Chapter-IV

Chandan's ma-boli

Chandan had started writing almost at the same time as Pash, when he too was engaged in a revolutionary politics represented by the Naxalite movement in the early 1970s. His first book of poems 'Kaun Nahin Chahega' (Who would not desire?) was published in 1975, which, unlike Pash's poetry, was overcharged with revolutionary fervour and what Jameson calls "the desire called utopia" (Jameson, 2002; 215). But he wanted the social transformation to be in consonance with the experience and freedom of being human:

(Oh aavega
Bhavikh sade kadaman vich hovega
Sarfaroshi di tamanna
agahan turegi)

Even though he published another book Kavitavan (Poems) in 1985, the real turn in his poetic thinking, rather his turn to poetic thinking, came only with the publication of jarhan (1995), Beejak (1996) and Chhanna (1998). Surviving a lost revolutionary struggle and coping with the despair and loneliness of being goalless was the experience which affected a major transition in his poetic journey. As Bhagwan Josh remarks, "A survivor is always faced with two mutually exclusive choices: to lead a life of – bhatkan – superficial worthless wandering or charting a new destiny by asking fundamental questions about life, its meaning and its worth. That is
why there is a sense in what Walter Benjamin, himself a victim of fascism, says: "only a beaten hero becomes a good thinker". But the perception of being beaten by history and being beaten merely by a particular government of the times could lead individuals in different directions with very differing consequences.

In the latter phase, he creates a difference from himself and engages in a self-talk while remembering the comrade with whom he had begun his poetic journey. 'नम रूप देखौ' is a poet's incessant quest for a lost time but also self-questioning regarding the very idea of such a quest:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{मैंने घर देखा तो बेहदौँ -} \\
\text{आपने पहुँचे मुझे बैठने दीं} \\
\text{सब ने भागा शील अभिषेक सी} \\
\text{............. ............. ..........} \\
\text{............. ............. ..........} \\
\text{चाप महाके नीतिका बैना भीतर} ²
\end{align*}
\]

(Sachin paye paash ne kehna –
Aappan parde sunde kehndi haan
Sabh ton pehla jee amoeba sec.
............. ............. ..........)

............. ............. .............

Bajh sawalon Jeeona kaija hovega)

Chandan's poetry is a search for its own possibility; he writes with the awareness of impossibility of finishing, of the completion of the act of writing, of making a meaningful verbal structure he could confidently call a poem. Self-reflexivity is inscribed in his very style of writing poetry:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{कैटी मदद लहर ठहर} \\
\text{मझ सरहेल तवहेल} \\
\end{align*}
\]
The poet wonders if he can make an absolutely new word which will always remain inside the poem never step outside into other poems. The letters, the words are bound to be repeated; the poem will be re-contextualized appropriated by various systems and genres:

nothing new or interesting can happen in this play with just twenty-six letters. The poet fears that language has already been exhausted in its poetic possibilities. The poet is not content to play within the rules of the game; he would rather play 'with' the rules; each game must make its own rules. The poem must resist being framed within the genre. Unless it
differs from itself, fractures its own identity, its identification within its genre, it may not succeed as a poem.

Every poem seeks to move beyond the limits of genre, freedom from the given form, in order to create the singularity of its own idiom. Is it possible, at least, to bring the impresentable desire to the threshold appearance in a language which would not be immediately translated into a critical reading.
The poet wants to create "The writerly text " which is a perpetual present, upon which no consequent language (which would inevitably make it past) can be superimposed. The writerly text is ourselves writing, before the infinite play of the world (the world as function) is traversed, intersected, stopped, plasticized by some singular system (Ideology, Genius, criticism) which reduces the plurality of entrances, the opening of networks, the infinity of languages.  

(a frog – like word)

The poem talks about the 'reality' of language; the lack of fit between the world and the word.
How to grasp the wild word and control it, check its proliferation of meanings, its endless movement along the axis of signification. The poet reflects on the possibility of finally pinning down the word, turning it inside out, dissecting it to its 'basic' structure, stabilizing it into a shape, a meaning, and thus claiming 'authority' over the underlying semantic content of the word:

This metaphor from the realm of science, the biological experiment of dissecting a frog to know its anatomy, to know how its inner organs work to produce its 'different' life-form, becomes an ironical trope as it points out, the limitations of the privileged form of knowledge, scientific analysis and method can reality, the life-form of a frog be made to perfectly match the language of scientific analysis. The moment it encounters language (Is there a purely non-linguistic moment in the scientific experiment?). The truth of the frog cannot cross the unbridgeable gap between the word and the referent. The frog 'constructed' by the
biologist has to face the deconstructive questions as it leaps from its world towards the abstract word, the notes taken down by the experimenter.

(Andar ki kujh ki hai?
Phir kapi di which likhna –
Eh keon nit garain garian karda
Nerion lagda kohja
Dooran sohja
Turda vi taan maar tapoosi urda)

The real meaning of frog leaps out of the hands of both the biologist and the poet; What they are left with is a signifier, with only its difference from other signifiers. Perhaps, both the poet and the scientist can only play with the 'frog' not nail it down to its 'truth'; not imprison it into their metanarratives. Let the scientist and the poet compete in telling more and more interesting stories about the frog:

(Eh shabad jo kaabu aayea
Eh daddu warga taan hai
Par daddu nahin hai
Isda Matlab koi ik have taan dassan)
The closer you bring it to the ugly eye of the microscope, the more it 
recedes into its own 'other' world whose beauty can only be appreciated 
from a distance. The beauty of its otherness will ever remain 
inapproporiate to the human discourse, whether scientific or poetic:

Daddu chapar de which
Eh shabad mere sir de andar rehnda)

The repetition of words in Chandan's poems is an effective 
technique of emptying the signifier of its referentiality. For instance, in the 
poem 'Saambh', virtually every line begins with the same phrase. Its 
referential integrity is fractured as it becomes an associative link between 
contradictory meanings:

(Saambh ke rahki cheer nu dekh lagda hai ki main haan ki mera vi 
Saambh ke rakhi cheez mainu cheta karoondi hai ki toon nahi en, 
tere taan ko nahini

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Saambh ke rakhi cheez dekh main sochda haan –
Eh saambh ke rakhan wali cheez nahin, par pher ve saanbi rakhda haan
Mainu lagda hai ki saambh ke rakhi cheez
Vakia he saambh ke rahan wali cheez hai
Saambh ke rakhi cheez, kade kam nahin aaondi, par hundi kam di hai.
Saambh ke rakhi cheez kade nahin mildi.)

