.



## CHAPTER 5

# SEMIOTICS OF NON-REPRESENTATIONAL SIGNS IN CS SUFİ SONGS

This chapter deals with semiotics of non-linguistic aspect of the Coke Studio singing discourse. This aspect is covered via the Non-Representational category of signs as suggested by Richard Dyer. The analysis under this category is subdivided into four units: (1) set design (2) colors (3) lighting (4) camerawork. In the set design of the selected video songs, coca cola sign of the CS Sufi discourse is taken into account. Other non-linguistic features, that is, RGB colors, 3D lighting and camerawork with its deep and shallow focus are traced as digital signs. Moreover, the meaning encoded in the stylistic presentation of the CS singing, e.g., singers with in-ear monitors, huge instrumentation and digital effects is also mapped. The non-linguistic signs and how they tend to go hyperreal in the digitalized and multi-semiotic setting of CS singing, is taken into full account.

### 5.1 *Mise-en-scène*

*Mise-en-scène* is a term borrowed from French theatre and translated as “putting on stage” or “putting into the scene” (Bordwell & Thompson, 2008, p. 112). The term refers to everything on stage which is in front of the camera: location/setting, props, set design (colour scheme), behaviour of the actors/performers, costumes and makeup. This definition, for some critics, is enough, referring to the elements staged in front of the camera at the time of videoing (2008, p. 1). However, as this definition of *mise en scène* does not take full account of the filmic/moviemaking frame’s specificities, some film critics define the *mise-en-scène* as involving the aforesaid elements as well as the composition of the frame, its movement and the entire cinematographic toolkit available to the film or video maker (Hodsdon, 1990, p. 73). This latter definition includes cinematography and other special effects such as lighting in the *mise en scène* (Spiedel, 2011, p. 87). Lastly, all *mise-en-scène* elements, be it set design, colours, light effects and shadows, can be generated, shaped, enhanced, edited or modified digitally and thus Computer-generated Imagery effects (CGI effects) may also be itemised as *mise-en-scène* (Sipos, 2010, p. 31). In the analysis below, I intend to treat set design, colors, lighting and

camerawork as independent units though they fall under *mise-en-scène* and are closely related to each other.

## 5.2 Set Design- A Site whereby Signs lie

The general concept that underlies the *mise-en-scène* is the staging of visual and (non)verbal signs in a symmetrical pattern so as to let the viewers relate to the overall in-shot set design (Mccornack, 2019, p. 138). But for a visual shot, it has to have a symmetrical combination of items, colours as well as the sequential placing of the on-stage props. In addition, it needs to have a coherent or logical connection of the set structure with the theme, subject and larger context in which a visual text (drama, film, video song) is designed (Heslinga, 2014, p. 38). For instance, in a serious and thematic drama or, say, a Sufi video song, one would definitely expect the symmetry of the kind I just mentioned and not the trendy, lousy music or varying colours of high intensity or glaring light fading in and out dramatically in the backdrop. However, the audience/viewers would expect the lousy backdrop in case it is the *mise-en-scène* of a comedy film such as “Can’t hardly Wait” (Lasalle, 1998, June 12) or that of Madonna’s “Cherish” (2009) or a video shot of the famous track “Hush, Hush” (2009) by Pussycat Dolls.

The color scheme, in “Hush, Hush” song, for instance, is predominantly murky in keeping with the aphrodisiac theme and spooky, surrealistic setting. The eerie setting, for instance, a hall with staircases going to various directions or the pell-mell the disco mirror ball presents due to its flickering light, chandeliers and roller discos, all co-match with muted shades of black, cloudy white and pale yellow with hazy grey being in the center. The setting of the song depicts rather a “desaturated look of the science fiction films” (Sipos, 2010, p. 102). Further, the light effects which are largely pale yellow (low key) and the insistent heavy rock of music enhance the same eerie effect. Similarly, the personal accessorizing items of the Pussycats, their costume, their auburn to platinum blonde hair, sultry smoky patterned eye(s) tattooed faces and Scherzinger’s (lead singer) huge Afro wig seen in the last close shot, all add strikingly creepy effect. However, the repetitious *Hush, Hush* mimed by the cats throughout the ballad, has no actual reference to other lyrics except that it is a buzzword and ergo signifies nothing like many other aspects of the song (Sipos, 2010).

Butler's (2005) words, "whether it is studio or location, the setting contributes to the meaning of the film" (p. 28) may be problematized and considered the other way round in lieu with what Eco (1976) said. Eco argued that If something cannot be used to tell a lie, logically it cannot be used to express the truth; rather it cannot be used "to tell" anything at all (p. 7). In this context, Butler's remark would also imply that if there is meaning, there is meaninglessness as well. To elaborate the point more, one may say that if setting contributes to the meaning, it should be doing the same to create a pseudo or no-meaning as, for instance, in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1953) which is an Absurdist play.

The Absurdist concern was whether reason and scientific knowledge could be the source for an in-depth understanding of human life and whether language was a tool to bring forth meaning and coherence in life. Their queries, however, echoed back to them with a grisly hush rather leaving them deserted in the absurdity of life- life which starts and ends in nothingness (Arendt, 1998). Their notion of absurdity is but easy to deconstruct keeping in view the post-World War period when the general masses lost faith in the legitimacy of rational and scientific knowledge. The concern that the Absurdist writers expressed was though valid, the repercussions of their philosophy were far from simple as they impacted the outlook of the later theorists, writers and artists in the postmodern, New Age phenomenon. Consequently, the quest for meaning and its value in human life came to be regarded as a trivial, backyard stuff because the argument was that it is futile to seek or to affirm meaning where none can be found (Arendt, 1998). In addition, a kind of complexity emerged on account of the proliferation of meaning(s) as, for instance, is the concept of spirituality(s). The idea that word, its symbolic value or its relation to any reality got unsettled and gradually, true and real was overtaken with what was fake (Shaw, 2010, p. 12). Language being a representative tool in the pre-modern era, came to be regarded as subjective and arbitrary and not a tool to express love, faith and beauty of the world, human relationships and their love for the Divine, as for instance, we find in Sufi poetry. Not only linguistic but numerous other theories and resurgence of affluence after the economic crisis of World Wars prepared the ground for scientism and a materialistic mindset (Waaajman, 2016). Amongst the various structures of life which collapsed, the faith in the spiritual and symbolic power of meaning was shattered, too. This phenomenon

has made it hard to trace the nature of the sign and what it stands for and hence has caused a gap between sign and the signified (spiritual).

The pre-modern era in Baudrillard's (1970/1996) view depicted a representational culture which expressed its belief in the symbolic exchange of meaning. The sign, linguistic and non-linguistic, was historically grounded in the spiritual signified and imbued with the intended meaning of the supremacy of beliefs, norms and moral boundaries. The period that followed, (post)modern, was/is marked with technological advancements (mediation of technology) which has turned the reverent traditions of the past into trivial junks (Hogan, 2010, p. 380). Every aspect of life; be it art, literature, culture or even religious performances is but a reflection of our self-styled actions and vanities. Our fancy gadgets and selfies represent us more than we do and neither we are concerned about the iconic signs we need to carry. Hence, what we own is simply a digitalized self and a simulation of the real which Baudrillard (1994) calls simulacra- the autonomous simulacra which are free from all reference to the real (p. 6). It exists by itself and is self-contained, e.g., the picture one pastes on Facebook. But a copy is more real than real, as he points out. Baudrillard's concern is to see how reality has been replaced by what he calls hyperreality and how sign is regarded to be more important than what it stands for or the iconic reality it was designed to imitate.

Similarly, Eco's notion that semiotics is the science that deals with our ability to lie and mislead is imbued with thoughtful ideas regarding our lived experiences of daily life wherein we see people who use signs for masquerading. Eco further points out how we impersonate or appropriate other people's identity by using signs of their choice and when we use an edited, stylized version of our self by using signs e.g., of costume, hair, glasses or make up accessories, we appropriate our credentials and pretend to be what we are not in reality. We use even emotions, feelings and beliefs as signs to lie or for impersonation which Eco calls Theater (as cited in Berger, 2010, p. 33).

We are the fashionistas of the new world and most of our transactions are only skin-deep and ritualistic, part of mere "showmanship and entertainment" (Bhattacharjee & Alam, 2012). Sufi singing of CS is not an exception and very much grounded in the same kind of materialistic pursuits, starship, showmanship and entertainment-the vanities I just mentioned above. The set design of the CS (*Mise-en-scène*) for example, shows a range of

signs depicting a feigning discourse and is an appropriation of the true Sufi singing in many respects. This is a performative or a make-believe discourse, I would say, since a new version of the Sufi singing is being enacted upon. In fact, the CS singing discourse seems more an attempt to “capitalize upon the basic values” (Berger, 2012) or more precisely directed towards materiality or the pursuing of starship than a sincere attempt to negotiate the true philosophy of Sufi singing. The signs, both representational and non-representational, as the analysis below reveal, that the singers are thoroughly engaged in their pursuits for starship which in Berger’s terms could be interpreted as “identity adventures” in the market of simulacra (Berger, p.77).

In the *mise-en-scène*, Coca Cola image is marked as the central sign which is suggestive of the Studio as a commercial forum and a representative of the material culture using objects and artefacts for promotional ends. Another tendency is to anthropomorphize objects, i.e., adding human-like body parts such as eyes and hands and use them in various ways (as cited in Song & Yamada, 2018, para 2).

### **5.2.1 Coca Cola Sign and its Mirror Effects**

The screen shots below taken from a few songs show a specific setting or set design, which is the “the material expression of the text ... and a separately variable semiotic feature,” state Kress and Leeuwen (as cited in Heslinga, 2014, p. 20). Here, setting is the material expression or “medium,” as “signs are always anchored in a medium.” The specific sign vehicle may be the words on a page, a live show on the stage, or projected images on a screen (as cited in Chandler, 2007, p. 55) such as we see a non-verbal sign in the center of the in-shot *mise-en-scène* in Figure 29 below.

In the Figure, one thing we can notice even with a cursory glance is the presence of a very engaging and eye-catching sign lying in the center of the design. The sign, as we see, is made conspicuous by using specific color, shape and design which, in Chandler’s view, are the techniques/codes used to limit the text’s possible meanings, or let us have “a preferred reading” (2007, p. 158). Three shades of ink blue color have been customized for this purpose: dark blue to form the basic structure/shape, a little light blue to draw a pattern on its body whereas the outside border is emphasized with even lighter a shade (Vorobyev, 2004, p. 232). The blue shades combined this way not only produce a 3D effect but also give a unique and distinguished position to the image which can be read as a self-contained

sign devoid of any reference other than itself. To Decker (2017), RGB colors with varying intensities produce the hue of a particular color and thereby visual effect also (para, 5). The sign on account of its visual power may easily drag us into a world of sensual pleasure, away from the spiritual reality of the Sufi text being sung and hence conceal the reality as Baudrillard (1994) suggests it.

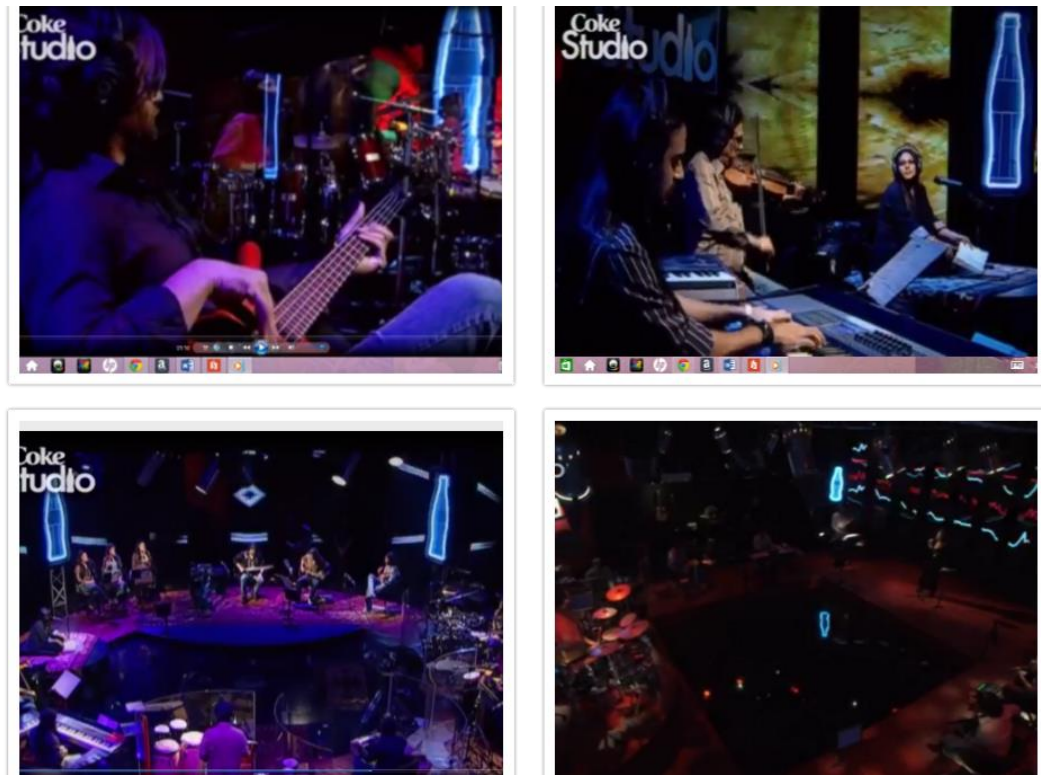


Figure 29. Images from songs: *Manzil-e Sufi* (Song 6), *Alif Allah Jugni* (Song 4), *Kamli* (Song 9) show up the hobble skirt Coca Cola bottle in various and eye-catching positions

Apart from color distinction, the way the Coca Cola image is positioned amongst the other mise-en-scene items is noticeable which contributes to further conceal the reality. It does not exactly fit into the inside view/picture though it gives this kind of illusion; in fact, it is both within and above the view. It is situated within the in-shot view and yet the effect that one receives is more like a picture that is adrift or floating up above the surface of water or is seen hanging onto it. Gerstenberger and Nusser (2015) describe the power of cinema in terms of the “visual power of displaying” and of the “illusionary power” it contains for the audience. Moreover, its appeal comes through the ability of the screen “to

hold the gaze of the viewer through an extravagant display and performance” (pp. 130-31). The Cola image contains the same “illusionary power” for the audience.

Moreover, the Coca Cola image is self-contained, that is, it refers to its own self and replicates and mirrors itself down in the bottom of water as well; it a self-referential sign which is free of any reference. Baudrillard (1984), was greatly concerned about what he called the “diabolical seduction of images because of the perversity of the relation between the image and its referent- the supposed real, the virtual but the image, technological, is the most perverse and immoral” (pp. 13-14). The Coca Cola image in this specific context is related to the surface only; it is a material signifier and is engaging in that it takes the viewer away from the spiritual reality Sufi lyrics are imbued with.

Here, when we look at the Coca Cola image, we notice how the outer border and shade of the image has been deployed in a way that it creates a hype or an intense effect without cracking the volume, size or its smart shape and thus making it visually engaging or what Baudrillard calls “ironic fascination” (p. 14). The image or the picture, shadowy and fluid, is technetronic as it is created through the use of the digital coding. Due to this digital treatment, a kind of trans-temporal and spatial environment has been created which further triggers the sensory palette of the viewer making it a sign eliciting other fantasies (Dyer, 2002). Nonetheless, this kind of show does nothing except to push the viewers into a virtual hype or hyperreal world with a lot of muddling effects or confusion. Digitalized Studio environment is but a waft, simulation and a mockery of the setting traditionally designed for Sufi singing. Using Dyer’s words, Coca Cola is a sign which triggers many other signs of imaginary pleasure as one would expect in any song with secular theme, e.g., “Hush, Hush” (2009) sung by the Pussy Cats.

Another aspect which is worth-noticing here that the central image used in the videos as the representative logo of Coca Cola Company is suggestive of even more subtle meanings. The floating of the logo/image in different directions, onto the surface and underneath the water, as mentioned above, also seems to refer to the allusive power and control of the agency to float or to hang-on to any TV channel it ventures for in order to air its shows. This entails that the company or the “medium” itself is a signifier that catches our attention more than what it conveys. It was McLuhan who said, “Medium is the message,” and it is the medium which shapes and controls “the scale and form of human

association and action” (1964, p. 9). In reality, what we, as viewers, tend to focus on, is not the medium, instead what comes in front of eyes, engages us more. Regarding the CS singing, there is hardly any viewer who might have missed the performance. Moreover, it was hard to miss it as the show was aired on many Pakistani TV channels concurrently. This is more particularly in the context of the CS, Season 8, which was launched in June 2015. The way the show used to appear every now and then onto the TV screen in an unwarranted way, boggled me as a viewer participant in the activity. This, in no way, can be made possible without high budgeting and financing. CS thus becomes a purely commercial discourse which is suggestive of its highly valued brand and global standing. The Studio manifests its overwhelming power, its brand consciousness and its logo of pure entertainment in different ways and in quite a theatrical manner, i.e., by capitalizing the spiritual values in this case. Exploiting Eco’s (1976) concept I would argue that something which is commercial cannot be a representative of the spiritual and any attempt of this kind would indeed be theatrical.

Continuing with the previous discussion of *mise-en-scene* with its central depiction of the Cola logo, here I would direct the reader’s attention to another delicate aspect, that is, how the Studio strategizes the display of visual imagery in lieu with the psyche and the funky trends of the selfie generation. Consider, for example, the shape of the bottle; it is showcased as if it is a smart gadget. It is sleek and slender, looks cool and trendy for its color and pattern. This tendency certainly refers to the “intrinsic mechanism of humans to anthropomorphize objects” (Song & Yamada, 2018, para 2). Although the image is not real, it is made more real than the real and hence hyperreal in Baudrillard’s (1994) view. Who would resist it and not carry the image along? This is how the companies set trends and remain in the center of the trendy gaze. To explore the point further I would point out the difference between the image displayed in the Studio and the actual physical coca cola bottle, the latter does not have this kind of curved shape or the other fancy aspects. So, what is being done is to create a quixotic image (simulation) as best as is possible and to no other but marketing end. Hence, the image is more real than what it is as an artefact which does not stand for other than itself, it only promotes itself through commercial and digital means.



### 5.2.2 Linguistic-Cum Optic Style

In the images above (Figure 29) and in all video songs, a linguistic representation of the visual image of the Coca Cola logo is presented in a very explicit way. The visual image may be called a quick, shorthand representation of the Cola Company having great impact but even in its written form, it is no less stylistic and has chromatic appeal. Moreover, its spatial dimensions are noteworthy as they influence the overall view and composition of the image (Eftaiha, 2012, para, 4). The image by its shape is vertical but is shown horizontally as a digital plaything; it flows towards the edges of the frame in duplication but remains well within the viewer's gaze. It catches the eye in its pictorial display- fluid, moving and in its written format- fixed and staying in prominence at the top left edge. Whereas a picture/image can speak more than a thousand words, writing tends to attract the eye the most and adds aesthetic quality to a work of art due to the information it carries (2012).

In this case, writing adds context to the image, gives it sense and frames it within place and time. The image thereby becomes alive with a specific meaning on account of what is termed as "framing effect" (Druckman, 2001, p. 95). Framing is a process whereby communicators, un/consciously, create a point of view that encourages the facts of a given situation to be taken by others in a specific manner (Kuypers, 2009). In the present context, the positioning, the color, font size and style of the Coca Cola image have been exploited to create a desired effect or frame, i.e., to popularize the brand. It is seen written on top left (privileged position) in every video in dull white with a little tinge of blue and with two different font sizes and styles. McCombs and other scholars agree that framing, along with priming, should be subsumed under the umbrella of "agenda setting" as a complex model of media effects which link media production, content and audience effects. Priming theory states that media images stimulate related thoughts in the minds of audience members (as cited in Kosicki, 1993, p. 53). CS discourse, therefore, is directed towards promoting a specific agenda.

Interestingly, even the style has been customized to achieve the desired impact. Keeping in view the commercial purpose, the "I" in Studio has been given a stylized effect since it is structured with the same bottle neck and shape, perhaps a two-in-one formula is followed; the I is an alphabet letter as well as a visual image, it is hybrid both

(non)linguistic. The visual or the graphic elements make the word an “image” (Falcidieno, 2017, p. 1) or it can be related to Deleuze’s (2002) concept of the moving image on account of the impact it has. In his view, the image directly acts on the senses, body and thought of the viewer obliterating the referential links that they might have in the outside reality and let every event happen just at the cognitive level (p. 5). This kind of affective response coming through a visual text disrupts difference between reality and irreality and subsequently changes the thought connection between image and viewer (as cited in Gormley, 2005, p. 15). In the similar context, Baudrillard argues that the “image” is an interesting read not only in its role as reflection, mirror, or counterpart to the real, but also “when it begins to contaminate reality” or better still when it appropriates reality for its own ends, when it anticipates it to the point that the real no longer has time to be produced as such (1994, p. 16). CS Sufi singing is a sign which exhibits these varying properties of simulation.

In all CS video songs, Coca Cola sign as a written logo appears in big and bold font which keeps hanging in the backdrop. Interestingly, the writing seems engraved rather than written and a kind of optic illusion is created as the logo appears both near and far from the sight. These are digitalized magical effects and by no other means except by using some software and towards no other end but their commercial promotion. This aspect again makes Cola image a sign which is suggestive of materiality in every sense of the word or a performance which is an attempt to contaminate reality or real Sufi music.

### **5.2.3 Electronic Raps and Taps**

The rest of the mise-en-scene consists of a jam of guitarists, pianists, saxophone players and drummers who make a simultaneous use of percussion instruments, e.g., Cymbals, *Dholak*, Piano and Drum etc. At surface level, this setting seems to suggest that CS is a trend setter and perhaps the trend can be set best by making a fusion of new and diverse singing. Klein’s words that multinational corporations sell “the perpetually new” are significant in this regard. In her book *No logo*, she powerfully demonstrates how this “diversity” is only a pretension in order to hide the fact that corporations are selling the sameness (as cited in Morin, n.d. p. 3).

However, in the present discussion, this diversity or a range of instrumentation used by CS in its Sufi singing also reveals subtle points. In reality, it is the instrumentation, the

music and the rhythm which is their prime focus. In other words, it is the exoteric and external which has been taken into account more than the significance it has at the signified level. The focus being on the surface, emphasizes a gap between an expression and its meaning, dividing between a sign (as a whole) and its referent (Brockelman, 2001, p. 71). The diverse assemblage of musical instruments for this genre of singing also implies a sort of casual and so-what attitude of the CS singers saying, “everything goes” and this makes their performance theatrical. To Brockelman, the “equivalent of theatricality is artificiality and it may be regarded as the single most pervasive property of the post-modern art” (pp. 54-64).

