

Marked Cultural Cues, Folk Traditions and Social Representations Embedded within Schimmel's *As through a Veil*

Muhammad Ilyas Chishti¹

Muhammad Aslam²

Abstract

The study encompasses diverse cultural cues, folk traditions and social representations embedded within Schimmel's analytical work *As through a Veil*. The rich Sufi interpretive discourse becomes an appropriate source and an exclusive matter of enquiry for the Critical Discourse Analysis as the investigation of social and cultural constructions and ideological dimensions acquires greater prominence with CDA. Application of a set of linguistic tools employed by CDA to Schimmel's interpretive discourse is indeed a matter worth enquiry. In this connection, Fairclough's three-dimensional model with textual, discursive and social perspectives was employed as a research model to a selected text from Schimmel's *As through a Veil*. The study revealed diverse discursive, social and cultural constructions evident through ideologies and social representations within Sufi norms, practices and folk traditions. Schimmel's tactful maneuvering through interplay of intertextual and various other linguistic tools comprising genre, social events, assumptions, modality, exchanges, speech functions, grammatical mood, distinctive vocabulary, metaphorical representation, discourses and representation of social events were found quite effective. The study provides evident answers to the research questions established within the study. Various discursive, social and cultural constructions comprising the depiction of women as 'the best transmitters of religious poetry, songs and proverbs and the depositaries of mystical lore'; the powerful discourses of 'grinding of grain' and 'spinning woman' and their significance within Sufi discourse; the discourse of Prophetic tradition mixed with the discourses of 'sowing and reaping' and diverse analogies taken from agriculture for human life were witnessed. Application of a research-based method of enquiry in pursuit of Sufi interpretive discourse is indeed a significant dimension. Instead of investigating the historical evolutionary stages of Sufism, the research study is entirely focused on textual and discursive dimensions. The study has wider socio-political implications for understanding the universal values of Islamic culture from the lenses of a European scholar. Its significance becomes manifold when seen in the current perspective of a lopsided view of Islam and Muslims being developed, especially by the international media for the vested interests. Another significant implication is the understanding of the ways, linguistic and other semiotic resources are employed to construct and communicate ideological and cultural meanings through discourse. The study has

also implications for discourse researchers to extend the toolkit of CDA to the rarely researched areas like Sufi discourse through linguistic perspective.

Keywords: *CDA, discursive construction of culture, semiosis of Sufism*

1. Introduction

Sufism blesses the devotees with an extreme state of contentment which they seek through self-realization. However the stage of self-realization is achieved after a long and repeated spiritual practice. After this stage is achieved, the Sufis show their disregard and spare themselves from the outward form of religion. Higher religious order of any faith aims at Sufism as its top most obligations and keeps itself away from any form of discord and contention resulting in conflict. Sufism may well be graded as a practical spiritual discipline which is entirely dependent on the insight of enlightened seekers after truth. The basic philosophy of Sufism is therefore, to guard the believers against the superficial doctrines of the religion and direct all their energies towards the spiritual dimensions of Islam (Upadhyay, 2004).

The process of propagation of the great Sufi message was initiated through a medium of Sufi poetry. Sufi poets exploited this medium by innovative use of the native languages and through the discourse of this influential medium, played a key role in bringing people of different religions and ethnic backgrounds close together. The impacts of Sufi poetry can be traced in the soils of Indus Valley to a great extent. Indus Valley was bestowed with cultural diversity because of the invasions and migrations of Aryans, Mongols, Greeks, Turks, Afghans, Arabs and Persians. Great scholars and Sufis who spent their lives in contemplation were allured and fascinated towards the culturally rich soil of the valley during the middle ages of Islam. This valley, indeed, strengthened the endeavors of Sufi poets for setting the rich tradition of Sufi poetry which later proved valuable in unifying the diversified cultural heritage of the valley. The message conveyed through this very effective medium is quite obvious that one cannot identify oneself or the reality of this universe without the strongest and purest element of love. 'Love' and 'Peace' become the core themes of the entire Sufi poetry. It not only gives the true essence of the social values but also suggests remedies for the human beings who have got themselves secluded from their own 'self' and also from their surroundings. Though the universe witnessed the astonishing wonders in the fields of science and technology in the modern age, the insightful Sufi poets conveyed the recent modernized picture of the universe through their intuitive and contemplative Sufi poetry centuries ago (Gardezi, n.d.).

