

**A Journey Within:
The Sufi Transformation in Mumtaz Mufti's Writings***

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Abstract:

Widespread dissemination of sufi teachings through fiction literature has gained considerable currency in recent decades. In South Asia, this literary trend also broadened the spectrum of Urdu fiction and influenced conventional literature. In this regard, Mumtaz Mufti (b. 1905-d. 1995) was a renowned Pakistani writer who has tremendous contribution to Urdu writings. He enjoys a writing career that has spanned over fifty-five years. Critics label him as a non-conformist writer having liberal views but overlooked different phases of Mufti's life, reflecting the shift from liberalism to Sufism. The publication of his collection of short stories titled Roghani Putlay in 1984 inaugurated a distinct literary phase in his life, inspired by psychological motifs and linked to the author's interest in Sufism. His inclination for Sufism remained evident in his works till the publication of his last collection of short stories titled Kahi na jaey, which appeared in 1992. During the last eighteen years of his literary career, one may discern sufi themes in nearly fourteen short-stories, whereas many others discuss it partly. By examining Mufti's works, it becomes evident that his stories are structured on a series of ongoing developing personal understanding of Sufism. Proficient use of sufi themes in his works shows that he was well-conversant with them. The present study aims at acknowledging the latent sufi thoughts and motifs in his works. The descriptive and analytical methodology adopted in the study entails tracing the evolution and development of his inclination towards Sufism, and the subsequent reflection of sufi thoughts in his life and writings. The article covers Mufti's biographical sketch, phase-wise influences, and his authorship with a particular focus on identifying sufi themes such as separation (firaq) and diversity (kathrat), the Truth of Truths (Haqiqat al-Haqa'iq), concept of Divine feminine (Jagat Maa), ontological levels of existence (maratib al-wujud), self-purification and self-transformation (tazkiyah al-nafs), the reality of attraction (haqiqat al-jadhbah), self-annihilation or self-effacement (Fana), the deception of ego (makr-i-nafsi) and the concept of ecstasy (wajd) in his writings. The study argues that the life of Mumtaz Mufti reflects a clear shift from liberalism to Sufism which is evident in his works.

Keywords: Mumtaz Mufti, Urdu Literature/fiction, Transformation, Sufism, Sufi themes.

Fiction can be defined as a literary narrative of a writer's imagination in form of prose, i.e., novels, short stories, and dramas.³ In 1885, the publication of Brander Matthews's essay 'The Philosophy of Short Stories' distinguished short stories from other genres of literature by highlighting their literary merits. In Urdu literature, fiction writing was started with the publication of a feministic story, *Naseer wa Khadija* (1901) by Rashid-ul-Khairi (b. 1868-d. 1936). Later on, the novel *Nashay ki pehli tarang* by Syed Sajjad Haider Yaldram (b. 1880-d. 1943) appeared, which is considered as the first Urdu fiction.⁴ The arrival of the nineteenth century further subsidized a fusion of East and West in the literary expression which resulted in the development of hybrid genre of Urdu fiction. The political, social, and economic variations of that time caused a two-fold impact on the development of Urdu fiction. Internally, colonial rule, the War of Independence (1857), the Industrial Revolution in India, Trade Union

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³ In South Asia, the terms *afsanah* or *qissa*, Persian words for story, are used to describe the literary narrative. Urdu literature has a rich inheritance of Arabic and Persian religio-mystical traditions which contributed vast vocabulary and concepts in the formation of Urdu language in South Asia. Jennifer Dubrow, "A Space for Debate: Fashioning the Urdu Novel in Colonial India," *Comparative Literature Studies*, Vol. 53, No. 2 (2016): 289.

⁴ Robina Rafiq, "Mumtaz Mufti: *Ahwal-o-Athaar*," Unpublished Ph.D. diss., Islamiyah University, Bahawalpur, n.d., 33.

Movement along with other national movements, became the cause of massive change in Indians' lives. Externally, their contact with the outside world, for instance, First World War (1914-1918), Russian Revolution (1917), and others evoked further self-realization.⁵ Hence, prevailing deep-rooted affiliations, patterns of behavior, modes of thinking, and future expectations of society were transformed gradually by new ideologies. Over time, Urdu fiction adopted various forms according to time and circumstances.⁶

Previously, Urdu fiction was confined to the allegoric realm and entangled in the cobweb of romance and adventures of medieval patriarchs.⁷ Later on, the challenges of the modern world and enormous profusion of new ideologies, i.e. socialism, liberalism, modernism, and others led to the development of a new orientation. It was the time when prose tales (*dastan*) transformed into both short stories and long forms (novel), either through the influence of the West or the changed post-war independence ambiance.⁸ Later on, Premchand (b. 1880-d. 1936),⁹ a renowned fiction writer of modern India branched off the Urdu short story into different directions as he borrowed the Western models and used them on the typically Indian subject matter.¹⁰ The post-colonial tendencies of the utilization of new scientific developments following exigencies of times has broadened the spectrum of Urdu literature. It brought rationality in conventional thoughts and writing patterns of South Asia, including the writings on Sufism. G.C. Narang categorizes Urdu short stories into two groups: the sociological stories, represented by Rajinder Singh Bedi (b. 1951-d. 1984),¹¹ Krishan Chander (b. 1914-d. 1977)¹² and Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi (b. 1961-d. 2006),¹³ and the psychological stories, dominated by the writings of Saadat Hasan Manto (b. 1912-d. 1955),¹⁴ Ismat Chughtai (b. 1915-d. 1991)¹⁵ and Mumtaz Mufti.¹⁶

Mumtaz Mufti was an acclaimed writer of Urdu fiction. He employed motifs of social issues, moral values, psychological problems of man and woman, and alien colonial culture. The heterogeneity of themes in Mufti's works, together with his enthusiasm for experimenting with language and forms of representation, reveals his profound independence vis-à-vis rigid ideological positions. His deep sufi thoughts and encoded sufi symbolism in his fictions require configuration. His stories based on sufi themes and spiritual development of an individual rise incredible joy and intoxication to deliver a sense of divine presence through the artistry of literary expression. However, the role of his fiction in the development of contemporary sufi thought still needs to be addressed. The article aims at bringing to forefront Mufti's sufi motifs, and strategies to narrate spiritual experimentation in literary work, which cannot be explored without discussing the complex dynamics characterizing his life and influences. Thus, the study aims at looking into the changing frames from liberalism to Sufism in Mufti's works within his ideological context. The present study covers his brief biographical sketch, literary works, and influences on Mumtaz Mufti. It explores how his writings in the last phase of life reflected Sufism, and is there any relation between his works with his spiritual development? This paper is an analytical investigation of sufi themes in Mufti's writings.

1. Mumtaz Mufti: A Biographical Sketch

⁵ Balraj Komal, "Twentieth Century Urdu Novel," *Indian Literature*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (March-April, 2002), 159.

⁶ Amina Yaqin, "Truth, Fiction and Autobiography in the Modern Urdu Narrative Tradition," *Comparative Critical Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 3, (2007), 379.

⁷ Nazir M. Gill, *Development of Urdu Language and Literature: Under the Shadow of the British in India* (New York: Xlibris Corporation, 2013), 6.

⁸ G. C. Narang, "Major Trends in the Urdu Short Story," *Indian Literature*, Vol. 16, No. 1 & 2 (January-June 1973), 113.

⁹ Dhanpat Rai Shrivastava's pen name was 'Munshi Premchand'. He was referred to as '*Upanyas Samrat*' (the emperor among novelists) by writers. He wrote dozens of novels and around three hundred short-stories. His notable writings are *Godaan*, *Bazaar-e-Husn*, *Idgah*, *Ghaban*, *Karamabhoomi* etc.

