

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

<https://llrjournal.com/index.php/11>

**GRAMMATICAL AND CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR IN
IDEATIONAL, INTERPERSONAL, AND TEXTUAL MEANING-
MAKING: A CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER SYSTEMIC
FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE FIRST TEN CHAPTERS OF
KHALIL GIBRAN'S 'THE PROPHET'**



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Abstract

*The present study examines the construction of ideational, interpersonal, and textual meaning in the first ten chapters of *The Prophet* (1923) by Khalil Gibran in terms of the Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) of Halliday. In non-specialist literary criticism on Gibran, the term grammatical metaphor has been applied to any figurative and/or metaphorical language in Gibran's prose, but in this study the term is used in the technical sense by Halliday, namely in those contexts where a process or quality is re-coded, in nominalizing, as a noun (a real shift of grammatical class, as evidenced by congruent paraphrase). Like Lakoff and Johnson (1980), figurative expressions that map an abstract target domain (love, joy, the soul) onto a concrete source domain (a journey, a vessel, a bird) using ordinary lexical choice (no change in grammatical class) are classified as conceptual (lexical) metaphor. Interpersonal meaning is examined by means of mood and modality instead of "metaphor" and textural meaning is examined by means of Theme-Rheme structure and cohesion, instead of "textual metaphor. It is found that genuine grammatical metaphor occurs comparatively infrequently and is found only in a few nominalised abstractions (e.g., "the season of giving", "the hour of separation", "my eagerness") and conceptual metaphor is pervasive, carrying the bulk of the text's ideational and emotional content. Interpersonal meaning develops through a recurring pattern of grant-and-restrict modality and hedged imperatives, whereas the textual meaning is created when Theme is marked, parallelism is used, and there is also a contrastive cohesion that is not based on a systematic grammatical-class shift. The study maintains that this difference, not the undifferentiated concept of 'grammatical metaphor', better explains Gibran's prose, which has an aphoristic, sermon-like style.*

Keywords: Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), Grammatical Metaphor, Conceptual Metaphor, Ideational Meaning, Interpersonal Meaning, Textual Meaning, Khalil Gibran, *The Prophet*

Introduction

Khalil Gibran (1883-1931) was a Lebanese-American poet, philosopher and artist whose works have inspired generations of people around the world. He was born in Lebanon and as a young immigrant to the USA, his writing took on a unique style of spirituality, poetry and philosophical reflection. Published in 1923 the book *The Prophet* is one of the most read books of the 20th century, with over 25 translations.

The book is divided into twenty-eight prose-poems, which are reflections given by the prophet Almustafa to the inhabitants of Orphalese before he leaves for his home country on a quest to find his beloved wife, offering wisdom on love, marriage, work, joy and sorrow, houses, clothing and death.

Gibran is a very figurative writer – the abstract emotions of love, joy, sorrow and the soul are constantly expressed in concrete, embodied, or natural images. It is a fine linguistic question, rather than a literary-critical one, to ask which resources of the lexicogrammar it is that it is responsible for? There are two different linguistic mechanisms here—both of which can be easily confused if not separated clearly.

Grammatical metaphor, in the sense of Systemic Functional Grammar, is the attribution of a meaning to a grammatical class of word, such as typically the nominalization of a process (e.g., "they departed" to "their departure") which "reconstrues" a happening as a thing (Halliday, 1994; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Secondly, conceptual (lexical) metaphor, in the sense of Lakoff and Johnson (1980), is the structuring of an abstract target domain in terms of a concrete source domain (e.g., LOVE IS A JOURNEY) which is realized in terms of ordinary lexical choice ("crowns you," "joy flew over the sea"), but not accompanied by any change of grammatical class. But the vast majority of Gibran's famous images (and, indeed, most of his literary commentary) are not of the first type, and a blanket term of "grammatical metaphor," as is often used in non-specialist literary criticism, adds little to aid comprehension of the text at hand. In this study the distinction is consistently applied, chapter by chapter, throughout the first ten chapters of *The Prophet*, and further separates interpersonal meaning making from the ideational system of metaphor as its own category, as mood, modality, Theme and cohesion are meaning resources in their own right and not varieties of "metaphor".

2. Research Objectives

1. To identify and classify genuine instances of grammatical (experiential) metaphor in the first ten chapters of *The Prophet*, using the congruent/incongruent realization test.
2. To identify and classify instances of conceptual (lexical) metaphor, using source-target domain mapping, and to distinguish these systematically from grammatical metaphor.
3. To analyze interpersonal meaning through mood and modality choices, and textual meaning through Theme-Rheme structure and cohesion, without conflating either with metaphor.
4. To examine how the distribution of these four resources — grammatical metaphor, conceptual metaphor, interpersonal meaning, and textual meaning — contributes to the philosophical and rhetorical character of Gibran's prose, chapter by chapter.