It is pertinent to mention that Sufi poetry entails a huge reservoir of discursive, social and cultural constructions. Though a bulk of work is available on Sufi beliefs, Schimmel's interpretive discourse on Sufism and Sufi poetry comprises a reasonable scope and diverse dimensions of inquiry for linguistic purposes. The

study is exclusively specified for linguistic dimensions whereas investigation of the complex Sufi notions is beyond its scope.

Phillips and Hardy (2002) opine that reality is formed, composed or constructed through language. Wood and Kroger (as cited in Phillips & Hardy, 2002) are of the view that language is considered as constitutive and constructive, rather than reflective and representative. Phillips and Hardy (2002), state that social reality cannot be thought of without discourse. They go as far as stating that no one is able to perceive his/her own reality and experience without getting familiar with discourse. It is obvious that discourses form individuals' experience and reality, but at the same time these discourses also confine them because the individuals have to behave within the boundaries of discourses. Wodak (2001), de Cillia et al. (1999) and Fairclough (1989) believe that a dialectical association gets established between discourses and society in which they function.

Social researches aim at comprehending and analyzing socially produced meanings. Phillips and Hardy (2002) relate that the emphasis of discourse analysis is on the processes where the social world is created and maintained. Phillips and Hardy (2002), and Fairclough (1992) further add that discourse analysis investigates the associations between texts, discourse and context. Phillips and Hardy (2002) maintain that world cannot be viewed independently from discourse as the discourse aims at investigating the way the social reality is produced. Social life is a prominent factor in the methodology of discourse analysis. So discourse is not independent. It is conditioned by the texts and contexts.

This study also traces the interplay of the discourse and diverse social realities constructed through Schimmel's Sufi interpretive discourse.

The word 'discourse' gained currency in linguistics but at times obscure and vague treatment of this term created stumbling blocks for the researchers. Van Dijk (1997) opines that discourse should be seen as language in use or talk and text in context. It clearly signifies context in the process of construction and reception of language. Fairclough (2003) views discourse to depict a specific way of demonstrating aspects of the world, i.e. to describe processes, relations, structures of the material world as well as thoughts, feelings, beliefs and so on. Woodilla (as cited in Phillips & Hardy, 2002) remarks that discourse can be considered as the real practice of talking and writing while Parker (as cited in Phillips & Hardy, 2002) is of the view that discourse is also an interconnected set of texts and the practices of their production, propagation, and reception that brings an object into being. Fairclough (1989) explicates discourse by adding that it should be viewed as a component of social practice which has its input to the reproduction of social practice. Phillips and Hardy (2002) opine that it is constructed through time by the interconnection between texts, changes and new forms in texts, and new systems of distributing texts. Fairclough (1989) employs the term discourse to refer to the entire phenomenon of social communication. He further relates that 'process' is

actually the production of text (where text is the product) and the interpretation of text (where the text is the resource).

Fairclough (1992a) presents a three dimensional model in CDA for analyzing discourse. He views:

- i) discourse as text
- ii) discourse as discursive practice
- iii) discourse as social practice

The very first point refers to the linguistic aspects where the selection and pattern of words in vocabulary, grammar, cohesion and text structure should be systematically analyzed. Discourse as discursive practice implies discourse as an entity that is produced, spread, disseminated and consumed in society, in the form of tangible particular texts. Vocabulary, grammar, cohesion and text structure are also analyzed here. Discourse as social practice examines the dogmatic influences and power processes in which discourse is one of the aspects.

Fairclough (1995) is of the view that the relationship between language and social structure is dialectic. Texts are socio-culturally shaped as well as socio-culturally constitutive. Fairclough's stance directly pertains to the nature of the study as the study in itself tends to explore the social constructions through discourse.