Harries relates modern art to the broader crisis of modern Western culture, a crisis he often evokes through Nietzsche’s “death of God.” Modern art, he says, has its origin in the collapse of the traditional order of values which once allocated man his proper place; knowing his place, man knew what to do. With the death of God, this order has lost both the founder and foundation, turning the world into a chaotic place- a place lacking in truth. In a godless world, everything seems to be allowed and by the same token everything threatens to become meaningless. To Vattimo, the postmodern is characterized by the “dissolution” of truth or at least its notion (as cited in Brockelman, pp. 39-40).

Connecting back with the discussion, the setting or huge instrumentation also carries a showy as well as disgruntled impact making the viewer seek pleasure by gazing at a mesmerizing play of instruments. In the performance, the instruments appear to be showcasing one after another precisely in the manner of the gorgeous damsels (models) who amazingly show up on the designated TV screen- to appear simply to disappear letting the next come in and do the same fancy drill. Fishwick’s use of the adjectives “hot stuff” and “gorgeous piece” for the celebrities perfectly describe the show here (2012, p. 76). In the view of these adjectives, the impact of these fashion drills on the audience is beyond any doubt; fun, excitement, pleasure and the like. These shows are not simply meant for the advertisement of certain brands, underneath the fancy display lies the enactment of even darker human instincts. One would make a simple query such as: what after all does it mean when a girl who is but less than half covered makes a smart play of the feminine delicacies and charms? One can imagine the amount of excitement it exerts on the audience however modest claims people might make. The answer as to why the majority of the

viewers are highly impacted by the CS performance, lies in the fact that the simulacrum always appears to be “true in its own right” (Baudrillard, 1994, p. 5).

It is the similar kind of impact that the Studio singers exert on the viewers. Sitting in (semi)circle, with stunning light, color and sound effects in the backdrop, the singers perform in a rather splashy manner with fusion of blows, plucks, clonks, strikes, throbs intermixed with electronic raps and taps and a lot more. This new music technology does nothing more than take us away from the “real music” to the realm of the “other music,” the hyperreal (as cited in Encabo, 2018, p. 18). The CS female guest singers at times intersperse the show with more bold and exciting dancing actions which the videographer captures without fail so as to be presented to the audience as an additional spice. The lead singers such as Fareeha Pervez, Meesha Shafi, Hadiqa Kiyani and Arif Lohar among others perform in their peculiar manner, with winning looks and dresses perfectly accessorized. What their smart demeanor and body language (non-verbal signs) speak is but irresistible and even sweeter though unheard and can easily drive people into sensory pleasure.

The viewers can well imagine the overwhelming impact the CS singers may have but more at the level of form, style, rhythm and modus-operandi than at the level of delivering the message the Sufi lyrics are meant for. They use their art for the sake of art, that is, the art that is meant only to please, entertain and satiate the visceral instincts of the viewers and not for any signified end. Hence, the split between form and meaning turns the singing into an instance of simulacra which in Baudrillard’s (1994) view is free of reference.

#### **5.2.4 Theatrical Play of Overdubbed Sounds**

All CS performers use in-ear monitors (which look like earphone) which are facilitating devices used for overdubbing in the digital recording system. The post-production often requires a process of overdubbing which is used in audio recording where music is pre-recorded, and during the replay, a new part is recorded to go along with the original (Zager, 2011, p. 34). Technically, the in-ear monitor lets the singers hear clearly their own prior recorded songs in the loud environment and helps them adjust their new recording. This procedure is done through the multi-track recorders that record each instrument on a separate track to be used later for mixing, editing and made subject to things like compression, equalization and edit/mix other effects separately. A particular care is taken while (re)editing and mixing so as to avoid any “bleed”-the amalgamation of

other noises such as that of car, or sound of another instrument etcetera that a microphone might have recorded (Bartlett, n.d. p. 209). This multi-track recording lets producers/singers manipulate with the sound in many ways. For instance, if there is only one or two artists involved in the recording process, overdubbing can give the effect of sounding like many performers (p. 209) and hence simulate. The musician Daniel Levitin (2006) proposed the term sound hyperreality to define those “sensory impressions we would never really have in the real world” (p. 2).

In Marvi’s *Mazil-e-Sufi*, for instance, we experience this hyperreality of sound. The singer’s voice entails crinkling effect particularly when she sings the refrain of song and is reverberated and drawn-out very long in the manner of the rippling sound of water which in Gonzalez’s words may be called “technologically mediated sensations” (2018. p. 29). These fancy effects and “with reverberation and all its related effects we can create all kinds of depths, both real and completely unreal” (p. 27). The song creates a spectacle of hyperreality which would fit more in a song like “Hush Hush” but not any mystic singing undertaken by the Coke singers. What is being enacted is more a masking than communicating the signified reality embedded in the poetic text being sung and thereby causing a split between the signifier and the signified.

Accessorized with this tech thing, in-ear monitors, the CS performers appear to be a little outlandish and give rather an astronautic or similar kind of effect. Even a quick and a close one-shot review will divulge how this very aspect has heavily affected the whole atmosphere and thereby a hyperreal milieu prevails in the Studio. One may be prompted to ask whether this singing is “mystic or surrealistic” (p. 26). Moreover, since these in-ear monitors are meant to let the singers remain focused on their individual performance, each one is self-contained fancying for soloist actions and keeping a psychological rift/distance. Consequently, the passionate and collective energy (seen Usually, in most of the liturgical gatherings) that needs to be consumed for mystic singing is not seen here. Other techniques such as the overdubbed recording and layered musical instrumentation also create discrete effects since the (re)recorded voice travels via digital and not analogue coding and the same goes for the recorded music of various instruments which is dubbed later. May be, these dubbed effects are used to sort of compensate the lack, or to fill in gap.

What happens, in reality, is that these techniques breed surrealistic and hypnotic effects than any kind of spiritual impact. This new music technology does nothing more than move us away from the “real music” to the realm of the “other music,” the hyperreal (as cited in Gonzalez, p. 18). Though CS is not focused on the original, the “duplicate” or the new Sufi singing is very popular amongst the common masses. In this context, Baudrillard’s words are noteworthy as he says, “simulacrum is not a copy of the real, but becomes truth in its own right” (Baudrillard, 1994, p. 5).

In the CS singing, therefore it is the sign, the enactment and the phenomenon which is centered on and around itself and not oriented towards any symbolic exchange of meaning. It is focused on itself, on its own “truth,” its reality as a “showbiz” and communicates the same to the viewers. The incongruity is evident between its claim of Sufi singing and the kind of treatment it is given. To elucidate this inconsistency, the term theater would be more appropriate and it definitely playing theater.

### **5.3 Colors, Funks and Commodity**

Colors speak their own language and negotiate motely effects in any visual text, be it film, drama or video songs. Colors add soft, mellifluous and naturally pleasant effect or else may cross over the usual upshot and burst with jarring, eerie and supernatural if not precisely vile effects. In any case, color palette is meant to add resonance and richness, tone, timbre, depth and some dramatic and supernatural touch in a visual text. Colors such as red, auburn, yellow and violet are termed as advancing colors. “When given high intensity and dark value, they seem to advance, making objects appear larger and closer to the camera than they are” (Boggs & Petrie, 2004, p. 210). At times when the intensity of these colors is a little more exaggerated, the effect is neither jarring nor pleasing, instead it is both and yet none for which a more appropriate term hyper is used.

Colors function in many ways and have various semiotic effects; atmospheric, symbolic, for expressionistic purpose and for making transitions within scenes/shots (2004, p. 157). Another way to use colors in a way which would blur any distinctive effect between various hues and the upshot is something above normal, unreal or hyperreal the way it happens in many noir films. This trend is seen more in the contemporary times though its roots may be traced back in the early 20s. In contrast to the tradition of using chromatic effects with a purpose prior to the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, the new trends which emerged

in literature, art, music in the aftermath of the First World War under the influence of Avant-guard movements such as Dadaism, Cubism and Surrealism were of more abstract, non-specific and eerie in nature (Desmond, 2011, p. 148). Whereas the Avant guard artists (modernism) expressed concern for the spiritual values lost in the horrors of the two world wars in their compositions, the work that followed from the mid to the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (postmodernism) featured signs of an outlook with far less concern regarding identity, belongingness to one's culture and faith. Consequently, a so-what kind of attitude emerged measuring even more delicate aspects of human life such as identity, culture or religion with the same nonchalant and petty scale of materialism. New terms such as relativity or plurality, however, were crafted to theorize the fakery and ersatz (p. 148).

The Avant-guard writers sought a way out to recuperate spiritual strength by embracing non-human and abstract modes of expression and thereby tried to find meaning in the world of chaos, disruption and meaninglessness. In reality, what they strove for was to fill the vacuum surrounding human life with more vacuum and absurdity but they considered it intellectual to celebrate the loss (2011, p. 4). To put it simple, postmodernism celebrates banana peeling for the sake of peeling and not for its purpose or the nutritive value it carries and ergo the act of celebration is merely skin-deep, ornamental lacking in symbolic signification. In fact, most of our enactments are but false, fake and empty signifiers which buzz all around signifying nothing, be it the words we speak or the promises we keep. It is in this context that Baudrillard pointed out that signs no more stand for any symbolic exchange of meaning or reality and are bereft of any signification and hence not real for which he used the term hyperreal.

The present world as Hebdige rightly points out fancies more for an array of "images, codes and styles" (as cited in Force, 2009, p. 295) than the traditionally known morals, codes of conduct and behavior. To elucidate more, I would say that "style" is but a modern and richly-fed parasite which is thriving on the beats of funky funks and fads in the consumer culture and the more it is fed, the more it asks for like a crazy jinni and ergo goes untermminated. The same funky situation is narrated very adroitly by Virginia Woolf in her story *The Duchess and the Jeweler* (1938) wherein the jeweler accumulates more and more wealth to earn glory and status but what he makes out at the end of the day is fakery and loss of identity. Woolf uses animal imagery and depicts Oliver Bacon, the jeweler, who

like “a giant hog in a pasture rich with truffles; after unearthing this truffle and that, still it smells a bigger, a blacker truffle under the ground further off” (p. 1). She uses the imagery to describe his smallness and guilt but the specter of vanity, wealth and riches always takes over. In the same way, the modern world being capitalistic in nature, is surrounded by fakery and incredulity wherein objects/articles/items (signs) are themselves and not their substance which is of prime importance. This implies that either there is no reality and material signs are altogether superficial or the reality is kept hidden.

Umberto Eco (1976) pointed out that signs are being used to lie and to mislead. Similarly, Baudrillard (1994) said that not only signs are bereft of any reality or signification but what they present is only a spectacle of *signness* (Trifonas, 2015, p. 8) or at the most an artificial discourse. This spectacle of *signness* also relates to the chromatic scheme used in the selected CS video songs. In the selected videos, colors do have resilience or colorfulness but it is hard to trace their relevance to semiotics of the Sufi text being sung. The web designers seem to have taken into account the major components of modern color theory, that is, complementation, contrast and vibrancy while designing the color scheme of videos which is as per the new trends of the consumer market (Cole, 1980, p. 11). Vibrant colors such as red, purple and blue with black in the backdrop form the major color palette in the selected videos. These colors have the power to emotionally engage the viewers as proponed by color theories. The web designers who work for various companies, therefore, exploit this power in their designs. Red color which has this peculiar buoyancy, is being used by topmost marketing agencies including the CS to attract consumers. Red dominates even when it takes up a relatively small portion of the frame and in Matisse’s words, “A thimble of red is redder than a bucketful” (Malpas, 2007, p. 23). For instance, a stark red banner is seen across the top of CNN’s website and the purpose is none but to advertise and to grab user’s attention. Hence, what is more important is to construct sign as a fancy object, a spectacle and a commodity to be used as a marketing ploy. Be it the CNN agency or CS, it is the *signness* as pointed out by Baudrillard which is taken into account.

### **5.3.1 Colors and the Feel-Good Consumer Niche**

Colors function in many ways and have various semiotic effects; atmospheric, symbolic, expressionistic and for making transitions within scenes/shots (Chaudhuri, 2016,



p. 157). The colors in this context are used largely for atmospheric effect or to construct a specific mood of jubilation as is seen in the musical performance of CS Sufi songs, (see 4.3). Screen shots taken from two songs “Alif Allah Jugni” and “Manzel-e-Sufi” (Figure 30) attached below reveal that a triadic contrast of colors has been employed to form the major color palette. Three colors red, purple and blue have been used to construct an overall view or setting of the videos. In addition, the use of muted white is seen in the wording of the company logo at the top left side. For the backdrop setting, black color has been employed in all videos. The question as to why a contrast of vibrant colors is used mostly by web designers working for corporations, Chaudhuri states that by using a good contrast of colors, the designer may help focus the viewer’s attention on specific page elements and this remark seems relevant here keeping in view the color scheme.



*Figure 30.* Images taken from songs- Alif Allah Jugni (Song 4), Manzel-e-Sufi (Song 6), reveal that a triadic contrast of colors has been employed to form the major color palette.

The three colors- red, purple and blue, as the videos show, have an awfully exciting texture: they are effervescent and bubbly meant to excite and please (Dyer's concept of pleasure) the viewers as is the CNN case mentioned above shows and the same goes for CS. It may be argued that measuring color designs in that way could be really hard but talk to any web designer, a connoisseur or search color theories, the same as stated by Cannon (2012) will be endorsed. Hence it may be agreed upon that the intent that underlies this particular color palette is not free of the promotional and commercial inclination of the CS.

Among the three components of color theory mentioned above, the element of vibrancy is a little funky and needs elucidation as highly "colorful style impoverishes content" (Chaudhuri, p. 155). In fact, a color becomes vibrant when it stands out amidst the background as the colors in the Figure are seen. The black color which is in direct contrast to the colors in front, has been used as a ploy to heighten the desired effect, as it is used in various contexts (p. 155). The effect is created through "chromatic difference of magnification" (Thompson, May & Stone, 1993). The black as a backdrop color functions to evoke and enhance the chromatic texture of other colors applied. The contrasting texture thus evokes a mood of joviality which triggers other signs such as desire, excitement, fantasy and pleasure as Dyer (2002) points out. The chromatic setting is, therefore, a sign which evokes merely an emotive response among the viewers since it is intended towards it; it does not touch them at spiritual level or engage them into a meaningful discourse via the Sufi singing. Eisenstein (1991) sought to "establish the place of color on an equal footing with other elements of montage," (as cited in Thompson, 1993), implying that colors should fit in with other elements (music, cinema, painting). Kalmus's words also suggest the need for a careful color selection as "the design and colors of sets and other furnishings must be selected as an artist would choose colors from his palette," (As cited in Chaudhuri, p. 159). In contrast to these insights, the Modernist ambition is, "to give form and location to sights so evanescent and complex that they could hardly be named" (p. 159) and this tendency is obvious in CS performances.

The overall CS discourse presented in the mise-en-scene, setting or color palette is phony and lacks substance as one would expect in Sufi singing. It is yet another kind of consumer niche, a maneuvering ploy being used by the Studio like any other agency using stunts to market its items. For instance, the green discourse taken up by the Body Shop

though is meant to express its ecological and ethical concerns, it is but an attempt to devise “a new register of meaning” (as cited in Amberg & Fogarassy, 2019, p. 41) or a new market niche to attract the green consumers. Whether how much green the Body Shop purports to be by offering green cosmetics manufactured out of natural ingredients, it operates first and foremost as a part of the cosmetics industry and would prioritize its financial profits than ecological concerns. It is not difficult to see how these modern industries exploit theoretical and contextual debates to construct their own narratives. (As is the narrative of mysticism & peace). Notice, for instance, the Body Shop’s use of the emerging popular notion green and exploitation of the popular term Sufi music by the CS. Both appear to be engaged in creating myths or modern theoretical notions such as “feel good” (as cited in 2019, p. 43) for the consumers; feeling good by using the green cosmetics or by listening to the quality Sufi music. CS adds quality to the Sufi music by adding the spice of fusion- and keep doing every kind of truncation in the name of fusion. What Whitley (1993) notes in the context of the Body Shop seems fit for the present discussion as well. He writes that the companies with specific high credentials after all have done “nothing more than discover and exploit previously underexplored opportunities in the marketplace” (as cited in Amberg & Fogarassy, 2019, p. 45).

### **5.3.2 Colors and a Near-Gaze Site of Instruments**

Another notable aspect regarding the color palette of the CS is the instrumental role that the colors perform in the overall mise-en-scene. The shots below taken from two songs, “Mein Sufi Hun” and “Ishq Di Booti” unfold how the musical instruments stand out amidst the backdrop and present a spectacular show.

In the screen shot taken from “Ishq di booti” (Song 12), black color in its saturated form has been used in the backdrop and none of the three sides of frame has been left out. Since the background is having the saturated color, that is, the color in its darker intense form, this creates a massively monochromatic impact as far as the surrounding is concerned. The purpose is obvious, that is, to offer a discernable fore-view and thus an “eye appeal” which turns it into an object of glamour and hence pleasing (Kaplan & Loow, 2002, p. 38) for the viewers. Four drummers playing their *dhol* (a kind of big bass drum, cylindrical and with a struck head at both ends) zoom in and turn out to be a near-gaze site which opens up by itself, its size, shape or accessories all become an object of interest for

the onlooker gaining a material pull. The instrument thus gives a trail-blaze effect and engage the viewer at close quarters.



*Figure 31.* Images taken from two CS songs show how musical instruments stand out amidst colors/shades- saturated black in *Ishq di Booti* (Song 12), and the vibrant blue in *Main Sufi Hun* (Song 13)

Red color has also been used to create a near view effect and to enhance the visual readability of the instruments being objectified. The color red basically delimits the focus on and around the target view and constrains it to wander to anything else. At least seven upright streaks of deep red are interspersed in the backdrop to enhance the instruments and present them as the focus of gaze for the viewers. Moreover, *dhols* are also accessorized with strings of red color since they are woven around its cylindrical shape which is basically meant for (re)adjusting the tension but is serving the purpose of attraction also.

In the shot below from “*Mein Sufi Hun*” (Song 13), blue color is noted for its accentuating and a kind of rainbow effect. It seems to have sprinkled like a sheet of cloud

leaving spaces across the sky which look more vibrant with its own hue. This effect of blue in the shot above makes the left-over slots shine, pinks and whites, more vehemently. It is easy to infer how a dual effect has been created the way it happens at times when sunshine and rain coalesce. Within the prism of the bluish shades, the percussion drum set comes to the forefront, gains more substance or an “added value” (2006, p. 38) and therefore a sign of visual attraction for the onlooker. Each part of the percussion set; drum (bass, snare and tenor drums), cymbal (hi-capped, superior, inferior cymbals), percussion stick, tripod stand and the tension screws gains value and substance and hence are noted as signs of materiality because of the color palette employed.

### **5.3.3 Grey Scale to Foreground the Brass and String Instruments**

As mentioned earlier that instrumentation is what the CS emphasizes in its Sufi singing which eclipses the message of the text being sung. Two more instances from songs “Ishq Di Booti” (Song 12) and “Charkha Nolakha” (Song 10) are cited below to substantiate the point.

In the shot below from “Ishq Di Booti” (Song 12), it is the instruments which are being accentuated. Here the whole grey scale has been deployed to keep the surrounding effect rather subdued and muted and even the costumes of music players are in a way blended with the use of soft and light colors. The brass family instruments (trumpet, trombone) woodwind family (saxophone, clarinet) are seen highlighted, all in golden color.

In the shot below from “Charkha Nolakha” (Song 10), again colors have been used to foreground instruments and in this case string family instruments (guitar, electric guitar) are placed as stylistically engaging. CS, therefore, seems to follow the New Age trends in its singing with its focus on style and color ambience than carrying any kind of spiritual feeling. This element brings it closer to the genre of ambient music which started in the 70’s with its focus on the visual and atmospheric in order to attract the viewer/listener more. The idea underpinning this genre was to present a discourse which could influence the viewer/listener and make them perceive it as the new reality in the music industry of late 20<sup>th</sup> century. A number of innovations, e.g., electronic instruments and synthesizers were introduced by the pioneers of this genre including the famous person, Brian Eno.



*Figure 32.* Images taken from two songs: in the image below from *Ishq di Booti* (Song 12), brass (trumpet, trombone) & woodwind (saxophone, clarinet) families are foregrounded via the grey scale of colors; in the above from *Charkha Nolakha* (Song 10), string family is foregrounded through colors.

CS seems to draw on a number of music genres of the New Age, e.g., jazz, rock, pop and ambient music and trance ambient in particular (refer to the discussion above). The features that these varieties of music share include fusion, innovation, rhythm, thrill, beat, heavy instrumentation, the use of electronic instruments and synthesizers and the like. Putting in the ecology the New Age phenomenon, all these music genres center on the notion of the “new”, e.g., new media, new music and new genre and the term “new” refers to a cluster of exciting, trendy and glamorous meanings as is seen in the case of CS also. More importantly the term is underpinned with new notions of progress, evolution, global and cultural consciousness. Far from being a simple idea, it has deeper implications and

refers to some basic societal and economic structures taking place globally from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards causing disruption in the traditional faiths and the value of symbolic meaning.

The new structures are more apprehensive of superficialities and cults of style, trends and market for which Hanegraaf (2000) use the term “cultic milieu” of the New Age. Though the writers talk about this phenomenon with reference to the American society, the same has heavily influenced other cultures and societies and the change is defined by all under the banner of the New Age. More importantly it has also affected the vital aspects of human life such as faith and spirituality. The New Age theology displays a universalistic approach (inclusivist) which accepts all subjective viewpoints on the Divine as being equally valid and the new trend is to intermix the secular and the spiritual which is gaining currency via agencies like CS. It rather consumes spirituality as a tool to promote starship and female glamour in order to get in the global market and models ways of production and dissemination for the upcoming music forums, e.g., Nescafe Basement. Hence it is easy to see the purpose(s) underpinning these agencies which Lister (2009) points out as ideological and states that the New Media is “rarely if ever ideologically neutral” (p. 11).

