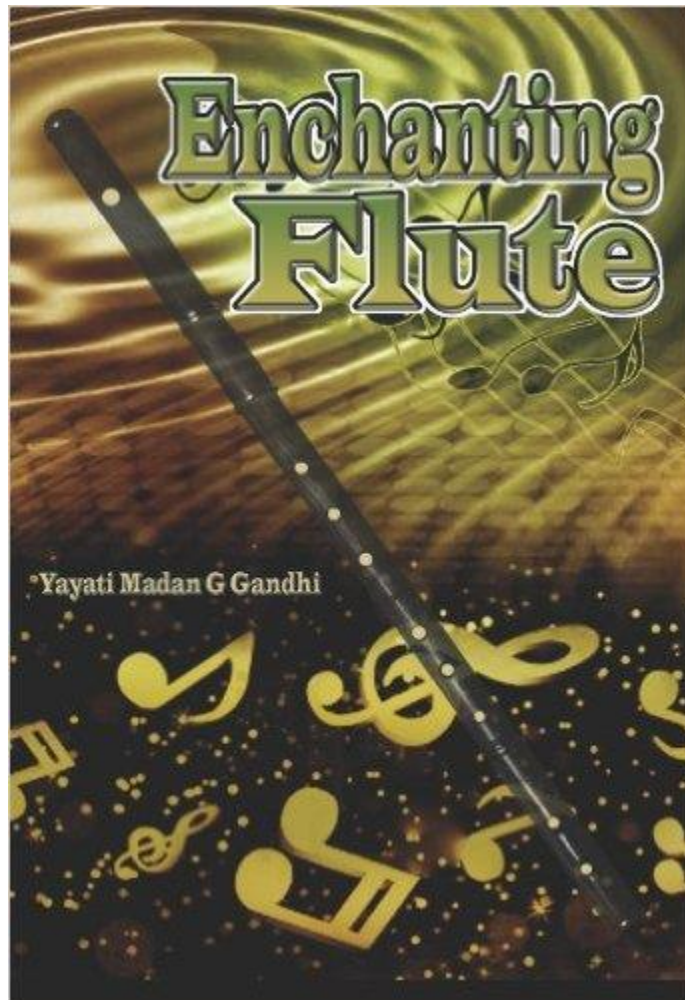


**The Power of Metaphor in Madan Gopal Gandhi's
The Enchanting Flute:
A Conceptual Cognitive Approach**

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Abstract

The present paper focuses on a detailed analysis of the power of metaphor in Gandhi's collection of poems, *The Enchanted Flute*. Metaphor as the inherent dimension of language gains

its functional role through the conceptual studies of language by Johnson and Lakoff. The present paper analyzes Gandhi's use of metaphor in his highly imagistic poetry collection. However, there is also an eye on the political significance of his metaphoric language in this seemingly romantic collection. It is argued the power of the poet's language arises out of the unsaid or untouched aspects in his metaphors. While the poet draws upon his conventional context to metaphorize his thoughts and emotions, he challenges them by taking them to their limits. This detailed analysis aims at unraveling such tensions and limitations.

Key words: Madan Gopal Gandhi, *The Enchanting Flute*, metaphor and thoughts and emotions, language use.



Madan Gopal Gandhi

Theoretical Background

Initially regarded as a poetic device for poetic imagination, metaphor used to be treated as a characteristic of language, rather than of action or thought. The conceptual cognitive linguistics of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson brought about a revolution in the so-called rift created between poetic and everyday language. These two thinkers contend that metaphor is not merely a poetic tool, nor a linguistic feature. They give it a conceptual basis and accord it a key role in linguistic communications in so far as they take human thought processes as basically metaphorical. Essentially, metaphor is nothing other than understanding one domain in terms of another domain. In their studies, they take the concrete domain, or source domain, as the means by which the abstract domain, or target domain, can be understood. Thereby, they believe “*no metaphor can ever be comprehended or even adequately represented independently of its experiential basis*” (1980, p. 20).

In Kovecses's words, there is a systematic correspondence between the source and the target; such conceptual correspondences are called mappings (2010, p. 7). The process of mapping is monitored by cultural background and conventions of society; hence mappings are only partial. According to the findings of Lakoff and Jackson, all people's speech can be nothing other than metaphoric. What distinguishes a poet's diction from everyday language is the degree s/he deviates from, challenges, extends, questions, or even modifies the conventionalized metaphors in a linguistic community. Thus poetic creativity relies on the poet's innovations applied to the metaphors well established and even clichéd in the cultural context. One of the objectives of the present article is to analyze Gandhi's unconventionalization of metaphors in his poetry.