Schimmel's work *As through a Veil* is the book from which representative sample text was selected. The book comprises brief sections which give the reader an ample opportunity to have a brief encounter of the mystical traditions and the poetical expression. These chapters include: Flowers of the Desert: The Development of Arabic Mystical Poetry; Tiny Mirrors of Divine Beauty: Classical Persian Mystical Poetry; Sun Triumphant-Love Triumphant: Maulana Rumi and the Metaphors of Love; The Voice of Love: Mystical Poetry in the Vernaculars; God's Beloved and Intercessor for Man: Poetry in Honor of the Prophet. The book encapsulates five lectures delivered by Schimmel in which multitude of verses of poetry are cited which serve as a guideline for further investigation. Vernaculars dealt in by the Sufi poets like Sindhi, Pashto, Saraiki, and Punjabi gained special significance for Schimmel. Being a Western scholar, her interest in these vernaculars is indeed a remarkable aspect.

The major objective which the book encompasses is the elemental pursuits about mysticism and its poetical expression. Propagation of Sufi poetry into Turkish and the vernaculars of the Indian subcontinent were touched upon. Sufi traditions, poetical metaphors and symbols were deciphered and explicated which can be witnessed in Schimmel's translations. Only the doctrinal and devotional facets of Sufi poetry were presented while the complex critical commentary was deliberately avoided within the book. *As through a Veil* may be viewed as a true demonstration of Schimmel's deep reverence for Sufism and Sufi poetry.

Thus building on all the literature and many other relevant works, the researchers tried to probe into the analytical work of Schimmel on Sufi poetry to further investigate how various social realities and folk traditions were constructed through her analysis of Sufi poetry (text as discourse).

Based on all the above mentioned theoretical insights, research enquiries the study tries to investigate are as under:

1. What social realities, folk traditions and cultural cues seem to be constructed within Schimmel's Sufi interpretive discourse?
2. How does Schimmel exploit diverse linguistic tools to effectively maneuver her discourse?

2. Methodology

Fairclough's three-dimensional model was selected (Fairclough, 2003) for this particular research study keeping into perspective its suitability for the specific enquiry. The analysis investigates:

- a) The linguistic features of the selected Sufi text from Schimmel's *As through a Veil*
- b) Processes pertaining to the production and consumption of the selected text (referring to discursive practice/genres of Sufi poetry)
- c) The wider social practice which the selected text represents (social practice/aspects of cultural cues/folk traditions).

The research study explores how culture, folk traditions and diverse social realities constitute discourse i.e., Schimmel's interpretive discourse, and similarly how discourse constructs social practices. The three-dimensional model was further categorized into sub-categories. The investigation tries to explore certain features postulated by Fairclough (2003). Subcategories of the three-dimensional model include:

- i) Social Events
- ii) Genre
- iii) Intertextuality
- iv) Modality
- v) Assumptions
- vi) Specific Vocabulary
- vii) Metaphor
- viii) Exchanges, Speech Functions and Grammatical Mood
- ix) Discourses
- x) Representation of Social Events

Schimmel's stature as a distinguished writer on Sufism, Sufi thought, beliefs and practices is credible. Out of Schimmel's many books, the following representative text was selected (see appendix) from *As through a Veil*. The selected text for the study is as under:

"One enjoys these poems best when.....to quicken the dead hearts."

As through a Veil (Schimmel, 1982, P.145-146, see appendix)

3. Results

3.1 Social Events

The text under study was extracted from 'Mystical poetry in the Vernaculars' chapters of *As through a Veil*. This volume is based on five lectures delivered by Schimmel within the auspices of American Council of Learned Societies in 1980 which were later published. The very objective behind selection of the text lies within the cultural traces embedded within it in a reasonable proportion. The discourse represented here is a 'Sufi Discourse' as it is an investigative study of the mystical poetry in Islam. Texts appeared to be the part of 'chain of social events' where Schimmel's pen probed into the social events explicated in the mystical poetry of the vernaculars. The overall tone of the text is analytical and investigative while it is descriptive in nature. The roots of the text were found within the book while no connection in terms of 'chain or network of text' could be traced other than this book. The text was seen as an extension in terms of the theoretical construction already established within various chapters of the book.