¹⁰ Narang, "Major Trends in the Urdu Short Story," 113.

¹¹ Rajinder Singh Bedi was a famous progressive writer of Urdu who also contributed to Hindi cinema as a film director, screenwriter, and dialogue writer.

¹² Krishan Chander was a well-known writer who wrote Urdu, Hindi, and English short stories and novels. He also wrote screen-plays for Indian cinema.

¹³ Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi was a famed Urdu and English writer. He was a poet, journalist, literary critic, dramatist, and short story writer.

¹⁴ Saadat Hasan Manto was a celebrated Urdu writer who dared to highlight the dark side of human beings in his short stories, novel, five series of radio plays and three collections of essays.

¹⁵ Ismat Chughtai was an eminent revolutionary feminist Urdu writer, considered the grand dame of Urdu fiction who explored feminine sexuality, middle-class gentility, and other evolving conflicts in the modern Muslim world.

¹⁶ Narang, "Major Trends in the Urdu Short Story," 115.

Mumtaz Mufti was a celebrated Urdu fiction writer, born on 11th September 1905 at Batala in Gurdaspur, East Punjab. His family roots are connected to Hashmi Syed Muslims.¹⁷ During the Mughal era, they held the post of 'Mufi' which was abolished in Ranjit Singh (b. 1780-d. 1839) era.¹⁸ His father, Mufti Muhammad Hussain named him Mumtaz Hussain, though his nickname was 'Boli'.¹⁹ He started his early education at Amritsar in 1913. But when his father got transferred to Mianwali, he got admission there in 1916. In 1920, he was admitted to Dera Ghazi Khan High School and passed his F.A exam from Hindu Sabha College, Amritsar in 1926. He graduated in philosophy and economics from Islamia College, Lahore in 1929. He completed his S.A.V. from Central Training College, Lahore in 1932 and adopted teaching as a profession.²⁰ He participated in various extracurricular activities including singing, dramas, as well as served as member Namaz Committee of the Khilafat Movement.²¹ In the meantime, Mufti fell in love with a married lady, Anwar Sultan, with whom he later got married.²² Later on, the troubled economic and psychological pressure ruined his domestic life, and he faced family court cases. In 1945, Anwar Sultan died, and Mufti resigned from his job in the education department.²³ In 1946, with the help of his close friends, Ahmad Bashir (b. 1923-d. 2004) and Ishfaq Ahmad (b. 1925-d. 2005), he married Iqbal Begum.²⁴ In his professional life, Mufti was a restless soul so he got into many jobs and left them. He joined All India Radio as a staff artist, but soon resigned and signed a contract with the Bombay film industry.

After the independence of Pakistan, he went to Lahore for the arrangement of finances and got appointed to Refugee Camp at Walton. Here he worked as Sub-editor in the weekly magazine *Istaqlal*. In 1949, he joined the Pakistan Air force as a psychoanalyst in P.R.C. Unit. In December 1950, he started working in Radio Azad-Kashmir and this job proved as a mind changer for him regarding his religious views. In 1951, he left Azad Kashmir Radio and got the position of Assistant Information Officer in Rawalpindi through Federal Public Service Commission (FPSC).²⁵ After his retirement, he settled down in Islamabad where he spent the last thirty years of his life. His remarkable literary career of fifty-five years ended on 27th October 1995.²⁶ The government of Pakistan awarded him prestigious Sitara-e-Imtiaz award in 1986, while he was also awarded Munshi Premchand Award in 1989 by the Sahitya Akademi, India's National Academy of letters.²⁷

2. Influences on Mumtaz Mufti

The extraordinary sensitivity of Mumtaz Mufti allowed him to register minute details of his surroundings. His writings depict his struggle against the moral and ethical dilemmas of society in addition to his unique individual experience and observation of human behaviour. He made his literary expression an essential vehicle for re-defining and re-modeling of social fabric of South Asia. He identified multifaceted peripheries of individual psychology and contributed to Sufi preaching's as a solution to these problems. The modification in his work was raised from the circumstances of extensive influence, which can categorize into three parts.

i) Parental Influence

Mufti's trait of being sensitive in his childhood makes him more observant and aware of his surroundings. Being highly sensitive is challenging to manage in real life, but it is an essential quality for a good writer. His writings were based on real-life experiences, which led to a detailed portrayal of his characters and sensitivity of scenes. Initial phase of his life was characterized by extreme inferiority complex and his father's hostility towards him, which pushed him to sexual obsession.²⁸ His father influenced Mufti's psyche to a great extent, and he considered

¹⁷ A branch of the family settled in Persia (Iran), and in the sixteenth century when Sunni Muslims were being persecuted by Shia Muslims there, one of the families, Feroz Wali, immigrated to India, where the Mughal Empire was at its zenith under Emperor Akbar. For details, see Najeeba Arif, *Mumtaz Mufti ka fikri Irtqa* (Lahore: Al-Faisal Nashran, 2011), 20.

¹⁸ Nazir Ahmad, *Fiction-nigar Mumtaz Mufti* (Lahore: Dastavez Matbuat, 1996), 21.

¹⁹ With the relevance of his nickname, he used the name 'Ailee' for himself in his roman à clef *Alipur ka Ailee*.

²⁰ Rehan Hassan, *Mumtaz Mufti: Hayat aur Adabi Khidmaat* (Karachi: Alia Publication, 2011), 20-21.

²¹ Arif, *Mumtaz Mufti ka fikri Irtqa*, 29-49.

²² She was the wife of his friend, Mufti Fazal-e-Haq. She eloped with Mumtaz Mufti, taking along her six children. Later on, Mufti Fazal-e-Haq divorced her and she got married to Mumtaz Mufti. They had two sons; one died in nascent age and the other is Uxi Mufti. For detail, see Arif, *Mumtaz Mufti ka fikri Irtqa*, 67.

²³ He had to face family court cases over the question of the marriage of his step daughter. Moreover, there were various reasons for his resignation from job such as insulting behaviour of his father, collapse of marital life, and departmental inquiries. He did not join teaching again as he said once that 'teachers/masters are monsters.' Cited in Arif, *Mumtaz Mufti ka fikri Irtqa*, 29-49.

²⁴ She was divorced. She gave birth to three daughters; Sawera Mufti, Nilo Mufti, and Naqsh Mufti.

²⁵ Arif, *Mumtaz Mufti ka fikri Irtqa*, 76.

²⁶ Abdul Karim Khalid. "Mumtaz Mufti kay Afsanvi Adab mein Nafsiyat Nigari". Unpublished PhD. diss., University of the Punjab, Lahore, 2004, 54.

²⁷ Munshi Premchand Award is awarded to persons of prominence in the field of culture from SAARC countries.