Mediating between contradictions, the repetitive sign becomes a loosely organizing principle rather than the sign of some actually existing 'Mann bade chehre'. Its repetition in different and often contradictory sentences disrupts its own 'unity' even as a sign and reveals its difference from itself. Existing as a common link among 26 different, often contradictory sentences, it becomes a non-identical pure sign dispersed everywhere in the poem. "...to repeat excessively is to enter into loss, into the zero of the signified... In short, the word can be erotic on two opposing conditions, both excessive; if it is extravagant by repeated, or on the contrary, if it is unexpected..."15. The repetitive sign rather than becoming the central motif, and thus corresponding to our habits of reading, gets dispersed into different and often contradictory meanings. The concreteness of the 'thing' to which the phrase as a sign seems to be referring dissolves into the textual surface as it progressively loses its evocative potential and becomes a merely flat sign, a spatial link without any depth:
(Saambh ke rakhi cheez samein di kukh wich payi hai mur hai mur jaman di udeek kardi
Saambh ke rakhi cheez vehende paani ch peya pathar hai
Saambh ke rakhi cheez kise de goachi hai cheez hai
Saambh ke rahi cheez kise de sutti hoi cheez hai.
Saambh ke rahi cheez kise ton vichdi hoi cheez hai
Saambh ke rahi cheez har dam yaad karooni hai –
Vichoda palo-pali vadh reha te jaan ghat rahi hai.)

The phrase also leaves its function undecidable. What is this 'मंड्र वे कंधी चीर' (Safely kept thing) ? Is it the same 'thing' in every sentence? Is it the same identifiable 'thing' even within each sentence? It might as well be a metaphor for the elusive signified which makes the movement of the sign possible:

( Saambh ke rahi cheez sochan laondi hai kei enda na aant hai the na aad
Saambh ke rahi cheez sabat kardi hai ki kisi karte ne enhu sajiya see.

(Saambh ke rahi cheez kade vee kam nahin aondi hai, par hundi kam di hai)

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It is undecidable as to whether 'Saambh ke rakhi cheez' is not a metaphor for the elusive 'meaning', 'presence' or 'signified' which cannot be discovered but always desired. It could also be a metaphor for the secret meaning of the poem safely deposited somewhere among the words. However its excessiveness robs it of conceptual dimension; its monotonous repetition inscribes it as a sound image, the facet of the self-divided sign which Saussure names signifier. One is not sure whether the poem mocks the seriousness we attach to the secret or exhorts us to take the secret more seriously by recognizing it in all its details and implications.
It can just as well be the Derridean Difference which is the condition of possibility for signification, conceptualization but does not itself appear as a concept:

(Saambh ke rahi saari kaimaat da dhura hundi hai)

Is it my secret 'self' safely deposited somewhere 'deep' 'inside' me which I am always looking for but cannot locate, because it is a primordial past which cannot be recovered as the present, or in the present, or is it the desire to keep myself preserved forever? What does it 'mean' to preserve something? What 'meaning' do we desire in keeping it safe in a hidden place? Why and how long can you preserve it? "It is the very basis of the whole universe". But then also:

(Saambh ke rahi cheez mainu sunao kardi hai –
Tu saambh ke rakhan wali cheez nahi tera pakka sarnwaan koi nahi.)

By parodying the grammar of language, by excluding rhythm, which more or less characterizes the free verse as its important formal feature. By writing the verse lines as well-formed prose sentences which, according to the grammar upon which our reading is based, form units of meaning connected by the logic of a discourse, he subverts the idea of the sentence as a unit of meaning in the very opening lines of the poem:

(Saambh ke rahi cheez nu dekh lagda hai ki main haan ki mera vi koi hai.)
Saambh ke rahi cheez mainu chete karaondi hai ki toon nahin eh, tere taan koi nahi.)

Whereas most of Chandan's poems hardly rely on punctuation marks, here almost every line is written like a prose sentence ending with punctuation mark in Punjabi which is the equivalent of full-stop. However the nominal phrase common to all sentences is not substituted either with a pronoun or another phrase with the same 'meaning'. It is as if the sentences were insisting on 'meaning' predicated upon a stable subject which would be irreducible and self-identical without breaking under the weight of 'other' meanings in other sentences:

(Saambh ke rahi cheez meri chaati te paya manaan-moonhi bhaar hai.)

However the very effort to preserve the 'same' meaning in all sentence fragments its nominal unity to such an extent that as a subject of each sentence it cannot maintain its function as a noun phrase contributing considerably to the meaning. It might as well be replaced by many pronouns ऐह, ऐह, तौन (Eh, oh, toon) or nouns राब, जिंदागी (Rab, jindagi) within the discourse of poetry. As the same subject with different meaning in each sentence, the modernist 'meaningful' noun phrase here cannot maintain its hierarchical superiority from a 'meaningless' conjunctive which the grammar of rational, modernist discourse constructs.

The poem has no sequence of one idea following the other... It might as well be read in the reverse order.

Even if you take out a few sentences, it would not mean an irreparable loss to the 'integrity' of the poem; in fact the might as well be treated as a fragment as the 'conjunctive' is still not exhausted in its arability as a glue in grafting more material on the poem. Language is
chasing 'reality'. The restless search for meaning is what makes the play of signification possible. However the sign also wants to preserve meaning, not to let it become fully manifest, because of its fear that it may fail as an adequate means to reflect 'meaning'. 'It can be read only either as a transcendental signified'. Which can put an end to the restless movement of its signifiers in so many directions, or as a 'meaningless' signifier functioning as a connective among different sentences which is necessary to the structure of the poem.

By rigorously observing the grammatical code of the sentence, the poem exposes its fragility, its seams where it is impossibly holding itself against the stress within language, the 'écriture' within which the logic of language is connected. The poem subverts this logic by first installing it; by letting itself appear within it, the poem exposes the inadequacy of this discourse of its unity and coherence to represent all experience.

दिख चलव वे दिखव लाकी देखी ॥२॥

(Ik hazar kore patrian wali pothi)

("Guru Granth has a thousand blank pages with the one song copied out on every page")

Guru Granth is a text which inaugurates Punjabi poetry, is the inaugural gesture of a new poetry, a text which both creates the letter (Gurmukhi script) and the word of Punjabi poetry and yet effaces the authorial voice so effectively, so completely that this extraordinary, paradoxical configuration work of the creation of a new language and the cancellation of originariness (mark) has bestowed on it the status of a scripture, even more, the ultimate canonized Book of a new religion. Chandan's poem re-reads a response to this canonization of the text by Puran Singh, another major poet in the canon of Punjabi poetry. The poem
begins with a quotation in English from one of Puran Singh's prose works, 'The spirit of Oriental Poetry' "Guru Granth has a thousand blank pages with the one song copied out on every page." "The one song" is not 'a' song; it is not sheer lyricism either. It is an effort, an impossible gesture, even in a new language, (or perhaps warranting a new language in my case) to copy out in so many different colors of signifies. The never-present (yet so necessary to the movement of signification) transcendental signified constituting the 'metaphysics of presence' marking every trace of western philosophy, perhaps the very possibility of a language itself. What is this one song is it the trace of an immemorial past, the ever irrecoverable eternity which inscribes and erases every signifier copying it out, thus creating a poem of a thousand blank pages. It is the one song which makes visible a thousand songs by precisely the very gesture of keeping itself invisible.