3.2 Genre

The genre within which the text was placed is 'Sufi Discourse' which is marked by its peculiar tone. However, descriptive and analytical spirit prevails within the text as it is an analytical work of a writer who has been inclined towards Sufi discourse since long. Her pursuits towards Sufi and cultural dimensions of discourse were found worth investigating for the researchers. No evident 'genre nixing' was witnessed as the text belongs to the same type of discourse. Schimmel went deeper into various dimensions of Sufism well incorporated in Rumi's Sufi poetry which is replete with many of the cultural aspects worth noticing for the researchers especially mystical poetry in the vernaculars is such an area which becomes quite significant for the researchers who intend to explore the Sufi and cultural dimensions at the same time. The researchers traced and further investigated all these pursuits within the research study under various aspects of Fairclough's three-dimensional model.

3.3 Intertextuality

The text under investigation commences with the powerful intertextual reference of Bijapuri Sufis of late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries who really adored the

concept of spinning and the *charkhi nama*. This very theme can also be traced in Sufis of Bijapur by Richard M. Eaton. Intertextual reference of allusion to Sura 9/112 explicating the concept of refinement of heart through *dhikr* is also significant here. Indirect quoting from Bhitai's *Risalo (Sur Kapaiti)* also signifies the theme of spinning. Another intertextual reference in poetic form was extracted from Eaton, *Sufis of Bijapur* where theme of spinning associated with various types of *dhikr*: *dhikr-i jali*, *dhikr-i qalbi*, *dhikr-i aini* have been presented in a poetic form. Intertextual reference in poetic form extracted from an anonymous Punjabi poet translated by Dr. Athar Ahsan is also a powerful reference which carries deeper meanings in cultural settings. Reference to *chakki nama* also presented in poetic form extracted from *Sufis of Bijapur*, (p.163) by Eaton also enriches the text in terms of cultural perspective. The reference of Koranic verses about the resurrection associated with analogy from agriculture gives more validity to the text. 'Paradise in its green robes' is also an extension of the theme associated with agriculture which has been extracted from *A Spring Day in Konya* by Schimmel. Another very powerful intertextual reference *Rahmatul lil aalamin* Prophet (PBUH) is associated with the beliefs of people and has been extracted from Sura 21/107 where theme of rain is connected with the praise of Prophet (PBUH) as mercy for the worlds. The love of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) is a central aspect deeply embedded within the beliefs and culture of the masses.

The author's skill in merging these intertextual references was noticed. Despite the frequency of direct quotations is greater and they have been specifically attributed to the specific writers, but still Schimmel's subjectivity can also be witnessed as she seems to know well where to place these references to make her message stronger.

3.4 Modality

As many as four instances of Deontic Modalities were traced within the text.

- i) "By such an act, the heart will, like yarn, become the more precious the more finely . . ."
- ii) ". . . and finally God will buy it for a high price . . ."
- iii) "And the woman-soul who neglects this duty will find herself naked at the day of the Feast when everyone else is wearing fine new garments."
- iv) "They may have thought thus of the Prophetic tradition: "This world is the seedbed for the other world."

The author's commitment to obligation was investigated from the first three examples where 'will' was employed as the modal verb whereas author's commitment to necessity is also obvious in example iv) where 'may' was used as a modal verb. However in all the four examples no modal adverb is used.

3.5 Assumptions

The text contains following two instances of Value Assumptions.

- i) “. . . many of them taken from the world of women, who were even less educated than men but were, and still are in rural areas, the best transmitters of religious poetry, songs and proverbs . . .”
- ii) “Similar are the *chakki nama*, which take inspiration from the most important occupation of the Indian housewife, the grinding of the grain.”

The first instance was taken from the world of women, who have been declared through the value assumptions as ‘the best transmitters of religious poetry, songs and proverbs. The author’s perception about the women folk was well comprehended through this value assumption with the attachment of her ideologies. In the second instance also, the grinding of the grain was considered through a value assumption as the most important occupation of the Indian housewife. Many of the cultural underpinnings are attached with this theme of grinding of the grain which takes us to the rural settings.