Ideology-Political Dimensions

The partiality of mappings or correspondences denotes the ideological and/or political dimensions of metaphoric expressions. Van Dijk defines ideology as "*the basis of the social representations shared by members of a group*". This means that ideologies allow people, as group members, to organize the multitude of social beliefs about what is the case, good or bad, right or wrong, *for them* to act accordingly" (1998, p. 8; cited in Goatly, 2007, p. 1). Van Dijk puts emphasis on both the social and cognitive aspects of ideology. Knowles and Moon put emphasis on metaphor for its functions such as "explaining, clarifying, describing, expressing, evaluating, entertaining" (2006, p. 3); this enumeration in fact denotes the ideological impact of metaphor. In this light, using conventionalized metaphors or unconventionalizing them accord the poet a particular stand. This is the point to which Charteris-Black aptly refers, writing: "A metaphor . . . has the underlying purpose of influencing opinions and judgments by persuasion; this purpose is often covert and reflects speaker's intentions within particular contexts of use" (2004, p. 21).

Pragmatic Dimension of Metaphor

Metaphor's pragmatic dimension nullifies the traditional belief that used to regard metaphor and thereby poetry as being less serious than everyday language. The persuasive basis that Charteris-Black assigns to metaphor renders it a means of maneuvering the user's power

The Enchanting Flute Abounds in Auditory Images

A glance over the whole book testifies to this claim that the poet relies heavily on this specific imagery more than the others. This insistence on auditory image could be interpreted as the absence, or impotence, of other major imageries like gustatory, tactile, olfactory, and visual. The *raison d'être* of this absence could be detected in the world in which the poet tries to enchant the audience by his poetry. Gandhi's world is a world ridden by high-tech facilities and fast technology; a world stricken by symptoms of (post)modernity. An India torn between demands of tradition and forces of Western modern life is where the poet finds himself located and at grapple with. Among all senses which have not been left impervious to the thwarts of enchantments of the age of cyberspace and cyber technology, auditory still holds its significant role. This point is highlighted in the quartet the poet inserts on the title page:

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 16:1 January 2016

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Suddenly it turns into a musical band.

A Sacred Significance

This metaphor accords poetry a sacred significance and an ambivalence that underlies the whole collection. The clash between good and evil, holy and unholy, visible and invisible rules over all poems included here. The speaker in different poems experiences different moods; once he is a powerful figure with the promise of a sea change in his hands; at other times, he becomes a timid man who is disturbed by shades and vague figures that intrude upon his loneliness. Sometimes, he is a lover; some other time, he turns against all human bonds and emotions. All these find their full expressions in the metaphoric concepts he draws upon in his poems. Such fluctuations and ambivalence motivate us to seek after the silenced, ignored, or marginalized through the voiced, said, and centralized.

A Variety of Themes – Emphasis on Nature

The Enchanting Flute covers a wide variety of themes such as nature, peace, art, music, poetry, love, etc. Each of these themes is treated differently in the poems. The collection starts with “Invocation” in which the poet invokes nature and all natural elements to help him out. Such a start for this collection accords it an epic tone. While in epic, the poet by convention appeals to gods and goddesses to help him all through his poetic enterprise, here Gandhi goes to nature. His predilections for nature over religious, or supernatural, beings could be interpreted as the paralysis of such entities in modern man’s life.

On the one hand, invoking nature goes in the line of the pastoral type of the collection and on the other hand it signifies the absence of the supposedly powerful in man’s destiny. Invoking nature in the face of any other power could be interpreted as the absence of, and therefore the poet’s yearn for, nature in the face of the abundance and, at times, over dominance of the supernatural. Unlike T. S. Eliot who averts from April accusing it of lying,

Gandhi invokes April and the spring. Then he moves on to other natural elements like rivers, trees, birds, rain, etc. The poet’s invocation of nature could imply the absence of nature in

his practical life. This point is confirmed when in the last stanza, he chants: “O angel dear come/ O morning star come/Mother calls you home” (Gandhi 2013, p. 1). Calling home signifies nothing other than its displacement by other forces which could be cyber beings. Taking invocation as the poet’s personifying attempt, one could regard it as a metaphor by means of which Gandhi highlights the absence of nature and bemoans the imposing presence of anti-nature.

The same theme of nature runs through the other poem in the collection. In “Whispering Nature”, the poet deals with nature, describing it as “whispering nature/danced in robes divine” (p. 30). The peaceful and Edenque view of the sea at sunset implies the poet’s yearning for the lost nature in the age of technology. In the poem, the speaker can hear the wind moving soothingly, the nature whispering, and the sea on which they sail softly. Yet in his modern life, all natural sounds disappear in the hums and rums of the mechanized life in which they have imprisoned themselves away from nature.

Also a Contradictory Treatment of the Theme of Nature

The speaker’s thematic oscillation is apparent in his contradictory treatment of the theme of nature in his other poem, “Action-Frame”. In this poem, Gandhi philosophizes on form and function. Nature disappears in this poem and what remains are crude notions of existence. The poem imprisons the soul’s action within the confines of structure and function. Such a shift from his romantic obsessions with nature and emotional dimension of man to his rational identity could imply his frustrations with his world of feelings.