इति नार्य तैं बद्ध धिार्यं शिनाय पेंशी दे न्या पद्रू ‘ते'।
उद बद्ध रिधैरि लीठ घरे ते बद्ध शिच संबे
बंधे पेंशी बिल्ले बंथे बाबली बंथे बदेवहि बिल्ले। ३४
(Ik hazaar kore patrian wali pothi te har patri 'te
Har khin ohio geet bane te phir khir jaave
kade painti wich kade baavni kade nkardi wich)

This invisible trace of the traces is what disrupts the stability of any meaning into which this 'Pothi' (text) might be fixed. Its resistance to interpretation is created by excessive repetitiveness and a proliferation of voices which rather than asserting themselves into meanings subvert the hegemony of meaning by submerging into the thousand fold blankness of the space pulsating with the virgin time, the arche-writing pre-inscribing every sound or mark which appears as speech or writing. This trace of one song pervading every page of the text makes it impossible to reduce it any
framework of meaning. The history of its readings has not been able to significantly alter its singularity as an 'unreadable' poem. Because it does not represent a hidden meaning.

As Rolland Barthes puts it "...any semiotics that keeps desire within the configuration of those upon whom it acts, however new it may be, is a semiotics of representation. That is what representation is: when nothing emerges, when nothing leaps out of the frame: of the picture, the book, the screen."²⁵ The frame, the book, the thousand acts of copying out are precisely the material signifiers out of which the one song emerges. It leaps out of the very "pursuit of the signs" while motivating that pursuit through its elusive trace while resisting being arrested as the final signified. But it also remains haunting, the chain of signifiers which cannot avoid their destiny of traversing the blank space, identifying eventually the history of their own journey marked by desire which can never be fulfilled. "Art seems compromised, historically, socially. Whence the effort on the part of the artist himself to destroy it."²⁶ The one song copied out on every page is the effort to resist its assimilation into the socio-cultural code, its appropriation by history. The unwritten blankness out of which the one song emerges on each page in the form of language is also the virtually uncircumscribed space of signification into which the song dissolves; it is the continuous mobility of this vibrant semantic space which does not let it settle within any hermeneutic frame.

तिब्बत उन्मलित पहिचिब मिय बैंक मां खड्डक ²⁷
(Ik hazaar patrian wich kora sumaan dharakda)

Text of one thousand blank pages has the same song on every page, inscribed and erased in every moment in... It is the unwritten law, the writeable order of the trace which cancels out the possibility of any reading – Reading can only be an act of infinite gratitude for the undefinable,
unconceptualizable, virtually blank 'différance' which makes the poem possible as readable with the only sequence being the excessive repetition of the same song carried to the limit of making irrelevant the pursuit of any meaning whatsoever. It is not to say that the poem is superficial on all surface; rather, there is a remarkable absence of a hierarchy of meanings. Rather the persuasiveness and stability of blankness on which the one song becomes visible in 'different' copies subsumes the proliferation of meanings before any sequence or hierarchy.

"The one song" which implodes into such a multiplicity of resonances, without any sequence, without any thematic development - the difference inscribed on each page does not reveal a competing meaning, but rather articulates the same 'blankness' the same negation of meaning. A thousand different copies of the one song insist on the untranslatiability of their resonances into a thousand meanings - they rather make visible the shapes of a silence, the blankness on which their difference is inscribed:

This is a prairie road
from nowhere to nowhere
this road is a poem

The one song is a poem of thousand pages unblackened by search for meaning. It is a pure dance of blank signifiers emptied of all semantic noise. It is the collage of many voices celebrating the blankness, the site of language's failure to get out of itself to touch the non-linguistic.
Interestingly, and in a typically postmodern way, Chandan here both re-installs and subverts the canonicity of Guru Granth as a holy text which is traditionally thought to be beyond textuality and historicity, as 'गुरु भी वद्य' (The voice of God).

Any translation of the poem into meaning is liable to stain its singular song of blankness. Neither can any reading make this one song, this unique blankness, appear in its ab-solute difference. Against the highly controversial history and politics which have marked the versions, often contradictory interpretations of Guru Granth. Chandan re-reads its unreadability by deconstructing the binary structure of the word and meaning. Is it possible to read the one song as it emerges out of and then dissolves into the blankness, the space of reading emptied of meaning?

Here is a poem which can be read only through absolute resistance to any urge for meaning. The one song, with its blankness over riding the hermeneutic code, is not the mystical absolute. However, the journey of the "Copied out" signifiers never reaches, is never able to trace the whole distance to touch, the blankness of its historical non-origin. The journey of the signifier traces many pathways which only lead to a jingle of meanings.

The reading of the text dissolves into another text; traversing various intertextual spaces, the reader knows that he has not succeeded in reading the unwritten blankness where the meaning is exhausted.

हिंदाचार शोधः पदकः सन्तानः पथीः
(Ik hazaar ko patrian waali pothi)

The one song which informs all the "the blank pages", all the possibilities of meanings in the text itself escapes the semantic appropriation precisely by disrupting the unity, coherence or order which might assume the power of a discourse the law and politics of a grammar.
It is this disruption of the new language in the very moment of its creation which saves its textuality from the hegemony of meaning.

The impossibly achieved power of the song lies in the multiplication of meaning, in the blankness of the trace which never discloses itself in its final shape that might be appropriated by meaning. "Only the song remains, it is reborn each time, nothing can be done against it, and it is only it, within it, that I love. Never will any letter ever make it heard". The meaning fails to circumscribe the song, to find any space for inserting its logic into the unbroken silence of the song. "But I wonder if philosophy, which is also the birth of prose, has not meant the repression of music or song. Philosophy cannot, as such, let the song resonate in some way". What and where is the whole point of writing a poem? "And this music, consequently, if there is any, I cannot say that I sign it. I do not write on it and when it arises, if it arises, I would say of it as I wrote, I think, elsewhere about the poem: a poem, I never sign it. The music of voices, if there is any, I do not sign it. I cannot precisely have it at my disposal or in my control. Music, if there is any and if it happens in the text, mine or that of others, if there is any music, first of all I listen to it. It is the experience itself of impossible appropriation. The most joyous and the most tragic".

Both reading and writing a poem comes to responding to the question of what a poem is and what to do with the both employing and under cutting the conventions of poetic discourse. The final irony is that the poem about the making of the poem:

कवि अपनी हुने लिखी कविता नाल खेदान खेद रेहा हैं किसी कीजे हैं 33
(Kavi aapni hune likhi kavita naal khedan khed reha hai)

It is by playing with the various possibilities of reading the poem that the poet-reader saves it from filling into the serious condition of a
fixed meaning. Every reading promises to trace the transcendental signified (structural, formal or contentual) which might stabilize the poem within a critical framework. While he should resist settling into a meaning, it must not lapse into the purely aesthetic space of non-meaning either which will erase its difference, its singular configuration of signifies loaded with traces of meaning which cannot be discovered in its full presence. You cannot just play around with the poem, kicking it around in any direction you like. You have to be an expert player to enter the game of signification re-writing the poem that a specific poem is. It is a rigorous game demanding serious participation.