3.6 Distinctive Vocabulary

The text is distinct with the employment of specific vocabulary which has a significant status within rural cultural settings. ‘Trousseau’ has a meaningful contribution within the lives of the village woman who has fascinated the Sufi poets to a great deal and has been the center of focus within the folktales. The laborious characters of the village folk work diligently preparing their trousseau, which acquires a special status in their lives. Despite the fact, Schimmel was a Western scholar, her special intimacy with local cultural aspects was quite significant. Another employment of specific vocabulary was taken from agriculture which offered analogies to human life. ‘Seemingly dead earth’ was attributed to the concept of *fana* and the arrival of spring characterizes *baqa* which are two significant themes embedded within Sufi settings establishing a special intimacy with the common folk. Schimmel’s style and subjective stance were traced through the instances of specific vocabulary.

3.7 Metaphorical Representation

The text is also rich in terms of metaphorical representations which are deeply embedded within local cultural settings. The metaphor of the ‘act of spinning’ was employed for *dhikr* which acquires great acclaim within Sufi settings and through Sufi poetic discourse reaches the common masses. Further, the extension of the same theme was witnessed within ‘humming sound of the wheel’ that was also presented as a metaphor employed for *dhikr*. ‘The grinding of the grain’ is another metaphor pointing toward the refinement of the soul before it is presented before the divine Beloved. ‘Handle of the grain mill’ was also presented

as a metaphor pointing towards *alif* of Allah. All these metaphors were deeply embedded within local culture, therefore developed special intimacy with the common folk.

3.8 Exchanges, Speech Functions and Grammatical Mood

Keeping into consideration the descriptive nature of Sufi interpretive discourse of *As through a Veil*, the researchers witnessed that the prominent type of 'exchange' employed within the text was 'knowledge exchange' while 'statement' was observed as the prevalent 'speech function'. 'Types of statement' were found to be mostly 'statement of fact' and 'evaluation'. The reason is that in Schimmel's interpretive Sufi discourse, factual and evaluative stances were employed. As the nature of the study does not require any predictive and hypothetical statements, therefore, 'prediction' and 'hypothetical statements' were not traced. In terms of investigating 'grammatical mood', the researcher observed that 'declarative' stance was employed with absence of 'interrogative' and 'imperative' clues as such clues are frequent in interactional and conversational analysis.

3.9 Discourses

Discourses 'from the world of women' set the tone of the text. They were further described as 'the best transmitters of religious poetry, songs and proverbs and the depositaries of mystical lore'. Rural woman was the central theme in most of the Sufi works. Her simplicity and the way the housewives keep themselves engaged the entire day grabs the attention of the folk-writers. The discourse of 'grinding of grain' evolves significance as it is considered to be the 'most important occupation of Indian housewife' and this very theme has deeper cultural connotations. This discourse was incorporated within text with the title *chakki nama*. Further, the discourse of 'spinning woman', and the association of the theme of *dhikr* and spinning were incorporated within the text. In poetic discourse, the mention of the types of *dhikr*: *dhikr-i jali*, *dhikr-i qalbi*, *dhikr-i aini* are the instances of 'mixing of discourse'. The discourse of Prophetic tradition was mixed with the discourses of 'sowing and reaping' by interrelating these themes. Koranic references were also mixed within various other discourses giving them strength. It is important that Schimmel incorporated these religious discourses at the appropriate places to make her message more convincing. Analogies taken from agriculture for human life were also few of the significant instances of incorporation of a powerful discourse as the themes associated with agriculture gain more prominence in rural and local cultural settings.

3.10 Representation of Social Events

The most significant social representation was that of the images taken from the world of women. The rural woman has attracted the attention of the Sufi mystic poets and they have given this theme a significant space within their poetical works. Her simplicity, laboriousness and loyalty to the cultural norms have been