On Peace

Peace is another theme that lies at the core of “A Tender Child” in which the poet metaphorizes May as a naked girl, joyful and naughty. The Edensque portrait of the poem represents her in the bosom of nature enjoying herself in peace: “She sleeps/ on luscious green/ caressed by lullabies” (p. 2). The same peace runs through the other poem, “Creation’s Song” which portrays complete harmony in nature. “Crimson bathes the horizon/the fog disappears/sleepy hills awake/to greet the golden sun” (p. 4). The poet’s insistence on this peace could represent the absence of peace in his life. This point is explicitly referred to in “Rain song”

in which the speaker expresses his longing for the peace he once cherished and now lacks; hearing the song of rain, the speaker complains: “Feel its rhythm/dream of childhood days/when nature and I were one” (p. 6). The unity between the speaker and nature metaphorizes mother-child unity which, according to Lacanian psychoanalysis, is disrupted as soon as the child learns language and is socialized. Language for Lacan stands for culture, all its cognates and social forces. The interference of society, disturbing mother-child unity, brings a primordial lack in the individual’s unconscious which remains insatiable till his death. Thus this metaphor voices the lost unity and the imposing force of society that disturbs the unity and brings man to a primal lack. Thematically, the poem sounds romantic; yet politically it puts the poet against society. The fact that in all poems of the collection, the speaker is a lone figure who mingles only with nature and not with human beings could be taken as the seclusion in which he has adopted against human society.

The absence of peace and the poet’s yearn for its return is well expressed in “Peace”. Here, the speaker prays for peace not only for the land but also for nature. This pray signifies the absence and thereby the desire for peace. Such an implication denotes lack of peace in the whole world (p. 23). In “My Goddess” the speaker hails to his goddess which is neither a religious being, nor a mythical entity; there is no mention of the true nature of this invoked being, just wrapped in descriptions like “My dream/my inspiration/ my mother, my goddess” (p. 12). The addressed entity does not have any identity; hence it implies a crisis in the man’s belief. On the one hand, this lack of identity broadens the speaker’s scope of vision, uprooting him from all the nets he is trying to get rid of. On the other hand, this lack presents the loneliness of the speaker in a world which does not offer him any aid. The vagueness of the addressee could also signify the speaker’s attempt to delink himself from any hailing discourse in his milieu. The speaker is a bard who dedicates his song as his prayer to this goddess “to soothe and sustain” (p. 12). Such dedication implies he does not have peace and tranquility in actual life.

Loss of Youth and Beauties of Life

Loss of youth and beauties of life are the other two themes which are treated metaphorically in some poems of the collection. “A Sneering Stump” bespeaks of the poet’s loss

of youth and strength. He is an aged man who remembers his passion for life and now he is bereft of that impulse: “Gone the bloom/ only a stump sneers” (p. 8). The sneering of the stump implies his futile belief in the eternity of his Eden. Thus the paradise of which he speaks in the previous stanzas is nothing other than a faked one: “In good old time/when I was youthful strong/life looked a gift divine/love an eternal song” (p. 8). The poem ends with “melody gone/but not the refrain” (p. 8). The refrain of which he speaks signifies repetition of life, the past, the memory. What has now remained of that paradise is just a faded memory which lacks that splendor and rhythm. The memory is now sneering back at him and his frustrations.

Paled-away Memory

The notion of paled-away memory is repeated in another poem in which a lover remembers his long lost beloved. “A Sweet Remembrance” is on the speaker’s memory of a beloved. The lover has forgotten the details of her figure, yet he still remembers her charms. The very act of remembering the lost ones is itself the speaker’s attempt to re-enliven his enchanting past; but the futility of the attempt to recapture the loss implies the gloomy and desperate mood of the speaker. The same state of mind could be detected in the speaker’s nostalgia about his homeland and his desire to revive his identity. This theme comprises “The Enchanted Field” which is on the speaker’s homeland where he has forged his identity. He attempts to recover his lost self from the debris of his memory. He believes he has roots in the depths of the land so that wherever he goes, he remains always attached to the land (p. 22).