3. Research Questions

RQ1. What patterns of genuine grammatical (experiential) metaphor occur in the first ten chapters of *The Prophet*, and how do they compare, in frequency and function, to instances of conceptual (lexical) metaphor?

RQ2. How are interpersonal meanings (mood and modality) grammatically realized across the ten chapters, and what stance toward the reader do they construct?

RQ3. How does Theme-Rheme organization and cohesion contribute to the textual coherence of Gibran's philosophical argument across the ten chapters?

4. Literature Review

Kristiani et al. (2018) examined all twenty-eight chapters of *The Prophet* with the help of transitivity system developed by Halliday to classify the clauses into material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioral, and existential processes, as well as coded circumstances of extent, location, manner, and cause. They observed that mental processes are the second most salient in their observations, and material processes the third, and that the most frequent recurring circumstance is one of location, a framing of abstract ideational content that is central to Gibran's use of location and time. Their study, however, focuses only on ideational metafunction, which is manifested in transitivity, and does not pay attention to interpersonal and textual meaning or grammatical metaphor.

Nandakumar and Subash (2020) explored the metaphysical aspect of the Gibran's imagery, and they discovered a commonality between Gibran's image of a 'boundless drop' and 'boundless ocean' of an individual dissolving into a larger whole, and compared Gibran's imagery with that of mystic Ramakrishna and John Donne. They analyze them in thematic and comparative not linguistic terms and they do not refer any particular grammatical system, systemic or otherwise.

They utilized Critical Discourse Analysis to uncover the universal themes of the text, namely 'love', 'marriage' and 'human goodness', claiming that these themes explain the book's cross-cultural popularity and the great amount of translation it has received over time (Al-Khazraji et al. 2013). Their study, like Nandakumar and Subash's, does not have a lexicogrammatical focus.

All three of the above studies of *The Prophet* have specifically demonstrated (a) that Gibran's ideational content can be quantitatively profiled at the level of process type, (b) it is possible to read his imagery in a metaphysical register, and (c) that his themes can be read discursively as expressions of universal humanism. None of the three provides a systemic-functional analysis of all three metafunctions, and none distinguishes Halliday's technical term, that of grammatical metaphor, from the much more common one of conceptual/lexical metaphor, which is in fact the umbrella for much of Gibran's imagery. This is what the current study seeks to fill.

The wider context for the use of the method in the present study is the work of Halliday (1971) in which he applied the Systemic Functional Grammar to literary style, in his analysis of transitivity patterns in *The Inheritors* by William Golding. This strategy has now been applied to a variety of literary genres (Leech & Short, 2007; Simpson, 2004), and close reading informed by stylistic analysis is now a well practised way of linking the grammatical choices to the literary effects of a text, but it has not often been applied to Gibran's prose-poetry in particular.

In the confines of the SFG, there has been a lot of work done to clarify the idea of grammatical metaphor. Taverniers (2006) explicitly asserts that grammatical metaphor and lexical (conceptual) metaphor are two distinct ways of looking at semantic variation, in the latter of which mapping of domains is the key constraint, while in the former the shift in grammatical classes is the key constraint, and warns against the ambiguity that often leads to the view that grammatical metaphor is equivalent to any figurative language or that the term "grammatical metaphor" is used as a generic label for figurative language. This caution is directly pertinent to the present study, because as shown in Section 8, significant numbers of the figurative expressions in Gibran's prose commonly found in newspapers which may be superficially called "grammatical metaphor" really fall under the headings of conceptual metaphor on Taverniers's (2006) and Halliday's (1994) classification.

In turn, conceptual metaphor theory has been applied to literary and poetic discourse in ways that have gone significantly beyond the scope of cognitive-linguistics outlined by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). Semino (2008) shows that the selection of a source domain of literary texts is by no means random, but is grouped around the central thematic concerns of the text and systematically contributes to its meaning and affective tone. Similarly, in his book, Kövecses (2010) demonstrates that culturally shared source domains, many of which are found in Gibran's imagery (such as journeys, vessels, and sovereignty), provide a means by which abstract, culturally variable target concepts are understood through embodied, cross-culturally recognisable experience. This literature confirms that Gibran's conceptual metaphors are not just incidental ornament; rather they are the main means of his abstract philosophical statements reaching out to the reader in emotional and cross-culturally accessible ways, which is what is further argued in Section 9.

5. Research Gap

Existing scholarship on *The Prophet* has examined transitivity (ideational meaning only) within an SFG framework, and separately has discussed figurative imagery thematically, without grammatical analysis. No prior study of this text has (a) examined all three Hallidayan metafunctions together, or (b) applied a grammatically motivated distinction between genuine grammatical metaphor and conceptual/lexical metaphor. This study addresses both gaps across the first ten chapters, applying Halliday's congruent-paraphrase test rigorously so that the label "grammatical metaphor" is reserved for genuine shifts in grammatical class rather than figurative language in general.