the most discussed aspects. Extending the same concept, woman was considered to be 'the best transmitter of religious poetry, songs, proverbs and depositaries of mystical lore'. 'Act of spinning' was another social representation which made the piece of text culturally loaded. This very theme contained plenty of the cultural underpinnings as this act was attributed to the rural women. Sufis related this theme to *dhikr*, known to be the most prestigious theme with Sufis. As Sufi practices are very close to the common folk, therefore, the significant Sufi themes became a part and parcel of the culture. 'Humming sound' of the wheel while spinning were associated with 'regular breathing' within the process of *dhikr*. Again, this very social representation was quite prominent and contained deeper meanings. This theme not only acquires significance in folklores, rather evident references can be traced in mystic poetry as well. Another social representation pertains to different kinds of *dhikr*: *dhikr-i-jali*, *dhikr-i-qalbi* and *dhikr-i-aini* which have been given proper place in Sufi discourse where social representation of *dhikr* may be witnessed within the disciples (*mureedain*) of Sufis which is significant aspect of local cultural settings. It is important that impacts of Sufi practices were so prominent on the common masses that deep imprints of these practices can be observed in local culture. 'Grinding of grain' was another social representation whose associations could be traced with various themes in Sufi discourse especially the poetic discourse of *chakki nama* by Bijapuri Sufis acquired greater acclaim within the masses and, therefore, it became an integral part of the local cultural settings. Social representation of various analogies from agriculture referring to human life was also traced within the text; especially the theme of 'sowing and reaping' was associated with the Prophetic tradition: 'This world is the seedbed for the other world'. This particular religious belief has a significant value within cultural settings as the common masses are fascinated to such analogies and comprehend the message easily as these analogies are drawn upon from their surroundings. Then the description of rain as *rahma* 'mercy' was associated with the praise of the Prophet of Mercy (PBUH) who was declared as 'the mercy for the worlds' in Qura'n. The rain of *Rahma* has a healing effect and it quickens the dead hearts. The love and praise of the Prophet of Mercy (PBUH) is not only the most prominent religious aspect rather it has a considerable value in the cultural settings as well. Muslims organize special gatherings *Mahafil-e-Na'at* in which special poetic discourse mostly written by great Sufi saints is recited in melodious voices showing reverence to the Prophet (PBUH). These *mahafil* have a considerable value within local cultural settings. A bulk of Sufi discourse has been written showing special veneration to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

It is important here that though many concrete elements were presented within the text but all these concrete aspects were abstractly represented and therefore the social representation was considered as an abstract one.

i) Participants

Major participants mentioned within the text are as under:

Allah, Muhammad (PBUH), Bijapuri Sufis, poets, Richard M. Eaton, heart, girl, woman-soul, Panjabi folk poet, Indian Housewife, Rumi etc.

All the Participants employed within the social representations were indicative of their close link with Sufi and cultural themes.

ii) Processes

Some of the processes found within the text are as under:

enjoy, know, realize, occur, see, show, remind, become, buy, prepare, neglect, find, call, use, offer, connect, wear, mention etc.

The Processes employed within the text established their intimacy and special link with the context they were extracted from.

The number of activated processes was greater than the passivated ones within the text under study.

iii) Circumstances

Some of the circumstances noticed within the text include:

for a high price, by constant spinning, at the day of the Feast

Again the Circumstances seemed to add more details to the Processes already presented within the text and at the same time developed their special link with the local cultural perspectives.

4. Discussions

The construction of culture, social realities and folk traditions was witnessed through the images taken from the world of women where the rural woman finds ample space within Schimmel's discourse. Schimmel constructs her image as 'the best transmitter of religious poetry, songs, proverbs and depositories of mystical lore' which contains sufficient local cultural underpinnings. Further, culturally loaded theme of 'act of spinning' was attributed to the rural woman. *Dhikr*, the most prestigious theme with Sufis was associated with the act of spinning. This theme acquires great significance within local cultural settings. 'Humming sound' of the wheel while spinning was attached to 'regular breathing' within the process of *dhikr*. Different kinds of *dhikr*: '*dhikr-i-jali*', '*dhikr-i-qalbi*' and '*dhikr-i-aini*' were constructed which are common practices within Sufi settings embedded with cultural meanings. Another construction of local culture was traced through the concept of 'grinding of grain' highlighted in the poetic discourse of *chakki nama* by Bijapuri Sufis acquired greater acclaim within the masses becoming a prominent reference in local cultural settings. Various analogies from agriculture referring to human life could also be visibly noticed within Schimmel's discourse. For instance 'sowing and reaping' was linked with the Prophetic tradition: 'This world is the seedbed for the other world'. Though it has religious connotation, its relevance in local cultural settings is also significant as the common folk develops a special

acclaim because of their closeness to their surroundings. Construction of theme of rain as *rahma* 'mercy' linked with the praise of the Prophet of Mercy (PBUH) as 'the mercy for the worlds' in Qura'n contains significant relevance with the masses as it not only has a religious relevance rather it comprises considerable significance within local culture. Special gatherings in the form of *Mahafil-e-Na'at* are organized by the Muslims in which special reverence is shown to the Prophet (PBUH) in melodious voices. A considerable value is attached with this concept within local cultural settings