Loss of Inspiration

Loss of beauties and joys of life extends right into the following poem entitled “Loss of Inspiration”. In this poem, Gandhi refers to Sophocles, the first classical tragedy writer. This allusion gives a historical depth to his poem which is on tragedies of man and humanity. In this poem, Sophocles laments, sleeping “in the sea/on an enormous mystery” (p. 9). He bemoans loss of love and beauty, “loss of inspiration/ its flight to spirit-infested woods/disappearance of nymph-swept oceans/ and of all the romance” (p. 9). The description, “disappearance of nymph-swept oceans”, can stand for the destroyed and demystified nature under the pressures of technology.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 **16:1 January 2016**

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Other Poems

Finding himself entrapped in such a predicament, the speaker in *Quietude of Being* expresses his yearn “for love/to sustain me/ through dissolution/in the night of apocalypse” (p. 10). He finds peace only in love and thus avers from all social discourses with their fake security. Thus he finds himself a solitary boat, supported by no force, drifting “on slippery current/longing for rest/a quietude of being” (p. 10). The slippery current that sends the speaker afloat like a log metaphorizes the instable and shaky discourses of the society that seek his allegiance without giving him any sense of security and fixity. This anticipates the “night of apocalypse”, which brings him to annihilation. Implicitly, “the night of apocalypse” stands as a metaphor for the final annihilation of the world. The speaker’s belief in the power of love, and the impotence of all other discourses including the religious discourse with its redeeming promises, does away with the claims of such discourses and restores man to his genuine love bonds.

Plumes expresses the poet’s attempt to seize the day. Aware of the transience of life, “before we are swept away/ by the current” (p. 11), he asks the addressee, a friend or the beloved, to join him in sporting life, hence “Let us have some fun/before we are run out/ and in fatigue snooze/in the shade” (p. 11). The use of passive form “we are run out” is discursively significant here as it deprives the subject “we” of its acting or doing position and degrades it to an “acted-on” or “done-on” object. The deceitful position of “we” as the subject, while it is only an object denotes the illusion of life that man is entrapped in. Politically, this grammatical point stands for the illusory vision social discourses accord man. As time passes one comes to know about the fake discursive hail, hence frustration. Besides, the urge of the speaker to sport life implies his modernity-stricken anxiety. Seizing the day highlights the speaker’s longing for joy and simultaneously hides his deep-rooted anxiety which he faces in his age. He is a man of rationality, a man who has lost his faith in his genuine human love, a man whose human bonds are defined by economy-based loss and gain. For such a man, religion has revealed its fake visions and thus proved impotent in procuring his belief in an afterlife. Feeling anxious and frustrated, the speaker desperately seeks sporting life as a way to escape, ignore, or forget (all in vain) his doomed destiny.

Magic Realms is on the magic power of love and the loneliness of the speaker in his age. The speaker is disturbed by a mysterious and unexpected presence. He feels interrupted by the intruder; thus like a bird he takes flight: “I jump to my cushion,/tidy up my jumbled thoughts,/flex my fluffy feathers/ preparing to take wings” (p. 13). Metaphorizing himself as a bird implies the inescapability of his predicament in his practical life. The more one is entrapped in his world, the more he tries to fly by nets metaphorically. Just as the transformation into a bird is impossible, to be realized only in dreams or in poetry, finding true love is also an impossibility; hence love is to be found only in magic realms, not in society nor even in human hearts. It is the absence of love, of which the poet does not speak explicitly but implicitly refers to in his metaphors, that the speaker aims at: “Charged, I soar/to mysterious realms above the constellation/where in pitch black dark/ love lights a sextillion lamps/ on the inverted tree of the sky” (p. 13). Only in the magic realms can one see “the inverted tree of the sky”. The image this metaphor brings to the mind of the sky like an inverted tree sounds quite cartoonish, hence the poet’s retreat into the realm of childhood dreams. At the beginning of the poem, the speaker is disturbed in his dark abode and thus takes wings into the dark realm of the magic. The first dark place signifies his loneliness in the actual world, while the second darkness shows his loneliness in the magic world to which only he has access.

I may reach emanates from his lonely world. The speaker is caught up in whirls of the rushing world with no way out. He metaphorizes himself to a cry, “I am a cry/ rising ceaselessly into an uproar” (p. 14). Yet in his lonely lands, there is nobody to hear his uproar. Unlike the previous poems, the speaker is in conflict with nature, “With no shore, no shore/I roar, I roar/ at the winds and the sea” (p. 14). Clung to tail of a fish, he enters “a pitch-black cavern/trodden not by anyone/ .../hope and hope I may reach” (p.14). The hope he nourishes for reaching is a vague hope; the speaker is not clear where or who his voice may reach. The destination is not important; the acknowledgment of his being by the other, the other’s affirmation of his identity as a being is aimed at here. Thus all he is looking for is reassertion of his own self through the other.

Art, Music and Poetry

In some of the poems of the collection, Gandhi goes to art, music and poetry, as redeeming channels and sows seeds of hope in them. The poet's emphasis on art for helping man to survive metaphorically implies the impotence of other discourses of modern man's culture in this respect. "Music" gives the speaker's view of music and its redeeming and relieving function. Music is a response to man's deep need (p. 18). Similarly, in "Enchanted Flame" the poet implies the spiritual essence of his visions and words. A treatise on poetry, the poem metaphorizes poetry as "the enchanted flame" (p. 19). Divining the deep, it "chants and haunts/with eerie desire/to know and be /the enchanted flame./A new breed moved by a yearning heart/blows through hollow reeds/ singing ecstasy of pain" (p. 19). The redeeming role of poetry lies in "signing ecstasy of pain".