The poem blurs the line between the critical and the creative. The poet as the first reader of his own poem inscribes the critical within. The act of devising critical strategies of reading rather the failure to find a way into the poem creates the possibility of the very search for the poem constitutes the poem. The poem is continuously monitoring its own progress as a novel verbal experience. Writing a poem is an experience of reading it. Each reading must re-write, the poem must reinvent it each time to resurrect it from appropriation by the strong hermeneutic tradition. It must renew its difference each time the interpretive community reads/reduces it into a critical meaning. It should open itself to only a radical reading, reading as re-writing it as another text, not interpreting it as pure content or even pure style.

If it does not have any 'progressive' function to perform, any potential to participate in the modernist project of emancipation, what then, is the idea of writing poetry at all. What to do with a poem which has no meaningful function? Freed from any semantic, pragmatic or even aesthetic roles, the poem opens up a loosely structured space where the reader can only re-invent the poem rather than interpret it in terms of some
hidden content. The poem reflects upon its own mode of existence, the structure of its own possibility.

Can it happen as a poem if it subverts the conventional way of reading from the left to the right by reversing it? The arrangement of the letters seen from the left to the right does surprise the eye. But this surprise is not enough to convert this experience into a poem. It not only puts an end to the meaning but also erases the word as a signifier connected to other signifiers. Only occasionally does this novelty promise some signification.

(Kavi aapni hune likhi kavita
aakhir ton puthe passion parni shuru karda hai
Sajion khabe nu tardi nazar
Akhkhraan di chinai dekh khud hairaan hundi hain
Inj pehlaan nazar ne kade nahi si dikhia)

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(Jad kavi tak gal appardi hai
Taan on hasda hai hairan nahi hunda
Kite kite gal bandi lagdi hai

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Taan chup kar jaanda hai

The critical eye does at times blink, and that moment of creative silence inscribes itself somewhere as a poem. But where to locate it, how to read it still remains a question. The critical eye again traverses the path of signifiers to trace their underlying, 'deep structure'. What lies inside the surface? Where is the final common code, the key entrance to the poem? Breaking through the outer shell of signifiers should reveal the kernel of its significance:

(Kavi aapni hune likhi kavita
Santre vaang childa hai
Kavita da andar taan hor vi sohna hai
Usda andar dhup di chungi warga mitha hai
Usde andar bee hai –
   Bhavith da
   Mrityu da
   Sandeh da)

Of course, peeling the poem off like an orange discloses, an aesthetically pleasing signified. But what precisely is this signified, if not another metaphor ("sweet like the kiss of sunshine"). This signified is only
the seed of a promise, disseminated to the space of future, the endless deferring of meaning. The seed will not sprout into the ever-green tree of solid meaning; it will rather bloom into the flower of skepticism and bring to fruit an another death - The poem is guaranteed no permanence of meaning, of even its existence as a poem.

The poet is unmaking the poem in the very act of making it up. He is unmasking the tie of any authorial presence, any 'truth' which might assert itself behind or within the poem:

हरी अभच्छी रुटे हिमां बरिला
वैलटवै रेखाट रे -
ठेड री भक्ती हिम ठेड ठेड हिम बिखा खाली रे
भीत हरी बर्दी भेयाज भेयाज बढ़त बढ़त रे
अङ्क अपनी हिम बूँढ़ेम बर्दी रे 37
(Kavi aapni hune likhi kavita
Ultake dekhda hai –
Rath di ghari wich reth reth wich kiran lagdi hai
Meeh kadi kadi sagar booud banda hai
Aurat aadmi wich parvash kardi hai)

The textual structurality of the 'underlying' structure is exposed. The play within the structure become visible as it is turned upside down. The regularity and stability of the deep idea dissolves into the shifting of signification, the sliding of the signified under the signifiers. If there is no meaning to be found in the poem, you can engage with the poem in other, different ways. The poem is what Rolland Barthes calls "The untenable text, the impossible text. This text is outside pleasure, outside criticism, unless it is reached through another text of bliss. You cannot speak "on" such a text, you can only speak "in" it, in its fashion, enter into a desperate
plagiarism, hysterically affirm the void of bliss," 38 "The poet is playing games with 'his' poem, considering various possibilities of signing it, leaving a signature of his disappearance into the poem, without casting too much of his shadow on it. However, his shadow presence is inscribed into the very idea of making this particular poem". The text needs its shadow: this shadow is a bit of ideology, a bit of representation, a bit of subject; ghosts, pockets, traces, necessary clouds subversion must produce its own chiaroscuro." 39 The process of deconstructing himself as the author is at work in the poem itself as the poet explores various ways of entering the poem. The poem appears as the unfolding of the process of the poet's transformation from its author into it is reader.

कवि आपनी हुने लिखी कविता 
अक्षर तू छुटी फर्मिंग भइती छाया वहन ठहर े 40
(Kavi aapni hune likhi kavita
Aakhar ton puthe passion parni shuru karda hai)

He gradually loosens control over the poem by exteriorizing the whole design, by disseminating the seed of the poem into the inter text of future, with all the risk and uncertainty of its journey towards nowhere:

उस्दे अंदर बी हई - 
भाविक्ष दा
हितु दा
मंदिर दा 41
(Usde andar bee hai –
Bhavikh da
Merityu da
Sandeh da)

Chandan's poetry is replete with such self-reflexive moments, questioning both the transparency of realism and the profundity of meaning. To write a poem is to take a risk - the hegemony of meaning is
bound to classify and appropriate it. But post modern poetry self-consciously leaves the gap between the event and its representation, making this gap a sign in its own right. Chandan uses gaps between the words and the lines very effectively, often making them serve as the only marks of punctuation.

The poem problematizes the univalent truth of the statement, inscribed as such within the self-parodic logic and movement of the poem's process of making and unmaking itself,

The poem constructs itself as the complex process of both installing and subverting the 'meaning' of this statement; the poem becomes the very gesture of the impossible inscription of the trace which is always already erased; the poem makes 'itself' by only unmaking itself. The poem is
parodic erasure, the very visibility of the erasure of the obvious, depthlessly obvious, certainty of what it seemingly asserts:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{Gull ban gayi hai} \\
&\text{Gull ban jaani} \\
&\text{Hun gulp her turi} \\
&\text{Gull ban gayi hai}
\end{align*}
\]

It is precisely the implicit self-ironizing force of the mock-certainty of these lines which creates it as a site where the 'poem' confesses its own failure to find meaning or even the lack of it which might 'anchor' or 'centre' it as an organization of signs. The excessive repetition and 'privileging' of the signifier 'चंद' is a structural necessity which the poem parodies by progressively evacuating it of meaning, an evacuation, paradoxically, effected by an immasterable excess of meaning. The poem deliberately frustrates the reader's desire for meaning by first constantly provoking it in progressively promising meaning till the very last line:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{चंद घट तारी ठी} \\
&\text{(Gull ban gayi hai)}
\end{align*}
\]

The 'concluding' line of the mock-argument which literally asserts that the thing, the meaning has eventually been clinched, coincides with the reader's awareness that the meaning has not happened, that the poem
has happened by refuting the literal import of the last line that the poem's own self-awareness, its implicit recognition of its failure to fulfil the promise of meaning is constitutive of its very status as a poem. One of the most commonly used words in Punjabi, it always cuts itself loose from any freed referential or conceptual determination. There is only one line in the poem which uses the exclamation mark -

जोल हेटी है
जोल हिरा है। 46

(Gull eni hai
Gull eko hai)

(The whole thing comes to this –
It is just the same thing).