6. Theoretical Framework

6.1 The Three Metafunctions

Michael Alexander Kirkwood Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar treats language as a system of meaningful choices rather than a fixed set of rules, with choices shaped by communicative context and speaker intention (Halliday, 1978). Every clause simultaneously realizes three kinds of meaning: ideational meaning, which represents experience through the transitivity system (process types: material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioral, existential); interpersonal meaning, which negotiates social relations and stance through mood (declarative, interrogative, imperative) and modality (probability, obligation, usuality); and textual meaning, which organizes the clause and text as a coherent message through Theme-Rheme structure (Theme being the point of departure for the clause) and cohesion (reference,

ellipsis, conjunction, lexical cohesion, and parallelism; Halliday & Hasan, 1976; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). For accessible general introductions to the SFG model applied throughout this study, see also Eggins (2004), Thompson (2014), and Martin and Rose (2007).

6.2 Grammatical Metaphor (Experiential)

Grammatical metaphor occurs when a meaning that can be expressed congruently — in its most typical grammatical form — is instead expressed incongruently (Halliday, 1994). Its most common realization is nominalization, in which a process (congruently a verb) or a quality (congruently an adjective) is re-coded as a noun, allowing it to function as a countable, modifiable participant that can enter into relations of identity or possession. For example, the congruent clause "people gather to part" can be reconstructed incongruently as "the day of parting be the day of gathering": the processes "part" and "gather" are re-coded as the nouns "parting" and "gathering," which can then be equated through a relational clause ("X be Y") in a way the congruent verbal form cannot support. The analytic test applied throughout this study is the congruent-paraphrase test: an expression counts as grammatical metaphor only if a congruent paraphrase can be reconstructed and shown to differ from the original in grammatical class.

6.3 Conceptual (Lexical) Metaphor

Where grammatical metaphor concerns a shift of grammatical class, Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) conceptual metaphor theory concerns a shift of domain: an abstract target concept (LOVE, JOY, THE SOUL, LIFE) is understood and talked about through the vocabulary of a concrete source domain (a JOURNEY, a VESSEL, a BIRD, FIRE, a PLANT), without any accompanying change of grammatical class. "His joy flew far over the sea" does not nominalize any process; it maps the target domain JOY onto the source domain of a FLYING CREATURE using an ordinary finite verb ("flew"). This is overwhelmingly the more frequent mechanism in Gibran's imagery, and it is treated here as analytically distinct from grammatical metaphor, though both are ideational resources.

6.4 Interpersonal and Textual Meaning

Interpersonal and textual meaning are analyzed in this study as meaning-making resources in their own right, not as further categories of "metaphor." Interpersonal meaning is examined through mood choices (imperative, interrogative, declarative) and modality (modal verbs and adjuncts expressing permission, obligation, or probability), following Halliday (1994). Textual meaning is examined through marked and unmarked Theme, and through cohesive devices including repetition, parallelism, and conjunctive/contrastive linking, following Halliday and Hasan (1976) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). (Halliday's narrower technical sense of "interpersonal grammatical metaphor" — the metaphorical realization of modality, as when "I think X" stands in for the more congruent "probably X" — is a distinct phenomenon from ordinary mood and modality choice, and is noted separately where it occurs in the data; most of the interpersonal patterns identified below are direct realizations of mood and modality rather than metaphors of them.)

7. Methodology

This is a qualitative content analysis of the first ten chapters of *The Prophet*, combining close reading with a systematic identification procedure applied uniformly across chapters.

7.1 Identification Procedure

Each chapter was read clause by clause for: (i) potential grammatical metaphor, tested by constructing a congruent paraphrase and checking whether the original differs from it in grammatical class; (ii) potential conceptual metaphor, tested by identifying an abstract target domain described through vocabulary conventionally associated with a distinct concrete

source domain, following Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) source-target mapping procedure; (iii) mood and modality choices bearing interpersonal meaning; and (iv) Theme position and cohesive ties bearing textual meaning.

7.2 Coding and Transparency

Each identified instance was tagged under one of four categories — grammatical metaphor, conceptual metaphor, interpersonal meaning, textual meaning — with the source clause and, for grammatical metaphor, its reconstructed congruent form. Every candidate instance was tested against the congruent-paraphrase criterion (Section 6.2) before being assigned to the grammatical-metaphor category; instances that did not pass this test but exhibited a clear source-target domain mapping were assigned instead to the conceptual-metaphor category. Rather than being reported only as a summary count, the complete instance-level record for all ten chapters is presented in full in Section 8 below, chapter by chapter, with every identified instance quoted alongside its source chapter and assigned category; this chapter-by-chapter presentation constitutes the study's coding table.

7.3 Scope and Limitations

The analysis is confined to the first ten of The Prophet's twenty-eight chapters; findings describe this sub-corpus and are not claimed to generalize to the full text without further study. As with any single-analyst qualitative coding, some interpretive judgment is unavoidable; this is mitigated, but not eliminated, by consistent application of the congruent-paraphrase and source-target mapping tests, and a second coder is recommended for future work (see Section 10).