Art's Eternity is on the eternity of art; it metaphorically exemplifies how an insignificant event like a woman's robe left on the beach and taken by the wind looks like "the bird of love" (p. 27). In the third stanza the speaker explains the nature of art, calling it "a mix of myth and reality"; it is eternally sung by minstrels in all languages at all times (p. 27). In the second stanza, the speaker metaphorizes the way art feeds on the familiar, the outmoded, or the by-gone. The stanza starts with "Leans over the legendary dome" (p. 27). The sentence lacks any subject, yet following the first stanza, it could be decided the subject is "She". She is "a perfection in flesh and bone/wears a shock frozen fish-stone/silhouetted on a ruined zone" (p. 27). The "legendary dome" like "a ruined zone" comprises the background of art and through art these are turned into eternal entities.

A Singing Brush is on a poem which is described here as an "anti-poem" (p. 28). The speaker draws on the mythical figure of Pegasus who comes to unveil his would-be bride. Such an allusion implies the complementary relation between poem and anti-poem. It is not only complementary but also unavoidable. Reading in the line of the argument of the paper, one can generalize this to poetic metaphor and its anti-form, the conventional. The poem here implies the poetic metaphor arises out of and simultaneously against its anti-form, the conventionalized one. This relation shows how intricately they are interdependent on one another and how one could be different from the other. The last stanza, "Prepares for the tryst paints/her harmonic mounts /with

a singing brush” concretizes poetry through painting, implying poetry is painting in words, hence “singing brush”. This metaphor refers to the imagistic power of words by means of which the poet can picture his ideas. Thus the speaker brings onstage the myth of Pegasus and his bride to give his idea on the emergence of poetry a pictorial angle.

My Bird is an extension of the theme of the previous poem. Here the speaker metaphorizes his imagination to a bird that soars to unknown seas and skies, “star-worlds and galaxies” (p. 29). The flight of the bird denotes the wild run of imagination which challenges the mysterious and the untrodden realms. Yet this imagination moves “on the trail of song” (p. 29). This metaphor implies the magic power of poetry, “The song, the sweetest bright/weaves a spell/ deep and long” (p. 29). The spell of the song is compatible with the unknown realms into which the poet’s imagination led by poetry enters.

Night Descends brings the speaker to a state of respite after all struggles against life and its illusions. The seer poet comes to see naked truth “staring out of every particle of sand” (p. 20). Now that he has come to see naked right into the eye, he has no quest; thus “No yearning no questing/no mad pursuit/all cawing gone mute” (p. 20). Reaching this stage, he gets ready for the covering night. Death here is metaphorized as night which descends on him, putting him to rest and silence. Anticipating his death, the seer knows before being engulfed by night, he has to “light the flame” (p. 20). The conceptual metaphor that dominates this poem is LIFE IS A DAY.

Swan-song

The speaker lights his flame in *Swan-song* in which he resists being silenced, put to death: “why snatch me away/ why nail me to the shroud” (p. 21). He longs for a cry: “Tonight I shall cry aloud”. In his cry, he asks for stopping “these tolling rites”; the poet is against the social rites which bound man to formalities: ““Before this shell bursts out/let me sing my swan-song”” (p. 21).

Fluted Moments

The metaphor of the poet as a weaver lies at the core of *Fluted Moments*. Yet here he is not a trickster; rather he is a masculine figure with powers of eternal fertility. He is the man who comes from the world of dreams, “I river into the future/on my little rift, dreamy/soar on wings of fancy/breaking my mortal chains” (p. 40). He regards himself as the rightful heir of the earth: “Sunbathed/ my stretch of earth/bequeathed to me since my birth” (p. 40). He is no longer a stringless harp; rather music is there intertwined with his masculine power: “With winged lyres on musical waves/I go from generation to generation/with one-stringed harp in my loins” (p. 40). Despite all this, he is not a romanticized figure, as he is also suffering, “My dreams are in pain/disguised in the isles of gloom/melancholy weaves my memory loom” (p. 40). In the last stanza, the poet speaker is not to give up his hopes, “I walk all over the earth with my sack/watering the desert waste/making a million springs bloom” (p. 40). This stanza metaphorizes the poet speaker to an earth-wandering cloud with a sack full of rain and seeds of hope. He is there to water the desert waste. The reference of the Indian poet to the waste reminds one of Eliot’s “The Wasteland” with all of its negative cognates. Describing his world as “the desert waste” draws affinities between Gandhi and Eliot for both of whom this life has become as infertile as a desert. While Eliot’s modern man loses himself in the wasteland vision he has been exposed to, Gandhi’s takes wings from this earthly world and returns like a redeemer to sow seeds of hope in the desert.