However the poem is contesting this very claim in its strong propositional form, by disrupting the order of this form, by exposing the constitutive otherness of this 'same thing'. Rather than directing the incontrollable play of the sign towards a central meaning which he might 'authorise' as his poem, Chandan tries to catalogue some of the contexts of its usage into the poem as a site where the signifier restlessly moves among contradictory meanings. While making it a significant associative link among what otherwise would be just randomly listed verbs and adjectives which a student might be practicing to learn grammar, Chandan undermines its progressive towards any idea or referent by precisely overwriting its significance in/as the poem. The poem might as well be read as more like a lexical entry in a dictionary, cataloguing the various usages of 'जोल' in an interesting new order. As Rolland Barthes puts its, "...the writer can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original. His only power is to mix writings, to counter the ones with the others, in such a way as never to rest on any one of them. Did he wish to express himself, he ought at least to know that the inner 'thing' he thinks to
'translate' is itself only a ready-formed dictionary, its words only explainable through other words, and so on indefinitely 47. . . .

As a deliberate disclaimer of any originality, as "only a tissue of signs, an imitation that is lost, infinitely deferred", the poem has to be re-made by the reader each time he participates in what remains always to be played as a new intertextual game. Chandan's poem plays upon this possibility of the elusiveness of meaning in the employment of this signifier ('Gall'). The poem exploits the proliferation of meanings it gives rise to and creates a semblance of a formal structure and thematic continuity around the signifier 'Gall' without arresting its flow of signification into a calculated coherence. The irony which constantly disrupts the seeming unity of the poem is contrived by the use of a contrast between the single punctuation mark at the end of a sentence and the absence of punctuation marks in the rest of the poem. In fact the entire poem is a deconstruction of the exclaimatory finality of the tone, which is also self-parodying, of the sentence, "It is the same thing.

The poem writes itself as the very impossibility of grasping the meaning of one of the commonest words in Punjabi language. Here is a signifier which figures almost in every conversation. (One of the meaning of 'Gall' is also conversation) which names the very act of conversation, the articulation of the self is relationship to the other. Its endless repetition in the use of Punjabi language its meaningfulness and at the same time, paradoxically the evacuation of all meaning by virtue of the same excessive repetition.
The poem creates its form through, first a dichotomy between the *Gull* as a noun having an identity of a meaning, and the *Gull* as a subject of so many different verbs/predicates which de-stabilize the possibility of its stabilization into a nominal identity. However this binary structure of *Gull* as a definite noun and mobile subject determined by its varying/differing predicates is itself problematized by the undecidability inscribed into the poem as it leaves open the possibility of choosing between various
meanings, the meaningfulness and meaninglessness, the identity of the signifier as a noun and its endless mobility/provisionality as the process of becoming subject of different predicates:

Gull ban gayee hai
Gull ban jaani
Gull ho gayee hai
Gull ho rahee hai
Gull chal payee hai
Gull khul rahee hai.

(Gull ban gayee hai
Gull ban jaani
Gull ho gayee hai
Gull ho rahee hai
Gull chal payee hai
Gull khul rahee hai.)

It is the predicate which creates a different meaning of the subject in each line of the poem, each line beginning with the same word *Gull*; the predicate keeps shifting and displacing the subject, the subject of the poem (The *Gull* is also the title of the poem), the subject as the poet, the subject as the reader, the subject as the language itself. The *Gull* is being continuously resituated in the poem; its excessive presence as a signifier dissimulates its absence as a signified; the predicate in each line serves to add a supplement, which reinscribes its meaning appearing as a trace which has always already disappeared in the differential network of predicates in the preceding and following lines within the text of the poem as well as of the larger intertext of the Punjabi cultural and literary fields). That has, in the first place, produced the word *Gull* as a signifier.
The modernist concept of 'language' (another meaning of *Gull*) was one of a means, more or less stable and reliable, to reflect, represent or express non-linguistic truth or reality:

\begin{align*}
\&G\text{ull} \text{ mudd \ bahi} \text{ mii} \\
\&G\text{ull} \text{ bhop \ bahi} \text{ mii} \\
\&G\text{ull} \text{ cho \ bahi} \text{ mii} \\
\&G\text{ull} \text{ bho \ bahi} \text{ mii} \\
\&G\text{ull} \text{ bachhi} \text{ mii} \ 50 \\
\end{align*}

(Gull sullh gayee see
Gull wadh gayee see
Gull hul gayee se
Gull ruk gayee see
Gull sachchi see)

However the language as a structure of signifiers is futile search of a 'transcendental signified' cannot be trusted as a simple, stable or reliable medium of representation or even communication. Even the translation of the title, the word *Gull* itself becomes a problem, poses in fact the very problematic of translation itself. This impossibility of translating one language into another is what one encounters while redescribing something even within the same language. The gap between the signifier and the signified is ever widening since Saussure made it visible within in the sign. Chandan rewrites this continual slipping of the signified under the signifier, as Lacan puts it, into another poem titled *Gull* which carries this slippage into a semantic space which cannot be guttered up into a unified lexico grammatical field:

\begin{align*}
\&G\text{ull} \text{ bahut \ barhi} \\
\&G\text{ull} \text{ bho \ bahi} \text{ the} \ 51 \\
\end{align*}

(Gull bahut barhi
Gull tur payee hai)
The reader is left with in question what is this *Gull*, as a word or as a concept or even as a poem in its unity (thematic, structural or otherwise) which might resolve the question of its appearance as the 'different' copies of the same in all the lines of the poem. But this precisely is the question that is the poem – The raising of question in an order other than that of the definitional 'what is'.

Like Derrida's reading of the concept of the supplement in Rousseau, the often mutually contradictory meanings of this one of the most frequently used words in Punjabi language (*Gull*) ... cannot be contained with in any single, coherently organised structure of meaning. Here too, the poem deconstructs the metaphysical assertion implicit in the common usages of the word *Gull* which inevitably slips into various conflicting meanings. For example commonly used sentences: हिंदू गृह जी ठै and लेख 'च' जी शिखर ठै. (What is the substance/essence of it all?) ; (Nothing comes of merely indulging in talk). Thus *Gull* signifies both nothingness/meaninglessness and substance/essence/meaningfulness. It is also a parody of grammar which promises meaning by a linear organisation of signifiers. By reinscribing the grammar in structure which denies the expected meanings, the poem foregrounds the rhetoric inscribed within every grammatical and logical construction, which subverts the possibility of clear unequivocal meaning which founds the very validity/truth of grammatical logic (logic of grammar/this logic)...