8. Findings and Analysis

This section presents the reclassified findings chapter by chapter. For each chapter, genuine grammatical metaphor is reported first (noted as absent where the congruent-paraphrase test did not identify any clear instance), followed by conceptual metaphor, interpersonal meaning, and textual meaning.

8.1 Chapter 1: The Coming of the Ship

Grammatical (Experiential) Metaphor

- "If this is my day of harvest, in what fields have I sowed the seed?" — Congruent form: if I harvest today, what did I sow, and where? "Harvest" nominalizes the process "to harvest," compressing a lifetime's cycle into a single nominal group placed in a relational clause.
- "My eagerness with sails full set awaits the wind" — Congruent form: I eagerly await the wind, my sails full set. "Eagerness" nominalizes the adjective "eager," allowing the quality to function as a grammatical participant that can itself "await."
- "Deep is your longing for the land of your memories" — Congruent form: you long deeply for the land of your memories. "Longing" nominalizes "long for," letting the process be modified by "deep" as though it were a measurable entity.
- "Shall the day of parting be the day of gathering?" — Congruent form: when people part, will they later gather? "Parting" and "gathering" are nominalized so they can be equated in a relational clause, turning a narrated sequence into a stated identity.
- "Love knows not its own depth until the hour of separation" — Congruent form: people do not know how deeply they love until they separate. "Separation" nominalizes "separate," allowing "hour" to modify it as a measurable event.

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

Conceptual (Lexical) Metaphor

- JOY IS A BIRD/FLYING ENTITY: "His joy flew far over the sea" maps the abstract target JOY onto a winged, unbounded creature, conveying limitless happiness without any nominalization.
- THE SPIRIT IS A FRAGILE, DIVISIBLE BODY: "A wound in the spirit" and "too many fragments of the spirit have I scattered in these streets" map SPIRIT onto a woundable, breakable physical body.
- THE SEA IS A CALLING MOTHER: "The sea that calls all things unto her" and "you, vast sea, sleeping mother" personify the sea as a maternal, summoning force.
- STAYING IS FREEZING: "To stay... is to freeze and crystallize and be bound in a mould" maps stasis onto physical solidification.
- THE HEART IS A TREE / A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT: "Shall my heart become a tree heavy-laden with fruit" and "Am I a harp that the hand of the mighty may touch me" map the self onto natural growth and onto an instrument awaiting a divine player.
- LIFE'S PURPOSE IS A LANTERN LIT BY A GUARDIAN: "Empty and dark shall I raise my lantern, and the guardian of the night shall fill it with oil" maps mission and guidance onto light imagery.

Interpersonal Meaning (Mood and Modality)

- Rhetorical interrogatives position the reader as co-reflector rather than passive recipient: "How shall I go in peace and without sorrow?"; "Am I a harp... or a flute..."
- Declarative statements of emotional cost build solidarity with the reader rather than commanding: "I cannot withdraw from them without a burden and an ache."
- Direct address personifies and engages an addressee beyond the human audience: "And you, vast sea, sleeping mother."
- An indirect, mitigated request closes the chapter's communal exchange: "We ask ere you leave us, that you speak to us," softening what could be a direct imperative into a polite appeal.

Textual Meaning (Theme-Rheme and Cohesion)

- Marked Theme fronts a non-subject element for emphasis: "Too many fragments of the spirit have I scattered in these streets" places the object before the subject-verb, foregrounding the scattered spirit as the clause's point of departure.
- Repeated interrogative frames ("Shall...?", "And shall...?", "Am I...?") create textual rhythm and organize the chapter's reflective movement.
- The antithetical pairing "day of parting"/"day of gathering" functions as a cohesive contrastive tie that structures the chapter's central paradox.
- Clause repetition ("you have walked among us," "our dearly beloved") reinforces cohesion across the community's farewell address.

8.2 Chapter 2: On Love

Grammatical (Experiential) Metaphor

- No instance in this chapter passed the congruent-paraphrase test; Gibran's treatment of love in this chapter is carried almost entirely by conceptual metaphor rather than nominalization.

Conceptual (Lexical) Metaphor

- LOVE IS A SOVEREIGN/SACRIFICIAL FORCE: "For even as love crowns you so shall he crucify you... He assigns you to his sacred fire, that you may become sacred bread for God's sacred feast" personifies love as a ruler who simultaneously elevates and demands suffering.

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Print ISSN: 3006-5887

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- LOVE IS AN AGRICULTURAL PURIFIER: "He sifts you to free you from your husks" and "He kneads you until you are pliant" map love's transformative effect onto processes of threshing and kneading.
- THE SELF IS A WINGED HEART: "To wake at dawn with a winged heart" maps renewed vitality onto flight.
- LOVE IS AN AUTONOMOUS GIVER: "Love gives naught but itself and takes not but from itself" personifies love as self-sufficient and independent of external influence.