He in Meditation

The speaker in *He in Meditation* takes up three different but significant roles. In the first stanza, he is in the womb, “I am love-blossoming” (p.42). On the earth, he becomes “a golden offspring”. In darkness “burgeoning” he is “A stubborn light/. . ./I am He in meditation” (p. 42). In the last stanza, he is a musician, “playing on my one-stringed harp/I go about warbling like a lark” (p. 42). The trace of the artist speaker from the womb till his adulthood metaphorizes the inherent power of art. In all phases of his life, he is the promising entity once wrapped in love, other times, in meditation. The metaphor that helps the speaker identify with the supreme presence of He in meditation sanctifies the artist as a holy being. Thus he is the figure in whom

love and thought converge and unify. The whole poem can be taken as a treatise on the different isms that draw demarcating lines between sense and sensibility.

Bone-Flute

In ***Bone-Flute***, the speaker is a musician who romantically takes up the journey at the end of which he finds his love “smiling there/tranquil, calm/radiating ineffable charm” (p. 45). With his music, he can revive the dead; his flesh burning, he experiences illumination. He becomes the sun in which he seeks his love: “In astral robes, /sun-eyed gaze/in Delphic trance/enter the sunny mansion” (p. 45). In the sunny mansion, he can see his love. The whole poem stands for the desperate situation out of which he seeks an outlet through his powers of imagination. The fact that he identifies himself with the sun so that he gets a “sun-eyed gaze and enters a “sunny mansion” where he can find his love all represent his lack and thereby his desire for the sun, the light. An inhabitant of the land of darkness, the speaker imagines himself in the world of the sun where everything is as he wishes; this metaphorizes his repressed desires and the suffering he undergoes due to the frustration of his desires.

Apparently Contradictory Stances

The collection’s thematic diversity emerges out of Gandhi’s contradictory stances especially with respect to the poet, the artist, in the society. He avoids romanticizing his vision of the artist so his speaker, a musician or a poet, lapses into a state of impotence and silence, stricken by anxiety and dread. “Let Her Sleep” is on the disturbing presence of dark stillness and silence. The poem starts with the ring of the doorbell singing “don’t disturb, don’t disturb/let her sleep, let her sleep” (p. 24). In the second stanza, it is the dark stillness that sings the same; the third stanza talks of the “snoring silence” singing the same. Giving an imposing voice to elements of silence and quietude like silence and stillness signifies their contrastive function.

Fluted Rill

Fluted Rill centers on the speaker’s state of confusion. His thoughts are metaphorized as a sea on which he is floating: “My raft/wheels on stagnant waters/silhouetted shadows darken the deep” (p. 32). He is going along “a fluted rill/on trackless course of winds/drip-dropping sweet

sad melody/over the sunset sea” (p. 32). The same theme of suspension and desperation is well expressed in “The Salver” which metaphorizes the hopeless state of modern man walking in darkness. “In the translucent lake/on tranquil waves afloat:/ the salver of earthen lamps” (p. 44). Men are metaphorized as “the salver of earthen lamps”; in the second stanza they turn into “windswept tides” that walk side by side “in moonlit ocean” (p. 44). The last stanza expresses a hope: “Hope/ one day we meet,/ our light, the sun. /Amen!” (p. 44). The only hope that links them all together is the hope of meeting the sun, their light. This hope implies the desperate situation in which they find themselves stuck.

Salt

Salt is on the merge which occurs between the speaker and the ocean. Salt is the taste of the sea which enters him. He is in complete harmony with nature. “I bask in my part of the sun/. . ./I reach for the moon/to heal myself” (p. 35). In “Moonstone”, he reaches for the moon to heal himself. The fact that he is seeking a remedy for his pains shows he is suffering and is in need of cure. For this, he relies on some superstitious beliefs. The poem starts with “I dream when awake” (p. 34). This means the speaker cannot sleep. So his dream is just a daydream. Daydreams, like fantasies, crystallize one’s frustrated wishes and repressed desires. Suffering from amnesia, the speaker helplessly retreats to the world of superstitions and thus “capsule my vision/in a moonstone/to charm me into sleep” (p. 34). Modernity-ridden anxiety is the main reason for his sleeplessness. Superstitions arise out of two basic conditions: either the man is too much ignorant, like the primitives, that he has to fabricate false beliefs; or he is too much helpless that he cannot resolve his problems in their logical way. The latter case applies to the speaker here. In an age of technology and scientific progress, he is stricken with amnesia and no medication can help him out. Amnesia like neurosis is a modern disorder that has inflicted modern man. Taking the moonstone as “a talisman/. . . /to ward off evil spirits” gives the speaker a primitive dimension. Moreover, the fact that he could not find any solution to get rid of the pangs of modern life, calling them “evil spirits”, stands for the speaker’s critical sight of his age. In the third stanza, he calls his moonstone “my lucky charm/my heart’s mid cord/my stringless harp” (p. 34). Here he is already aware that his moonstone is futile, hence his “stringless harp”.