The word *Gull* here works as a hinge which both structures the poem as a meaningful organisation of signifiers and also undoes that structure into semantic indeterminacy. On the other hand the noun *Gull* is constantly shifted in meaning as a subject by its different predicates in each line, and lacks coherence in itself; however it is only by virtue of the stability of the
noun *Gull* as a signifier that the predicates themselves attain coherence and the lines get connected to each other in the coherence of what appears to be a progressive argument.

Another poem 'Chhanna' problematizes the possibility of representing any reality or meaning through a sign embedded into a cultural intertext. What is *Chhanna* after all – it is only a utensil like any other and its difference from other 'quite similar' utensils is not as marked or significant for practical purposes as it is for textual/cultural reasons. It is, in the last analysis, only a reminder of bygone cultural practices, lost traditions. Another word would be perhaps equally effective and useful -

(Eh chchanna mathon waddha
Is witch payeeaan yaadaan
Jeon lassi with loon ghule hai
Bapu libriyan muchhan chatda
Man purani baat chatter ke dasse)

It is not an event to be represented through a text; it is a word which gets associated with a number of different (otherwise) sentences; it creates a network of signifiers, an interesting surface without any ‘deep’ cultural value. The poet is not discovering a lost practice, or an object’s uniqueness. Rather the poem itself is creating a new object by redescribing an old word in different contexts, generating new significance with a new text, making a set of new sentences from the word *Chhanna*, hence making
a new (poetic) truth called *Chhanna* rather than recovering, re-presenting ‘the’ given, only historical truth called *Chhanna*. It is not the true reflection of a reality which was out there, but a new performance where *Chhanna* becomes another simulacrum rather than a sign of faith in the once-existing referent. There is no nostalgia, only the acknowledgement of its poetic usefulness as a device, as a textual tool to facilitate a redescription of ourselves. Its ‘natural purity’ and historical particularity are de-emphasized through its re-contextualization in the contemporary culture:

(Kornnis utte rakhya chhanna challi janda
Aisean waajan kadhda, lagda jikkan-)

Its textualization into a poem demystifies its original irreducible value, A poem is only one of the many interesting things we can do with our memories. Even while it is emptied of all utilitarian value, the *Chhanna* is still full, inexhaustibly perhaps, of textual, poetic possibilities. It can still serve as an important symbol of, and object for, desire:

(Eh bhariya
194
Eh sakhna chhanna  
Kade na bharda  
Kade naa sakhna hunda  
Kandeon uchhle deek lagavan rajj na aarounda

--- --- --- --- ---

Naa dubda naa tarda chhanna)

Ironically, the more it loses in utilitarian value, the richer it becomes in textual value. Its textual richness, paradoxically, owes itself to that loss; there is no lamenting of the loss, differentiating it from a Modernist nostalgia or search. This poem could not be written when it was just another ordinary object, taken for granted like everything else. It must be freed from its pragmatic trappings to make it useable as a poetic sign. To acquire the full vibrancy of a simulacrum, Chhanna must lose all connection with its referent, including even its absence. It establishes another connection with new signifiers and creates a new network of signs, the streaming surface of simulacra cut off from all depth, neither floating nor sinking in the continually changing flow of meanings:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Chhanna} \\
\text{Janda} \\
\text{Tarda} \\
\text{Chhanna} \\
\text{Chhanna} \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Dubda} \\
\text{Janda} \\
\text{Tarda} \\
\text{Janda} \\
\text{Dubda} \\
\text{Janda} \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Chhanna} \\
\text{Tarda} \\
\text{Janda} \\
\text{Chhanna} \\
\text{Dubda} \\
\text{Janda} \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Chhanna} \\
\text{Dubda} \\
\text{Tarda} \\
\text{Chhanna} \\
\end{array}
\]

(Dubda janda chhanna tarda janda lagda

Lagda tarda janda chhanna dubda janda

Na dubda na tarda chhanna)

\textit{Chhanna} is relevant less as a symbol of nostalgia for the loss of Punjabi culture than as a new textual possibility. It is not a question of missing the absence of an essentially real Chhanna but retextualizing the
always already reproduced cultural text we had named Chhanna .....It is not very markedly different from Baatti or Katora but it can signify a much larger cultural memory than other words denoting similar experiences or objects. As Baudrillard says, “Today it is quotidian reality in its entirety – political, social, historical and economic – that from now on incorporates the simulatory dimension of hyperrealism. We live everywhere already in an esthetic hallucination of reality. The old slogan, ‘truth is stranger than fiction’, that still corresponded to the surrealist phase of this estheticization of life, is obsolete. There is no more fiction that life could possibly confront, even victoriously – it is reality itself that disappears utterly in the game of reality – radical disenchantment, the cool and cybernetic phase following the hot stage of fantasy.”

In the poem ‘घुंग्रू’ (Ghungroo) the poetic voice is not confident of having successfully rendered the experience (of somebody smiling in his thoughts, reminding him of the enchanting sounds of Ghungroo) into words. Or perhaps he is rather too confident of having successfully done it – he is only articulating the inherent inadequacy of articulating a lived moment. The experience of living, thinking, relating to the other both makes possible and is made possible through a language which must not be allowed to be mastered by the lens of a given poetics. The poet struggles to create a ‘new’ sign by making the word Ghungroo (also the title of the poem) signify the unbridgeable distance between the poem and its meaning, the impossibility of representation; the reader is asked to negotiate and re-negotiate over and over again with the poem as an experience of the unpresentable.

दिन वाखरा भूकुटी हट प्ये
वष्ण धत खेलते भूकुटी पुंटे
हट हट खेलते भूकुटी 57

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(Eh kavita parhni chhad ke
Kujh pal wajde ghunghru suno
Chhan chhhan wajde ghungru)
Is he privileging listening to the Ghungroo over the reading of the poem. Is he asserting the aesthetic superiority of music over poetry. But he might as well be saying: this poem is not to be ‘read’ in the usual way; any conventional reading will miss the point of this poem. Can you experience it in a different way, like the Chhan Chhan of Ghungroo; can you read it in its ‘difference’. The metaphoric rendering of the moment he is trying to capture must keep its distance from reading. Paradoxically, the poem must not be read; it must necessarily keep its distance from reading in order to remain a poem) which is bowed to more or less generalize its singularity:

बेहदियो दि मंजिल हँ
से जान दे में दंपती
बेहदियो दि हत्ति हे दैवी बुध
से बयिंदू जान जू हि भिंजवे

(Koi riaz kare nachchan da
Jo yaar de agge nachchna
Koi soch riha hai oh kutchh
Jo kehna yaar nu milke)