Interpersonal Meaning (Mood and Modality)

- Concessive modality softens an acknowledgment of hardship: "Though his ways are hard and steep," tempering the warning that follows.
- A direct imperative of trust is issued without hedging: "When he speaks to you believe in him," reflecting the didactic register of the chapter.
- Bounded permission-modality: "It is better for you that you cover your nakedness" indirectly cautions the reader rather than commanding outright.
- A recast declarative reframes selfhood in relation to the divine: "Say not, 'God is in my heart,' but rather, 'I am in the heart of God,'" restructuring agency between speaker and addressee.

Textual Meaning (Theme-Rheme and Cohesion)

- A cause-effect parallel structure links two opposed outcomes: "For even as love crowns you... so shall he crucify you," holding both poles of love's effect in a single balanced clause.
- Sequential conjunction organizes the stages of love's transformative process: "And then he assigns you to his sacred fire... that you may become sacred bread," moving the reader from process to outcome.
- A shift from reported speech to narrative stillness marks a textual boundary: "And there fell a stillness upon them," cohesively closing the dialogic exchange.

8.3 Chapter 3: On Marriage

Grammatical (Experiential) Metaphor

- No instance in this chapter passed the congruent-paraphrase test; the chapter's central claims about marriage are carried by conceptual metaphor.

Conceptual (Lexical) Metaphor

- MARRIAGE IS A MOVING SEA BETWEEN SHORES: "Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls" maps the marital bond onto a dynamic body of water connecting, but not merging, two shores.
- PARTNERS ARE LUTE STRINGS / TEMPLE PILLARS / DISTINCT TREES: "Even as the strings of a lute are alone though they quiver with the same music," "the pillars of the temple stand apart," and "the oak tree and the cypress grow not in each other's shadow" each map the couple onto physically separate but jointly functioning or coexisting objects.
- DEATH IS A WINGED SCATTERING FORCE: "When the white wings of death scatter your days" personifies death as an agent with wings that disperses time.

Interpersonal Meaning (Mood and Modality)

- A repeated imperative-plus-negative-imperative pattern grants and restrains in the same breath: "Love one another, but make not a bond of love... Fill each other's cup but drink not from one cup... Give your hearts, but not into each other's keeping." Each positive instruction is immediately hedged, softening the imperative's inherent face-threat (cf. Brown & Levinson, 1987, on negative politeness).

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

- A declarative appeal to a higher authority limits the addressee's claim over their partner: "For only the hand of life can contain your hearts."
- A balanced directive combines togetherness and distance: "Stand together yet not too near together," enacting the chapter's central counsel through mood choice itself.

Textual Meaning (Theme-Rheme and Cohesion)

- Contrastive cohesion structures the chapter's central argument: "But let there be spaces in your togetherness" sets "spaces" against "togetherness" as a cohesive antithesis running through the chapter.
- Parallel imperatives ("sing and dance together... but let each one of you be alone") extend the same contrastive structure established above, reinforcing thematic coherence.
- The lute-strings and oak-and-cypress images (see Conceptual Metaphor, above) additionally function as textually cohesive parallel illustrations of the same underlying argument, each restating the individuality-within-unity theme in a different concrete register.

8.4 Chapter 4: On Children

Grammatical (Experiential) Metaphor

- No instance in this chapter passed the congruent-paraphrase test; the chapter's argument is carried by conceptual metaphor and by interpersonal modality rather than nominalization.

Conceptual (Lexical) Metaphor

- CHILDREN ARE LIVING ARROWS SHOT FROM PARENTAL BOWS: "You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth... He bends you with his might" maps the parent-child relationship onto an archer's bow and arrow, each with a path the parent does not fully control.
- THE CHILD'S FUTURE IS A HOUSE OF TOMORROW: "Their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit" maps an inaccessible future onto a physical dwelling.
- LIFE IS FORWARD MOVEMENT ALONG AN INFINITE PATH: "Life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday" and "the path of the infinite" map temporal progression onto physical, directional movement.

Interpersonal Meaning (Mood and Modality)

- A recurring grant-and-restrict modal pattern defines the limits of parental authority: "You may give them your love but not your thoughts... You may house their bodies but not their souls." The modal "may" grants permission bounded by an immediately following restriction, constructing an interpersonal stance of guidance rather than control.
- An optative/hortative mood expresses hope rather than instruction: "Let your bending in the Archer's hand be for gladness," reframing parental influence as something to be embraced rather than imposed.
- A causal declarative builds solidarity between the archer-parent and the target-child: "For even as He loves the arrow that flies, so He loves also the bow that is stable," affirming both roles without subordinating one to the other.

Textual Meaning (Theme-Rheme and Cohesion)

- Temporal linking connects present parental care to an inaccessible future: "For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit," a cohesive tie between the chapter's present-tense counsel and its future-oriented claims.
- The bow-and-arrow image (see Conceptual Metaphor) is extended and repeated across several clauses ("bows," "living arrows," "bends you," "stable"), giving the chapter lexical cohesion through a single sustained image rather than isolated figures.