High-Strung

The same sense of anxiety runs through the other poem, ***High-Strung***. The speaker takes a realistic view and acknowledges: “No more the relaxed delight:/tension teasing every vein/life full of careless pain” (p. 36). He bemoans the “Somnolent sadness in the gaze/intractable the musical maze/high-strung the guitar string/like the cry of the crescent moon” (p. 36). The crescent moon reminds one of the moonstone; it seems as if the moon has got in half after the dreaming man has got part of it as his talisman, hence “The cry” of the moon.

Midnight Hour

In ***Midnight Hour*** the speaker expresses his dread when he is visited by some unknown entity at midnight: “Every night I hear/a gentle knock at my door/someone calling in soft tones/Fear creeps into my bones” (p. 37). In the second stanza, the “gentle knock” changes “a firm knock”. In the third stanza, “With all strength/I see someone raise the latch/and unbar the creaking door” (p. 37). The poem implicitly presents the loneliness of the speaker.

The corporeal disturbance of “Midnight Hour” gets a metaphorical vision in “Shipwreck”. In this poem, the speaker starts asking “Who comes/flighty-footed in the dark/soundlessly like a thief/from the hole in my head?” (p. 38). While, in “Midnight Hour” the speaker stands the silence of the night, hearing only the church bell in the chill in fear of the unwanted visitor, in “Shipwreck”, he hears the turbulence in his head: “A thousand thoughts contend and clash/a million waves splash/my mind’s lake./I hear a shriek/piercing through the corpus callosum” (p. 38). While the visitor remains unseen and unknown in “Midnight Hour”, here the speaker describes the visitor as “A shipwreck” who “splinters the mirror,/ocean-eyed” (p. 38). In both cases the visitor could be a metaphor for some idea, being, or entity that is simultaneously desired and dreaded. It is desired because, in the first poem, the speaker waits for the intruder at midnight, albeit with fear. In the second poem, the intruder, albeit a shipwreck, is ocean-eyed who enters through the hole in the speaker’s head. While the speaker himself lacks an eye, or having the sense of seeing, the shipwreck is “ocean-eyed”, hence desired by the speaker.

My Sin

The speaker of ***My Sin*** could be the thief of “Shipwreck” or the unwanted intruder in “Midnight Hour”. He appears when “The walls are mute/the doors dumb/the clock strikes twelve” (p. 39). Fainting on the threshold, he hears a “tune/in low tones” and “weave a circle thrice/with my pencil-knife” (p. 39). His weapon is his pencil-knife which could stand for the poet’s weapon, the pencil, and a thief’s, the knife. Changing pen-knife into a pencil-knife is Gandhi’s creative play on the word which imbrues the discourse of men of letters as well. Yet the thief-poet weaves a circle, instead of carving it. Weaving beings on stage the discourse of making and interferes the myth of Penelope and her weaving and unweaving tricks. The speaker’s sin is playing this trick thrice; three and thrice stand for eternity; here it means the trick is done eternally. This point is further backed up in the third stanza in which the speaker confesses, “I carry the charred remains/ in timeless urn;/Even Ganga shall not wash clean/the stains of my sin” (p. 39). Metaphorizing the poet to a thief, or a trickster, Gandhi not only indicates the nonconformity of the figure of the poet, but also his unwanted presence among the others in the society, hence a sinner, a perverse.

A Mission

The real situation of the musician is explicitly described in ***A Mission*** in which the speaker bemoans lack of inspiration and hope in the world around. He complains, “No fountain on my sojourn/to relax my weary limbs/no muse rose to sing.” (p. 46). He sees himself alone with no one there to help him out: “no Ariel came with a band/to lend a helping hand” (p. 46). The allusion to the mythical Ariel as an aid implies helping one another has become a story in legends; in practical life, nobody is helped as nobody helps the others. When he says “No Artemis in my garden danced,/ no fairy flapped its wings” (p. 46), he is actually referring to the joyless and drab sort of life they are doomed to in the modern era. Despite all these, the artist finds the inspiration in his bones: “yet drunk with inspiration/I feel a mission /in my bones” (p. 46). The mission to which he refers is the same one as reviving the dead and giving hope to the desperate.

Beyond Pain

Beyond Pain portrays the speaker as the one who has got immune to all pains of the world, hence a powerful figure. In the first stanza, he is a lone figure, enduring his sufferings all by himself: “I die each hour/my cry no one hears” (p. 47). He believes he has fallen under a spell which has deprived him of his real life and joys. Implicitly the spell is the one inflicted on modern men by modernity: “I wake from the spell/to confront the void” (p. 47). Having suffered a lot, he now finds himself immune to all pains: “Caught in the burning maze/ to all pains I have grown immune” (p. 47). This state of immunity implies the many sufferings he has been through in his life.