It is not another instantiation (example) of a genre; you can’t play this game like an expert; you will know the game, its rules only while playing it; moreover you cannot win it, you can only play it. So leaving aside the act of reading this poem, rather listen to the music of Ghungroo. There is nothing else to read, to interpret, in this poem (and by implication, in any text) but rather an assemblage of sounds. Then why not attend to the
more rhythmic, even more significant, sound (*Chhan Chhan*) of *Ghungroo*:

```
किन्नर छिर बेही भ्रमरचा है  
मेहरा सपट वेंकतु गुहार       
खिल विलिय भुजुती बङ वे   
कुछ भल गंगाते गुहार हटे     
बंट बंट गंगाते गुहार 59
```
(Khialaan witch koi muskanda hai
Mainu wajjan ghungroo
Eh kavita parhni chhad ke
Kujh pal wajde ghungroo suno
Chhan chhan wajde ghungroo)

You cannot substitute this poem with your own meaning. Perhaps this performance is more poetic than poetry. Poetry aspires to the condition of singularity, but it knows itself to be context-dependent; it is bound to be eventually literalized into/by the tradition of reading. It cannot rid itself entirely of the trace of generality. The sound of *Ghungroo* carries a better semblance of ‘pure’ aesthetic appeal; even when torn away from the context it still preserves its melody.