New discourses such as peace and spirituality, music, fun and stress management, love, healing and Coca Cola are presently among the most popular cross-cultural talks and are being used by various agencies in amazing contrasts which nonetheless is theatrical in nature, if I use Eco’s term. For instance, Body Shop becomes green (ecology), Nestle picks up CSV (Creating Shared Value) formula and CS deploys Sufi music and all use these socio-cultural resources for particular ends. The companies without any doubt prioritize their agenda in terms of their commercial benefits. This is paradoxical that we say one thing in terms of another and the companies are not an exception. In reality today’s world is full of such paradoxes that we do not mean to say what we say and neither we are concerned with it and this is how Baudrillard’s simulation takes place. These are the new discourses or new “categories of thought and perception” which the societies and cultures are embracing rapidly and this is what our art and cultural productions represent largely.

## 5.4 Lighting

The use of light is another significant feature of the overall setting of a visual text. Light plays pivotal role in creating specific effects. Depending on the context or need, either low or high key light may be employed. When natural light is enhanced by a set of lights, that is, key light, back light, fill and background lights among other kind of lights, it may be described in different ways. In Gaffney's view whether it is in the studio, set, or on location, light is controlled and manipulated in order to achieve the look desired for a particular shot or scene (as cited in Butler, 2005).



*Figure 33.* Images taken from two songs- Kamlee (Song 9) & Charkha Nolakha (Song 10), display color images/effects via generating the red, green and blue lights

High key light is normally used to depict pleasant, cheerful scenes or at times to create supernatural environment whereas low key is used to convey a gloomy, ambiguous or mysterious effect. To analyse various shades of light in a visual text, it is important to take into account the source, direction as well as the nature of light. For instance, sun light would convey different meaning but in case it is candle light, the implication may turn out



to be opposite. Moreover, to analyse how bright the light is, whether flickering and the like is also significant. Lastly, the colour of the light helps the spectators to dig out meanings and inter-relate them to the overall atmosphere of a scene/shot in a specific setting. Butler (2005) endorses this point and says, “The color of the light--red, green, blue and so forth--will have an impact on how we relate to a scene” (p. 29).

Low key refers to a shot or scene which largely displays areas imbued with shadowy effects and this style is awfully significant in every kind of cinematography since it helps to create chiaroscuro effect by using one key light coming mostly from a reflector or dimmer(s) (Pramaggiore & Wallis, 2005, p. 81). Light in low key is needed to accentuate the contours of an item/object as well as to build a contrast which occurs when minimum light is thrown on the shadowy areas. The term low key is Usually, associated with German Expressionism and later came to be used in film noir and horror genres (2005, p. 8).

Lighting as the Figure above reveals, plays an equally significant role in the selected video songs particularly because of digital RGB (red, green, blue) effects which play a great role in enhancing the impact of illumination. RGB is basically the computer’s built-in color space or said simply it is an electronic system designed to capture and display color images by generating red, green and blue lights (Hirsch, 2004). RGB model of color and light display is meant for digital communications such as websites, TV, mobiles and computer whereas CMYK (cyan, magenta, yellow, key black) is used for printing stuff, like brochures etc. RGB is recognized to be a model of primary colors widely in the color/design market and the reason being that our eyes have a natural capacity to interact with these colors and our brain does the rest of the labor, i.e., intermixing. RGB (tri-color light-emitting diode or LED) is known as an additive model whereby colors are added or mixed up together to construct what we see on the screen (Malpas, 2007, pp, 12-13). In reality, tiny pixels on a computer or television screen, if viewed under a magnifying glass, are one of these three colors. Light is projected through the pixels which helps blend the colors on the eye’s retina and creates the colors desired after (pixels are the smallest elements of an image that can be individually processed in a video display system).

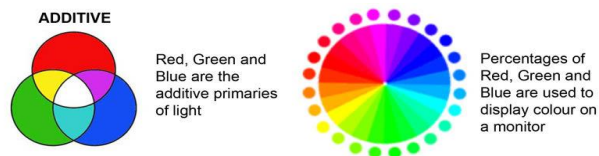


Figure 34. RGB Color & CMYK models taken from ineasysteps.com

In the current scenario, use of digital RGB is a common practice in all digital communications and the same goes with CS. Digital-RGB LEDs are the kind that contain their own smart control electronics and micro-processing system which control the brightness and color of each LED independently of others (Edwards, n.d. p. 2).

#### 5.4.1 RGB Flickers, Fun and Fantasy

Since CS uses digital RGB system of light and color, it has the control to use light in any way or introduce any kind of digital aesthetics for the viewers, an addition to the visual semiotics. The screen shots above (Figure 33), a digitalized spectacle which is peculiar to CS video songs, is very much eye-catching.

The background milieu in both the images shows a spectacle of flickering lights with red as a powerful contrast and blue having more sensory appeal for the viewers. The digital RGB display is further enhanced with high and low-key light effects so as to illumine the blank, dark spaces with tiny blinks. Tri-color lights seen in the front back seem to be woven in a pattern and move in a quick succession and animation which interweave a little drama into the on-going course of action (Cole, 1990, p. 11). The colors, lights, animation and dramatic effect though seem to be woven in a pattern are yet randomly picked and edited. Seeing the lights going in motion, fading in and out, makes it a continuous play of construction and deconstruction or pattern and randomness, a trick of the digital binaries.

In fact, the whole scene in the above shots, the lights, the images all flow up, sprout, take shape, squeeze and crash constructing a dialectic of their own which goes in an unbroken but empty cycle as does Sisyphus in Beckett's play. The images flow in a sequence and yet the sequence is disrupted which helps keep the upbeat of excitement, suspense and pleasure. Digital aesthetics/semiotics would thus place the modern viewer in an imaginary island which displays but one encoded message, i.e., desire and desire in Dyer's view is a sign which triggers a multitude of signs, of pleasure, of fantasy. The

digitalized arena in the shots above thus acts as an object fetishized for the pleasure of viewers which in Umberto Eco's (1979) words may be called "a text whose content is a multilevel discourse" (p. 57).



*Figure 35.* Images taken from two songs- display color images/effects via generating the red, green and blue lights

As the images above show that the "flowing image" flows (Hayles, 1999, p. 26) for the pleasure-seeking viewer in a way as if it is a force or a fetish embodied with magical potency to leave the viewer with no option but enter a simulated arena unfolding a trail of kinesthetic imagery for them. Such is the cogency of the digital discourse- the modern avatar that has the power to enact upon the subliminal vexations of the human body via "connecting body and simulation in a technobio-integrated circuit" (Hayles, p. 27) and turning them into new kind of subjectivities, mesmerized/hypnotized. Hypnotism as it has its own mind-body debates propped by many theorists, e.g., Erickson, Carpenter and Braid. It would not be irrelevant to relate the discussion of the transformative power of the

new digital signs/codes to what James Braid (1795-1860) stated regarding the power of mind over body and how mind evokes bodily reaction. For instance, the idea of sucking lemon would robotically arouse salivation or some awful, supernatural element could make blood creep inside the body or increase blood pressure in one's body, in Braid's view. The term that he used to describe this subliminal reaction of body was "mono-ideo-dynamics" (as cited in Palmer, 2015, p. 438).

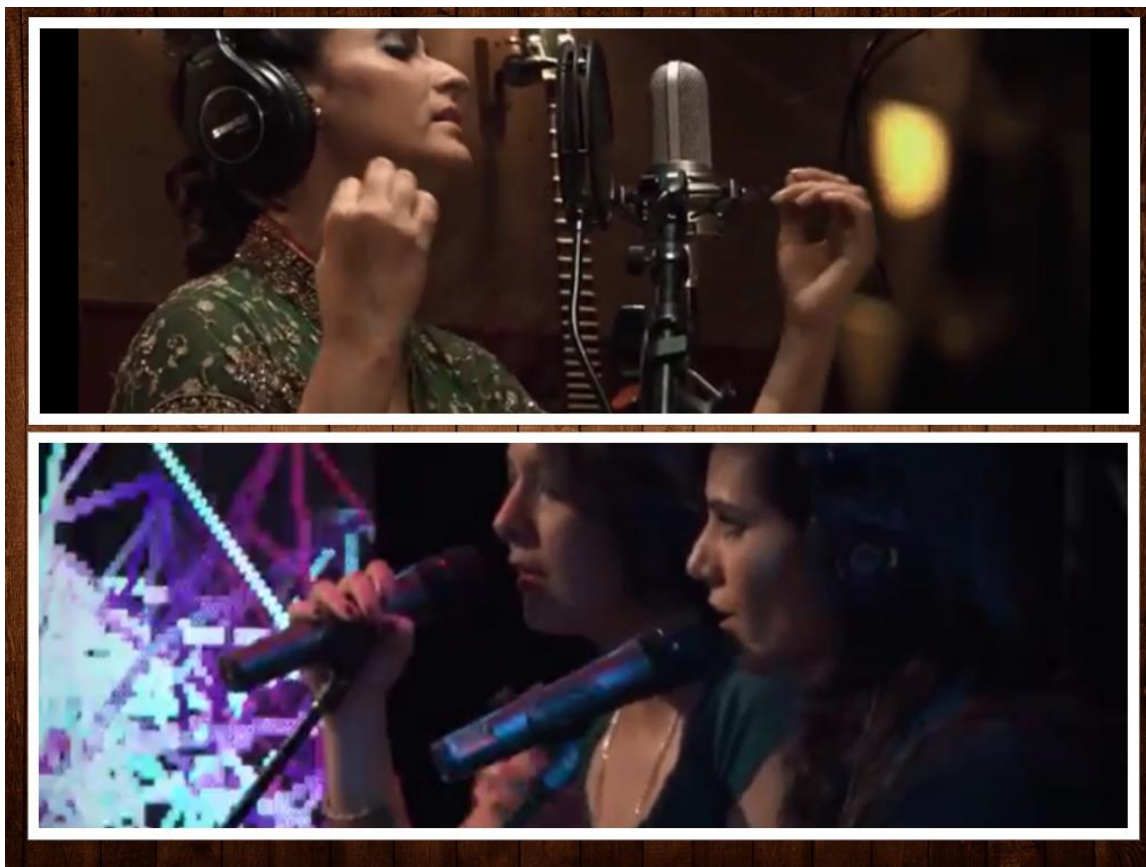
The point is that if simply an idea or the thought of something can induce such a strong bodily reaction, one can easily imagine the amount of implosive and multi-sensory effect a visual image would conjure in the mind of the subject or viewer.

#### **5.4.2 Lighting and Female as Fetish**

The spectacle created through lighting in the images below (Figure 36) is noticeable. The candle light effect in the screen shot taken from "Jogi" (Song 11) and a robust, breezy color effect facing the two guest (back) singers created through lights in the other shot "Charkha Nolakha" (Song 10). The meaning that underlies the camera angle and the position of lighting is easy to infer. But one cannot perhaps oversimplify the notion since it raises a number of questions, e.g., the question of ideology, politics of representation or systems of meaning (Barthes). Does the picture signify an image or description of an image or both? What New Age cult, what form of identity, self-image and celebrity culture are being projected? Or an attempt to present celebrity culture as the idealized form of fashion and representation? Non-verbal signs as they are, they hold tremendous significance since they produce a trail of complex signs which are rhizomatous in nature (Mccornack, 2019, p. 138). Nonetheless the imagery being evoked in the shots above is of exhilarating nature though it represents one aspect of reality also.

The imagery that the figure below invokes is as exotic and real as the one conjured via the Coca Cola advertisement created in the 70's by three directors of the company Backer, Cook and Davis. What it stated is interesting to note, "I'd like to teach the world to sing in perfect harmony, I'd like to buy the world a Coke and keep it company. It's the real thing, Coke is what the world wants today," (as cited in Svendsen, 2013, p. 1). Note how the real thing phenomenon is created, theorized and naturalized via playing the keynotes of the new cognition which is centered on the philosophy of pleasure and entertainment. What a smart use of the Derridian Deconstruction (construction in reverse)

by the Cola directors, I would say, which ventures like other big agencies to create new subjectivities. And see the results! We all have internalized the Coca Cola philosophy of Open Happiness (Svendsen, p. 3) and its theory of the real thing and so have made it a compulsory item of our day-to-day meals.



*Figure 36.* Images taken from two songs- Jogi (Song 11) & Charkha Nolakha (Song 10) which are specifically noted for the camera angle and the position of lighting toward the female

The cola drink is thus no more a mere drink or a liquid refresher, it is a fetishized image we can toy with, or romanticize or enjoy in company and this is precisely what Backer (1993), “In that moment ... [I] began to see a bottle of Coca-Cola as more than a drink ... [I] began to see the familiar words, ‘Let’s have a Coke,’ as a subtle way of saying ‘Let’s keep each other company for a little while’ (as cited in Svendsen, 2013, pp. 1-2). Another Cola advertisement [*Sohnian*, Coca-Cola *Pila dey/O*, my beautiful beloved! Make me drink the fizzy Coca Cola] seen on all TV channel these days is an extension of its original Entertainment logo and has gained a tremendous popularity since it has been

invested with the meaning that would appeal to the emerging trends of the New Age. According to Lister (2009), “new media is rarely if ever ideologically neutral” (p. 11). The celebration and incessant promotion of the new media and ICTs in both state and corporate sector cannot be disassociated from the globalizing neo-liberal forms of production and distribution which have been characteristic of the past twenty years.

In the CS video songs, like the Coca Cola logo female body is used as a fetishized image, a plaything in the digital market of simulacra as the shots above (Figure 36) and in many sections below reveal. At an overarching level, CS itself turns out to be a material sign using female currency as a cultural capital in the midst of the new material games taking place within the digital context and guerilla marketing. And perhaps it aims to use this currency as the only option or way out to be a part of the global within new systems of representation and meaning.

### **5.5 Videography/Camerawork**

Camerawork is even trickier and constitutive in nature. Camera angle, e.g., camera set at a higher position, oblique or close to its target plays a tremendous role with regard to how the videographer has tried to frame the event/scene or codify an implicit layer of meaning or point of view of the agency behind. A camera from a higher angle, for instance, might convey the triviality or insignificance of an object and zooming-in might suggest that a keen attention is being paid to a specific object or person. Zooming-out would imply that the interest is “to take in more of the setting” (Millerson, Owens & College, 2008, p. 33). Secondly camera movement is also significant. It may be a crane shot, that is, when the camera is moved to the forward or backward or to an up and down track. It may be a pan movement, i.e., moving the camera on either of the sides or even on any direction provided it is placed at a certain distance from the target. In addition to the angle and movement, the videographer may opt for any kind of shot, i.e., long, short and medium depending on what is required. Moreover, the shot size may vary between two extremes, long and short. In Gaffney’s view, the videographer can deploy even an extreme long shot (ELS) or an extreme close-up (ECU) closing in on just part of the face. There may be simply a long shot (LS) framing a full-length of the character or object, a medium shot (MS) giving half a standing character, and a close-up (CU) giving a head and shoulders shot (p. 32).

Videography is required to capture the in-shot narrative or the mise-en-scene of a text. The mise en scene, composition of the shot and framing are closely linked. It depends on how the videographer uses the camera lens that framing is realised since it is matter of what to include in a shot. “Framing refers to the edges of a shot and determines what is to be excluded and what is to be included” (Woźnicka, 2008, p. 14). Another significant aspect of videography is known as depth of field, that is, whether the focus is on the whole event/scene or on just a small part of it. The former is called deep focus which captures everything lying within the target scene, foreground as well as background. The latter is the shallow focus which concentrates only on one part, segment or element of the shot.

### **5.5.1 Female Framing: A Spectacle for Gaze**

As far as videography in CS songs is concerned, three aspects out of many, i.e., framing, shot size and depth of field are more relevant in analysing the CS singing discourse. For instance, in the screen shots below taken from “Alif Allah Jugni” (Song 4), and “Jogi Mairy naal” (Song 11), reveal the framing of the female singers in close-ups, with all their facial and bodily contours which remain well within the reach of the viewer’s gaze and create a spectacle for the public gaze. This gaze fixes the woman and makes her the object, not subject, of desire. It attributes meanings to her that are derived from another (male) perception or reading of the female bodily text” (Hayward, 2013, p. 319).

The Figure above reveals that the zoom-in focus of the camera has been deployed to capture over the shoulder close-ups of the female CS singers. The shots have been framed in various sizes ranging between medium to slightly extreme close-up and with a shallow focus. Moreover, the position of the camera seems to be slightly oblique with camera placement at some distance rather than very close. The camera position thus technically facilitates the videographer to take the shot in its close-up without risking the intended silouhete effect by directly putting heavy flash of camera on the face. Framed thus via close-ups as shown above, the female singers with all their facial and bodily contours remain well within the reach of the viewer’s gaze and create a spectacle of “visual meaning” (Woźnicka, 2008, p. 13). Further the background, proportion of light and colors, is captured in a way that it exists only as an abstract entity in the background and at the most remains a digitally RGB color design. And though it remains well within the range

of the viewer's perception, it does not obscure a full view of the female face and figure, rather it allows an emphatic view.



*Figure 37.* Images taken from two songs- Alif Allah Jugni (Song 4) and Jogi Mairy naal (Song 11) are noted for a zoom-in focus of the camera to capture over the shoulder close-ups of the female CS singers

Though the close-up shots lack contextual detail, the color pattern, however, still performs some function. It seems to enact a dual role which assimilates as well as discerns the female figure from the periphery. Assimilating effect is created, for instance, in close-up shot capturing Shafi, by interweaving red color in the left side of the backdrop pattern since it co-matches with the red shirt the singer is clad in. It is through “controlling color” that a specific mood or visual harmony or else cacophony is created (Collopy, 2000, p. 356). Whereas the same pattern allows her enough space to stand distinguished with the contrast of her black blazer giving an exhaustive view of her feminine delicacies and accessories. As the camera angle puts her in a medium close-up shot, it presents a



wholesome, one-glance view, that is, her youthful oval face with features well-defined, blonde hair smoothly falling onto the neck line in a grooving, casual way, fair slender arm, beautiful and adorned hand on the mike and the neck-line wreathed for a suggestive transplay and easy to be mapped by the imagination of the viewer. This sort of camera shot of a female figure creates a spectacle for the male gaze particularly warranting them a “psychic body” to be carried along even if the “physical form drops off” (2000, p. 344). For the female viewers, it would be suggestive of an ideal picture of the female figure and adoration of celebrity culture. CS thus employs female agency and celebrity culture as discursive means to promote the neo-liberal agenda of the New Age.

In Dyer’s (2002) view, what has become a fashion in every cultural or art production as the New Age phenomenon and is being used as a trope is to put female stars to a glamorous space and CS is not an exception. Keeping this aspect in mind, the CS singing is not suggestive of just a simple kind of pleasure and entertainment, it presents a discourse which is more alusive, more of performative kind characterized by an “*élan* of the musical, the allure of stars” (p. 2), sensuality and the excitement of action and thrill and thereby it provokes the idea of new subjectivities. The Studio enacts this discourse by using an “affective code” or formal properties in its production which entails a specific response, excitement and utopian pleasure in the viewers. Production agencies, e.g., the Studio is aware of the smart ways of presenting the female glamor well within its discourse by making “use of editing to display” in Dyer’s view (p. 2) as the figure above provides the evidence. The discourse is thus underpinned by what I call utopian pleasure and happiness.

Another aspect that Dyer (2002) underscores regarding the celebrated space the female artists are assigned in a cultural production is worth noting. Dyer’s statement that the “musical is unusual in assigning the experience of expansion to female characters” (p. 2) further elaborates my argument regarding the female celebrity space or expansion because that is assigned to female singers in CS singing. Female agency thus plays an important role in the Studio singing and also enacts as a discursive sign for the agency to promote the liberal agenda of the New Age. CS thus vocalizes the idea of entertainment which according to Dyer (2002), is not a straightforward formula of simple fun and enjoyment, it is in itself a site of pleasure and fantasy or a notion which is structured on the utopian philosophy; it does not present a model(s) of the utopian as was the case in the

classic utopias rather it is an embodied illustration of the utopian and “presents, head-on as it were, what utopia would feel like ... and works at the level of sensibility” and (p. 20).

### 5.5.2 Close-Up and the Female Fetish

The second close-up presents Fareeha Pervez (Figure 37) the singer, in a posture which reminds me of the Keatsian metaphor of an “unravished bride of quietness” though the Studio context does make her sing to a “sensual ear” (Keats, 1819). In the close-up view, the singer appears self-contained with her calm, quiet posture and yet her song can drive the audience into the cross-cultural space through the new digital modes of dissemination. As the image/shot reveals that the background plays a dual role as is seen in other Figures attached. It is the muted golden with a tinge of soft yellow which co-matches with the singer’s dress producing an assimilating effect and yet the singer stands out due to the contrast of her green apparel with copper sequins. By presenting her so, the camera fixes her and “in so doing fetishizes her and attributes meanings to her that are derived from another (male) perception or reading of the female bodily text” (Hayward, 2013, p. 319). Moreover, it is the candle light effect which makes her spectacular in the close-up shot. Her overall demeanor, posture and particularly her fluid hand movement makes her appear to be a deity who might inspire a poet or a sculptor. She also appears to be engrossed in a sort of meditation and resembles that of the Buddhist art in which the hand movements of the statues entail different kinds of *mudra* (hand & finger gestures) after the fashion of Buddha. Another subtlety which is imbricated in the singer’s postures is that in the Indian tradition of classical dance and raga, the hand movements are regarded to be not just movements but melodic actions (Hayward, 2013) as they have their own language and are a significant part of kinesthetic vocabulary of a singer or dancer. Nandikesvara, a renowned theorist of stage craft writes in his book *Abhinaya Darpana* (The Mirror of Gesture) that while singing, a singer should use hand and eye gestures to enhance the effect of singing than simply voicing the lyrics. Excitement, mood, flavour and pleasure may be aroused via these actions (Falkner, 1983, p. 13).

There are a number of hand gestures, e.g., *Sarpashirsha* (hood of a snake), *shikhara* (thumb movement) known in the Indian classical traditions of dance and music. Fareeha Pervez, the singer, uses her hand gestures in a way which is similar to *Sarpashirsha*. The term *Sarpashirsha* or the hood of a snake implies the effect of charm when a *sapera* (the

snake charmer) plays *pungi* or *bansuri*. In fact, snake worship was one of the ancient religions of India and snakes are given special reference in the earliest books, *The Book of Genesis and the Vedas*. The snake is said to carry secrets and codes that have yet to be explored but it is generally associated with holiness as well as diabolic carrying the same element of secrecy and ambiguity (Jamil, 2012).