Hollow of Silence

In ***Hollow of Silence***, the speaker is the musician who is forced to silence. In the first stanza, he is the marching fleet “windswept” and “tide-blown . . ./caught in a cyclone” (p. 49). But he is not hit by any natural disaster: “No cognition of cataclysms/tornados and squalls/no footfalls of tempest’s beat/nor of the typhoon’s tweet” (p. 49). In this poem, the speaker has lost his source of inspiration. He has lost all sense of life: “My moon gone/snapped life’s rhythm” (p. 49). His flute is in chains; his voice is mute, and “stuck in the hollow of silence” (p. 49). His silence is not related to nature or natural disasters, but the poem implicitly targets the society for having doomed him and his art to silence.

Predicament

Predicament aptly addresses the poet-speaker’s plight, presenting him a doomed man. He is “caught in a cycle. . ./without a choice, helpless” (p. 50). Therefore, he views his death and life not as compromise but something already determined without his own choice. He calls himself “the first bard /of flowing waters”; thus he resorts to metaphor to paint his predicament “in the image of fish and pond” (p. 50). The image of fish and pond both metaphorize his limited conditions in which he can have the least creativity and freedom. The fact that he can express his plight in these images can stand for the many limitations he has in expressing himself sincerely. He is actually resorting to metaphors.

A Fish in the Pond

In the following poem, the poet-speaker becomes the fish in the pond, “I am an elusive fish of the pond/make no ripples as I swim” (p. 51). Making no ripples metaphorize his insignificance of which he is aware. By contrast, “amber currents splash/ moonlit waters” (p. 51). The small fish is transfixed “humming a tune” (p. 51). While in the previous poem, the speaker sees his fate determined by some other hand, here the fish is shown “playing on the checkerboard/with stars for dice;/ with dark forebodings filled,/ I see in the hour-glass my reflection” (p. 51). Seeing his reflection in the hour-glass, which metaphorizes time, stands for his active role in making his own fate, although he is aware of his state as a doomed figure.

A Conch

A Conch is on the music itself which has lost its harmony and tune. The speaker describes himself as “the heartthrob/gone amuck/sprung rhythm/ discordant,/ harmony ruptured” (p. 52). He has become “An eerie sound/ in an empty shell,/ a conch tucked to a cyclone/ blown by shrill winds” (p. 52). All these harsh views of the sound are due to the lost balance he is facing in his milieu. The disastrous natural elements here metaphorize the forces of society to which the speaker finds himself exposed. Despite all these, he prefers being a cacophonous sound than turning into a void: “In the barren reaches of my soul/many cacophonous sounds rise/never hoping to reach the crescendo/in the benumbing void” (p. 52). In “The Crow Within”, the speaker expresses his tiredness of having to listen to disharmonious and unturned voices within him: “I am tired of deafening noises,/squirms and shrieks;/ the ceaseless cawing of the crow within,/ tired of this thumbing and jumping” (p. 53). In the second stanza, he longs for “the melody/a cooing soft tune-/. . ./to stir my inmost spring” (p. 53).

Resurrection of the Artist-Speaker

The collection ends with the resurrection of the artist-speaker from the inflicted “Hypnotic Sleep”. In the poem, the speaker is well aware that he is a wreck, a “castaway in wilderness/ yet a creator of symphonies” (p. 54). In spite of his predicaments, he has the power to “wave in gay abandon” with “every blade of grass” (p. 54). He is able to “rouse the celestial harmony/ hidden in the forest of stars” (p. 54). He is well aware of the power of his music; it can

bring the whole universe into dance, “conjuring the visions of high romance/swaying in ecstasy’s perfume” (p. 54). In the last stanza, the speaker talks of “an incantatory spell” chanted by someone who is squatting on the tombstone. The spell cracks open the field of rhythms and thereby “I rise from my hypnotic sleep” (p. 54).

Conclusion

Ideology underlies man’s social and cognitive life; it lurks under his discourse and determines his multivalent roles. Lakoff and Johnson prove man’s language could be nothing other than metaphoric. Thus the metaphoric expressions are highly ideology-ridden. The present paper has been an attempt to show how the poet, Gandhi, at times takes issue with some conventional metaphors to pinpoint his own interpretation of the way the world should be. At other times, he draws upon conventional metaphors to imply more forcefully the longed-for, but marginalized, state of affairs. The detailed analysis of the poems of his volume, *The Enchanting Flute*, bears the Indian poet’s ideological stance against the imposed norms of the society which is falling apart under the pressures of modernity. As analyzed, he finds himself impotent against the destructive forces of the society, hence frustration and his illusive retreat into the images of an idyllic world. At other times, he sees himself powerful enough to oppose the goings-on of his context by relying on the power of love and strengthening human bonds. In all these cases, metaphors are of great significance to the poet who finds no other way not only to express himself but also to conceptualize his very being as a man as well as a poet.

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