Schimmel's ideological stance attached with the world of women was presented through a value assumption in which the women were declared as 'the best transmitters of religious poetry, songs and proverbs'. The author's stance towards the womenfolk could also be accessed through this value assumption. At another stage, the value assumption regarding the 'grinding of the grain' brought into limelight the 'most important occupation of the Indian housewife' reflective of Schimmel's complete grasp over the themes of rural local cultural settings.

5. Conclusion

After an encompassing analysis conducted in pursuit of social realities, folk traditions and cultural cues constructed within Schimmel's Sufi interpretive discourse, the researcher was able reach the following conclusive insights:

Investigation of Schimmel's text through critical discourse perspective revealed that the construction of diverse cultural cues, folk traditions and social representation within her interpretive discourse were evident through various indicators which were merged in her analysis of Sufi poetry. These local cultural indicators comprise various analogies taken from agriculture, Sufi beliefs, practices, esteemed figures, rural cultural norms and the images taken from womenfolk. Diverse discursive, social and cultural constructions comprising the portrayal of women as 'the best transmitters of religious poetry, songs and proverbs and the depositaries of mystical lore'; the powerful discourses of 'grinding of grain' and 'spinning woman' and their deep roots within Sufi discourse; the discourse of Prophetic tradition embedded with the discourses of 'sowing and reaping' and diverse analogies taken from agriculture for human life were noticed which sufficiently substantiated the researcher argument in meeting the objectives of the study. It is significant that Schimmel's interpretive discourse constructed social realities and vice versa. This very phenomenon is attributive of Critical Discourse Perspective

Responding to the second inquiry pertaining to Schimmel's exploitation of diverse linguistic tools in effectively maneuvering her discourse, the researcher observed that despite the fact she was a Western scholar, Schimmel's profound comprehensibility within Sufi themes and her reasonably effective maneuvering, while employing intertextual references and linguistic tools were quite prominently evident. The reconstructions in her interpretive discourse within As

through a Veil are reflective of her reasonably sound comprehension of diverse cultural cues and folk traditions. Through metaphorical representation, intertextual references and employment of specific vocabulary Schimmel remained successful in effectively reconstructing diverse cultural cues and folk traditions with her marked subjectivity.

The research study may have various implications. To begin with the most striking aspect, it is imperative to bring into limelight the research based methods of enquiry in pursuit of Sufi interpretive discourse. Most of the work which is available on Sufi discourse is tilted towards investigating Sufi beliefs and is focused on historical revelations and inquiries of miracles associated with great Sufi saints. But textual dimensions have not been the supreme priority within writers of Sufi discourse. Though translations and somewhat critical aspects are available, urgency was observed in research-based inquiries of the textual and discourse dimensions of Sufi works. Further, most of the studies are confined to impressionistic analysis and research-based textual inquiries have been compromised. So, this research study acquires a unique stature that it has not only probed into the textual dimensions of Sufi discourse rather a distinct method of critical enquiry was conducted to reach the conclusions instead of relying only on impressionistic analysis. Employment of CDA as theory and research method was indeed a unique dimension of enquiry in terms of Sufi discourse.

The study has wider socio-political implications to better comprehend universal values of Islamic culture through a European scholar's perspective. The study has all the potential to acquire a significant stature especially within the current scenario when a lopsided view of Islam and Muslims is being propagated, especially by the international media for the vested interests. Further, the understanding of the ways, linguistic and other semiotic resources are employed to construct and communicate ideological and cultural meanings through discourse has diverse implications. The study has a great potential for discourse researchers to open new avenues in extending the diverse methods employed within CDA to the rarely researched areas like Sufi discourse through linguistic perspective.