Seen in this context, the performance- be it music or dance seems a multi-faceted signifying event which may carry the element of simple sensory pleasure as well as the highest level of magical effect and that is the reason why specific body language is divested with rich meanings and termed as melodic action in the Indian classical music tradition. The aspect which needs special emphasis here is that the hypnotic effect created through music performance in a live concert gets highly accentuated when performed in a digitally en-coded environment as it is manifest in the case of the singing performance of CS singers under discussion. In fact, hypnotic effect becomes hyper (with an addition of the prefix hyper+effect) when charged through this kind of simulated environment to which Richard Dyer refers as “it takes your mind off things” and “it’s only entertainment” (Dyer 2002, p.1).

The spectacular features of the CS video songs make a play of signifiers like “glamour, fun, stardom and excitement” and hence “it’s only entertainment.” Using the popular term “innovative fusions” in the context of CS ...both representational and non-representational signs of this video song present a play of signifiers like “glamour, fun, stardom and excitement, as well as phrases such as “it takes your mind off things” and “it’s only entertainment” (Dyer, p.1). Or using the popular metaphor of Disney Land conceived by Baudrillard (1994), one might say that this kind of excitement which takes your mind off things could easily charm and simulate you into a world wherein fake is not fake, rather it offers itself as substitution of the real and is not perceived as fake, rather as an alternative reality. This happens when reality is objectified and the alternative signs are used to create a spectacle.

The word “spectacle” is one of the modern jargons and is used to describe a prodigal display of an object or a person meant for the public gaze in order to influence people or to attract their attention. In fact, the term carries ambivalent meanings meant to describe an extravagant kind of emotional response, an intellectual shock or a bodily kinesis a

person passes through under the power of a spectacle. The word spectacle is rooted in the Latin *spectare* “to view/watch” and *specere* which means “to look at.” Even the usual definition of the word as a pair of spectacles/glasses refers to an instrument used in the assistance of sight or as a mediating eye. The response to the spectacle may be different in each viewer, its appeal lies in its “visual power and the ability to hold the gaze of the viewer through an extravagant display and performance” (Gerstenberger & Nusser, 2015, p. 130).

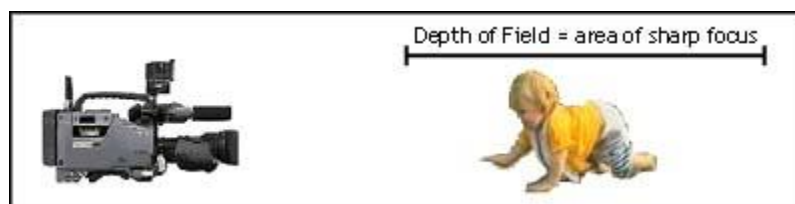
Spectacle in the new cybernetic context may also be related to Deleuze’s (2002) concept of the moving image which directly acts on the senses, body and thought of the viewer across space and time deconstructing the referential links that they might have in the outside reality and let every event happen just at the cognitive level (p. 5). This kind of affective response received from a visual text in the New Media context disrupts any difference between reality and irreality and subsequently changes the thought connection between image and viewer. Deleuze defines this moving image as a ‘circuit’ between the moving image and the viewer which was initiated by “the shared power of what forces thinking and what thinks under the shock” (as cited in Gerstenberger & Nusser, p. 60).

In view of the above discussion, it may thus be argued that the spectacle created through the close-ups of the female singers (Figure 37) must have superseding impact on the mind of the viewers. To put it simple, I would say that it is the camerawork, shot size and framing in addition to the setting, color and lights stated earlier, contribute to creating a spectacle for viewers. The display is spellbinding enough as would unfix any outside reality or any desire for spiritual gratification on part of the viewers and make them subjected to an imaginary, hyperreal world created through spectacle.

Though the context was different but Aristotle meant to convey the same when he used the term spectacle and by this, he meant a proper arrangement of the dramatic elements which entailed staging, sets, or effects with little emphasis on costumes (other than masks), the theater subsisted almost entirely on the power of the spoken word (Brown, 2013, p. 1). The same goes here because the whole mise-en-scene is structured in a way that it carries an extravagant visual appeal like that of a spectacle.

### 5.5.3 Face-Only Discourse

Depth of field (DOF) is an important term in videography which refers to the range of distance from the camera at which an adequate sharp focus (of the subject) can be taken. For instance, see the diagram below to understand the concept of DOF.



*Figure 38.* The figure above retrieved from [www.mediacollege.com](http://www.mediacollege.com), shows how the DOF tends to extend 1/3 in front of the focus point (of camera), and 2/3 behind it.

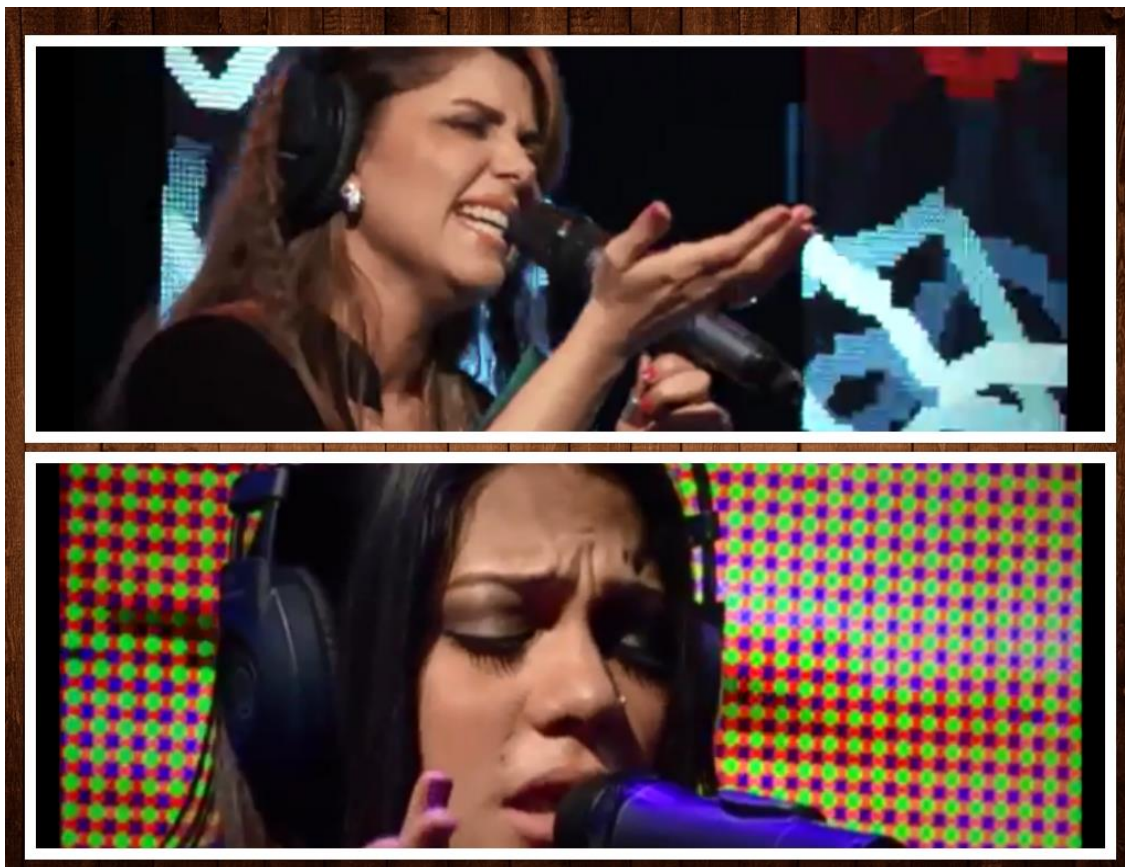
The next two close-up shots taken from “Manzel-e-Sufi” (Song 6) and “Kamlee” (Song 9), are also significant to explore the concept of spectacle and gaze further but from another angle, namely, Depth of field (DOP).

Looking at the screen shots below from the angle of the camera focus is significant. Hadiqa Kiyani, screen Shot 1 (Song 9) presents as an over the shoulder shot (OSS) with side pose, hand and face gestures not only sharply focused but also foregrounded whereas Sanam Marvi, screen Shot 2 (Song 6) which is slightly extreme CU takes more of the face of singer. Since the field of focus is narrow, it is important to analyse the shots from the point of view of its lens focus and the function that it serves. When the focus is shallow, this means that the subject is the central focus point with the background softly treated (Mamer, 2013, p. 19). However, in the CS videos as the Figure 39 reveals, the backdrop is not treated as left out or hazy and blurred which Usually, is the case when the focus is more subject-oriented and taken as shallow. Instead the backdrop is framed as an entity which is not only under sharp focus but also in close proximity with the subject on the forefront and thereby heightens its prominence (Allen, 2013, p. 8).

The images (Figure 39) below reveal almost the zooming-in of the focus with camera at slightly diagonal position and the faces of the singers properly contoured and not overexposed to flash light. However, background and depth of field have been controlled and the subject foregrounded.

For instance, in close-up One, the red color/light in the top right corner is rather ablaze and a little firey with the subsequent impact of warmth and heat. This firey and heated red color attains the power of a visual image to attract people/audience and draw them impulsively. The power of this visual imagery may also be better understood in terms of Deleuze's (2002, p. 5) moving image discussed in 5.5. 2. Moreover, the way the red light seems to flicker in the backdrop, it creates an animated and live effect though it is simulated but it is encoded with power switches, attraction and sensory pleasure. This flicker and heat and visual engagement reminds me of the firelight which attracted hunters of the past and drew them towards it on account of its visual power though the context was different and the firelight had symbolic functions to perform unlike the simulated computer generated imagery (CGI) used in the present performance. The firelight in the past went ablaze as a center of visual focus for the tired hunters making them sit around in circles to exchange chit chat, with an elderly giving a recount of the hunt or narrating a story of the tribe (Brown, 2013, p. 1). That indeed was ideal but imbued with cultural meaning which had symbolic worth.

In the present context, though red color lacks symbolic depth, it somehow depicts energy and may also be related to the Kiyani's energetic (Song 9), and robust performance as she sings quite emphatically which is further heightened dramatically through overdubbed sounds (Figure 39, Shot 1). The energy that the singer consumes in singing is manifest through her facial as well as hand gestures. Her hand movement is not fluid like that of Fareeha Pervez (Figure 37, Shot 2); it is rather a kind of automatic reflex that complements her facial expressions and adds strength to it. In fact, she complements her facial expressions with hand gestures whereas Sanam Marvi (Figure 39, Shot 2) employs more of her facial gestures. In the close-up under discussion, though the focus of the camera is shallow and it takes less of the contextual information but on account of its proximity to the subject, the singer, it affects more the overall contouring and proffers the aesthetics of her performance. The close ups thus refer to the enactment of the performers which is riveting and has a pulling effect on the viewer/spectator. This implicates two things: first, it creates the spectator as subject or beholder of the gaze; second, it establishes the desire to look or the drive to pleasurable viewing (Hayward, 2013, p. 318). Therefore, specific ways of thought and perception are inculcated upon the viewers or spectators.



*Figure 39.* Images taken from two songs- Kamlee (Song 9) and Manzel-e-Sufi (Song 6) are noted for a zoom-in focus of the camera to capture over the shoulder close-ups of the female CS singers

Bourdieu's (1996) notion of "symbolic power" emphasizes how specific categories of thought and perception are imposed upon the social agents (viewers) who somehow begin to perceive the world in the given terms. They may not be consciously aware of the changes in their outlook or standpoint regarding various events or cultural productions. In *The Rules of Art*, Bourdieu (1996) refers to the "charismatic ideology of creation" found in various cultural studies, e.g., literature and art which, in his view, directs and keeps our "gaze towards the apparent producer and prevents us from asking who has created this 'creator' and the magic power of transformation with which the 'creator' is endowed" (p.167). Hence, in his view, most of the artists and writers use their artistic and creative capital towards the creation of this charisma and therefore, exert symbolic power on the agents/viewers/readers as well as create an imaginary habitus for them to enact, to rate or to send likes sharing the same charisma across fields. Thus, the relationship of objects and

subject (fields of production and consumption) is not easy to determine since it is a complex and dense in nature.

#### **5.5.4 Thickness of the Discourse**

The argument in the previous section highlights how the sharp focus of the camera underscores both the performer and her singing enactment, presenting it as a manifest subject for the gaze of the viewer. Sanam Marvi, screen Shot 2 (Figure 38), however, triggers ambiguity regarding what has been made the point of focus, the female face or her enactment of singing. And since the singing activity has been made far less a point of focus, it may be assumed that it is the face-only shot and being a female face it has been accentuated for the public gaze.

This idea also seems probable in the light of what other researchers argue in this regard. In an article “Objectifying Media,” the researchers note how the media employs ways of women objectification; directly or indirectly, verbally or nonverbally and it is not only done via the visual but also through expressing subtle comments on women’s appearance. Camera techniques are used to bring in subtleties of such kind for the pleasure of public gaze (Galdi, Maass, & Cadinu, 2014). Mulvey (1975) in her article, uses the term “male-gaze” to describe the ways that women in film/media serve as projections of male fantasies. Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) are of the view that objectification occurs when, “women are treated as bodies- and in particular, as bodies that exist for the pleasure of others” (as cited in Mulvey) and this is how the fantasy is further provoked.

Continuing with the analysis concerning the Shot 2 (Figure 38), any viewer can see how the objectification of the females occurs. As the image shows that by employing the specific color lens of the camera(s), the face is further made conspicuous in a way that does not overlook even the minutest detail, e.g., most subtle facial or hand gestures or even the tiniest accessory used as face adornment by the singer. Various researchers endorse this view that in video songs, films or other media, a woman’s physical appearance and sexuality is Usually, emphasized (Vincent, 1987; Gow, 1996; Wallis, 2010) and she is more likely to be provocatively dressed (and shown) than a man (Andsanger & Roe, 1999; Seidman, 1992) (as cited in Hayward, 2013).

In the images above (Figure 38), the face-only has been employed as a fetish entity, an action which is commercially more pragmatic. A close analysis reveals the density and



thickness underpinning this discourse which could otherwise be regarded as simple camera work in terms of its field of focus. For instance, by focusing sharply on less, i.e., the face-only, the camerawork excites more in the imagination of the viewer, rather it awakens their desire to see more of the concealed image. The most familiar type of “affective shot is of the face- the close-up,” says Deleuze (2002, p. 87). The close-up lens, in fact, may well anticipate a voyeuristic view for the male gaze by throwing an intimate glance on the female beauty, on each facial gesture which is aglow on account of being in the while-performance phase. This means that the “closer up the shot, the more the spectator’s eye is directed by the camera to a specified reading” (Hayward, 2013, p. 329).

The discourse thus gets thickened at various levels, cognitive, psychological and sensual levels. The element of pleasure with which the CS singing is imbued, therefore, turns out to be a thick discourse featuring a web of narratives. The discourse thus clothed does not allow transparency of any action, be it time, space, subject, object and agency; the boundaries go fuzzy and the conceptual differences blur in the singing (hyperreality). The fuzzy boundaries are thereby easy to manipulate further by hi-tech digital tools which subsequently turn the final product into a case of simulation. The camera-work, lighting, color, sound or editing draws our attention towards the illusionist nature of the reality effect. The whole purpose is to stitch the spectator into the illusion (Hayward, 2013, p. 312).

CS, like all new media, thus pushes both performers and consumers in an e-flux state whereby new subjectivities are created and subsequently funky theories emerge and bring in the “new” stuff displacing the old and the symbolic. The mushrooming outgrowth of notions such as starship and celebrity which turn them into thick discourses may better be understood in the larger context. Endorsing this point, Dyer regarded film stars as texts which need to be contextualized within the discursive and ideological conditions enabling the star’s rising. The meaning of the star, therefore, contains not only the professionally cultivated media image, but also the social context in which the image could be welcomed (p. 6).

Every discourse is perhaps thick and complex in nature and hence it needs to have a “thick description” employing Ryle’s term who was a twentieth century British philosopher. The term was later used by Geertz, an American anthropologist, who

explicated the concept further linking it to his own method of doing ethnography. Hence the term was expanded at theoretical as well as at conceptual levels and later gained currency in religious studies, sociology and beyond. Seen in this perspective, human conduct/performance may be called thick because it is encoded and situated in its surroundings, its context, micro as well as macro and not within a single action in isolation. In Geertz's (1973) view even a seemingly simple "human action" of "winking" involves complexity and it has to be studied in the context of the "corresponding structure of signification" (as cited in Kaploun, 2013, p. 10). Geertz's study of the cultural symbols (symbolic anthropology) is also an extension of the same idea because, in his view, this kind of study may help understand society at large.

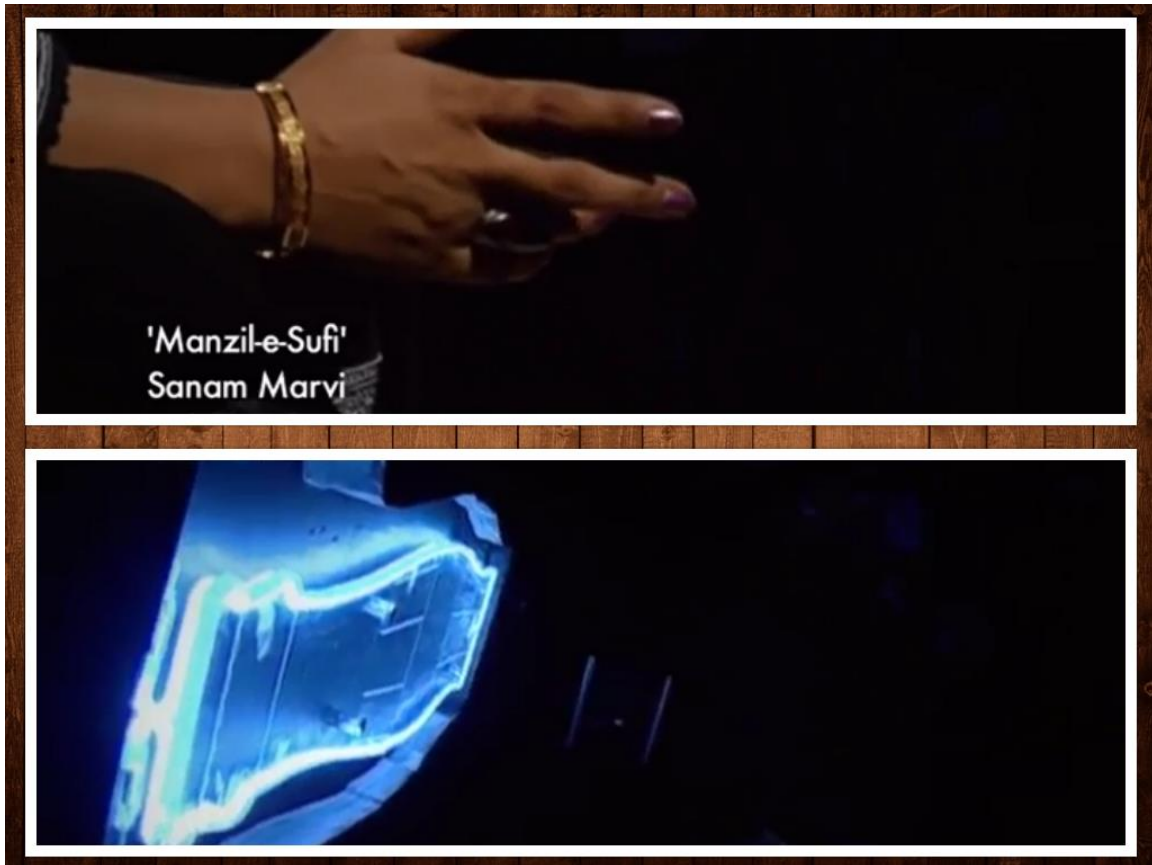
The concept of thick discourse propounded by Ryle and developed by Geertz within the framework of society, culture and signification is, therefore, relevant within the present study because it makes us apprehensive regarding our inert acceptance of everything as translucent and candid. The term "thick description," therefore, in the view of Kaploun, is a conceptual tool which facilitates us to analyze the phenomenon of "human action" (p. 7).

### **5.5.5 Videography: Framing of Persons as Objects**

Another notable aspect of the videography in CS singing is the framing of persons and objects in the minimalist fashion, that is, either a person is indexed in a metonymic way or an object used as a signifier which neither seems to be an intellectual puzzle nor a creative art. Karg's (2015) words reveal more of the digital aesthetic from futuristic viewpoint, "Today's minimalism has moved away from the human body as a primary structure and instead shifted to a futuristic, dystopian and digital aesthetic" (p. 5). It is perhaps just a totemic image or a by-product of CGI or an attempt to create an illogical logic. The screen shots taken from "Manzel-e-Sufi" (Song 6) attached below are noted in this regard.

In the shots as the figure below reveals, the camera focus is shallow with an exclusive focus on the target so as to present an exhaustive view or "is typically used to emphasize one part of the image over another" (Bruce, 2013, p. 8). The scene has been made further eye-catching by dint of the monochromatic or the one-tone effect in the backdrop. Though "these are the simplest color schemes to create, as they're all taken from the same hue," the effect is appealing (Chapman, 2010). The monotonic black seems to spread like a sheet

falling all over in the background and functions in various ways, e.g., it creates an effect of high contrast, it proffers spatial depth and it heightens the foregrounding of the targets framed thus.



*Figure 40.* Images taken from *Manzil-e-Sufi* (Song 6): Shot 1 reveals in hand-in-action image & Shot 2 carries a digital image with which the song begins

The shot 1 (Figure 40) reveals an image, a hand in fact which is conspicuous on account of its dynamism and overall discourse. The hand-in-action image speaks too, though in latent tone, of music, rhythm and cadence it seems to carry within. The mute rhythm, therefore, entails the presence of a voice which is off the framed shot and yet is immanent, immediate, and present and easy to be mapped by the viewer's imagination. The figure, the body is situated within the grooved space and apprehensively carries the vibrancy of the music already anticipated by the prosodic action of the hand. The feel of the presence within absence is what makes this image intriguing, or a construction which resists explicit interpretation. The imagery is relatable to John Smith's film *The Black*

*Tower* (1987), in which the artist animates a found object and persuades the viewer it is a creation of the imagination. Thus the “work permanently shifts suggesting a falsehood that is not actually present,” notes Carey-Kent (2015, Feb 6).

The less, in fact, is more and this is what underpins the seemingly mute shot under discussion. On further probing, the shot reveals a number of traces of the female delicacy, e.g., the shape of the hand, it’s fair, smooth contouring but the metonymic display makes it more than simply a subversive act. What it invokes is perhaps a web of intricate implications: it may be a simple act to excite or please the viewers or it may arouse even visceral instincts among them by seeing the female body presented in an apartheid way as goes in gender or racist discourses. But this would be perhaps oversimplification. The issue may be explored in a wider context of the digital discourses being used to enact a perspectival change in various artistic expressions of human life.