²⁸ Rafiq, "Mumtaz Mufti: Ahwal-o-Athaar," 6.

his father responsible for all the misfortunes of his life.²⁹ He could not forgive him, as his entire life had fallen prey to an unnatural and emotional complication. He was a scared, lonely, and nervous child who felt it challenging to mingle with other children.³⁰ The second significant influence upon him was that of his mother, Sughra Begum, a pious and exceptionally kind lady. It was due to her influence that Mufti became receptive to Sufism in the later phase of his life. His mother's spiritual affiliation with Haji Rafiuddin of Delhi of Chishti *Silsilah* deeply inspired Mufti,³¹ as she took her son with her for meeting his mentor. These meetings lasted for twenty years, when his mother took him to a *majzub* named *Pug walay* Baba (lit. the elderly man with a turban).³² The Baba suggested him to go toward the mountains and meet a person wearing a Rumi cap (*fez*).³³

In fiction, distinctive sensibility is achieved through immersing one's spirit in experiencing others' personal stories in real life.³⁴ Mufti's novels can be treated as *roman-à-clef*, based on two phases of his life.³⁵ The first phase of his life is depicted in *Alipur Ka Ailee*, a story of a lover who challenged the social taboos of his times, while the second phase is reflected in *Alakh Nagri*, a story of a devotee who is greatly influenced by Qudratullah Shahab (b. 1920-d. 1986).³⁶ In both books, the author's personal experiences are theorized in close connection with social realities.

ii) Inspiration from Psychology

The decade of 1930s manifested the influx of western influences and a turning point in significant trends of Urdu short stories. After the First World War, the influence of English, Russian, and French translations of great literary works became available in Urdu language.³⁷ Ashfaq Ahmad (b. 1925-d. 2004), who was a close friend of Mufti, once stated that the latter also used to read the unpopular literature of a Swedish writer.³⁸ Renowned Urdu writers including Aziz Ahmad, Ismat Chughati, and Mumtaz Mufti got the influence of the writings of Sigmund Freud (b. 1856-d. 1939),³⁹ who founded a new school of knowledge about the field of psychology. The first noted literary influence on Mufti was Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory about personality and its essential components: id/identity, ego, and superego.⁴⁰ These themes are reflected in Mufti's initial short stories such as *Gehma-gehmi*, *Chup*, *Mehndi Walay Hath*, *Samay or Asmara*, *Badmash*, *Jawar-bhata*, etc.⁴¹ His later short stories, for instance, *Kalay Sleeper*, *Beygangi*, and the character of *Alipur Ka Ailee* reveal his inspiration from German psychotherapist, Alfred Adler (b. 1870-d. 1937).⁴² The influence of Carl Gustav Jung (b. 1875-d. 1961), a Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, attracted Mufti towards religion, spirituality, history, and mythology.⁴³ However, Mufti maintained his individuality beside all the challenges he faced during his ideological transformation from Liberalism to Sufism. His first fiction on Sufism *Raughani Putley* disclosed his inclination in the preface:

For me, the expression of narration is a blessing. I humbly stood in the honourable service of Hazrat Damri Shah and pleaded: 'Hazoor, you blessed Hazrat Mian Muhammad Bakhsh with the pen, please bless me with something as well!' I prayed at the door of Hazrat Nizam-ud-Din Auliya in Delhi: 'Hazrat! you sufficed Hazrat Amir Khusrau, grant me with something as well. They are capable and I am incapable. But for blessings, capability does not matter. With the blessing from these sufis, may be I can write that story which I wish to report before death.'⁴⁴

²⁹ As in the first chapter of *Alakh Nagri* titled Allah-Mian, he described that his thoughts were conditioned by western philosophers whereas his brought up was in a family where the name of God was used to terrify the children. For detail see Mumtaz Mufti, *Alakh Nagri* (Lahore: Al-Faisal Nashran, 1993), 15.

³⁰ Mumtaz Mufti, *Asmanrain* (Lahore: Ferozsons, 1993), 60.

³¹ Later on, some incidents of his life transformed his thinking as in 1921, when he was studying in Islamia College Lahore, he was influenced by a girl named Jalia who was a *balki* (female dervish) of Data Darbar. Afterwards, he started visiting Data Darbar (the shrine of Syed Ali Hujwiri, an eleventh century sufi, popularly known as Data Ganj Bakhsh) regularly.

³² He mentioned his experience that "in those days I was not aware of Chishtiyya or Chishtiyya gaze, neither God nor Islam...for me a pious person was one who could show miracles and predict future..." Cited in Mumtaz Mufti, *Alakh Nagri*, 45.

³³ It is mentioned in both of his roman-à-clefs, *Alipur Ka Ailee* and *Alakh Nagri*.

³⁴ Mehr Afshan Farooqi, *Urdu Literary Culture: Vernacular Modernity in the Writing of Muhammad Hasan Askari* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 75.

³⁵ Mumtaz Mufti, *Alipur Ka Ailee* (Lahore: Al-Faisal Nashran, 2007), 7.

³⁶ "About Mumtaz Mufti | Biography", <https://upclosed.com/people/mumtaz-mufti/>, (accessed March 22, 2019).

³⁷ Narang, "Major Trends in the Urdu Short Story," 115.

³⁸ Ashfaque Naqvi, "Recalling Mumtaz Mufti: Lahore Literary Scene," *Dawn*, April 24, 2020

³⁹ Arif, *Mumtaz Mufti ka fikri Irtqa*, 239.

⁴⁰ He was an Austrian neurologist and the founding founder of psychoanalysis and theory of human behavior and mental treatment.

⁴¹ "Mumtaz Mufti" <https://www.revolvy.com/page/Mumtaz-Mufti>, (accessed March 22, 2019).

⁴² A German psychotherapist and founder of individual psychology who emphasized the inferiority complex as an element of isolation in a person's development and human being.

⁴³ Arif, *Mumtaz Mufti ka fikri Irtqa*, 239.

⁴⁴ Najeeba Arif, *Bukkal Dey Wich Chor* (Lahore: Al-Faisal Nashran, 2012), 30.

Najeeba Arif (b. 1964)⁴⁵ argues that Mufti's works depict a gradual evolution in his thoughts. She categorized the literary development of Mufti's work into three phases: In the first phase, the focal point of his literary dimension was psychology, sex, and social ethics. In the second phase, there was inclination and transformation in his thoughts toward Sufism. In the third and final phase, his interest increased in Quranic reading and *shariah*.⁴⁶ In short, Mufti's works display consistent development of tendencies that are discernable in his short stories and novels produced in these phases.

iii) Peer Influence

Another profound influence on Mufti's writings was that of a sufi named Sain Allah Bakhsh (b. 1910-d. 1983), and his literary friends including Quadratullah Shahab,⁴⁷ Ahmed Rafique Akhtar (b. 1941-),⁴⁸ and Ashfaq Ahmed (b. 1925-d. 2004).⁴⁹ These were the people who changed the course of Mufti's life and persuaded him to moral and spiritual development. A close friend, Ahmad Bashir⁵⁰ indicated that in a group of seekers Mufti once disclosed the truth that Syed Ghous Ali Shah Qalandar (b. 1804-d. 1880) of Panipat was his paternal father.⁵¹ One of his friends, Aziz Malik⁵² took him to the shrine of Sain Allah Bakhsh and he realized that Sain Allah Bakhsh was the person with Rumi cap (*fez*) and *huqqa* (a kind of pipe for smoking), as suggested to him by a dervish. Later on, his meeting with Jan Muhammad Butt (Sain Allah Bakhsh's *khalifa* or spiritual successor) enthused him a lot. On December 29, 1955, Mufti started scripting his mystical dreams in his diary.⁵³ It was a hidden dimension of his life. Although he discussed his meetings with living sufis, he never openly affirmed that he was sincerely and honestly a seeker of Divine Light.⁵⁴ His thoughts and ideas constantly evolved, and in this process of ideological transformation, his close association with Quadratullah Shahab played a pivotal role. When Jan Muhammad Butt addressed Quadratullah Shahab as a '*Sitara*' (star), it enhanced the attraction for Mufti for the latter.⁵⁵ Shahab did not have formal affiliation with any of the institutional orders or *silsilahs* of Sufism, rather he chose the *Uwaysi* path which lacks any organized structure and chain of master-disciple relationship.⁵⁶ Mufti's meetings with sufis and dervishes, particularly his relationship with Shahab affected him a lot which can be indicated in his short stories as well. Though apparently Mufti openly gave Shahab the status of *murshid*, he differed with the latter on many points.⁵⁷ Instead of *Shahabnama*, there was profound influence of *Tazkira-e-Ghousiyya*⁵⁸ on Mufti. Moreover, contrary to Shahab, many of Mufti's works depict the master-disciple relationship and manifest Chishtiyya influence.