References

- De Cillia, R., Reisigl, M. & Wodak, R. (1999). The discursive construction of national identities. *Discourse and Society*, 10 (1), 149–73. London: Sage.
- Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and power*. New York: Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (1992a). *Discourse and social change*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Fairclough, N. (1995b). *Media discourse*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing discourse*. London: Routledge.
- Gardezi, H. N. (n.d.). *Sufi mysticism of the Indus valley*. Retrieved on December 7, 2016, from <http://www.apnaorg.com/articles/sufi.html>
- Phillips, N., & Hardy, C. (2002). *Discourse analysis. Investigating processes of social construction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Schimmel, A. (2001). *As through a veil*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications.
- Upadhyay, R. (2004). *Sufism in India: Its origin, history and politics*. Retrieved on December 7, 2016, from <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/paper924>
- van Dijk, T. A. (1997). The Study of Discourse. In van Dijk, T. A. (Ed.). *Discourse as Structure and Process* (pp. 1-34). London: Sage.
- Wodak, R. (2001). The discourse-historical approach. In Wodak, R. and Meyer, M. (Eds.). *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (pp. 63-94). London: Sage.

APPENDIX

As through a Veil (Schimmel, 1982, 2001. P. 145-146)

One enjoys these poems best when one knows the country and realizes how true to life their imagery is. There occur other images in folk poetry as well, many of them taken from the world of women, who were even less educated than men but were, and still are in rural areas, the best transmitters of religious poetry, songs, and proverbs, and the depositaries of mystical lore. The poets saw the women spinning, and some of the earliest Urdu poems for mystical instruction are *charkhi nama*, spinning songs, which were popular, as Richard M. Eaton has shown, among the Bijapuri Sufis of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The act of spinning could be easily compared to the *dhikr*, for regular breathing is similar to spinning, and the humming sound of the wheel reminded the poets of the sound of the *dhikr*, repeated thousands of times with low voice. By such an act the heart will, like yarn, become the more precious the more finely and regularly it is “spun” and finally God will buy it for a high price (allusion to Sura 9/112). Is not every girl called to prepare her trousseau by constant spinning? And the woman-soul who neglects this duty will find herself naked at the day of the Feast when everyone else is wearing fine new garments.

As you take the cotton, you should do *dhikr-i jali*,

As you separate the cotton, you should do *dhikr-i qalbi*,

As you spool the thread you should do *dhikr-i ‘aini’*:

The threads of breath should be counted one by one, O sister,

sings a Bijapuri Sufi in a style typical of women’s song while the Panjabi folk poet calls the woman soul:

Quit playing, and spin the spinning wheel, young girl!

Hurry and make the bridal gear ready, young girl!

The droning spindle moans God, O God!

The trembling and shaking in fear of the Lord,

The spindle wind breathes like the sighs—

Seems, there is a heavy load ahead, young girl!

Similar are the *chakki nama*, which take inspiration from the most important occupation of the Indian housewife, the grinding of grain. Does not the straight handle of the grain mill look like an *alif*, the symbol of God?

The *chakki*’s handle resembles *alif*, which means Allah,

and the axle is Muhammad and is fixed there,

in this way the true seeker sees the relationship,

Ah bismillah hu hu Allah!

We put the grains in the *chakki*,

to which our hands are witnesses; the
chakki of the body is in order when
you follow the Divine Law . . .

That is how the *Bijapuri Sufis* used the image.

Agriculture offered fine analogies to human life. The Koranic verses about resurrection as prefigured in the awakening of the seemingly dead earth in spring when the soil all of a sudden becomes alive again (and, as Rumi would add, looks like Paradise in its green robes) were certainly in the poet's minds when they mentioned sowing and reaping. They may have thought thus of the Prophetic tradition: "This world is the seedbed for the Otherworld." But there are also realistic descriptions of fields and animals that thirst for rain, of clouds gathering and finally distributing *rahma*, mercy, to the world.

Such descriptions are then ingeniously connected with praise of the Prophet who too was sent *rahmatan lil'alamin*, "as mercy for the worlds" (Sura 21/107), to quicken the dead hearts.