More problematic among the new stances is the rapidly growing phenomenon of hyperreality or a viewpoint which is esemplastic, fragmentary and illusory in nature featuring non-spatiality and fluid context. These new perspectives are indicative of an ontological rift and a split of human self and a reduction of its sublimity into a digital plaything. As a consequence of this sort of neo-Avant-garde scenario, not only the spiritual and the sublime has been reduced to a digital petite but it has thrown mankind, so to say, to a transhuman phase. Blommaert and Varis (2012) argue how professionals use digital techniques to frame personalities in metonymic ways, employing minimal semiotic features. Moreover, products and the trivial features such as pattern or style of clothes or, say, the bottle of beer or other abstract things are promoted as unavoidably important items that matter our ways of life (as cited in Kaploun, 2013, p. 8). This metonymic phase haunts our contemporary life like a specter and very rightly in Huo’s words, it is “disturbingly resistant to interpretation” since it is not easy to define it in rational terms. The specter of the digital is thus replacing the profound realities- the traditional, the real, and the sublime- of human life and hence simulation is taking place. Cubitt (2011) notes and explains that the theory of simulation is a theory of how our images, our communications and our media have appropriated the role of reality, and a history of how reality fades (p. 39). Alongside there is “simultaneous judgement of the old as limited” but perhaps no mention of the “experience of loss with the displacement of the old” (p. 69).

## 5.6 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has focused on four main categories of non-linguistic representation of the CS Sufi singing discourse. The four units: (1) set design (2) colors (3) lighting and (4) camerawork is analyzed which reveal coca cola sign to be in the center of the set design of CS songs. The aspect related to stylistic representation of the CS singing, i.e., their appearance with in-ear monitors, huge instrumentation and digital effects, is taken into account. Other non-linguistic features, that is, RGB colors, 3D lighting and camerawork with its deep and shallow focus are examined and what emerges is that they play a great role towards creating visual and digital effects.

The overall CS setting seems to enact as a physical signifier, i.e., it is mainly the bodily performance of singers with stunning light, color and sound effects in the backdrop, the instrumentation with blows, plucks, clonks, strikes and throbs intermixed with lots of electronic raps and taps and hence it is the form, style, music and the rhythm which dominate in the singing.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

The present qualitative research has attempted to inquire into the problematic nature of the spiritual signified in Coke Studio Sufi singing. It has explored how sign in the CS singing is more important than what it stands for and it is the form, not meaning, which is forefronted in singing. The study has attempted to explicate how Coke singing is largely confined to the exoteric and it is the music, rhythm and instrumentation which dominate and thereby eclipse the spiritual reality or message Sufi verses contain. As a consequence, the sublime poetic text is truncated into merely a sensuous and raucous articulation.

By assimilating insights of three theoretical views, the study has identified four main aspects of the problem of spiritual signified in CS Sufi singing. Sign in CS Sufi singing is largely (1) exoteric with its focus on form, causing split between signifier and signified; (2) it is simulated, fake and theatrical; (3) it is entertaining and appeals greatly to senses and (4) it is commercial and uses Sufi singing for commodification. In many respects, CS introduces a discourse, a rebranded form of Sufi singing which is directed towards materiality or the gaining of starship, glamor, fun, excitement and thereby it makes a ludic play of Sufi verses.

The problem that the present study has attempted to address is crucial keeping in view the New Age logic of capitalism, free marketing, media hoopla and corporate monopolies over semiotic, digital and cultural resources of communities across the globe which are maintained under the cover of charity and public good as, for instance, we read through Coca Cola discourse in the present study. And we all know this era, this place well—a pluralist, borderless, global world that suffers from surfeit of discourses, ideologies and meanings thrown in our way as random choices but implicitly made compelling, essential for us to enter the global phase/market.

The New Age, in reality, has become a place mushrooming in choices and alternatives with underlying pragmatics of picking up the one having value and profit in the market, no matter whether the item commodified comes from culture, tradition and spirituality one belongs to. Commercialization of values and traditions is what the logic of

late capitalism fosters and promotes as the present study demonstrates how CS by drawing on a traditionally known and popular genre of Sufi music, uses it to accommodate various music styles from the genre of world music in its singing and thereby capitalizes on it. Whatever grounds CS singers might offer for this enactment of simulation of Sufi music, or whatever compulsions of the global market they might speak of, it would be hard for them to fully justify it. The matter is serious, the situation is grave but are we and how much are we concerned to notice that what is being radically transformed is our consciousness: who we are, our values and mystical identity.

We seem to have reached a phase whereby we have willingly suspended our conviction over what we knew as esoteric realities, the cosmic Truth and insight one could hope to search for, for instance, by reading the tenets on which Sufi music is based. Perhaps we also feel stifled in the dark, foggy and illusory world of materialism whereby the tendency is to situate contrasting signs on the same scale and consume them alike, for instance, signs of truth and falsehood, reality and irreality, spiritual and secular but perhaps even the sensitive are caught up in the spiral of silence. The New era has moved toward structural shifts and the usual practice is either to truncate the meaning of symbolic values and representations or assimilate the difference between contrasting values and alongside design new theories to shape and fit them within normal view.

This is the way New Age discourses of fakery, simulation and theatricality are enacting their role to displace and simulate our most dependable resources such as culture and spirituality. The present study, by using CS as a point of reference, has highlighted how Sufi literature is being consumed as a cultural practice far and wide or more precisely being assimilated amongst the trendy jargons of the New Age discourses such as genre fusion, adaptation and plurality of style as well as text. It thereby has pinpointed the need to critically read these discourses invented by the new market as per its profiteering motives. The study has emphasized the urgency of the need to reflect over the meaning/message underpinning Sufi literature/poetry instead of treating it as a plaything or using it to direct or shape the flow of entertainment culture.

## 6.1 Insights and Inferences

The present study has come up with some insights about CS (Pakistan) concerning the question of the nature of spiritual signified in its Sufi singing discourse.

1. My study has found out that CS, via enacting a newer version of Sufi music, institutes itself as a performative discourse. It performs Sufi music at least as far as the usage of the term is concerned, consumes spiritual text of Sufi poets, singing of two internationally celebrated Sufi singers, and some traditional musical instruments and manufactures for the majority that this is what Sufi music is about. In reality, as the present study demonstrates, CS singing upends any difference between Sufi singing and any other kind of singing meant solely for pleasure and fun. The study has uncovered how the performance of majority singers is not underpinned by a sense of the tradition and the words they sing (Sufi poetry) do not co-match with their bodily discourse, i.e., words do not serve any purpose here as they are intended for by Sufi poets. Moreover, many singers intermix Sufi poetry with (semi)romantic and worldly lyrics which implies that they treat this content as a plaything to be trimmed and truncated any way. This kind of treatment of the genre of Sufi music on part of CS singers creates gap between the signifier (poetry) and signified meaning (message) in their singing performance.
2. My study has argued that by reducing the Sufi text into a mere articulation, a verbal plaything, CS singers enact simulation than a devotional performance and this way they represent largely a culture of simulation and escape. Moreover, this enactment disseminates the message that every subjective or idiosyncratic interpretation of the esoteric within the ambit of Sufi poetry is to be considered adequate. Most of the singers, under the umbrella of popular discourses such as fusions and innovations, experiment with the genre which entails that their purpose is to use Sufi text as a shorthand formula to win popularity and in doing so, they tend to oversimplify the notion of real Sufi singing. The study, via the semiotic inquiry, has questioned Sufi singing discourse of CS at its various levels of density and the inroads the singers make in their performance.



3. This work, a study of both representational and non-representational signs of CS singing, has highlighted that singing of most of the singers is devoid of solemnity, devotion and ambience of traditional Sufi music. The stylistic and textual fusions made in the singing though turn the show into a spectacular and grand at the material level, these adjustments reduce the performance of singers into a display of theatricality and showmanship than something which could be called a devotional activity. Moreover, the singing style of majority of the singers is highly rowdy and diverting which further contributes in distracting viewers from any spiritual engagement with Sufi lyrics being sung. For instance, the song “Alif Allah Jugni” by Arif Lohar and Meesha Shafi lacks any kind of reverence to Sufi lyrics, Sultan Bahu’s *Kalaam*, and instead subdues it to a style which seems a folk-jazz admixture and what is kept to the forefront is a repetitive singing of a popular catch phrase *Jugni* intoned with merriment and fun. This implies that the spiritual signified in the sung text is largely disregarded or is not a matter of interest for most of the singers. And more or less similar aspects have been marked in many other songs whereby it is one signifier, i.e., entertainment, which plays in the centre. Their singing is largely focused on the exoteric.
4. My study has brought to light that CS Sufi singing discourse is a performative account of pleasure and excitement and not a focus on meaning underpinning the sublime text of Sufi poets used in singing. As a consequence, poetic words remain empty signifiers and thereby enact distraction from the signified meaning or reality emphasized by Sufis. And as Baudrillard pinpoints: the more the distraction, the more simulacra govern larger space for itself and reality foiled. Moreover, what Ali Hajveri is cited to have said that in our times this science [Sufism] has been in reality eliminated because people are all occupied with pleasure, is relevant here to pinpoint how the only reality which is adored and acknowledged as “reality” is pleasure and quest for iconic meanings is no more a prime concern in the present times. And CS Sufi singing discourse is mainly a representation of this version of reality.
5. This study has underscored that CS Sufi singing is a discourse which draws on a chain of borrowed signs and thereby what it carries is a trail of empty titles or labels

than a serious or sacred notion of representing symbolic forms. CS Sufi music is a sign which can be traced as a sign of popularity after the Sufi Rock was introduced in Pakistan in the 1990's. The term Sufi Rock was coined in 1993 to define the Pakistani band *Junoon* which gained a wide popularity in the coming years whereas Rock music itself was borrowed from the genre of popular music that originated as "Rock and Roll" in the USA in 1950's and this genre itself was conceived after the influence of many other music genres. This implies that CS singing is a sign which is fluid, subject to new and innovative interpretations and can be crafted any way whereas real Sufi music is based on a philosophy of archetypal signs and its essential meaning cannot be truncated. In reality, CS singing is a sign which simulates Sufi music and uses it as a ploy to dupe the viewers into believing a didactic truth (Sufi poetry) within a lie in the similar fashion as Disney Land is used as a kind of ruse to confuse people between irreality as reality.

6. My study has found out that CS Sufi singing discourse is predominantly directed towards entertainment and greatly appeals to senses. Since it remains focused on the exoteric: music, rhythm and heavy instrumentation, it truncates the sublime Sufi text into merely an aesthetic and musical articulation. Sitting in (semi)circle, with exquisite light, color and sound effects in the backdrop, the singers perform in splashy manner with fusion of blows, plucks, clonks, strikes, throbs intermixed with electronic raps and taps and a lot more. Their singing style is highly rowdy, entertaining and no less theatrical which although seems outstanding and grand at the material level entails a loss of the spiritual signified or the meaning that the Sufi poetry carries.
7. In addition, the study has highlighted that CS sign is more of material and commercial nature than mystic or devotional. The study notes that Coca Cola remains situated as the most visible and eye-catching sign in all video songs studied which implies as if Sufi singing is a spiritual product to be used anyway, for pleasure or commodification and thereby this singing is representative of the capitalistic culture. Similarly, like any other commercial agency, CS is no less active in using other cultural resources or capital so as to add more entertainment spice in their Sufi singing, for instance, the use of female agency as a market ploy

which would maximize profit value in the global market. By employing various cultural and spiritual resources within the context of digitalized simulation and commercialization, CS transgresses the real discourse of Sufi music and thereby connects itself to the New Age spirituality- an offshoot of the neo-capitalistic culture. In reality, CS Sufi singing is a play-acting of simulation and pretense which commodifies the sublime Sufi verses through various commercial and digital transgressions and thereby it largely represents the New Age spirituality and new systems of global politics and representation.

## **6.2 More Nuanced Aspects**

1. CS singing discourse, as the section above has argued, is mainly directed towards materiality or the pursuing of starship than a sincere attempt to negotiate the philosophy underpinning real Sufi music. There are, however, more nuanced and problematic aspects of the semiotics of Sufi discourse of CS singing which pinpoint the jarring nature of signs and how they are employed from mild to intense degrees of simulation in its performance. The argument below has further probed which parameters CS singing uses to assimilate Sufi music within modern and novel definitions of art, music and digital context. Keeping this aspect in view, the present study has made some inferences. A few key points are organized below.
2. My study has argued that CS sign is largely simulated because it distances itself from the sacred ambience of Sufi music and demonstrates from mild to intense degrees of concealment and masquerading in its performance and thereby it confuses the real with the unreal or sacred with secular. Simulation occurs in various forms in CS Sufi singing. For instance, by using Sufi poetry (some famous verses) in their performance, the singers tend to convey this message that they cling to the spiritual traditions though perhaps in their own way. At the level of text selection, therefore, reality does have some reflection. However, simulation is seen in its intense form at the level of performance which lacks seriousness and devotion essential for this kind of singing as the ancient Sufis guide us. In addition, it is the lurid setting of CS, heavy instrumentation, digital spin of light and color that let the

fantastic/simulacra mediate, take over and come in the way to perceive truth or meaning embedded within the Sufi text being sung.

3. The study has further highlighted that CS Sufi discourse presents an assemblage of diverse sources belonging to neither one culture nor one philosophy in its performance. Be it music, singing performance or apparel of singers, it is an amalgamation of various cultural views and resources. For instance, the inclusion of a group of dancers in the backdrop of a song (Abrar-ul-Haq) does create the impression of the mystic whirling of Rumi's Dervishes though this seems more an item deliberately placed in this sensually engaging visual and digital context. It seems an attempt to use spirituality as an item of authenticity, i.e., to use spirituality as a bottle with secular contents filled inside. Another song *Ik Alif* by Saeen Zahoor and Noori singers presents a polyphonic and polyrhythmic and hence a confused and disrupted discourse. It is split in three segments, singing styles, voices and even textual fragments selected randomly from Sufi poetry. At rhetorical level, though the song is engaging, much of its strength comes from the visual components, e.g., the mise-en-scene, colors, lights or digitally controlled sounds and not via the content or Sufi lyrics being sung. Any viewer can easily judge how the visual and instrumental aspect of the video songs overshadows the content or lyrics with the consequent loss of meaning. This seems more a discursive attempt on part of CS singers to take two kinds of leverage, to liberalize the notion of Sufi singing or to construct a specific form of and to use famous Sufi lyrics for commercial purpose and starship.
4. CS seems to draw on a number of music genres of the New Age, e.g., jazz, rock, pop and ambient music and trance ambient in particular (see the discussion above). The features that these varieties of music share include fusion, innovation, rhythm, thrill, beat, heavy instrumentation, the use of electronic instruments and synthesizers and the like. Putting in the ecology of the New Age phenomenon, all these music genres center on the notion of the "new", e.g., new media, new music and new genre and the term "new" refers to a cluster of exciting, trendy and glamorous meanings as is seen in the case of CS also. More importantly the term is underpinned with new notions of progress, evolution, global and cultural

consciousness. Far from being a simple idea, it has deeper implications and refers to some basic societal and economic structures taking place globally from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards causing disruption in the traditional faiths and the value of symbolic meaning.

5. The new structures are more apprehensive of superficialities and cults of style, trends and market for which Kaplan and Loow (2002) use the term “cultic milieu” of the New Age. Though the writers talk about this phenomenon with reference to the American society, the same has heavily influenced other cultures and societies and the change is defined by all under the banner of the New Age. More importantly it has also affected the vital aspects of human life such as faith and spirituality. The New Age theology displays a universalistic approach (inclusivist) which accepts all subjective viewpoints on the Divine as being equally valid and the new trend is to intermix secular and spiritual which is gaining currency via agencies like CS. It largely consumes spirituality as a tool to promote starship and female glamour in order to get in the global market and also models ways of production and dissemination for the upcoming music forums, e.g., Nescafe Basement, Pepsi Battle of the Bands and Cornetto Pop Rock. Hence it is easy to see the purpose(s) underpinning these agencies which Lister (2009) points out as ideological and states that the New Media is “rarely if ever ideologically neutral” (p. 11).
6. New discourses such as peace and spirituality, music, fun and stress management, love, healing and Coca Cola are presently among the most popular cross-cultural talks and are being used by various agencies in amazing contrasts which nonetheless is theatrical in nature, if I use Eco’s term. For instance, Body Shop becomes green (ecology), Nestle picks up CSV (Creating Shared Value) formula and CS deploys Sufi music and all use these socio-cultural resources for particular ends. The companies without any doubt prioritize their agenda in terms of their commercial benefits. This is paradoxical that we say one thing in terms of another and the companies are not an exception. In reality today’s world is full of such paradoxes that we do not mean to say what we say and neither we are concerned with it and this is how Baudrillard’s simulation takes place. These are the new discourses or new “categories of thought and perception” which the societies and

cultures are embracing rapidly and this is what our art and cultural productions represent largely.

### **6.3 My Contribution**

With no claim of being an exhaustive work, the present study, using the lens of semiotics, has attempted to explore the relationship of art, media and Sufi music in the wake of the newer music industries in Pakistan such as CS. The intention, however, has been to initiate a wide-ranging critical discussion in the context of New Age discourses that have the vantage point of contriving and shaping any discourse into reality, be it tapering or playing with the basic tenets of any tradition or philosophy, the practice, such as CS is engaged in through its Sufi singing.

1. The present study, through its interpretation of CS singing discourse, demonstrates that it is different and new in terms of its nuanced approach, sense of direction, selection of theme/subject and the questions and concerns it raises in a broader context. It chooses a track a few have travelled in the Pakistani context in particular; it has initiated a journey, a scholarly battle, which though sets the sail against the larger grain of popularity of CS singing, hopes to orient the coming readership to New Age menaces such as alternative religions and spiritualities and their confusing impact on the minds of the faithful. The term “alternative” means something which may (not) be taken up, something which is marginal, the New Agers, however, tend to use the term to promote individualism, liberalism and secularism and thereby allow space to people to question the mainstream systems of thought and religions through their subjective interpretations.
2. My study has highlighted the need to develop a critical stance of our own concerning matters crucial in conserving our mystical identity and be wary of the New Age upsurges. It is the need of time that we all scholars, critics, writers, and general public of Pakistan must re-think critically of who we are and our sense of identity. Policy makers, political, religious and social scientists and scholars across the globe also need to share the burden of this responsibility and realize the dangers of passive acceptance of “new” realities such as alternative spirituality(s) superimposed upon the mainstream systems of thought. Whether Christians,

Hindus, Muslims or believers of any other religion, we all have sacred traditions, the Head-sources of wisdom and knowledge that none of us, the global citizens, would like to compromise on.

3. The present research as it is an interdisciplinary work, has highlighted the co-influence and intermedial ways of production involved in CS Sufi singing. Not only the techno-digital form and ways of presentation of the Studio discourse have been analyzed but what has been emphasized in particular, is a way of thinking about the discourse itself, in its broadest semiotic conception- as a digital media practice. By using Sufi music for commercial and entertainment purpose, CS demonstrates that it has employed the term as a cover to accommodate and publicize various singing styles that fit well within the context of new entertainment culture. In addition, it conveys the message that the philosophy underpinning the real/traditional Sufi music may be secularized, liberalized and adapted for any material end. The study has attempted to uncover various discursive strategies enacted by CS at implicit levels. By making a critical inquiry of the problems involved in CS Sufi singing, and parallel to it, by focusing on the intrinsic message of Sufi music, the study has attempted to bring to light the sacred ambience, the essence and spirit it is based on, and thereby it has argued that by focusing on the exoteric: form, style and instrumentation, CS singers withhold the message underpinning the sung material.
4. My study has initiated the possibility of interpreting a discourse so far not addressed and has endeavored to define concepts and popular terms such as entertainment in the light of its lived context, in the contemporary consumer culture. The word “entertainment” is commonly known as a kind of simple pleasure, enjoyment, happiness and the like, a notion which draws on a feel-good formula or the philosophy of escape from pain and suffering. Its lived context, however, suggests that entertainment is more than a simple pursuit of happiness; it is suggestive of the alternative culture which associates happiness to things outside the self and suggests a number of ways to graft happiness or a sense of fulfilment and it submits a number of quick fix formulas for its people to boost some kind of happiness onto the existing structure, for instance, by buying that car, or choosing that shade of lipstick or going for a music concert or using drugs to boost happy mood and the

like. Happiness industries (advertising agencies) enact their role, per se, to make people look forward for new ways to hunt pleasure and they do their part well under the control of corporate agencies, moving within the prescribed limits in the manner of a semiotic pawn on a chess board as, for instance, CS enacts. In reality, these new trends are a by-product of the cultural shift rapidly taking place in our communities which ascribes happiness with “feel-good” formula and it can be felt, for instance, by putting on smile on one’s face. This trend is in contrast to the idea of happiness by doing well (past) or doing virtuous things, an idea grounded in religions and proponed by philosophers such as Aristotle. Feel-good formula of happiness also connotes personal gratification, and pursuing sensory pleasure with liberty and individual freedom which may be traced back to the Declaration of Independence in America or as happiness taken on functions more often associated with religion, happiness rather than service to God or spiritual transcendence, has come to be seen as the ultimate aim of life in many cultures.

5. My study has also highlighted the intellectual responsibility of researchers to take initiatives of questioning aspects of a theory(s) one tends to diverge from. The present study contributes by rethinking an aspect from Baudrillard’s theory which favors rather suggests us to accept the contemporary illusory and fake realities as reality, the study, on the other hand, insists on seeking solution or to search truth, for instance, truth underpinning the philosophy of Sufi music in its real/traditional context and by searching for it in the foundational writings on Sufism such as *Kashf-al Mahjoob* (Unveiling the Veiled). The study has thereby attempted to broaden the parameters of theory and method in certain ways.

With no claim of being an exhaustive work, I have mentioned above a few points as my contribution in the gamut of views and discussions on the subject of Sufi music via the use of CS Sufi singing as a point of reference. In saying this I would emphasize the role of researchers and scholars more as critics to make use of his/her linguistic and cultural knowledge in order to yield a more engaging critical practice.



## 6.4 Suggestions for Future Work

The insights that emerge from my study of signs of CS Sufi singing may provide impetus to future researchers to explore more nuanced angles, I suggest, however, the following ideas that can inform future work.