3. Mumtaz Mufti's Literary Writings

Mumtaz Mufti started his literary career with an essay on psychology, titled *Uljhao*. In 1932, his first fiction, *Jhuki Jhuki Ankhen* was published in a famous literary magazine, *Adbi Duniya*. Later, he published eight collections of fiction-based short stories. His first collection of fiction, *Un-kahi*⁵⁹ (The Unsaid) was comprised of seventeen short

⁴⁵ Prof Najeeba Arif is a prominent Urdu writer and poetess. She has written many books including *Raagni ki Khoj mein*, *Ma'aani sey Ziada*, *Mumtaz Mufti: Shakhshiyat aur Fun*, *Raftah-o-Aaindah: Urdu Adab ka Manzarnama*, and *Talash: Mavara Ka Ta'ayyun*, etc.

⁴⁶ Arif, *Bukkal Dey Wich Chor*, 22.

⁴⁷ Quadratullah Shahab was a renowned Urdu writer and civil servant who served as the Principal Secretary to three heads of the state; Governor-General Ghulam Muhammad, President Iskander Mirza, and President Ayub Khan. He was exceptionally famous for his best-selling Urdu autobiography, *Shahabnama*, which is dismissed as 'fiction' by some critics such as Mushfiq Khwaja.

⁴⁸ Ahmed Rafique Akhtar is a renowned and highly influential religious and spiritual scholar who wrote many books such as *Paimaan-e-Azal*, *Chiragh-i Sar-i Rah*, and *Mavra-i-Sarab*.

⁴⁹ Ashfaq Ahmed was a distinguished writer, famous for his works such as *Dastaango* (The Storyteller), *Talqeen Shah* (The Preacher), *Aik Muhabbat Sau Afsanay* (Bunch of Love Stories), *Man Chalay Ka Sauda* (Bargain of Stubborn), *Baithak* (The Guest Room) and *Zaviya* (The Dimension). He is also considered a cause of Mumtaz Mufti's inclination toward sufi thoughts.

⁵⁰ A celebrated Urdu writer who helped Mufti to join the now-defunct Urdu daily, *Imroze* after the creation of Pakistan.

⁵¹ He was a sufi of Panipat (India) in the nineteenth century. His biography is titled, *Tazkira-e-Ghousiyya* written by Gul Hasan Qadri, which describes his life and teachings. (Delhi: Jauhar-i Hind, 1298 AH). However, there is no confirmation of Mufti's relation with Syed Ghous Ali. Interview with Dr Najeeba Arif (Islamabad), July 21, 2019.

⁵² He is an Urdu writer mentioned in Mufti's book.

⁵³ His dreams mentioned in his personal diary reveal his ecstatic's restlessness, inner shifts, and bestowal of spiritual benediction. His diary also informs that he used to recite *Darood-i-Taj*, study *Tazkira-tul-Aulia* (a book authored by Fariduddin Attar (d. 1221) on sufi biographies) and perform *zikr*, and *namaz*.

⁵⁴ Arif, *Mumtaz Mufti ka fikri Irtqa*, 339.

⁵⁵ Mufti was considered a man behind spreading whiffs about Shahab's sainthood, spiritual powers, and status among the sufis. Rauf Parekh, "*Shahabnama, its Creator and Critics*", *Dawn*, April 25, 2020.

⁵⁶ Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *Islam in Pakistan: A History* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2018), 219.

⁵⁷ Arif, *Mumtaz Mufti Ka Tehzibi Irtqa*, 14.

⁵⁸ See note 51 (supra).

⁵⁹ Mumtaz Mufti, *Un-kahi* (Lahore: Maktaba-i-Urdu, 1943).

stories on complexities of human relationships.⁶⁰ These are *Jhuki Jhuki Ankhen*, *Appa*, *Mehndi walay Hath*, *Mathay ka Til*, *Syaani*, *Ghalat Malat*, *Ghusl-e Aftabi*, *Mora*, *Andha*, and others. The second collection titled *Gehma-gehmi*⁶¹ contained fifteen stories on themes related to complications in human relations. These short stories include *Khwab*, *Chirr*, *Had ho gae*, *Jab or Ab*, and others. Six stories define the hitches and complexities in husband-wife relationship, and these include *Intqam*, *Al-Sadaf*, *Sharabi ka Raaz*, and *Doctor ka Istemal*, etc. The third collection of short stories was *Chup*,⁶² which contained fifteen short stories; four short stories were written on the failure of love which are *Neeli*, *Baji*, *Gehraayaan*, and *Lady Doctor*, whereas seven stories are written on sexual love and human behaviour, and these include, for instance, *Chup*, *Piyara Paltu*, *Shaista*, and others.⁶³ Then, the fourth collection, *Asma Araien*,⁶⁴ was comprised of seventeen short-stories; four on different social issues, two on partition in 1947, and eleven discussed love and sex. Except for two of his stories, *Gober ka Dhair* and *Gour Andhayra* all others discussed almost the same themes. In 1953, his famous drama *Nizaam Saqqa*⁶⁵ was performed on stage in Rawalpindi.⁶⁶ His first collection of essays, *Ghubarey* described different themes such as woman and sex, Islam, difficulties of life, love, and others.⁶⁷ In 1961, his novel, *Alipur Ka Ailee*⁶⁸ was published and got much appreciation in the literary world. Later on, Mufti disclosed it as *roman à clef*.⁶⁹

In 1965, his fifth collection of short stories titled *Guriya-ghar*⁷⁰ was published which discusses artificiality in the life of the upper classes and its hollowness.⁷¹ In this collection, *Scarlet Road* and *Neeli Rugg* are unique in their subject-matter, as they deal with palmistry and astronomy. He also wrote two books, *Maulana Maudoodi and Jamaat-i-Islami* and *The Delusion of Grandeur: Analysis of Maulana Maudoodi and his Jamaat*. Both were published with pseudonym Mumtaz Ali Aasi and A. R. Khan respectively in 1964 on the behest of the government. In 1968, a collection of sketches titled *Peyaz ke Chhilkey*⁷² was published. In the same year, Mufti performed Hajj along with Qudratullah Shahab and wrote his travelogue, *Labbaik*. Initially, it was published in *Sayarah* digest, in sixteen episodes and afterwards published in the form of a book in 1975.⁷³ *Labbaik* proved as his foremost book which overtly brought Sufism into his literary production, and familiarized the readers with Mufti's sufi thought. The popularization of the book realized Mufti that it was a mandate of the Divine, so he abolished its copyrights for further publication.⁷⁴ First chapter of this book, *Bin mangay miley*, starts with description of a *faqir* or dervish who met him in Rawalpindi, and gave some money to Mufti and asked him to proceed for hajj. Over all theme of this book is that hajj is not merely a religious ritual, rather its purpose is to feel the presence of Allah Almighty and strengthen one's bond with Him and to change our lives according to His will.