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Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

8.5 Chapter 5: On Giving

Grammatical (Experiential) Metaphor

- "Therefore give now, that the season of giving may be yours" — Congruent form: give now, while you are able to give. "Giving," a process, is nominalized and bound to "season," reconstruing an ongoing act as a possessable interval of time.

Conceptual (Lexical) Metaphor

- JOY AND PAIN ARE TANGIBLE REWARDS: "There are those who give with joy, and that joy is their reward" and "there are those who give with pain, and that pain is their baptism" map abstract emotional states onto concrete, transferable objects (a reward, a purifying rite).
- NATURE IS A SELFLESS GIVER: "The myrtle breathes its fragrance into space" and "the trees in your orchard say not so, nor the flocks in your pasture" personify plants and animals as models of unselfconscious generosity.
- LIFE IS AN OCEAN FED BY STREAMS: "He who deserves to drink from the ocean of life deserves to fill his cup from your little stream" maps abundance and individual contribution onto a shared hydrological system.
- GRATITUDE IS FLIGHT ON WINGS: "Rather rise together with the giver on his gifts as on wings" maps the experience of grateful receiving onto shared upward flight.

Interpersonal Meaning (Mood and Modality)

- A rhetorical question draws the reader into reflecting on the paradox of scarcity: "And what is fear of need but need itself?"
- An evaluative, advisory declarative frames generosity without commanding it: "It is well to give when asked, but it is better to give unasked, through understanding."
- A pointed rhetorical question challenges the reader's assumed right to judge others' worthiness to receive: "And who are you that men should rend their bosom and unveil their pride...?"

Textual Meaning (Theme-Rheme and Cohesion)

- Contrastive structuring pairs opposing dispositions toward giving: "those who give little" and "those who give all," a cohesive antithesis running through the chapter.
- The nominalized phrase "the season of giving" (see Grammatical Metaphor, above) also functions textually, marking urgency and temporal framing at a key thematic turning point.
- Contrastive phrasing between "deserving" and "unveiling pride" links self-effacement cohesively to the chapter's broader argument about ego-free generosity.

8.6 Chapter 6: On Eating and Drinking

Grammatical (Experiential) Metaphor

- No instance in this chapter passed the congruent-paraphrase test; the chapter relies on conceptual metaphor to spiritualize a bodily activity.

Conceptual (Lexical) Metaphor

- SUSTENANCE IS THE FRAGRANCE OF THE EARTH: "Would that you could live on the fragrance of the earth" maps nourishment onto scent rather than substance, idealizing a purer form of sustenance.
- THE SELF IS AN AIR PLANT: "And like an air plant be sustained by the light" maps self-sufficiency onto a plant that draws sustenance from light alone.
- THE SOUL IS WINE PRESERVED IN A VESSEL: "And like new wine I shall be kept in eternal vessels" maps the soul's preservation onto the aging and storing of wine.

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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Interpersonal Meaning (Mood and Modality)

- A direct imperative instructs the reader in ritual conduct toward another being: "When you kill a beast, say to him in your heart," positioning the reader as an empathetic agent rather than a passive consumer.
- Direct address to nature constructs an interpersonal relationship of reciprocity: "Your seeds shall live in my body, and the buds of your tomorrow shall blossom in my heart."

Textual Meaning (Theme-Rheme and Cohesion)

- Repetition of the ritual phrase "say to it in your heart" creates cohesion around the chapter's central ethical practice.
- A seasonal contrast (autumn and winter) cohesively links human conduct to the rhythms of the natural world, reinforcing the chapter's argument thematically.

8.7 Chapter 7: On Work

Grammatical (Experiential) Metaphor

- No instance in this chapter passed the congruent-paraphrase test; the chapter's argument is carried almost entirely by conceptual metaphor.

Conceptual (Lexical) Metaphor

- WORK IS RHYTHM WITH THE EARTH: "You work that you may keep pace with the earth and the soul of the earth" and "to be idle is to become a stranger unto the seasons" map productive labor onto natural, cyclical rhythm, and idleness onto exile from it.
- THE WORKER IS A FLUTE: "You are a flute through whose heart the whispering of the hours turns to music" maps meaningful work onto an instrument that transforms passing time into music.
- WORK IS WEAVING/SOWING/REAPING: "To work with love is to weave the cloth with threads drawn from your heart" and "to sow seeds with tenderness and reap the harvest with joy" map dedicated labor onto textile-making and agriculture.
- WORK IS LOVE MADE VISIBLE: "Work is love made visible" directly equates two abstract concepts (work, love) through metaphorical predication rather than nominalization.
- NEGATIVE EMOTION IS POISON IN WINE: "If you grind the crushing of the grapes, your grudge distils a poison in the wine" maps the corrupting effect of resentment onto contamination of a crafted product.