1. In the while-process of my research on CS Sufi singing, the phase I worked on lyrics of Sufi songs particularly, a serious limitation that I faced was the lack of dependable English translations of Punjabi Sufi poetry. There may be various reasons for this lack, but admittedly translation is a complex area of study which requires plenty of theoretical and operational competence to transfer meaning from one language to another without losing much of the resonance, thought and context the source language is grounded in. In the present neo-capitalistic era where our indigenous Sufi literature is in use other than what it was intended for, a sincere revival of Sufi thought and philosophy is much needed, translation may provide the tool to reach out masses in and across the globe. Rendition of Sufi poetry may, for instance, be done in two ways: literal and idiomatic with additional notes and mystical interpretation to unveil the treasure rooted within our folk literature to the world outside, in various languages and in English particularly. We need to produce quality translations of Punjabi literature as have been done from Persian and Arabic by Nicholson (*Kashf al-Mahjub*, 1911) and Arberry (*Kitab al-Ta'arruf li-madhhab ahl al-tasawwuf*, 1935) years back.
2. Another vista of study that opens up is to work on semiotics and translation tracing how semiotics is effective in broadening the very notion of translation both at theoretical and applied levels. Study of signs, for instance, in the Islamic Art and translations among them may be a useful one. Using translation as a tool to interpret signs, linguistic or metaphoric, in terms of their relation to each other within the larger context of Islamic mysticism and investing in them spiritual power and meaning would turn it into a significant task. Many scholars are of the view that the sign processes are in a way similar to translation processes and may put a researcher in a vantage position to indicate the problems that come on the way and thereby contribute in creating more workable methodologies in this area.

3. Another suggestion is to explore semioethics, an area that emerged within semiotics, after the term was coined in the 1980s. Semioethics is a new approach in semiotics which assigns responsibility to humans to care for life, creativity and expression and to improve the lot of the humanity at large, through a dialogic relationship with the other or listen to what the others have to say. It mainly considers the health of sign activity, of language and meaning and offers insights to “detotalize” the grand narratives and dominant sign systems. Integrating sign and value, identity and otherness, semioethics addresses our natural bent, our active rethink ability as humans to affect change and move beyond the constrictive orders of communication. The theoretical guideline may be expanded and applied to speak about the value of spiritual signs as necessary elements for our bodily and spiritual health particularly in today’s disrupted modern and postmodern times.
4. Another suggestion for future researchers is to explore the paradigm of “music as Sufi culture,” within the framework of Sufi music theorized by Hazrat Inayat Khan. This paradigm remains effective in exploring the symbolic links between music and Islamic culture in the Sufi context coming through way back from the ancient Arabic folk and sacred music. This will provide the basic point of departure of how to work on though similar yet distinct genres of music, e.g., spiritual and folk music. It may provide the researchers with a sound theoretical and cultural standing to move on to the new ontological and theological beliefs that comprise worldview, and be in a position to shape their aesthetics instead of getting shaped.
5. The other vista of research that opens up is to make comparative study of Sufi music rooted in various Orders, e.g., Chishti and Mevlevi within the prism of semiotics or more precisely within the new paradigms of Interpretative semiotics. Both linguistic and non-linguistic signs may be traced that are particularly different yet connected because of the mystical notions of rhythm, movement and meditation. Also, a comparison may be drawn between the internal organization and structure within the strict Sufi parameters in their specific orders and the rationale behind music, its purpose and function, emphasizing the significance of the sacred ambience and even relevance in the present times where values and beliefs are being thrown away.

6. Sufi poets speak of the philosophy of Higher Truth relying less on language than its suggestive power. They believe that the power of words essentially belongs to the Divine, i.e., words are the emblems of *a priori* truth and not an outcome of rational search. Sufis in this way credit words with a sacred power, i.e., letters and alphabets are endowed with a prior knowledge and thereby they become a medium to search and express reality of the sacred. Sufi use of the term “sacred”, however, may not be confused with terms such as “sacred canopy” (Berger) or “sacred umbrellas” (Smith), used to give rational explanation for an event or an unusual occurrence. Sufis, on the other hand, hardly rely on reason or positivist means to seek truth or knowledge of the highest order. This can be taken as Sufi inquiry and critique of positivism by scholars as a point of reference to go beyond the confines of (post)modernism and contribute in a rethink process about the rootlessness of relativism or insipid language-games which offer nothing to hold to. Wittgenstein’s language games may be rethought and reinterpreted through the lens of the sacred the Sufis offer. This perspective may open gateways of how to address issues in studying language, different types of knowledge and understanding truth and reality.

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**APPENDICES****[A1 (O) – Q2 (T)]****[O= Original] [T= Translation]****APPENDICES****[Q1 to Q2]**

## Appendix A1 (O)

### Allah Hu by Tufail Ahmad (Song1)

الف اللہ حبے دی بوٹی، مرشد من وچ لائی ہو  
 نفی اثبات داپانی ملیا، ہر رگے ہر جائی ہو  
 اندر بوٹی مشک مچایا، جاں پھلس تے آئی ہو  
 جیوے مرشد کامل باہو، جیس اے بوٹی لائی ہو

الف اللہ حبے دی بوٹی، مرشد من وچ لائی ہو  
 نفی اثبات داپانی ملیا، ہر رگے ہر جائی ہو  
 اندر بوٹی مشک مچایا، جاں پھلس تے آئی ہو  
 جیوے مرشد کامل باہو، جیس اے بوٹی لائی ہو

**Appendix A2 (T)**

Allah Hu by Tufail Ahmad (Song1)

*My Murshad (my Guide) has planted this Jasmine plant (i.e. concept of Allah) in my heart. The water of negation and affirmation irrigated it (all its parts were watered). At the time of blossoming, it spreads its fragrance within (and later on without as well). May my perfect Murshad live long who planted it (Jasmine plant in my being)!*

*My Murshad (my Guide) has planted this Jasmine plant (i.e. concept of Allah) in my heart. The water of negation and affirmation irrigated it (all its parts were watered). At the time of blossoming, it spreads its fragrance within (and later on without as well). May my perfect Murshad live long who planted it (Jasmine plant in my being)!*

## Appendix B1 (O)

### Aik Alif by Saen Zahoor and Noori (Song2)

پڑھ پڑھ علم تے فاضل ہو یا  
 تے کدے اپنے آپ نوں پڑھیا ای نہ  
 بھج بھج وڑنا اے مندر مسیسی  
 تے کدے من اپنے وچ وڑیا ای نہ  
 لڑنا اے روز شیطان دے نال  
 تے کدے نفس اپنے نال لڑیا ای نہ  
 بلے شاہ اسمانی اڈیا پھڑوند اے  
 تے حیرا گھر بیٹھا اونوں پھڑیا ای نہ  
 بس کریں او یار  
 علموں بس کریں او یار  
 بس کریں او یار  
 اک الف تیرے درکار  
 اک الف تیرے درکار  
 بس کریں او یار  
 اللہ سائیاں اللہ سائیاں  
 اللہ سائیاں اللہ سائیاں  
 نی میں جانا جوگی دے نال  
 نی میں جانا جوگی دے نال  
 نی میں جانا  
 جو نہ جانے حق کی طاقت

جو نہ جانے حق کی طاقت  
 رب نہ دیوے اسکو ہمت  
 رب نہ دیوے اسکو ہمت  
 ہم من کے دریا میں ڈوبے  
 ہم من کے دریا میں ڈوبے  
 کیسی نیا کیا منجھدار  
 بس کریں اویار  
 علموں بس کریں اویار  
 بس کریں اویار  
 علموں بس کریں اویار  
 اللہ سائیاں اللہ سائیاں  
 اللہ سائیاں اللہ سائیاں  
 اللہ سائیاں اللہ سائیاں



## Appendix B2 (T)

### Aik Alif by Saeen Zahoor and Noori (Song2)

You read so many books to know it all  
 but you never tried to read your own self.  
 You run to enter temples and mosques  
 but you never entered your own heart.

Every day you fight with the Satan/Devil/Evil  
 but you never fight against your own ego/pride.  
 Bulleh Shah! You aim high at the stars/sky  
 but never care to look at that which is within you.

Enough my friend!  
 Enough of outward knowledge, my friend!  
 ‘The One’ is all you need to know/discover.

Enough my friend!  
 Enough of outward knowledge, my friend

O God, the Beloved one  
 O God, the Beloved one

I am going to the Jogi (ascetic/Sufi)  
 Going to the Jogi  
 I am going to the Jogi (ascetic/Sufi)  
 Going to the Jogi

Those who do not know the Strength of Truth

Those who do not know the Strength of Truth

Lord cannot give them courage

Lord cannot give them courage

Let us drown in the river of Self

Let us drown in the river of Self

No more worrying about the boat or waves

No more worrying about the boat or waves

Enough my friend!

Enough of outward knowledge, my friend

‘The One’ is all you need to know/discover.

O God, the Beloved one

O God, the Beloved one

## Appendix C1 (O)

### Dastaan-e-Ishq by Ali Zafar (Song3)

رانجھارا رانجھا کر دی نی میں آپے رانجھا ہوئی

رانجھا کہو سہیلیو۔۔۔

میںوں ہیر نہ آکھو کوئی

کیندے نے۔۔ کیندے نے کہ لمبیاں نے راہواں عشق دیاں۔۔۔

کیندے لوکی کے لمبیاں نے راہواں عشق دیاں۔۔۔

کی دساں کی بات سناواں عشق دیاں۔۔۔

کی دساں کی بات سناواں عشق دیاں۔۔۔

اندر آ۔۔۔ پھیر اپا۔۔۔

آ۔۔۔ وس جا۔۔۔ اوسیاں۔۔۔

اندر آ۔۔۔ پھیر اپا۔۔۔

آ۔۔۔ وس جا۔۔۔ سیاں۔۔۔

اندر توہی، باہر توہی

اندر توہی، باہر توہی۔۔۔ روم روم وچ تو۔۔۔

توہی تانا توہی بانا سب کچھ میرا تو۔۔۔

اندر توہی، باہر توہی۔۔۔ روم روم وچ تو۔۔۔

توہی تانا توہی بانا سب کچھ میرا تو۔۔۔

کہے حسین فقیر نمانا

کہے حسین فقیر نمانا

میں ناہیں سب تو

کی دساں کی بات سناواں عشق دیاں

کی دساں کی بات سناواں عشق دیاں

کنجری بنیاں میری ذات نہ گھٹدی، مینوں نچ کے یار مناوان دے

لوگ عشق نامل گھدے، مینوں نچ کے یار مناوان دے

کنجری بنیاں میری ذات نہ گھٹدی، مینوں نچ کے یار مناوان دے

لوگ عشق نامل گھدے، مینوں نچ کے یار مناوان دے

او آجرب نئی رسدا۔۔

او آجرب نئی رسدا، سوں رب دی

جینوں رب مناوان دا حج ہووے

اووت مکے دی کیوں پاوے

اووت مکے دی کیوں پاوے

جیدے یارنوں کیا حج ہووے

کی دساں کی بات سناواں عشق دیاں

اندر آ، پھیر اپا۔۔

## Appendix C2 (T)

### Dastaan-e-Ishq by Ali Zafar (Song3)

By pronouncing RaaNjha's name again and again,  
 I myself have become RaaNjha,  
 Call me RaaNjha, and do not call me Heer

They say that the path of Ishq (Love) is very arduous  
 They say that the path of Ishq (Love) is very arduous

What should I tell you about Ishq  
 What should I tell you about Ishq

Come inside (my life/soul) and stay herein forever, Beloved!  
 Come inside (my life/soul) and stay herein forever, Beloved!  
 You are inside me, you outside of me  
 You are inside me, you outside of me  
 You are every bit of me  
 You are my everything  
 Shah Husain says, I have no existence without you (God)

What should I tell you about Ishq  
 What should I tell you about Ishq

My stature does not diminish by being a dancer  
 People buy love (but)  
 I must dance to win my love  
 Let me dance to win my love

I swear to God that He (God) doesn't turn away from him  
(the one) who knows how to appease him.

I swear to God that He (God) doesn't turn away from him  
(the one) who knows how to appease him.

Why should one talk of going to Makkah,  
when s/he can perform his/her Hajj by just looking at his/her Beloved?

What should I tell you about Ishq

What should I tell you about Ishq ...

## Appendix D1 (O)

### Alif Allah Jugni by Arif Lohar and Meesha Shafi (Song4)

الف اللہ حبیبے دی بوٹی  
 میرے مرشد من وچ لائی۔۔۔ ہو  
 نفی اثبات داپانی دے کے  
 ہر رگے ہر جائی۔۔۔ ہو  
 جگ جگ جیوے میرا مرشد سوہنا  
 ہتھ جس ہے بوٹی لائی۔۔۔ ہو

پیر میریا۔۔۔ جگنی جی  
 اے وے اللہ والیاں دی جگنی جی  
 اے وے نبی پاک دی جگنی جی  
 اے وے مولا علی والی جگنی جی  
 اے وے میرے پیر دی جگنی جی  
 اے وے سرسبز دی جگنی جی

دم گنلوں دم گنلوں  
 دم گنلوں دم گنلوں کرے سائیں  
 اے تے کلمہ نبی دا پڑھے سائیں

پیر میریا۔۔۔ جگنی جی  
 اے وے اللہ والیاں دی جگنی جی  
 اے وے نبی پاک دی جگنی جی  
 اے وے مولا علی والی جگنی جی

اے وے میرے پیر دی جگنی جی  
اے وے سر سبز دی جگنی جی

جگنی دھر کھائیں وچ تھال  
چھڈ دیا دا جھسجال  
کچھ نہیں نبھنا بندیاں نال  
رکھیں ثبات صدق عمال

پیر میریا۔۔۔ جگنی جی  
اے وے اللہ والیاں دی جگنی جی  
اے وے نبی پاک دی جگنی جی  
اے وے مولا علی والی جگنی جی  
اے وے میرے پیر دی جگنی جی  
اے وے سر سبز دی جگنی جی

جگنی ڈگ پئی وچ روہی  
اوتھے رور وکملی ہوئی  
اوبدی وات نئی لید اکوئی  
تے کلے بنائیں ملدی ٹوئی

دم گنلوں دم گنلوں  
دم گنلوں دم گنلوں

ونگاں چٹھالو کڑیو  
میرے داتا دے دربار دیاں



نہ کر دھیے کھیڈ پیاری  
 ماں دیندی آگاڑیاں  
 دن دن ڈھلی جوانی جاندی  
 جیوں سونا کٹھیا لڑیاں  
 عورت مرد شہزادے سوہنے  
 اوہ موتی اوہ لالڑیاں  
 سرداسر پھا کرن نہ جیہڑے  
 پین پریم پیالڑیاں  
 داتا دے در بار چے آکھو  
 پاون خیر سوالڑیاں

ونگاں چڑھا لو کڑیو  
 میرے داتا دے در بار دیاں

دم گنگوں دم گنگوں  
 دم گنگوں دم گنگوں کرے سائیں

پیر میریا۔۔۔ جگنی جی  
 اے وے اللہ والیاں دی جگنی جی  
 اے وے نبی پاک دی جگنی جی  
 اے وے مولا علی والی جگنی جی  
 اے وے میرے پیر دی جگنی جی  
 اے وے سر سبز دی جگنی جی

## Appendix D2 (T)

### Alif Allah Jugni by Arif Lohar and Meesha Shafi (Song4)

My God has planted the fragrant seed of love in my heart  
 Which flourished with modesty, piety and acceptance of His existence  
 My God is present in every throbbing pulse  
 My beautiful master is omnipresent  
 The one who blew life into me

I've the spirit of my Guide  
 The spirit of all the messengers who brought His message to this Earth  
 The spirit of Holy Prophet  
 The spirit of Ali and his followers  
 The spirit of my saint  
 The spirit of all his words

Every time I think of you, my heart flutters  
 So I recite the Kalma whenever I think of God  
 I've the spirit of my Guide  
 The spirit of all the messengers who brought His message to this Earth  
 The spirit of the Holy Prophet (PBUH)  
 The spirit of Ali and his followers  
 The spirit of my saint  
 The spirit of all his words

O my creation, share whatever you have  
 Remove yourself from worldly concerns  
 There is nothing that you can get from other human beings  
 that you can take to the after-life

O my creation, share whatever you have  
 Remove yourself from worldly concerns  
 There is nothing that you can get from other human beings  
 that you can take to the after-life  
 Just keep your actions and intentions pure and true

I've the spirit of my Guide  
 The spirit of all the messengers who brought His message to this Earth  
 The spirit of Holy Prophet  
 The spirit of Ali and his followers  
 The spirit of my saint  
 The spirit of all his words

So absorbed was the creation that she stumbled into a ditch  
 She wailed relentlessly  
 But there was no one who inquired about her

Put on the bangles, Girls  
 Girls! put on the bangles from the court of my Benefactor (Data Ganj Bakhsh)  
 O daughter, don't revel in love of fun and play  
 Mother gives advice (that)  
 with each day the bloom of youth is waning  
 as gold in a goldsmith's crucible  
 women and men are beautiful and precious  
 they are pearls, they are rubies  
 those who don't care to save their own head  
 drink from the cup of love  
 In the court of the Benefactor, come and state your desire  
 (He) will grant prosperity to the petitioners

Girls! put on the bangles from the court of my Benefactor  
Girls! put on the bangles from the court of my Benefactor

Every time I think of you, my heart flutters  
So I recite the *Kalma* whenever I think of God  
I've the spirit of my Guide  
The spirit of all the messengers who brought His message to this Earth  
The spirit of Holy Prophet  
The spirit of Ali and his followers  
The spirit of my saint  
The spirit of all his words

## Appendix E1 (O)

### Na Raindi Ay by Areib Azhar (Song5)

منہ آئی بات نارہندی اے  
 منہ آئی بات نارہندی اے  
 جھوٹ اکھاں کچھ بچد اے  
 سچ اکھاں بھانبر مچد اے  
 دو نہاں گلاں توں جی چچد اے  
 چچ کے جھاں کہندی اے  
 منہ آئی بات نارہندی اے  
 منہ آئی بات نارہندی اے  
 آ۔۔ او  
 جس پایا بھیت قلندر دا  
 راہ کھوجیا اپنے اندر دا  
 او واسی اے سکھ مندر دا  
 جتھے چڑھدی اے نالہندی اے  
 منہ آئی بات نارہندی اے  
 منہ آئی بات نارہندی اے  
 نارہندی اے۔۔۔  
 اک لازم بات ادب دی اے  
 ساناں بات معلوم سب دی اے  
 ہر ہر وچ صورت رب دی اے  
 کتھے ظاہر کتھے چھپ بہندی اے  
 منہ آئی بات نارہندی اے

منہ آئی بات نارہندی اے

اووووو۔۔۔۔

اے ملکس بازی وھیڑا اے

تھم تھم کے ٹرا بھیرا اے

وڑاندر ویکھو کیٹرا اے

کیوں خلقت باہر ڈھنڈھیدی اے

منہ آئی بات نارہندی اے

منہ آئی بات نارہندی اے

بلہاشاہ اسان توں وکھ نہیں

پرویکھس والی اکھ نہیں

تائیں جان جدائیاں سہدی اے

منہ آئی بات نارہندی اے

پڑھ پڑھ علم کتاباں داتوں رکھ لیاناں قاضی

ہتھ وچ پھڑکے تلواراں توں ناں رکھ لیاناں غازی

کے مدیسیگھم آیتوں ناں رکھ لیاجا جی

بلھیاتوں کی حاصل کیاجے یار نارکھیاراضی

## Appendix E2 (T)

### Na Raindi Ay by Areib Azhar (Song5)

What's on the tip of the tongue cannot be withheld

What's on the tip of the tongue cannot be withheld

By telling lies, nothing can be saved or nothing remains

if I speak the truth, flaming fire kindles

My heart or mind selects between both these options

my tongue keeps choosing and says,

What's on the tip of the tongue cannot be withheld

What's on the tip of the tongue cannot be withheld

Anyone who discovers the mystery of a "Qalandar" (a saintly person)

actually traces out the path within himself (and)

will inherit the temple of peace

(such a person is a dweller of the Temple of Peace where there is no rise and fall)

What's on the tip of the tongue cannot be withheld

What's on the tip of the tongue cannot be withheld

A point to be noted if I may...

If I know the secret (the secret which we need to know)

that inside each, is the face of the Lord

which flows visibly or hidden elsewhere (or with some others)

What's on the tip of the tongue cannot be withheld

What's on the tip of the tongue cannot be withheld

Bullah! Sweetheart is not alienated (or separated) from us

except from the Sweetheart, there is none  
(or nothing) else (of value or significance or existence)

The world is a slippery place  
Tread carefully because it is dark  
Go inside (and) see who's there  
why do the people search outside (instead of seeing inside)

What's on the tip of the tongue cannot be withheld  
What's on the tip of the tongue cannot be withheld

Bullah, the Beloved is not separate from us  
except from the Beloved, there is naught  
but the discerning/seeing eye is missing  
That's why we (all) suffer (pangs of) separation

What's on the tip of the tongue cannot be withheld  
What's on the tip of the tongue cannot be withheld

Learning through the rote of books you call yourself a scholar?  
Grasping the sword in your hand you call yourself a warrior?  
Having visited Mecca and Medina you call yourself a pilgrim?  
Bullah, what have you accomplished if you have not remained true to your friend!