The sixth collection *Roghani Putlay*⁷⁵ was published nineteen years after the previous one. Mufti left writing after the publication of *Guriya-Ghar* at the suggestion of his son, Uxi Mufti due to the monotonous themes of his fiction. *Roghani Putlay* focused on the new theme of Sufism/spiritualism vis-à-vis materialism, and highlighted the hollowness of alien Western culture. It contained eighteen stories such as *Sundrta ka Rakshak*, *An-purni*, *Khul Bandhna*, and *Apsara* based on Hindu mythology. Other short stories such as *Bush or Bushra*, *Picnic*, *Dairy Agah*, *Haunted House*, *Purani bottle Nae Sharab* and *Halwai ki Dukan* present glimpses of alien Western culture and its effects on Pakistani society.⁷⁶ Later, two non-fiction books, one is the second collection of essays, *Ram Din*,⁷⁷ and

⁶⁰ His famous story *Appa* is also part of it. Woman was a favorite topic of Mumtaz Mufti and this book presents different shades of women; Sajjo Baji (*Appa*), Zeenat Begum (*Andha*), Azra (*Jhuki Jhuki Ankhen*) and Nazli (*Naftrat*) and many others.

⁶¹ Mumtaz Mufti, *Gehma-gehmi* (Lahore: Sindh Sagar Academy, 1944).

⁶² Mumtaz Mufti, *Chup* (Lahore: Maktaba-i-Urdu, 1947).

⁶³ When his personal life was going through a lot of difficulties, his wife Anwar Sultan got separated from him along with her six children. Later on, she died and he resigned from his job in the Education Department.

⁶⁴ Mumtaz Mufti, *Asma Araien* (Lahore: Maktaba-i-Jadid, 1952).

⁶⁵ Mumtaz Mufti, *Nizaam Saqqa* (Lahore: Maktaba-i-Urdu, 1953).

⁶⁶ It was also telecast by national channel (Pakistan Television or PTV). Mufti also wrote three stories for film, the first one was Sultana Razia, which was stopped due to Hindu-Muslim riots in 1947. Second movie was *Islam ki Aamad*, which was delayed due to lack of funds. Third story of movie was written at the request of Ahmad Bashir. Ahmad, *Fiction-nigar Mumtaz Mufti*, 17.

⁶⁷ Mumtaz Mufti, *Ghubarey* (Lahore: Maktaba-i-Urdu, 1954).

⁶⁸ Mumtaz Mufti, *Alipur Ka Ailee* (Lahore: Dastango, 1961).

⁶⁹ *Roman à clef* is a novel based on real life story.

⁷⁰ Mumtaz Mufti, *Guriya-ghar* (Karachi: Writers Guild, 1965).

⁷¹ Arif, *Mumtaz Mufti ka fikri Irtqa*, 119-232.

⁷² Mumtaz Mufti, *Pyaz ke Chilke* (Lahore: National Publishing Company, 1968).

⁷³ Mumtaz Mufti, *Labbaik* (Lahore: National Publishing Company, 1975).

⁷⁴ Uxi Mufti, *Maha Okha Mufti* (Lahore: Al-Faisal Nashran, 2012), 21.

⁷⁵ Mumtaz Mufti, *Roghani Putlay* (Lahore: Universal Books, 1984).

⁷⁶ Rafiq, "Mumtaz Mufti: *Ahwal-o-Athaar*," 64.

⁷⁷ Mumtaz Mufti, *Ram Din* (Lahore: Ferozsons, 1982).

the other one was a collection of sketches titled *Okhay Log*,⁷⁸ came in limelight. The seventh fiction-based collection of short stories *Samay ka Bandhan*⁷⁹ was printed in 1986. This collection is confined to nineteen short-stories and discusses themes ranging from the impact of alien Western culture on Pakistani society, love for materialism, to distancing from the soul. *Saari Baat*, *Do Mohi*, and *Chitkapri*, and *Third Person* reflect the paradox of materialism and spiritualism. *Grann Ma*, *Rukavat*, *Kamra Number 7*, and *Mod House* are social stories that described the complexities of modernism.

Two books, *Hind Yatra*,⁸⁰ a travelogue recounting his trip to India, and *Alakh Nagri*, the second part of his *roman à clef*, got acclaim and admiration.⁸¹ Analysis of *Alipur Ka Ailee* and *Alakh Nagri* disclose the transformation of soul. This transformation started in the soul of a novice, who is a slave of his desires and pleasures but afterward he is guided by his urge for higher truths of spirit, leading to the attainment of bliss. These two books also define prominent stages of spirituality: purgative stage refers to the need to purify from lust, pleasures and sin; illuminative stage refers to attainment of bliss, and the unitive stage refers to the unification of a seeker in the Godhead. In *Alipur Ka Ailee* his center of analysis was 'woman' whereas in *Alakh Nagri* it was Qudratullah Shahab.⁸²

The eighth and the last fiction-based collection of short stories, *Kahi Na Jaey* was comprised of twenty stories published in 1992.⁸³ There were eighteen stories including *Maroof Farabi*, *Daykhan Dukhan*, *Kahaani ki Talash*, *Ander Wali*, *Choocha*, *Do Hath*, *Bottle ka Kaag*, etc. This book was dedicated to Qudratullah Shahab and most of its stories present elements of Sufism and rationalism. In 1996, his last book *Talash* was posthumously published which offered a crux of his thoughts and ideology of ninety years long life.⁸⁴ In this book, he highlighted the hypocritical role of religious clerics in Islam who preach the obligatory rituals to increase his importance rather than stressing on other obligations of Islam that can make the society prosperous.⁸⁵ He further emphasized that the Quran encourages rational thinking. He concluded the book by defending/presenting the case of Islam as a balanced religion.⁸⁶

4. Mystical Themes in the Works of Mumtaz Mufti

The impact of Sufism on Mufti is clearly visible in his writings. His self-consciousness was at the edges of his expanding awareness of Sufism. He seemed keenly aware of the sufi domain and he freely moved his readers into its uncharted realms. His writings constructed on sufi themes generated a tremendous response. His short stories reflect the notion of sufi mediation between God and humanity. Mufti explained his sufi thoughts by interpreting metaphors and hidden meanings in his stories. Although Sufism itself is a complex phenomenon to be explained, his expression of sufi thought seems ambiguous, and at times implicit, which further complicates the issue. Perhaps this is the very reason that his sufi views were not as highlighted as Qudratullah Shahab and Ashfaq Ahmad, whose writings explicitly discussed sufi ideas. There are almost fourteen short stories that employ sufi symbolism evidently, from *Roghani Putlay* (sixth collection) to the last one *Kahi na jaey* while others discuss it partially. *Roghani Putlay* was his first short story written on sufi theme. Its analysis reveals that he tried to highlight the gap in Pakistani culture generated by modernism, and tried to fill it with Sufism, suggesting it as a panacea for the complexities of modernism and materialism in contemporary times. He used the Rumi cap (*fez*) as an imperative symbol in *Andhera*, *Roghani Putlay*, and *Alipur ka Ailee*, initially representing Islam, and in the later stories as a symbol of Sufism. It appears that he might be indicating towards Maulana Rumi or Khilafat movement.⁸⁷ His writings portray sufi thoughts and demonstrate that he was familiar with the authority structures of Sufism. Mufti's works also present scattered references of the sacred geographies, for instance, the shrine of Data Ali al-Hujwiri (b.1009-d. 1072), and Sehwan Sharif of Lal Shahbaz Qalandar (b. 1177-d. 1274).⁸⁸ In short, a close analysis of his writings indicates some major Sufi themes which are sometimes presented overtly and sometimes covertly. Following is an analysis of the major sufi themes which are reflected in his literary productions:

4.1 Separation (*Firaq*) and Diversity (*Kathrat*)

⁷⁸ Mumtaz Mufti, *Okhay Log* (Lahore: Universal Books, 1982).