Interpersonal Meaning (Mood and Modality)

- A declarative claim builds interpersonal solidarity around shared purpose: "When you work with love you bind yourself to yourself, and to one another, and to God," positioning labor as a relational, not merely individual, act.
- An evaluative declarative confers status conditionally: "He alone is great who turns the voice of the wind into a song made sweeter by his own loving," implicitly inviting the reader to aspire to this standard.
- A conditional warning cautions against insincerity: "If you sing though as angels, and love not the singing, you muffle man's ears to the voices of the day and the voices of the night."

Textual Meaning (Theme-Rheme and Cohesion)

- Lexical repetition of "when you work" organizes the chapter's argument and creates rhythmic cohesion across its central claims.
- Repeated conditional clauses ("if you cannot work with love...", "save when...") structure a sustained contrast between work done with devotion and work done with indifference.

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

- A parallel listing of metaphorical actions ("to weave... to build... to sow...") creates textual rhythm through structural repetition, reinforcing the chapter's central claim across multiple concrete registers.

8.8 Chapter 8: On Joy and Sorrow

Grammatical (Experiential) Metaphor

- No instance in this chapter passed the congruent-paraphrase test; the chapter's central claim is carried by a single sustained conceptual metaphor.

Conceptual (Lexical) Metaphor

- JOY AND SORROW SHARE A SINGLE VESSEL/SOURCE: "The same well from which your laughter rises was oftentimes filled with your tears" and "is not the cup that holds your wine the very cup that was burned in the potter's oven?" map two emotions conventionally treated as opposites onto a single container that serves both, structurally embodying their inseparability rather than merely asserting it.
- SORROW IS A CARVING TOOL: "When sorrow carves into your being" maps emotional pain onto a physical, shaping instrument.
- FATE IS A TREASURE-KEEPER WHO WEIGHS: "When the treasure-keeper lifts you to weigh you" personifies an abstract governing force as a merchant balancing scales.

Interpersonal Meaning (Mood and Modality)

- A declarative equates two emotional states directly, inviting reflection rather than asserting a closed claim: "Your joy is your sorrow unmasked."
- A direct imperative invites introspection: "When you are joyous, look deep into your heart," engaging the reader in self-examination.
- Reported, contrasting voices stage an interpersonal negotiation of meaning within the text itself: "Some of you say, 'Joy is greater than sorrow,' and others say, 'Nay, sorrow is the greater,'" dramatizing disagreement rather than resolving it.

Textual Meaning (Theme-Rheme and Cohesion)

- A paradoxical declarative closes the chapter's argument through balance rather than resolution: "Only when you are empty are you at standstill and balanced," a cohesive tie back to the well/cup imagery established earlier in the chapter.

8.9 Chapter 9: On Houses

Grammatical (Experiential) Metaphor

- No instance in this chapter passed the congruent-paraphrase test; the chapter's claims about the soul and comfort are carried by conceptual metaphor.

Conceptual (Lexical) Metaphor

- IMAGININGS ARE A BUILT SHELTER: "Build of your imaginings a bower in the wilderness" maps abstract thought onto physical construction.
- THE SOUL IS A WALKING, GROWING BEING: "The soul walks upon all paths... It grows in the sun and sleeps in the stillness of the night" maps inner life onto organic, plant-like or animate process rather than static existence.
- COMFORT IS A MURDEROUS, MOCKING FORCE: "The lust for comfort murders the passion of the soul" and "it makes mock of your sound senses" personify comfort as an antagonist actively working against the self.
- THE HOME IS A MAST, NOT AN ANCHOR: "Your house shall not be an anchor but a mast" maps stagnation versus forward movement onto two nautical objects with opposite functions.

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

- INNER BOUNDLESSNESS IS A SKY-MANSION: "That which is boundless in you abides in the mansion of the sky" maps an abstract inner quality onto a vast, unbounded architectural space.

Interpersonal Meaning (Mood and Modality)

- A hortative/optative expression conveys aspiration rather than command: "Would that I could gather your houses into my hand," positioning the speaker as caring rather than authoritative.
- A modally hedged directive frames liberty as an expectation rather than an order: "You shall not fold your wings that they may pass through doors," figuring aspiration as something the addressee is trusted, not merely told, to protect.

Textual Meaning (Theme-Rheme and Cohesion)

- A parallel contrastive structure organizes the chapter's central claim about human duality: "the longing for the heights and the terror of the depths" holds two opposed experiences in a single cohesive tie without resolving them.
- The anchor/mast contrast (see Conceptual Metaphor, above) is textually reinforced through the surrounding discussion of walls that "crack and fall down," extending the same restriction-versus-openness antithesis across the chapter.

8.10 Chapter 10: Clothes

Grammatical (Experiential) Metaphor

- No instance in this short chapter passed the congruent-paraphrase test.