## Appendix F1 (O)

### Manzil-e Sufi by Sanam Marvi (Song6)

ملاں مار نہ میکوں جھڑکوں  
 میکوں اپنا یار مناؤں دے  
 کنجری بن کے ساڈی عزت نہ گھٹدی  
 ساکوں نچ کے یار مناؤں دے  
 جو گن کھسیاں یار دے پچھوں  
 ساکوں گل وچ ہلھڑا پاؤں دے  
 غلام فرید اوندی او جانے  
 ساکوں اپنی توڑ نہھاؤں دے  
 میں تاں کوئی خیال ہاں  
 ہن ملساں نال خیال دے  
 میں دیدار دیدار میں وچ  
 پھریم دیس وصال دے  
 ہن ملساں نال  
 ملساں نال خیال دے  
 میں تاں کوئی خیال  
 سچل سچ کریندا ظاہر  
 الاکان قتال دے  
 ہن ملساں نال  
 ملساں نال خیال دے  
 میں تاں کوئی خیال ہاں  
 میں تاں کوئی خیال

## Appendix F2 (T)

### Manzil-e Sufi by Sanam Marvi (Song6)

O Mullah! don't rebuke me  
 Let me cajole my Beloved  
 Becoming a dancing girl does not cheapen us  
 Let's cajole our beloved by dancing

I'll become a roaming (female) beggar-mystic in pursuit of my Beloved  
 Let's wear the devotee's beads around our neck  
 Ghulam Farid: He knows his affairs best  
 (but) let us fulfill our pledge(s) to our utmost

I am really just a thought  
 Now I can only be met with...  
 Now I can only be met with through a thought

I am really just a thought  
 I am the vision and the vision is in me  
 I rove in the land of union

Now I can only be met with ...  
 Now I can only be met with through a thought  
 I am really just a thought

Sachal Sarmast makes the Truth apparent  
 Except it would result in battle (hence it cannot)  
 Now I can only be met with ...  
 Now I can only be met with through a thought  
 I am really just a thought

## Appendix G1 (O)

### Soz-e-Ishq by Abida Perveen (Song7)

ہو۔۔۔ مولا  
 احمد توں احد ہو یا  
 احمد نام دھریا ہو  
 دو جگ نوں روشن کر کے  
 باہو نام سرا یا  
 ہو مولا  
 میرے گھر آیا پیا ہمارا  
 واہو وحدت کنا شور  
 میرے گھر آیا پیا ہمارا  
 جو دم غافل سو دم کافر  
 ساکوں مرشد اے پڑھایا ہو  
 سنیا سکھ کھان گیاں کھول اکھیاں  
 اسان چت مولا دل لایا ہو  
 کیتی جان حوالے رب دے  
 ایسا عشق کمایا ہو  
 مرن تھیں اگے مرگے باہو  
 تاں مطلب نوں پایا ہو  
 میرے گھر آیا پیا ہمارا  
 واہو وحدت کناں شور  
 میرے گھر آیا پیا ہمارا  
 مولا۔۔۔ مولا

علی۔۔ علی

علی۔۔ علی

غوث قطب ہیں اڑے اڑے رے

عاشق جان آگیرے ہو

جیٹری منزل عاشق پہنچس

اوتھے غوث ناپاون پھیرے ہو

عاشق وچ وصال دے رہندے

جناں لامکانی ڈیرے ہون

میں قربان تنہاں توں باہو

جناں ذات و ذات بسیرے ہو

میرے گھر آیا پیا ہمارا

واہو وحدت کناں شور

میرے گھر آیا پیا ہمارا

جب میں تھاتب ہری نہیں

اب ہرے میں ناہیں

جب اندھیر مٹ گیا

دیکھ ڈھیر کاما ہی

میرے گھر آیا پیا ہمارا

واہو وحدت کناں شور

میرے گھر آیا پیا ہمارا

میں ہوں پتی کا تھ کی ڈور پیا کے ہاتھ

ناچت ہوں میں پریم سے جیسوں پیا نچات

میرے گھر آیا پیا ہمارا

بلھے شاہ آیا ہمارے پاس مرشد پجاری آس دیا

مولا، علی، یاری

## Appendix G2 (T)

### Soz-e-Ishq by Abida Perveen (Song7)

O my Master!

When the Invisible revealed Himself

He changed his name from Ahad to Ahmad (the Prophet)

By illuminating this world and the world hereafter

Bahu! what was hidden, also came forth

Allah, my Master

My Beloved has come to my abode

(And when He revealed Himself), my heart could hear the din (commotion) within

My Beloved has come to my abode

(And when he revealed Himself), my heart could hear the din within

My Beloved has come to my abode

Being unenlightened is akin to being an unbeliever

My spiritual guide taught me thus

My eyes opened from devotion

I have betrothed my life to Him

I have devoted my life to the Lord

I earned such passion

That I realized what death is even before dying

And so discovered the Eternal Truth

My Beloved has come to my abode

(And when he revealed Himself), my heart could hear the din within

My Beloved has come to my abode

Maula... Maula...

Ali... Ali...

Lord...Lord

Ali...Ali

Ghaus and Qutab would not come to the levels set

*(Ghaus and Qutab are the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades of the 7 grades of Sufi Spiritual Hierarchy)*

Lovers go far beyond

The levels that lovers reach

Even Ghaus is unaware of those

Divine lovers remain in Unification

For they reside everywhere, yet nowhere

I would gladly sacrifice myself for those ...

Those who are in His proximity

My Beloved has come to my abode

(And when he revealed Himself), my heart could hear the din within

My Beloved has come to my abode

When I was me, I couldn't see Him

Now that He is apparent, I can no longer see myself

When that veil of darkness was lifted

There was no need to light a lamp

My Beloved has come to my abode

(And when he revealed Himself), my heart could hear the din even within

My Beloved has come to my abode

I am a puppet, the strings in my Beloved's hands

I dance in a trance of love, the way my Beloved wishes

My Beloved has come to my abode  
Bullah! He came, and gave me hope

Maula, Ali, Ali, Ali, Ali .....

My Protector, Ali, Companion

## Appendix H1 (O)

### Sighra Aaween (Come Swiftly) by Sanam Marvi (Song8)

الف اللہ تجھے دی بوٹی مرشد من وچ لائی ہو  
 نفی اثبات داپانی ملیو ہر رگے ہر جائی ہو  
 اندر بوٹی مشک چچائے جاں پھلن تے آئی ہو  
 جیوے مرشد کامل باہو جیں ایہہ بوٹی لائی ہو  
 گکھڑ آویں سانول یار  
 روندی وتدیاں زاروزار  
 گکھڑ آویں سانول یار  
 رات دیاں وچ سانگ سجن دے رہن ہمیشہ سردرات  
 جواک واری مرکے جیوے فیراناں کی مرناہو  
 دنیا اتوں جس دن بھاویں اس دن پردہ کرناہو  
 راہاں تے ایہاں روز ولیدیاں  
 من توں آویں کیہہ ول یار  
 گکھڑ آویں سانول یار  
 جیں ڈیہدا میں در سجدے تے سجدہ سہی جا کساہو  
 اس ڈینہ داسرند اتھائیں بیادر بار نہ لتاہو  
 سر ڈیون آکھیں ناہیں شاد پیالہ پیتاہو  
 میں قربان تنہاں توں باہو جہاں عشق سلامت کیاہو  
 درہے تے سچو جہے  
 عشق لکھ ہزار او یار  
 گکھڑ آویں سانول یار



## Appendix H2 (T)

### Sighra Aaween (Come Swiftly) by Sanam Marvi (Song8)

Alif- the first letter of God's name, is a jasmine flower  
 that the Guide has planted in my heart – Hoo!  
 watered with negation and affirmation (no God, but God)  
 was each vein and each pore – Hoo!  
 inside, the plant stirred a musky tumult of fragrance  
 when the flowers of gnosis blossomed – Hoo!  
 long live my Consummate Guide, O “Bahu,”  
 who planted this chaste flower

Come swiftly, dark, handsome love!  
 I wander weeping wretchedly  
 come swiftly, dark, handsome love!  
 the nights and days of separation from my lover always remain bitterly cold  
 he who, after death, once more lives, what fear has he of death then – Hoo!  
 from the world, the day he chooses his mortal frame he can quit – Hoo!  
 each day, I scour the roads you travelled  
 oh, would to God, you come back, love!

Come swiftly, dark, handsome love!  
 at your door, from the day  
 that I did my forehead bow in the True Court – Hoo!  
 from that day, my head (life) is devoted to that Court;  
 no other court have I since sought – Hoo!  
 they'd give up their heads than give up His Secret,  
 who have drunk from the Cup of Gladness – Hoo!

I am sacrificed for those ones, O “Bahu,”  
who have safeguarded Pure Love – Hoo!  
at your door, like the lowly Sachu (Sacchal)  
(must be) countless ardent lovers, love!  
Come swiftly, dark, handsome love!

## Appendix I1 (O)

### Kamlee by Hadiqa Kiyani (Song9)

دال دس خاں شہر لاہور اندر  
 دال دس خاں شہر لاہور اندر  
 بیئ کنے بوہے تے کنیاں باریاں نے  
 نالے دس خاں او تھوں دیاں اٹاں  
 کنیاں ٹٹیاں تے کنیاں سارن نے  
 دال دس خاں شہر لاہور اندر  
 کھوئیاں کنیاں مٹھیاں تے کنیاں کھاریاں نے  
 ذرا سوچ کے دیویں جو اب مینوں  
 او تھے کنیاں ویایاں تے کنیاں کنواریاں نے  
 دال دسساں میں شہر لاہور اندر  
 بیئ لکھاں بوہے تے لکھاں باریاں نے  
 جناں اٹاں تے دہر گئے پیر عاشق  
 اوہیوں ٹٹیاں تے باقی ساریاں نے  
 جہاں کھوئیاں توں بھر گے معشوق بھریاں  
 اوہیوں ٹٹیاں تے باقی ساریاں نے  
 جھڑیں بھہدیاں اپنے نال سچراں دے  
 اوہیوں ویاہیاں تے باقی کنواریاں نے  
 حاجی لوک مکے نوں جان دے  
 میرا رانجھاما ہی مکہ  
 نہیں میں کملی آں  
 ہو میرا رانجھاما ہی مکہ

نہیں میں کملی آں  
 ہو کا جل دا کی پانا  
 کہ جیہڑا اتھرو و گن رڑ جاوے  
 رنگ دا کی لاورن  
 کہ جیہڑا بوند پوے تے کھر جاوے  
 عاشق نوں کی ماراں  
 کہ جیہڑا جھڑک دیوے مر جاوے  
 نہیں میں کملی آں  
 نہیں میں کملی آں  
 ہو میں تاں منگ را نجن دی ہوئیں  
 میرا بل دیند اے دھک  
 نہیں میں کملی آں  
 جے رب ملد اناہتیاں دھوتیاں  
 تے ملد اڈواں مچھیاں  
 جے رب ملد ا جنگل نیلے  
 تاں ملد ا گانواں و چھیاں  
 جے رب ملد ا وچ مسے  
 تاں ملد ا چچڑکیاں  
 بلیلار ب اونہاں نوں ملد ا  
 ہئی نیتاں جہاں دیاں سچیاں  
 نہیں میں کملی آں  
 پڑھ پڑھ علم ہزار کتاباں  
 کتاباں  
 پڑھ پڑھ علم ہزار کتاباں  
 کدے اپنے آپ نوں پڑھیا سنیں  
 جا جاوڑدے مندر مسے

کدے من اپنے وچ وڑیا سئیں  
 اینویں لڑیں شیطان دے نال بندیا  
 اینویں لڑیں شیطان دے نال بندیا  
 کدے نفس اپنے نال لڑیا سئیں  
 آکھے پیر بے شاہ  
 آکھے پیر بے شاہ آسمانی پھڑ سئیں  
 جیہڑا من وچ وسدا او نہوں پھڑیا سئیں

اللہ

نی میں کملی آں

## Appendix I2 (T)

### Kamlee by Hadiqa Kiyani (Song9)

Tell me, in the city of Lahore  
 how many doors and windows are there?  
 Tell me also about its bricks  
 how many are still firm, and how many lie broken?

Tell me, inside the city of Lahore  
 how many wells have fresh water and how many are ruined with salt?

Think carefully before you answer  
 how many are married and how many single?

Let me tell you what lies in the city of Lahore ...  
 there are millions of doors and millions of windows  
 the bricks burn in the memory of lovers' footsteps  
 Only those lie broken  
 Only (those) wells that quench a lover's thirst  
 Are filled with fresh water and the rest are salty  
 Only those who sit with their lovers  
 Are married and the others are still single

Pilgrims go to Mecca  
 (but for me) my beloved RanJha is my Mecca.  
 O! I am crazy  
 (but for me) my beloved RanJha is my Mecca.  
 O! I am crazy

What is the use of wearing kohl  
 Which is washed away with streaming tears?  
 Why wear glass  
 which can shatter with a nudge?  
 Why bother putting on color  
 that would melt away with every drop?  
 Why bother killing the lover  
 when he would die with the thought of your anger?

O! I am crazy indeed  
 O! I am crazy  
 To Ranjha I am betrothed  
 my father (also) pushes me (towards Him)

O! I am crazy  
 O! I am crazy

If God was to be found by bathing  
 Then fish and frogs would have found Him  
 If God was to be found by roaming jungles  
 Then cows and calves would have found Him  
 If God was to be found in Mosques  
 Then bats would have found Him  
 He is only found by those  
 Who are pure at heart

O! I am crazy  
 O! I am crazy  
 You read thousands of books  
 Yes, you have read thousands of books  
 But you never read your own self

You rush to enter temples and mosques  
But you never try to enter your own heart

All your battles with Satan are lost  
All your battles with Satan are lost  
For you never tried to fight your own desires  
Saint Bulleh Shah says,  
Saint Bulleh Shah says (that) you (only) tried to touch the one in the sky (false ambitions)  
But you never tried to touch the one who lives in your heart

Allah...

Allah

O! I am crazy

O! I am crazy



## Appendix J1 (O)

### Charkha Nolakha by Atif Aslam & Umair Jaswal (Song10)

تیرے باجھوں دل دیا مہر ماوے  
میرا جیونا کیہڑے حج داوے

میرے لوں لوں وچ میری نس نس وچ  
تیری یاد دا تمبا و جد اوے  
آجا ہر چرخے دے گیڑے  
میں تینوں یاد کر دی  
کدی آسڑی دے ویہڑے  
میں تینوں یاد کر دی

آجا

عسق دا چرخہ خاد کھاں دیاں پونیاں  
جیوں جیوں کتی جاواں ہوں پینیاں گینیاں  
یار فرید اقبول کریں  
میڈا سانول مٹھڑا  
شام سلوندا اتے سانول یار او یار  
میڈا سانول مٹھڑا شام سالوں سلوندا  
یار ملے لچپال ملے تدیاری لاون چس ہے

جیوں تیرے پیار میں کروں انتظار میں کسی سے کہا جائے نہ  
جلوں تیرے پیار میں کروں انتظار میں  
کسی سے کہا جائے نہ

میراے چرخانو لکھا کڑے  
میراے چرخانو لکھا کڑے  
آجا

## Appendix J2 (T)

### Charkha Nolakha by Atif Aslam & Umair Jaswal (Song10)

Oh! Keeper of my heart?  
 What good is my life without you?  
 In every pore and every vein of my being  
 the song of your memory strums

Come with every turn of the wheel  
 I yearn for you  
 Come to the courtyard  
 to the one who longs for you  
 Come!

The spindle of love, the unspun fibers of sorrow  
 the more I spin, the more they seem to increase  
 my friend Fareed, please avow  
 my sweet Beloved

Dark as the evening is my Beloved, friend, oh friend!  
 salty, dark as the evening is my sweet Beloved  
 finding the friend, the protector, makes friendship worth it  
 (I) live in your love, I wait for you, cannot tell anyone  
 burning in your love I wait for you  
 cannot tell anyone

This spindle of mine is priceless  
 This spindle of mine is priceless  
 Come!!!

## Appendix K1 (O)

### Jogi Mery Naal by Fareeha Pervez (Song11)

نی میں جانا

نی میں جانا

نی میں جانا جوگی دے نال

نی میں جانا جوگی دے نال

کنیں مندرائ پا کے

کنیں مندرائ پا کے

متھے تلک لگا کے

نی میں جانا جوگی دے نال

نی میں جانا جوگی دے نال

ایہہ جوگی میرے من وچ و سیا

ایہہ جوگی میرا جوڑا کسیا

سچ آکھاں میں قسم قرآن ایس

جوگی میرا دین ایمان اے

جوگی میرے نال نال

میں جوگی دے نال نال

کوئی کسے دے نال

کوئی کسے دے نال

تے میں جوگی دے نال نال

جوگی میرے نال نال

میں جوگی دے نال نال

جدوں دی میں

جدوں دی میں  
 جدوں دی میں جوگی دی ہوئی  
 میں وچ میں نہ رہ گئی کوئی  
 جوگی میرے نال نال  
 میں جوگی دے نال نال  
 جوگی نال جانا  
 جوگی نال جانا  
 نی میں جانا  
 نی میں جانا  
 میں جانا  
 میں جانا، جانا، جانا  
 سرپے ٹوپی تے نیت کھوٹی  
 لینا کی ٹوپی سرپے دھر کے  
 تسبیح پھری پر دل نہ پھریا  
 لینا کی تسبیح ہتھ پھڑ کے  
 چلے کسے پر رب نہ ملیا  
 لینا کی چلیاں وچ وڑ کے  
 بلایا جاگ بنا ددھ سیں کڑھدا  
 بھانویں لال ہووے کڑھ کڑھ کے  
 جوگی دے نال نال  
 کنیں مندر راں پا کے  
 کنیں مندر راں پا کے  
 متھے تلک لگا کے  
 نی میں جانا جوگی دے نال  
 نی میں جانا جوگی دے نال

## Appendix K2 (T)

### Jogi Mery Naal by Fareeha Pervez (Song11)

I want to go along...

I want to go along with the Jogi

Wearing heavy earrings

adorning my brow with the bridal mark

I want to go along with the Jogi,

this Jogi dwells in my heart,

this Jogi tightens my hair-knot

If I were to swear by the Holy book and speak the truth

the Jogi is my very creed and faith

The Jogi's always with me

and I'm always with the Jogi

Different people are with different people,

other people are with others

But for me, there can be no one but the Jogi

the Jogi's always with me

And I'm always with the Jogi

The moment I...

The moment I became the Jogi's

nothing of 'me' remained within me

the Jogi is always with me

And I'm always with the Jogi

...go along with the Jogi ...

I must go

I must go, must go, must go

You wear a (prayer) cap on your head,

but you harbor ill intent,

So, what good is wearing a cap on your head?

You spend your time in recitation over prayer beads,

but you don't feel it in your heart,

So what do you get out of holding prayer-beads in your hand?

You performed all your rituals, but you didn't find God

what good will observing such rituals do?

Bulleh Shah! You can't curdle milk without rennet

even if you make it turn red through trying ...

Always with the Jogi

wearing heavy earrings

adorning my brow with the bridal mark

I want to go along with the Jogi

I want to go along with the Jogi

I want to go along with the jogi

I want to go along with the jogi

## Appendix L1 (O)

### Ishq di Booti by Abrar ul Haq (Song12)

غوث قلندر، قطب، ابدال، قلندر

مٹی اندر

ہائے

دارا، ذوالقرنین، سکندر

مٹی اندر

سوہنے سوہنے مکھڑے سندر

مٹی اندر

آخر سب نے ٹر جانا ہے مٹی اندر

وے پریت لگائیے نال رب دے

ہائے

جنہوں پریت نبھاون دا اول آؤندا

تے دُ دنیا دغے داناں دو جا

تے جنہوں یار و نجاون دا اول آؤندا

اٹھ سگیا

اٹھ سگیا لے لے اللہ داناں

تے بوٹی بیج لے

حبے والی بوٹی بیج لے

حق والی بوٹی بیج لے

اٹھ سگیا لے لے عشق داناں

رب والی بوٹی بیج لے

حبے والی بوٹی بیج لے



پیار والی بوٹی بیچ لے  
 دل دی کھیتی دے وچ پہلاں نیت داہل وا  
 کھوٹ، عداوت، نفرت، جھگڑے

سارے مار مکا  
 نفس جیا دشمن وی کوئی نہیں

زہر دا ٹیکہ لا  
 لالچ، بدلہ، حسد کمینہ

چولہے دے وچ پا  
 عشق دی گوڈی کر کے

تے ہنجواں دا پانی پا  
 تے بوٹی بیچ لے

حبیبے والی بوٹی بیچ لے

حق والی بوٹی بیچ لے

اٹھ سگیا لے لے اللہ داناں

یار منالے

اوبابا بلھے وانگوں گھنگرو پالے

نچ نچ یار منالے

رحمت دا مینہ پا خدا یا

ہائے

تے باغ سکا کر ہریا

تے بوٹا آس امید میری دا

تو کر دے میوے بھریا

ربا ربامینہ برسا

بنجر دل میں میں پانی لا

میں انناں تے ملکن رستہ

تے کیونکر ملے سنبھالا

دھکے دیوں والے بوہتے  
 تے توں ہتھ پکڑن والا  
 اٹھ سگیا لے لے عشق داناں  
 تے بوئی بیچ لے  
 حبے والی بوئی بیچ لے  
 پیار والی بوئی بیچ لے  
 اٹھ سگیا لے لے اللہ داناں  
 تے یار منالے  
 بابا بلھے وانگوں گھنگرو پالے  
 نچ نچ یار منالے  
 دم دم دم حق  
 دم دم دم حق  
 دم دم دم  
 ربار با میسہ برسسا  
 بنجر دل میں پانی لا  
 دم دم دم حق  
 دم دم

## Appendix L2 (T)

### Ishq di Booti by Abrar ul Haq (Song12)

The great saints and mystics, and the humblest ascetics  
All lie buried in the dust

The great conquerors: Darius, Zulqarnain, & Alexander  
All lie buried in the dust  
Such beautiful, luminous faces  
All lie buried in the dust  
Ultimately, each one of us must be buried in the dust

To God you should give your love  
For only He can fulfil the pledge of True Love

This world is nothing but an illusion  
And pursuing the world means losing the True Beloved  
Come, friend!  
Come, friend, say over and over again the name of God  
And thus sow the seed  
Sow the seed of the jasmine flower  
Sow the seed of Truth

Come, friend! say over and over again the name of Love  
And sow the seed  
Sow the seed of your Lord  
Sow the seed of the jasmine flower  
Sow the seed of Love

First pass the plough of sincerity over the field of the heart  
Falseness, enmity, hatred, and strife...  
Purge these from your heart  
There is no enemy as great as your own worldly desires  
Destroy these desires, inject them with poison  
Greed, revenge, and envy are all vile things  
Cast them into the fire

Cultivate the field of Love  
And water it with tears  
And sow the seed  
Sow the seed of the Jasmine flower  
Sow the seed of Truth

Come, friend! say over and over again the name of God  
Cajole the Beloved  
Come on, put on the ankle-bells like Bulleh Shah did  
Dance and cajole the Beloved

Pour down the rain of your Divine Mercy, O Lord  
and make this parched garden green  
and let my hopes and longings...  
Flourish and bloom with fruit, my Lord

O my Lord, make it rain  
Make fertile this barren heart  
I am blind, and the path is slippery...  
so how do I stay steady?  
They are many people to push me down  
and there's none but You to grasp my hand

Come, friend! say over and over again the name of Love  
and thus sow the seed  
Sow the seed of the Jasmine flower  
Sow the seed of Love  
Come, friend! say over and over again the name of God  
And cajole the Beloved

Come on, put on the ankle-bells like Bulleh Shah did  
Dance and cajole the Beloved

The divine name of Truth in every breath I draw  
In every breath  
In every breath I draw

O my Lord, make it rain  
Make fertile this barren heart  
The divine name of Truth in every breath I draw  
The divine name of Truth in every breath I draw  
In every breath ...