⁷⁹ Mumtaz Mufti, *Samay ka Bandhan* (Lahore: Ferozsons, 1986).

⁸⁰ He visited India in 1982 and participated in the *urs* or death anniversary celebrations of Amir Khusrau (d. 1325), the favourite disciple-companion of the thirteenth century Chishti sufi, Shaykh Nizamuddin Auliya (d. 1325).

⁸¹ Mumtaz Mufti, *Alakh-Nagri* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel, 1992).

⁸² Rafiq, "Mumtaz Mufti: *Ahwal-o-Athaar*," 193.

⁸³ Mumtaz Mufti, *Kahi Na Jaey* (Lahore: Ferozsons, 1992).

⁸⁴ Syed Sarfraz Ali Shah predicted about his book that it would 'serve spirituality and Sufism.' Cited in Arif, *Mumtaz Mufti ka fikri Irtqa*, 513-15.

⁸⁵ Mumtaz Mufti, *Talash* (Lahore: Gora Publishers, 1996), 35.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁸⁷ Arif, *Mumtaz Mufti ka fikri Irtqa*, 320-21.

⁸⁸ Mufti, *Kahi Na Jaey*, 129.

The concept of separation (*firaq*)⁸⁹ is one of the major philosophies of Sufism, and refers to separation of lover from beloved or alienation of human soul from God. This concept is frequently discussed in Mumtaz Mufti's works, as he described *firaq* as a reason for the creation of the universe in his short story *Premnagar* included in the collection titled *Chup*.⁹⁰ *Premnagar* also reveals the second stage of separation (*firaq-i thani*).⁹¹ The story expresses the alternating experience of states of intoxication (*sukr*), sobriety (*sahw*), self-effacement (*mahw*) and affirmation (*ithbat*) between the lines. He wrote that an individual passes through these stages and he reaches the perpetual conscious unity with Allah which ends in second sobriety (*as-sahw 'i-thani*). Unity with Allah leads to absorption of diversity (*kathrat*). For instance; his short stories, *Premnagar* and *Wo*,⁹² and many others present the concept of diversity (*kathrat*). Diversity and unity are one of the central ideas in Sufism as 'Unity in Multiplicity' mirrors 'Multiplicity in Unity'.⁹³ It reveals that the world demonstrates divine unity in multiple forms. Ibn Arabi (d. 1240), a renowned Andalusian sufi scholar, defined unity of God and multiplicity within the Universe, and declared that there is only One Reality, *al-Haqq*, whether God views Himself or is viewed by many (*khalq*), the core behind all phenomena is one.⁹⁴

4.2 The Truth of Truths (*Haqiqat al-Haqa'iq*)

Dodhiya Sawera,⁹⁵ a short story defines the motif of 'Real Truth' or 'Reality of Realities' (*Haqiqat al-haqa'iq*).⁹⁶ Mufti described the journey from the end of physical needs and the extraordinary experience of metaphysical existence. He repeatedly used the word *Nur* in varied ways. Initially, he addressed the similitude of light in the physiological and psychological sense, and then brilliantly shifts it to the spiritual realm of light. As Imam al-Ghazali (b. 1058-d. 1111) wrote in *The Niche of Lights (Mishkat al-Anwar)* that the mystical nature of the light is that "it allows one to see and allow other things to be seen, which has obvious spiritual dimensions concerning God's Light."⁹⁷ The story further highlights that there is no light other than God's Light and all other lights are dependent on it. For Mufti, there is a kind of parallel between the visible and the invisible dominion in between the lines.⁹⁸

In *Daikan Dukhan*, he explained that human eyes got veiled with the deception of love, lust, and greed. This veil of deception is put off through the blessing of Allah which brings a state beyond worldly feelings of sadness or happiness and darkness or enlightenment.⁹⁹ *Dodiya Sawera* tells the story of a spiritually pure heart but endowed with wisdom that attains Divine Light or *Nur* rather than the intellectually limited sensory world of perception. The spiritually pure heart becomes qualified to have the vision of Allah along with the knowledge and love of Allah.¹⁰⁰

4.3 Concept of Divine Feminine (*Jagat Maa*)

Mumtaz Mufti presented God as the Divine Feminine (*Jagat Maa*) in his short story *Mumta ka bhaid*.¹⁰¹ This may be surprising to many people who see Islam in its patriarchal outlook. He highlighted the loving, forgiving, merciful Divine presence that draws hearts closer as the love of a mother. He emphasized the infinite *Jamali* attributes of Allah's beauty rather than *Jalali* or Majestic attribute. In his book *Talash*, he wrote that 'a relationship with God should be like a relationship with a mother. In the time of agony or tiredness, you can put your head in her lap and ask her for magical patting for peace.'¹⁰² Ibn Arabi also stated in *Fusus-ul-Hikma*, 'God is never seen immaterially,

⁸⁹ *Firaq* is the separation and alienation of human soul from God.

⁹⁰ A love story between four characters, Pili, Ajo, Zonu and Nizzi who are living in *Premnagar*. For details, see Mumtaz Mufti, *Chup* (Lahore: Maktaba-i-Urdu, 1947).

⁹¹ For a brief definition, see Amatullah Armstrong, *Sufi Terminology (Al-Qamus Al-Sufi)* (Lahore: Ferozsons) 2001, 48.

⁹² *Wo* is the story of two characters, *Mein* and *Wo* which is a conversation between a human being and the Divine. It describes the human loneliness and the existence of the Divine Being. For detail see, *Roghani Putlay*.

⁹³ William Stoddart, *Sufism: The Mystical Doctrines and Methods of Islam* (New Delhi: Taj Company, 1998), 75.

⁹⁴ According to him, human capacity is to see only the fragments of the whole but the mystic alone can perceive Him in unity rather than His alleged multiplicity. For details, see S. A. Q. Husaini, *The Pantheistic Monism of Ibn Al-'Arabi* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1970), 196.

⁹⁵ It is the story of four men who shared their story and were associated with the grave of a woman but experienced different faces of the same person.

⁹⁶ It is the intangible isthmus (*barzakh*) between the Divine being and the cosmos, about which human understanding and faith are speculative.

⁹⁷ Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali, Eng. Trans. David Buchman, *The Niche of Lights* (Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1998), 4.

⁹⁸ Sohaib N. Sultan, "Al-Ghazali on Divine Light and the Human Heart," *Village Journals*. www.naseeb.com/villages/journals/al-ghazali-on-divine-light-and-the-human-heart-5817, (accessed: March 2, 2020).

⁹⁹ Arif, *Bukkal Dey Wich Chor*, 41-42.

¹⁰⁰ This knowledge of God is acquired through the *ruya* (vision), *liqa* (meeting), *mushahada* (observation), *wajh* (face), and *nazr* (gaze). Masood Ali Khan and S. Ram, *Encyclopedia of Sufism*, Vol. 12 (New Delhi: Anmol Publications, 2003), 40-41.

¹⁰¹ For detail see, *Kahi na jaey*. It described the story of a Raja who built the *Jagat Maa* Temple in the memory of his mother.