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केला शेषा टेंट वे बिहार  
तू ही जगिया तो शेषा गुहार 60
```
(Vajda vajda tut ke digiya
taan vi hatiya na vajno ghungroo)

Even when broken into pieces when spread across an intertextual syntagm, its music does not fade; because there is no ‘real’ *Ghungroo* which is placed beyond the poem – it is a signifier which will be acquiring
new meanings unintended by the poet, uninscribed in the poem – rather the
more it breaks away from its ‘real’, ‘intended’ or original meaning, the
more fully it will participate into the web of intertextuality.

_Ghungroo_ does have a referent but seeking the real experience of
listening to the sound of _Ghungroo_, as the poet appears to be exhorting the
reader to is irrelevant to the reading of the poem. Paradoxically, it is also
by refusing to take the poet’s exhortation seriously that _Ghungroo_ acquires
the multivalent potential of a sign which deconstructs the obvious binary
opposition between the ‘real’ experience of the _Ghungroo_ and the verbal
construct, the poem, built around it.

The irony is that we can only end up reading the ‘real’, the ‘real’
will ever evade us, the eternal resonance of the ‘real’ (_Ghungroo_) can only
be desired but not guaranteed. We cannot disengage the real from its
representation. Try though we may, the real is only an experience of the
reading of signs; it will always be reduced to, and by, the sign. You cannot
quit the poem and embrace the real. The last line, an ironical assertion of
the survival of the real, is after all the defiance of the sign, the completion
of the act of reading, against the possibility, a merely verbal assertion, of
the singular, lasting moment of the real.

Its self-referencivity, its continuous self-questioning as a poem, is
pitted against the reality of a _Ghungroo_. The reader is exhorted to quit
reading the poem and experience the real moment while the poem seduces
him into enjoying the Ghungroo like music of its own rhythm. However
the conflict between the poem as a fake experience and _Chhan Chhan
Vajda Ghungroo_ as a real one never acquires the tension of a binary
opposition because the reader is aware that the _Ghungroo_ is as
insubstantial a trace of a presence that never was as all the other signs in
the poem. There is no romantic nostalgia or feeling of the loss of a really present moment.

The poem is also an attempt to renew the act of writing/reading poetry which is now evermore in the danger of immediate appropriation. To keep it from becoming another example of “literature of exhaustion.” The act of reading must be interrupted in some important way to create more space for finding a way into, rather across, poem. Can we create another site from where the poem can be experienced?

Chandan’s poem “33^1” tries to pose and come to terms with the problem of nothingness, where both existentialism and its deconstruction leave us alone struggling with the alienation from a possible or pre-given authentic self with an inalienable alienation which has no source or solution. Nevertheless, the poet here eschews both the existentialist dread/despair and the postmodern celebration of nothingness. He has his own singular way of seeing (into) this perennial abyssal problem, of how ‘desire’ seeks to fill this with its endless creativity of signifiers.
There is no crossing or filling of this bottomless pit, 'the lack' into which we are lost, the irreducible gap between the sign and the referent. This black hole has consumed countless days and nights, stars and moons, and an entire history of human endeavour to fill it, to light it up. However for Chandan, "...it is neither a lack nor an alienation" which can be philosophically or psychoanalytically dealt with. So there is no
existentialist 'authentic self' to go back to, to full back upon, to be created through the givenness of freedom of choice. Whatever you think or do about it, this "inalienable alienation" cannot be overcome:

This is a singular kind of 'alienation' which is reducible neither to Lacanian 'lack' nor to existentialist alienation. "This abiding 'alienation' ... appears, like 'lack', to be constitutive. But it is neither a lack nor an alienation; it lacks nothing that precedes or follows it, it alienates no 'pseity' no property, and no self that has ever been able to represent its watchful eye. Although this injunction issues a summons, lastingly..., nothing else 'is there' ever to watch over its past or future. This structure of alienation without alienation, this inalienable alienation, is not only the origin of our responsibility, it also structures the peculiarity ... and property of language". The poet would rather do poetic-thinking to keep continually 'filling' the void than indulge in merely analysing or seeking final answers to this inalienable alienation.
Even the date of writing this, given at the end of the poem, becomes a very significant part of the irreducible singularity of one particular moment of dealing with the difficulty of this 'तूँ' (pit). A sincere 'desire' to deal with the pit gather up as a 'subject', an 'I', on 20th August, 1998 ("20.8.98") as only one of the poet's responses to how and where he finds himself situated. It is neither readable as his 'general' view of 'this' problem, nor interpretable as a particular poetic view of a general, universal problem. "So the date is the mark of a singularity, of a temporal and spatial "this here". And it is with the date that one wants to keep the trace of this irreplaceable uniqueness." 65 This date, "20.8.98", marking the poem is both the 'substance', another effort to rethink the possibility of 'substantiality' he puts into the 'तूँ', the abyss, and the memory of the trace of the inevitable but singular loss of that one more 'substance'. This date is bound to become date, or also "How do we interpret the history of an example that allows the re-inscription of the structure of a universal law upon the body of an irreplaceable singularity in order to render it thus remarkable?" 66 However, Chandan tries to make the experience of a date as singular as possible, unreadable in its very readability. Another poem,
another date ("22.11.98") poses the problem of readability and translatability as the very problematic of the poetic itself:

**Sihai ki bidhi**

(Sirsaahee kajjal wajan

Bol

Goond kikar kaa

Ik ratti lajward

Door ka kajjal deh wee ghasni rawaa rakhni

Guru Ramdas jeeo kya dastkhat ka nakal that ha tis ka nakal

Nakal ka Nakal

Eh vidhi London sheher waali british library wich paye aad granth di 1727 ch tiyaar hoeb de aakhir ch darj hai.)

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The poem unfolds as a seemingly parodic but actually serious consideration of the possibility of some procedure of making a poem. The poem 'imitates' a "procedure of making ink" which the poet found written in an older manuscript which he happened to read. The poem created a unique form of a pastiche of serious parody, referentiality and self-reflexivity. It is not readable in terms of any received aesthetic of the postmodernist pastiche. However it too will open itself to some generality, the effacement marking every reading. "A date cannot be secret, can it? Once it is read, whether it makes reference to the calendar or not, it is immediately repeated and, consequently in this iterability that makes it readable, it losses the singularity that it keeps. It loses what it wants to keep. If burns what it wants to save." 68

However, here is a singular "procedure of making a poem" which constitutes the poem itself, the always unreadable, irreducible poem as such. What redeems it from dissolving into the postmodernist 'purity' of a simulacra, is its own, self-referential substance of 'The unknown' of which it knows itself to be a thrice-removed copy, and which is reducible neither to existential or deconstructive 'nothing' nor to a metaphysical 'presence'.

---

Kavita ki bidhi
(1 kajalrekh
1 bol
2 kikar de phool
Ik ratti mandhanga
Ik ratti birharra amrit mtti ka bhanda shabad ki lakri door ka
kajal nisdin simmrai rwalal rakhni
Naamaaloom ke dastkhat ka nakal that ha tis ka nakal nakal
ka nakal 1998)
However there is no place for nostalgia or nihilism in Chandan's poetic vision. His search for an affirmative gesture does not end up in a negative theology, a charge which is often leveled against postmodernism. As Derrida says, "What is unnamable here is not some ineffable being that cannot be approached by a name; like God, for example. What is unnamable is the play that brings about the nominal effects, the relatively unitary or atomic structures we call names, or claims of substitutions for names. In these, for example, the nominal effect of "differance" is itself involved, carried off, and reinscribed, just as the false beginning or end of a game is still part of the game, a function of the system". This problematization of translation is also constitutive of his poem मं-बोली (ma-boli):

मं बोली विच तिलके-नीलं अक्रं लापट।
मं बोली विच भगवत दुलि दे दहलीं दापट।
सब बुख निमले निमले मं बोली ठी।  71

(Man boli with mirze heeran alakh jagawan
Man boli wich shabad guraan de pariyaan gawan
Sabh kujh sirje binse maan boli hi.)

Neither the subject nor the 'meaning' can find any space other than the ma-boli (mother-tongue) to create itself. The words in the mother-tongue are 'grounded' in a space which extends beyond their referential, pragmatic or aesthetic function. Things intermixed with their names in the mother-tongue acquire a life of their own energized with a verbal excess.
into which they unfold their exteriority, their 'secrets' which otherwise lie unexplored and concealed from their pragmatic existence:

''/* SB3F TO UUB t off d<£ fftPH1' ddcj flu1" ^ fere- SB t fes £ dte1 tel tlUB Btt ooft '§5' eft £?
ferh§ fes urf urt oidB1 - ter sf stt t VU Ac/1 t tetBT HBBW ttt ter tt /3P #f SUB # few ter
bub (Daddu warga shabad pakar ke kaaboo keeta Hun esnu moodhian karke Pairan de wich kil thok ke Dhid noon cheera dena Eh dekhan layee. Andar kee kujh ki hai? Phir copy de wich likhna Eh keon nit grhain grhain karda Nerhion ladga kohja

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Dooron sohja
Turda vee taan maar tapoosee urhda

Eh shabad jo kabboo aayaa
Eh daddoo nahin hai
Par daddoo nahin hai
Isda matlab koi ik hove taan dassan
Daddoo chchaparh de witch
Eh shabad mere sir de andar rehnda)

His seemingly parochial assertion of the superiority of *ma-boli* is in fact a rejection of modernist search for a universal language which could reveal to us the truth about the 'self' and the world. This search for universal language has also been unsurprisingly coinciding with the increasing spread of English as the international language. Chandan's poetry is also a struggle to break out of this hold of the grammar of truth:

(Vienkaran taan honn da naksha
Is boli wich dase dishawanan mil ke
Sidha rasta bhalaan is nakshe ton bahar)

The structurelist metanarrative had claimed to have discovered the langue, the system, underpinning the paroles which were actually being performed as local little narratives. Chandan asserts the performative, experiential character of his own language above the grammarian's reduction of language into constative structures:

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This affirmation of the mother-tongue is neither contingent upon any assumption of 'presence' nor a consequence of a nostalgic remembrance. As Derrida says, "This will be no unique name, not even the name of being. It must be conceived without nostalgia; that is, it must be conceived outside the myth of the purely maternal or paternal language belonging to the lost fatherland of thought. On the contrary, we must affirm it - in the sense that Nietzsche brings affirmation into play - with a certain laughter and with a certain dance."
References

3. *Ibid*, p.50
4. *Ibid*
5. *Ibid*
9. *Ibid*
10. *Ibid*
11. *Ibid*
12. *Ibid*
13. *Ibid*
17. *Ibid*, pp. 40-41
18. *Ibid*, p. 40
19. *Ibid*
20. *Ibid*
21. *Ibid*
22. Ibid
23. Ibid, Gurhti, p. 70
24. Ibid
25. Rolland Barthes, op.cit., p. 57
26. Ibid, p. 54
27. Amarjit Chandan, Gurhti, p. 70
28. Ibid
29. Ibid
31. Ibid
32. Ibid
33. Amarjit Chandan, Beejak, Navyug Publisher, New Delhi, 1996, p. 63
34. Ibid
35. Ibid
36. Ibid
37. Ibid
38. Rolland Barthes, op.cit., p. 22
39. Ibid, p.32
40. Amarjit Chandan, Beejak, Navyug, Delhi, 1996, p. 63
41. Ibid
42. Amarjit Chandan, Chhanna, Navyug Publisher, New Delhi, 1998, p. 48
43. Amarjit Chandan, Gurhti, p. 82
44. Ibid
45. Ibid
46. Ibid

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48. Amarjit Chandan, *Gurhti*, p. 82
49. Ibid
50. Ibid
51. Ibid
52. Amarjit Chandan, *Chhanna*, p. 21
53. Ibid
54. Ibid, p. 22
55. Ibid
57. Amarjit Chandan, *Gurhti*, p. 19
58. Ibid
59. Ibid
60. Ibid
61. Ibid, p. 40
63. Amarjit Chandan, *Gurhti*, p. 40
64. Ibid
66. Mark Robson, *op.cit.*, p. 177
67. Amarjit Chandan, *Gurhti*, p. 53
69. Amarjit Chandan, *Gurhti*, p. 53

71. Amarjit Chandan, *Jarhan*, p.56


73. *Ibid*, Chhanna, p.40

74. *Ibid*

75. *Ibid*, pp. 239-240