Conceptual (Lexical) Metaphor

- CLOTHING IS SOCIETAL CONCEALMENT: "Your clothes conceal much of your beauty, yet they hide not the unbeautiful" maps social convention and self-presentation onto literal garments.
- MODESTY IS A SHIELD: "Modesty is for a shield against the eye of the unclean" maps an abstract virtue onto a concrete defensive object.

Interpersonal Meaning (Mood and Modality)

- A direct imperative frames modesty as a value to be actively remembered: "Forget not that modesty is for a shield against the eye of the unclean."

Textual Meaning (Theme-Rheme and Cohesion)

- Marked Theme places the completion of labor before the emotional response it produces: "And when his work was done he laughed in the forest," foregrounding closure and cohesively linking the chapter's brief argument to the completion-and-satisfaction theme carried throughout the book.

9. Discussion

The congruent-paraphrase test is used throughout all ten chapters and finds only a few instances of actual grammatical metaphor in the three chapters mentioned above (1, 5, and in a slightly modified way the final image of Chapter 10's "longing" and "eagerness") and always in the form of nominalized abstractions attached to nouns of time or measure ("season," "hour," "day"). In the other seven chapters no instance does; all the figurative force in the chapter comes from conceptual metaphor. This distribution answers RQ1 directly: grammatical metaphor is not the dominant ideational resource in this text at all; conceptual metaphor is, by a wide margin, and it is conceptual metaphor — not grammatical metaphor — that should be credited with the bulk of the text's capacity to render abstract philosophical claims emotionally graspable. This refines Kristiani et al.'s (2018) finding that

material processes dominate the text's transitivity profile: many of those material-process clauses such as; "love crowns you," "the soul walks," "joy flew over the sea" are precisely the vehicle through which conceptual metaphor operates, so the two findings are complementary rather than competing.

In response to RQ2, the interpersonal meaning in the ten chapters is primarily developed through two patterns: a grant-and-restrict modal pattern ("you may... but not...") that is present in Chapters 3 and 4, and a hedged-imperative pattern ("do X, but not Y") which is found throughout the chapters and weakens Almustafa's didactic authority. In addition, rhetorical, unanswered interrogatories (Chapters 1, 5, 8) further engage the reader as a co-reflector and not a passive recipient of doctrine. All of these patterns are direct, congruent realisations of mood and modality that do significant interpersonal work, but which in Halliday's narrower technical sense are not interpersonal metaphors, i.e. the metaphorical realisation of modality.

In response to RQ3, the textual coherence within the ten chapters is mainly found on the text level rather than on the systematic level of a strict grammatical-class shift. The antithetical parallelism and the single, cohesive ties (parting/gathering, spaces/togetherness, heights/depths, anchor/mast), repetition of selected clauses/conditional frames, and parallel listing of metaphorical actions are recurring devices. These are not really textual metaphor "resources" in the traditional Hallidayan sense of Theme-Rheme and cohesion, but rather are part of the general category of "textual meaning making resources."

These findings collectively point to a general claim about Gibran's lexicogrammar: its philosophical, sermon-like and highly quotable character is largely based on the density and consistency of conceptual metaphor, but also on a small number of strategically placed grammatical metaphors, at moments of aphoristic summary, and on a repeated and stable set of interpersonal and textual patterns, but not on any pervasive grammatical-class shift.

10. Conclusion

This study has re-examined the first ten chapters of *The Prophet* in the light of Halliday's three metafunctions and has applied the congruent-paraphrase test in such a manner that it is strictly adhered to so that "grammatical metaphor" does not refer to figurative language in general, but only to shifts in grammatical class. When applied to all ten chapters, this test reveals that real grammatical (nominalizing) metaphor, in this sense, is not very common in the text, and conceptual/lexical metaphor (Lakoff and Johnson's sense) is the most common ideational resource in the text. There is no particular grammatical-class shift that carries interpersonal meaning; the repetition of grant-and-restrict modality and hedged imperatives does, and there is no particular shift of grammatical classes that carries textual coherence; marked Theme, parallelism, and contrastive cohesion do. The reclassification allows for a more accurate description of the linguistic structure of Gibran's philosophical register than the undifferentiated concept of "grammatical metaphor" that characterizes earlier non-technical studies of Gibran's text. This is a single-text, single-analyst (STSA) qualitative study, meaning that these are the findings of this sub corpus and should be verified with the rest of the eighteen chapters before being generalized to *The Prophet* as a whole.

11. Limitations and Directions for Further Research

This study is limited to the first ten of the text's twenty eight chapters and to a single analyst's coding; future work should extend the analysis to the full text to test whether the grammatical/ conceptual metaphor distribution observed here holds across the book. The interpersonal patterns identified here (grant-and-restrict modality, hedged imperatives) could be tested quantitatively across the full text to establish whether they are as consistent as the qualitative reading here suggests. Comparative analysis across two or more of the text's twenty-five-plus translations could test whether the conceptual metaphors identified here are retained, adapted, or lost in translation, which would bear directly on claims about the text's cross-cultural popularity (Al-Khazraji et al., 2013).

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