¹⁰² Mumtaz Mufti, *Talash* (Lahore: Gora Publishers, 1996), 37.

and the vision of Him in a woman is the most perfect of all.¹⁰³ It is the same concept that was noted by Paulo Coelho (b. 1947)¹⁰⁴ in his novel, *By the River Piedra I Sat Down and Wept*, as he declared: "I have a different view of things: I believe in the feminine side of the God."¹⁰⁵

4.4 The Ontological Levels of Existence (*Maratib al-Wujud*)

Mufti's short story *Wo* is distinguished as it explores how the faculties of sensory perception perceive the metaphysical existence.¹⁰⁶ He explains various degrees/levels of awareness in which the creatures participate in the divine presence. This awareness became the reason for their spiritual awakening which articulates the psycho-spiritual centers, 'The Six Subtleties' (*Lataif-e-Sitta*)¹⁰⁷ as *Nafs*, *Qalb*, *Sirr*, *Ruh*, *Khafi*, and *Akhfa*.¹⁰⁸ This state of awareness and convergence of energy are the fundamentals of Sufism in spiritual experience. His stories like *But Deyyta aur Sannaata* and *Wo* can be ascribed to as the 'inner space fiction,' a literary label derived from J. G. Ballard, designating a peculiar kind of study of the conscious substitutes, the interplanetary or unknown dimension.¹⁰⁹ In *Ram Din*, he sheds light on the Omnipresence of God, and argued that earth and sky, tree and stone, human and animal, everything seemed to be unveiled, and became reflective of God. He added that Allah was smiling on my doubts and suspicion. The rational arguments were brushed off, and Allah Almighty was standing in front of me. The whole world came together and became Allah and I was watching in amazement. My mind had been changed.¹¹⁰

4.5 Self-Purification and Self-Transformation (*Tazkiyah al-Nafs*)

Another sufi idea discussed in his works is the process of transforming the carnal self or desires (*nafs*) from its appalling state of ego-centrality through various spiritual stages towards the level of purity and submission to the will of Allah. One of his stories *Dodiya Sawera* is based on the phases of spiritual development. This spiritual development starts from the suppression of one's desires and ends with the appearance of Divine Light (*Nur-e-Ilahi*) where everything is beyond good or evil, friend or foe. These phases are discussed in specific spatio-temporal contexts, but relate to one's inner experience rather than an external or superficial one. He also discussed the stage of harmony between the inner and the outer selves in his stories *Roghani Putlay*¹¹¹ and *Andhyra*. It is the task of Shaykh (a sufi teacher) to teach and transform the seeker or disciple so he may become instrument of God on the path of Sufism. The relation between shaykh and seeker is very significant as it is a relation of complete submission. Mufti's story titled *Gurdas Das Guru (Samay ka Bandhan)*¹¹² elaborates on this idea. In this short story, he presented a new thought that in the twentieth-century, seeker has become more important than the shaykh. He argued that now shaykh does not lead the seeker; preferably, the former monitors the latter's track, which changed the traditional concept of master-disciple relationship in Sufism.¹¹³

In *Samay ka Bandhan*, a phenomenal character of *Sunehri Bibi*, a dancer who accomplished her journey from physical or material reality to the eternal Truth, and her driving force in this journey is music (*sur*), a genre of art. Similarly, in *Un-kahi*, the story of *Appa* is a tale of gratuitous love. Its main protagonist, *Appa* presents sufi ethics such as tolerance, acceptance, sacrifice, and submission in love (*ishq*). A silent fire of love burned her and she became a source of light. Even the concept of love in Mufti's stories is very unique in the sense that he portrayed unconditional love. For a common man, it is hard to practice unconditional love until he is spiritually awakened. For instance, he wrote in a short story, *Aik Hath ki Taali* that in his understanding, love is unconditional. In love, there is no place for grievances and complaints, condition of fidelity, or moaning of infidelity as it is not a trade, rather it is

¹⁰³ Cyrus A Zargar, "Sufi Aesthetics", https://www.academia.edu/1074396/Sufi_Aesthetics, (accessed: March 2, 2020).

¹⁰⁴ Paulo Coelho de Souza is a Brazilian novelist who is famous for his bestselling novel, *The Alchemist* which has been published in 170 countries and translated in eight different languages.

¹⁰⁵ Paulo Coelho, *By the River Piedra I Sat Down and Wept* (New York: Harpercollins, 1997), 7.

¹⁰⁶ Arif, *Bukkal Dey Wich Chor*, 34.

¹⁰⁷ Chakras in Vedic terminology and Chinese Meridian system.

¹⁰⁸ Six subtle points (*Lataif-e-Sitta*) are drawn from the Quranic verses and often discussed by the sufis. In Vedic terminology these points known as 'Chakras' and in traditional Chinese medicine as 'Chinese Meridian system.'

¹⁰⁹ Inner space is a way of disclosing the new insights and developments of awareness which take place in unconsciousness. James Diedrick, "J. G. Ballard's 'Inner Space' and the early fiction of Martin Amis," https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/9780230598478_12, (accessed: December 12, 2020).

¹¹⁰ Mufti, *Ram Din*, 83.

¹¹¹ It is the story of a shopping mall in which there are varieties of dummies that get alive at night. For detail see *Roghani Putlay*.

¹¹² Mumtaz Mufti, *Samay ka Bandhan* (Lahore: Ferozsons, 1986).

¹¹³ Arif, *Bukkal Dey Wich Chor*, 40.

bestowal.¹¹⁴ In the same story, the character of Baba Kamal manifests a sufi theme, as he sacrifices his love without showing any grievances.

4.6 The Reality of Attraction (*Haqiqat al-Jadhbah*)

Mufti's works reflect the thirst for Truth and the attraction of reality (*haqiqat al-jadhbah*).¹¹⁵ This theme is palpable in *Dodiya Sawera*, which tells the story of four men affiliated with the grave of a woman. Grave is a metaphor for ultimate destination of human beings, and four men may refer to four dimensions (North, South, East, and West) or varied stages of human life. These four men may also refer to the variability of thoughts, sentiments, and reactions. According to Mufti, there is always a driving force or mechanism which leads to purity and awakening. It gives a direction toward the highest level of consciousness and gnosis, and stimulates a journey from the material world to the Real Truth. His stories like *Samay ka Bandhan* and *An-purni* deal with the journey from the physical need to spiritual reality, and music (*sur*) is the means to it. Mufti wrote that "rhythm affects the body and tune stimulates the soul."¹¹⁶ In *Sundrta ka Rakshik*, the character of *Maharani* also experiences thirst for Truth. In the words of Mufti: "Maharani, you should not search for Truth, as it is not a sweet fruit. The lie which springs peace in you is far better than the truth which burn you like a furnace."¹¹⁷ *Boond Boond Beeti* is also the story of restlessness and curiosity to awaken the third eye to know the Truth.¹¹⁸

4.7 Self-Annihilation or Self-Effacement (*Fana*)

The concept of "passing away from self" or in other words, self-annihilation (*fana*)¹¹⁹ was employed by Mufti in *Sirhi Sarkar* and *Aik Hath Ki Taali*.¹²⁰ In the stage of self-annihilation or losing one's self in God, it is like 'losing the finity of one's self in the infinity of God'. It leads to a higher stage of spirituality called 'self-renewal'. Dr. Muhammad Iqbal mentioned in the foreward of his book, *Asrar-i Khudi* (Secrets of Self) about Sufism that "it is not like that the finite loses itself into the Infinite, but rather the Infinite passes into the loving embrace of the finite."¹²¹

Die before you die,' Mufti argues that in Sufism, death is a stepping stone, leading to the crossing of a chasm, giving the 'being' another chance to reawaken. In *But Deyvta aur Sannaata*, the plot revolves around the description of death as a journey from the physical body to the spiritual realm, and accountability as a process of 'constant life or cycles of life'.¹²² In the same story, he further mentioned the three different phases: the first phase, the journey from the physical body to eternity, and the experience of death. In the second phase, the experience of timelessness (*la-waqt*) depicts the profound spiritual experience, while the third and last phase is the start of trial or accountability/self-assessment. Intriguing, in this accountability, the witness came out of the accused and punished himself. It seems that Mufti commingled the two world's spatio-temporal existence with his visionary imagination. Interestingly, for sufiologist, Muslim philosophers, and theologians, the paradigm of time is stretched from the fall of Adam and eve from Heaven to the day of final judgment. Ibn Arabi analyzed the concept of time and its relativity, as he argued that God's time (*dahr*) is eternal, beginningless, and endless, whereas human being's serial time (*waqt*) is momentary.¹²³ Mufti in this story analyzes both modes of time, the Divine everlasting and the mortal momentariness.

