

This interdisciplinary, qualitative study addresses key issues of relationship between language, meaning and life. It makes an entry, through Bulleh Shah's Punjabi poetry as a case, into the conceptual world of Sufi poetry as an authentic domain of knowledge, and argues that mystics' language articulates profound, high truths. This research focuses on metaphor as a discursive strategy that embodies abstract concepts in concrete images to perform ontological, epistemological and cognitive functions. Ricoeur's (2004) poetic hermeneutics of recovery underpins the theoretical approaches and ways of interpretation of the mystical discourse of Bulleh Shah. A detailed hermeneutic analysis and interpretation of *Alif*, one of the dominant metaphors for God in Sufi literature, is followed by the focus converging on three universal metaphors in mystical literature - Love, Journey and Transformation, expressed under culture-specific images in Bulleh Shah's poetry.

This study explores new vistas of research, looks at the interconnections between the sacred and the secular, the local and the universal, broadens the parameters of English Studies, and introduces a new paradigm shift that revises the relationship of English language and literature with local cultural and literary traditions in the perspective of sacred literature, and opens up the indigenous discourse in local context. It questions the assumed centrality of English literature in the English discipline, challenges the fixity of its canons and conventions, and replenishes the complete dearth of serious academic work on local literature by admitting Punjabi Sufi poetry as appropriate subject for study in English Studies. My application of Western theories of language and metaphor to Punjabi Sufi poetry and its hermeneutic interpretation in English language incorporates it in English Studies.

This study also adds to Translation Studies by looking at the issue of untranslatability of metaphor in mythic language and letter mysticism, and offers possibilities to future researchers to reread and rethink about the interconnections between English literature and local literatures, and include more voices from the peripheries in the construct of English Studies.