## Appendix M1 (O)

### Mein Sufi hun by Abida Perveen (Song13)

ہو جی مولا  
 عقل فکر دی جاء نہ کائی  
 جتھے سروحدت سبحانی ہو  
 نہ اتھ ملاں پنڈت جوشی  
 نہ اتھ ملاں پنڈت جوشی  
 نہ اتھ علم قرآنی ہو  
 جد احمد احد و کھالی دتا  
 تاں کل ہوئے فانی ہو  
 علم تمام کیتو نے حاصل باہو  
 ٹھپ کتاباں اسمانی ہو  
 میں صوفی ہوں سر مستہ  
 میں صوفی ہوں سر مستہ  
 میرا کون پچھانے رستہ  
 میں صوفی ہوں سر مستہ  
 میں صوفی ہوں

مولا

جب میں تھا  
 جب میں تھا تب ہری نہیں  
 جب میں تھا تب ہری نہیں  
 اب ہری ہے میں ناہیں  
 میں ناہیں  
 جب اندھیرا مٹ گیا  
 دیکھ دیر کماہیں  
 میں صوفی ہوں سر مستہ

میرا کون پچھانے رستہ  
 میں صوفی ہوں سر مستہ  
 سر مستہ  
 جی مولا  
 مقام اسکا ہے  
 مقام اسکا ہے دل کی خلوتوں میں  
 خدا جانے مقام دل کہاں ہے  
 کہاں ہے  
 میں صوفی ہوں سر مستہ  
 عاشق ہوں نویں  
 عاشق ہوں نویں تاں عشق کمانویں  
 دل رکھیں وانگ پہاڑاں ہو  
 سے سے بدیاں لکھ لاکھ ہے  
 جانیں باغ بہاراں ہو  
 منصور جسے چک سولی دتے  
 جیہڑے واقف کل اسراراں ہو  
 سجدیوں سر نہ چائیے باہو  
 باہو  
 سجدیوں سر نہ چائیے باہو  
 توڑے کافر کہن ہزاراں ہو  
 میں صوفی ہوں سر مستہ  
 میرا کون پچھانے رستہ  
 جی مولا  
 جی مو  
 توں توں کرنا توں بھیا  
 مجھ میں رہی نہ ہو  
 داری تیرے نام کے  
 جت دیکھوں تہ توں

میں صوفی ہوں سر مستہ

سر مستہ

جی مولا

جی مولا

علی علی علی علی

علی مولا



## Appendix M2 (T)

### Mein Sufi hun by Abida Perveen (Song13)

O Master!

There is no place for wisdom or thought there

There is no place for wisdom or thought there

where the Unity of the Divine is the secret – Hoo!

grand professors, priests, and astrologers have no use there

and bookish knowledge of scripture has no worth – Hoo!

with the veil of ‘m’ removed, when ‘Ahmad’ was revealed as ‘Ahad’ (one with God)

then all creation merged with the Reality of Him – Hoo!

You’ve acquired all kinds of knowledge, Bahu (Sultan Bahu)

now shut the holy books and put them away

I am an ecstatic mystic

who can trace the path of my inward journey?

I am an ecstatic mystic

Who can trace the path of my inward journey?

O Master!

When my own ego was there

When my own ego was there, the awareness of God was not (there)

Now there’s only God, no ‘me’

No ‘me’

When illumination of Knowledge chased away the darkness in me

there was no need to light a lamp

I am an ecstatic mystic  
 who can trace the path of my inward journey?  
 I am an ecstatic mystic

The abode of God is...  
 The abode of God is in the innermost heart  
 But God knows where the heart's abode is

Where?  
 Where is the heart's abode?  
 I am an ecstatic mystic

Become a true lover and thus gain love  
 Become a true lover and thus gain love

Keep your heart as staunch and unfaltering as a mountain – Hoo!  
 The hundreds of cruelties, and thousands of insults you suffer at people's hands  
 Consider these to be a joyous blessing – Hoo!  
 Even true devotees like Mansur Hallaj were hung at the gallows  
 (the one) who had known His Secrets – Hoo!

We don't lift our bowed head from prayer, Sultan Bahu  
 Bahu! Bahu! Bahu!  
 We don't lift our bowed head from prayer, Bahu  
 Even if crowds and crowds of people call us infidels – Hoo!

I am an ecstatic mystic  
 who can trace the path of my inward journey?  
 I am an ecstatic mystic  
 I am an ecstatic mystic

O Master!

My constant remembrance of Your name merged me into You

All trace of me was erased until there was nothing left but You

I offer my life for your blessed name

Wherever I turn, I can see only You

I am an ecstatic mystic

O Master!

I am an ecstatic mystic

Who can trace the path of my inward journey?

I am an ecstatic mystic

Who can trace the path of my inward journey?

'ali 'ali 'ali 'ali ....

Ali

## Appendix N1 (O)

### Khaaki Bandah by Umair Jaswal & Ahmed Jahanzeb (Song14)

خاکی بندہ  
 کردا پھرے خدائی  
 لولا بیٹھا دنیا نال  
 رب توں کرے جدائی  
 نا کر بندیا میری میری  
 ناتیری نامیری  
 چار دناں دا اے میلہ  
 دنیا فیر مٹی دی ڈھیری  
 پڑھ پڑھ کتاباں علم دیاں  
 ناں رکھ لیا اے قاضی  
 مکے مدینے گھم آیتے  
 ناں رکھ لیا اے حاجی  
 سترنگی رے نادانی تیری  
 نوٹسکی رے من مانی تیری  
 دین دھرم دی گلاں باتاں کر کر کے وی سمجھ نا آئی  
 فرقے ونڈے علم نا ونڈیا  
 وچ ویراں بوئی لڑائی  
 نا کر بندیا پھیرا پھیری  
 ناتیری نامیری  
 چار دناں دا اے میلہ  
 دنیا فیر مٹی دی ڈھیری

کھوٹی نیت کھوٹے سکے

نادیون سچا ہانی

بدلیں گاتوں بدلے گاسب

دے نفس اپنے دی توں قربانی

سترنگی رے نادانی تیری

من رنگی رے نادانی تیری

سترنگی رے نادانی تیری

نوٹسکی رے من مانی تیری

اے ذات مگر فانی تیری

آدل دے رستے تے چل

چڑھدے سورج ڈھلدے دیکھے

بجھدے دیوے بلدے دیکھے

جسہاں دانا جگتے کوئی

اووی پتر پلدے دیکھے

لوکی کہدے دال ناگلدی

میں تے پتھر گلدے دیکھے

سترنگی رے نادانی تیری

نوٹسکی رے من مانی تیری

اے ذات مگر فانی تیری

آدل دے رستے تے چل

سونا چاندی ہیرے موتی کھالے توں

اچے مکاناں کمرے بھانویں سجالے توں

لازم نہیں اے کے خوشیاں ساری کی ساری کمالے توں

راتاں وچ کلیاں رورورب اپنے نوں منالے توں

دھو کے بازی وچ گزارا دکھ ناسجن بھائی

راز تیرے راز میرے جانے خدا دی خدائی

سترنگی رے نادانی تیری  
نوٹسکی رے من مانی تیری  
اے ذات مگر فانی تیری  
آدل دے رستے تے چل

خاکی بندہ

خاکی بندہ

خاکی

خاکی

## Appendix N2 (T)

### Khaaki Bandah by Umair Jaswal & Ahmed Jahanzeb (Song14)

A mere human made of clay  
goes around acting as if he's as invincible as God  
he's lost himself completely to this ephemeral world  
and does not ponder his relationship with his Lord

O human! leave off this battle for worldly possessions  
nothing here can ever truly belong to us  
the glittering spectacle of this world lasts but a few days  
and then everything turns to dust.

You've filled your head with mere bookish knowledge  
and smugly titled yourself a grand authority  
you've done a round of Mecca and Medina  
and smugly titled yourself a holy pilgrim.

You are fooled by the bright spectacle of this world  
your proud willfulness is driven by nothing but conceit.

Your never-ending religious debates failed to create a deeper understanding  
You spread people into conflicting camps, but failed to spread real knowledge  
All you did was (that you) sowed seeds of dissension among friends and brothers  
O human! don't get caught up in worldly matters  
nothing here can ever truly belong to us

the glittering spectacle of this world lasts but a few days  
and then everything turns to dust.

False intentions, deceit, and duplicity  
can never win you sincere companions  
all will change if you only change yourself  
slay your own base desires.

You are fooled by the bright spectacle of this world  
Your proud willfulness is driven by nothing but conceit  
but your being is ephemeral  
come! follow the path of Love!

I've seen the sun that rises, sets (also)  
I've seen flickering lamp blaze anew  
The orphans who have no one left in this world  
I've seen them also finding the means to flourish  
People say that success is beyond reach  
But I have seen the impossible become possible

You are fooled by the bright spectacle of this world  
your proud willfulness is driven by nothing but conceit  
But your being is ephemeral  
come! follow the path of Love.

You can gobble up pearls, diamonds, and all the riches of the world  
You can construct grand mansions and adorn them beautifully  
But true happiness is something difficult to buy  
So spend your nights in solitary vigil, weeping for your Lord's forgiveness  
Those who live by dishonest means don't hesitate to harm even their loved one  
God in His infinite power is privy to all our secrets



You are fooled by the bright spectacle of this world  
your proud willfulness is driven by nothing but conceit  
But your being is ephemeral  
Come! follow the path of Love.

A mere human made of clay  
A mere human made of clay  
goes around acting...  
A mere human made of clay  
goes around acting...

## Appendix O1 (O)

### Chal Mele Noon Chaliye by Saeen Zahoor & Sanam Marvi (Song15)

گالی میرے لال کی  
 جت دیکھوں تت لال  
 لال ویکھس میں گئی  
 میں ویہوئی لال  
 کیسریا بلما آؤنی پدھارو  
 مارے دیس  
 رین نا جاگے  
 جاگے نہ رین  
 اولاگی بنارین نہ جاگے کوئی  
 او جاگے جس نو آپ جگاوے  
 ارے ہو رنہ جاگے کوئی  
 اولاگی بنارین نہ جاگے کوئی  
 او پہلا پہر کوئی جاگے  
 پر دو جانہ جاگے کوئی  
 اولاگی بنارین نہ جاگے کوئی  
 او جیویں او بھلیا اوئے  
 میلہ اے پل دی پل اے  
 چل میلے نوں چلئے  
 او آخر جانا مروے  
 چل میلے نوں چلئے  
 ہو میلہ پل دی پل وے

چل میلے نوں چلے  
 ہو آخر جانا اے گھر وے  
 چل میلے نوں چلے  
 جیہڑا ویکھ کے گیا ڈروے  
 چل میلے نوں چلے  
 ہو آخر جانا گھر وے  
 چل میلے نوں چلے  
 رین نہ جاگ  
 جاگے نہ رین نہ جاگے  
 ہو دکھی جاگے دکھ دے کارن  
 پر سکھی نہ جاگے کوئی  
 اولاگی بنارین نہ جاگے کوئی  
 بھلے شاہپیر مناوے  
 تے درشن یار داپاوے  
 نچ کے اوپیر مناندا  
 تے درشن یار داپاندا  
 اولاگی بنارین نہ جاگے کوئی

## Appendix O2 (T)

### Chal Mele Noon Chaliye by Saeen Zahoor & Sanam Marvi (Song15)

Everywhere I turn, I see the brilliant color of my Beloved  
I went to see that dazzling hue  
and myself got dyed in His blessed color.

My handsome Beloved! Come to me  
come home to me, please

No one stays up all night  
no one stays up all through the night  
without the yearning of love,  
no one stays up all night in prayer.

Only he stays awake whose inner yearning keeps him awake  
No one else stays awake  
without the yearning of love, no one stays up all night in prayer;  
Everyone can stay up for some of the night  
but no one devotes all the long night to prayer  
without the yearning of love, no one stays up all night in prayer.

O Bulleh Shah, live long!

The sparkling assembly of the world is now here and now gone  
Let's go and see its sights for these few moments  
we must ultimately die and leave here  
Let's go and see its sights for these few moments.

God gathered the first assembly  
on His order, the angels bowed to Adam.  
It is sorrows that keep the sorrowful awake  
but the joyful are not kept awake.

Without the yearning of love, no one stays up all night in prayer;  
Bulleh Shah cajoles his guide  
and is thus blessed with his beloved's sight  
he dances to cajole his guide  
and is thus blessed with his Beloved's sight.

## Appendix P1 (O)

### Meri Meri by Rizwan Butt and Sara Haider (Song16)

رب رب کر دے بڑھے ہو گئے ملاں پنڈت سارے  
 رب داکھوج نالہجیا سجدے کر کر ہارے  
 رب تے تیرے اندروس سی وچ قرآن اشارے  
 بلھے شاہ رب اوس نوں ملسی جیہڑا اپنے نفس نوں مارے  
 اونا کر بندیا میری میری  
 میری میری میری میری  
 ناتیری نامیری  
 نا کر بندیا میری میری  
 میری میری میری میری  
 چار دناں دامیلہ  
 دنیا فیر مٹی دی ڈھیری  
 رب رب کر دے بڑھے ہو گئے ملاں پنڈت سارے  
 رب داکھوج نالہجیا سجدے کر کر ہارے  
 نا کر بندیا میری میری  
 میری میری میری میری  
 ناتیری نامیری  
 نا کر بندیا میری میری  
 میری میری میری میری  
 چار دناں دامیلہ  
 دنیا فیر مٹی دی ڈھیری  
 ناتیری نامیری

ناتیری نامیری

چار دناں دی

چار دناں دی دنیا

چار دناں دی دنیا

ناکر بندیا تیری میری

ناکر بندیا

چل بلھیا چل اوتھے چلے جتھے سارے اھے

ناکوئی ساڈی ذات چھانے ناکوئی سانوں منے

چل بلھیا چل اوتھے چلے جتھے سارے اھے

ناکر بندیا میری میری

میری میری میری میری

ناتیری نامیری

ناکر بندیا میری میری

میری میری میری میری

چار دناں دامیلہ

دنیا فیر مٹی دی ڈھیری

## Appendix P2 (T)

### Meri Meri by Rizwan Butt and Sara Haider (Song16)

Pundits and mullahs have passed their entire lives in calling out God's name  
but despite endless prostrations,  
they failed to find a trace of God (because)  
it is within you that God resides, as the Quran shows

Bulleh Shah, he who kills his own base desires is the one who finds god;  
O human, leave off this battle for worldly possessions  
nothing here can ever truly belong to us  
O human, leave off this battle for worldly possessions  
the glittering spectacle of this world only lasts a few days  
and then everything turns to dust.

Come, Bulleh Shah, let's go to a place where everyone is sightless  
where no one asks us about our lineage, and no one reveres us  
come, Bulleh Shah, let's go to a place where everyone is sightless.



## Appendix Q 1

### Average Rating taken from 2 Web Sites

No	Song/ Kala'am	Artist(s)	YouTube	Sound Cloud	Average
1	<i>Allah Hu</i>	Tufail Ahmad	2, 002	333	1, 167.5
2	<i>Aik Alif</i>	Saeen Zahoor	41, 000	7,886	24, 443
3	<i>Daastan-e-Ishq</i>	Ali Zafar	21, 000	2,113	11, 556.5
4	<i>Alif Allah Jugni</i>	Arif Lohar Meesha Shafi	148000	735	74, 367.5
5	<i>Na Raihndi Ay</i>	Arieab Azhar	1000	576	788
6	<i>Manzel-e-Sufi</i>	Sanam Marvi	9, 007	6, 270	7,638.5
7	<i>Soz-e-Ishq</i>	Abida Perveen	3000	35	1,517.5
8	<i>Sighra Aaween</i> <i>Saanwal Yaar</i>	Sanam Marvi	1000	90	545
9	<i>Kamli</i>	Hadiqa Kiyani	2, 002	543	1,272.5
10	<i>Charkha Neolakha</i>	Atif Aslam	17, 000	10,001	13,500.5
11	<i>Jogi Mairy Naal</i>	Fareeha Pervez	12, 000	4,528	8, 264
12	<i>Ishq di Booti</i>	Abrar-ul-Haq	14, 000	1, 941	7,970.5
13	<i>Mein Sufi Hun</i>	Abida Perveen	4, 004	43, 008	23, 506
14	<i>Khaki Banda</i>	Ahmed Jahanzeb Umair Jaswal	24000	21,003	22, 501.5
15	<i>Chall Mele Noon</i> <i>Challiye</i>	Saeen Zahoor Sanam Marvi	53000	25,006	39,003
16	<i>Meri Meri</i>	Rizwan Butt Sara Haider	10, 000	6, 066	8,033

### Appendix Q 2 (web site links)

No	Song/ <i>Kala'am</i>	Artist(s)	YouTube Links for Songs	Sound Cloud Links for Songs
1	<i>Allah Hu</i>	Tufail Ahmad	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bpsSkUvIwiE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bpsSkUvIwiE</a>	<a href="https://soundcloud.com/gouhar-pirzada/sets/allah-hu-coke-studio">https://soundcloud.com/gouhar-pirzada/sets/allah-hu-coke-studio</a>
2	<i>Aik Alif</i>	Saeen Zahoor	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ra5nTlty6CM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ra5nTlty6CM</a>	<a href="https://soundcloud.com/aashirr/sets/aik-alif-noori-saeen-zahoor">https://soundcloud.com/aashirr/sets/aik-alif-noori-saeen-zahoor</a>
3	<i>Daastan-e-Ishq</i>	Ali Zafar	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6UknDjQZr5E">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6UknDjQZr5E</a>	<a href="https://soundcloud.com/nasir-amin-4/dastaan-e-ishq-ali-zafar-coke-studio-pakistan-season-2-youtube">https://soundcloud.com/nasir-amin-4/dastaan-e-ishq-ali-zafar-coke-studio-pakistan-season-2-youtube</a>
4	<i>Alif Allah Jugni</i>	Arif Lohar Meesha Shafi	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gjaH2iuoYWE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gjaH2iuoYWE</a>	<a href="https://soundcloud.com/gaurav-rohatgi/alif-allah-jugni-arif-lohar">https://soundcloud.com/gaurav-rohatgi/alif-allah-jugni-arif-lohar</a>
5	<i>Na Raihndi Ay</i>	Arieab Azhar	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XxH5wQtWZqQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XxH5wQtWZqQ</a>	<a href="https://soundcloud.com/adilch/husn-ehaqiqi">https://soundcloud.com/adilch/husn-ehaqiqi</a>
6	<i>Manzel-e-Sufi</i>	Sanam Marvi	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lxFaUIxezkc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lxFaUIxezkc</a>	<a href="https://soundcloud.com/jm_qasim/manzil-e-sufi-sanam-marvi">https://soundcloud.com/jm_qasim/manzil-e-sufi-sanam-marvi</a>
7	<i>Soz-e-Ishq</i>	Abida Perveen	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XaII05SfX9E">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XaII05SfX9E</a>	<a href="https://soundcloud.com/lineartimelines/soz-e-ishq-abida-parveen-coke-studio">https://soundcloud.com/lineartimelines/soz-e-ishq-abida-parveen-coke-studio</a>
8	<i>Sighra Aaween</i>	Sanam Marvi	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OuIg9NGAnVc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OuIg9NGAnVc</a>	<a href="https://soundcloud.com/akanksha-aditya-singh/sighra-aaween-saanwal-yaar-hd">https://soundcloud.com/akanksha-aditya-singh/sighra-aaween-saanwal-yaar-hd</a>
9	<i>Kamli</i>	Hadiqa Kiyani	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9oGSq6iGSjQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9oGSq6iGSjQ</a>	<a href="https://soundcloud.com/jm_qasim/kamlee-hd-hadiqa-kiani-coke">https://soundcloud.com/jm_qasim/kamlee-hd-hadiqa-kiani-coke</a>
10	<i>Charkha Neolakha</i>	Atif Aslam	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y8qU0VcbhBY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y8qU0VcbhBY</a>	<a href="https://soundcloud.com/search?q=Carkha%20Neolakha%20coke%20studio">https://soundcloud.com/search?q=Carkha%20Neolakha%20coke%20studio</a>
11	<i>Jogi Mairy Naal</i>	Fareeha Pervez	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6StD5G12vjM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6StD5G12vjM</a>	<a href="https://soundcloud.com/amardeep-sandhu-2/jana-jogi-dey-naal-rizwan-amp-muazzam-coke-studio">https://soundcloud.com/amardeep-sandhu-2/jana-jogi-dey-naal-rizwan-amp-muazzam-coke-studio</a>
12	<i>Ishq di Booti</i>	Abrar-ul-Haq	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QLf2ewlaLMA">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QLf2ewlaLMA</a>	<a href="https://soundcloud.com/search?q=ishq%20di%20booti%20coke%20studio">https://soundcloud.com/search?q=ishq%20di%20booti%20coke%20studio</a>
13	<i>Mein Sufi Hun</i>	Abida Perveen	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qOgZJJmLfhA">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qOgZJJmLfhA</a>	<a href="https://soundcloud.com/search?q=main%20sufi%20hoon&amp;query_urn=soundcloud%3Asearch-autocomplete%3Ab09d1493c53143099889b35980834b91">https://soundcloud.com/search?q=main%20sufi%20hoon&amp;query_urn=soundcloud%3Asearch-autocomplete%3Ab09d1493c53143099889b35980834b91</a>
14	<i>Khaki Banda</i>	Ahmed Jahanzeb Umair Jaswal	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OuIg9NGAnVc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OuIg9NGAnVc</a>	<a href="https://soundcloud.com/cokestudio/khaki-banda-ahmed-jahanzeb-umair-jaswal-episode-3-coke-studio-9">https://soundcloud.com/cokestudio/khaki-banda-ahmed-jahanzeb-umair-jaswal-episode-3-coke-studio-9</a>
15	<i>Chall Mele Noon Challiye</i>	Saeen Zahoor Sanam Marvi	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I3tS2oTUvHI">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I3tS2oTUvHI</a>	<a href="https://soundcloud.com/cokestudio/lagi-bina">https://soundcloud.com/cokestudio/lagi-bina</a>
16	<i>Meri Meri</i>	Rizwan Butt Sara Haider	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BBSE4dA4aLg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BBSE4dA4aLg</a>	<a href="https://soundcloud.com/search?q=meri%20meri%20coke%20studio">https://soundcloud.com/search?q=meri%20meri%20coke%20studio</a>