4.8 The Deception of the Ego (*Makr-i-Nafsi*)

The deception of ego (*makr-i-nafsi*) is one of the most prominent veils in the path of Truth and perfection. It is a treacherous enemy that encourages lying, deception, and flattery to persuade an individual away from his/her destination.¹²⁴ The duality of good and evil in present in every human being. Mufti indicated this duality in his short stories, *Do Mohi* and *Chitkapri* (included in *Samay ka Bandhan*), in which he highlighted the struggle of a human soul competing for two magnetic power poles; one attracts him towards heavenly spheres and inspires him to acts of goodness resulting in the unification of the self, whereas the other pole tempts him towards realms of darkness

¹¹⁴ Mufti, *Samay ka Bandhan*, 91.

¹¹⁵ It is the power that enables one to draw anything to himself, from inanimate objects to humans. This power is only given to the spiritually advanced and mature seekers.

¹¹⁶ Uxi Mufti, *Maha Okha Mufti*, 55.

¹¹⁷ Mufti, *Roghani Putlay*, 65.

¹¹⁸ Mufti, *Kahi Na Jaey*, 133.

¹¹⁹ Within Sufism there are three major stages of *fana*, through which the seeker must travel if he is to reach absolutely. These are *fana' fi-murshid*, *fana' fi-Rasul*, and *fana-fi Allah*.

¹²⁰ *Sirhi Sarkar* and *Aik Hath Ki Taali* are stories of one-sided love which leads toward eternal love.

¹²¹ J. I. Laliwala, *Islamic Philosophy of Religion: Synthesis of Science Religion and Philosophy* (New Delhi: Sarup & Sons, 2005), 95-96.

¹²² Lesser and greater death.

¹²³ Gerhard Bowering, "The Concept of Time in Islam," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 141, No. 1 (March 1997), 55-66.

¹²⁴ Armstrong, *Sufi Terminology*, 137.

where deception of ego is one of the most significant barriers on the path to God resulting in alienation of self. These downward-pulling tendencies of the lower-self (*nafs*) perpetually endeavor to control the human.¹²⁵

In Mufti's stories, *An-purni*, *Samay ka Bandhan*, *Aik hath ki Taali*, and *Sirhi Sarkar*, he mentioned the journey from physical reality to eternal Truth which passes through the trial of self-humiliation.¹²⁶ Themes like self-awareness and self-deception are discussed in *Aini aur Afriyat*, *Maroof Farabi*, *Daykhan Dukhan*, *Phaylao ki zayrlabi*, and *Choocha*. *Aini aur Afriyat's* central theme is to unfold the difficulties of the burden of self that man has burdened himself, and it makes his life a consistent penalty. However, when he gets rid of this vicious cycle of self, all his problems are solved and the only means is self-awareness (*irfan-e-zaat*).

4.9 The Concept of Ecstasy (*Wajd*)

In *Bottle ka Kaag*, Mufti mentioned the ecstasy (*wajd*) as a state of mind and physical body that come upon the heart unexpectedly.¹²⁷ It is result of immense spiritual energy (*barakah*) bestowed upon the human. It overwhelms the senses, causing extreme physical reactions. It is during *sama* (sufi devotional music) that a seeker may experience ecstasy and more ecstasy. Ecstasy is a gift of Allah's Grace upon His lover. Without the gift of *wajd*, the lover would be unable to bear the intensity of emotion.¹²⁸ Abu Bakr Shibli (b. 861-d. 946) once declared that ecstasy is the "manifestation of existent One or 'the Found' (*mawjud*)."¹²⁹ Metaphysical experience is the central theme of Mufti's story, *Bottle ka Kaag* which encircles the intensity of love of the Divine, its effect on the heart, and immense spiritual energy that affects the surroundings. In another short story *Wo*, the presence of the Divine Being is beautifully illustrated. It seems that Mufti identifies the *sahib al-nafs* (lit. the possessor of breath) with the one who finds Allah in his ecstasy.¹³⁰

Conclusion

The dissemination of sufi thought and teachings through literary writings brought a remarkable shift in Urdu literature as well as in sufi writings. In South Asia, the profound psychological tragedy of colonial experience and struggle for independence to reaffirm the identity encouraged many writers to writing sociological and psychological stories. Mumtaz Mufti is also among those Urdu writers who accommodated contemporary literary trends (Western derived sociological and psychological themes) as well as his personal experiences (parental, familial, and peer influences) profoundly. The devastating effect of his father brought restlessness in life, but the soothing effect of his mother brought gratification. The agony of his life took him from the realm of psychology and philosophy to spirituality. Moreover, most of his fiction is autobiographical in nature, which portrays his tussle with moral and ethical dilemmas. He was an advocate of social reform.

Although, Mufti faced many challenges during his ideological transformation from Liberalism to Sufism, critics attempt to label him merely as a liberal writer, overlooking his evolution as a sufi author. His literary works including novels, short stories and essays, were a reflection of his life and journey within that witnessed steady transformation of his thoughts. His inclination to Sufism transformed him from an angry young man to a compassionate writer. He started his journey from *Un-kahi*, his first short story, when he thought that his life experiences were utterable, and his life ended on *Kahi na jaey*, his last short story, when he realized that it is essentially unspeakable.

Mufti's unique literary journey reflects his own transformation and growing spiritual dimension of his life. Sufi and metaphysical themes are candidly discussed, and at times they are latent. In a variety of ways, he engages his readers in the journey in time and space, level by level, preaches sufi wisdom by underscoring self-awareness (*irfan-e-zaat*) and self-purification (*tazkiyah al-nafs*) in his writings. Sufi themes in his writings. These themes include separation (*firaq*) and diversity (*kathrat*), deception of the ego (*makr-i-nafsi*), self-annihilation (*fana*) (*haqiqat al-jadhbah*), the Truth of truths (*Haqiqat al-Haqiqat*), the ontological levels of existence (*muratib al-wujud*), and ecstasy (*wajd*). The teachings of Sufism, as well as the authority structures of Sufism which were constructed in his stories and generated a tremendous shift from skepticism to the adoration of spirituality.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Arif, *Bukkal Dey Wich Chor*, 40.

¹²⁷ Ecstasy means to leave one's current or conscious state or to stand outside oneself. Zeshan Syed, *Lost and Found: The Ecstasy of Wordplay* (Chicago: School of Art Institute of Chicago, 2020), 33.

¹²⁸ Armstrong, *Sufi Terminology*, 265.

¹²⁹ Leonard Lewisohn, *Principles of the Philosophy of Ecstasy in Rūmī's Poetry* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), xvi.

¹³⁰ Ecstasy is a phenomenon in which each soul provokes a unique preparedness (*isti'dad*).