



ANUKARAN: EXPLORING THE IDEA OF 'MIMESIS' IN NORTH INDIAN CLASSICAL TAAL-SYSTEM

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Abstract

Every piece of literature, in some way or the other, is influenced by a sort of 'Imitation'. Some are worthy enough to imitate closely and that gives us aesthetic pleasure. All Post-Marxist believe that there is nothing called 'Reality'. So, if there is nothing called reality, then the idea of exact imitation is not possible as there are no just parameters to judge. Interesting enough, Indian classical music, as a pure form of performing art is also influenced by a sense of imitation. And Tabla, being an instrumental knowledge of the Classical system, is not an exception in this case. Classical music is very much influenced by the idea of 'Rasa' and that is what we witness in representation- 'the mimesis of the emotion'. This paper aims to explore how the literature of Tabla is enriched with the idea of 'Close Mimesis' and 'Inspired Mimesis' and how this particular knowledge being only a part of the vast Classical theory, explores a new dimension out of the theories put forward by old Classicists.

Keywords: Mimesis, Indian Classical Music, Tabla, Gharanas, Rasa, Close Imitation vs. Mimesis Inspired.

INTRODUCTION

Every piece of literature- whether it is poetry, drama, music, or any other art form, in some way or the other, is influenced by a kind of imitation. When Plato first used the term in his *The Republic* (380 BC), he had distinguished between the useful arts and the imitative arts. He used the term in relation to poetry as he believed the very form to be an epitome of falsehood. The phrase, however, got a new dimension with Aristotle and his *Poetics* (335 BC) as he believed every art form to be an imitation of something else: "Epic poetry and Tragedy, as also Comedy, Dithyrambic poetry, and most flute-playing and lyre-playing, are all viewed as a whole, modes of imitation." (Aristotle, *Poetics*, p.23). Aristotle identified all art forms as a form of imitation, but it is also a crucial point that imitation here doesn't mean a slavish rhetorical or pictorial copying. Imagination, Novelty, and Imitation- together form the base of any art form, and that is not an exception in the case of Indian Classical Music as well. The idea of 'Mimesis' always serves as an inspiration to the artists which makes them 'think' about the music. This has always been a crucial element for any art form. The thinking leads to observation and imitation, which ultimately combines with new experimentations and gives birth to new ideas and forms. In the case of Indian Classical Music, there are basically three major components which constitute the grounds for it- 'Sur' [The Tune or Melody], 'Taal' [A structured time-cycle], and



‘Laya’ [Rhythm and Tempo]. Tabla is the instrument where these experimentations take place.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS

While going through the literature review, it has been observed that there has not been many contribution by the researchers in the field of Tabla so far as the aesthetics or rasa of Tabla is concerned. Martin Richard Lawson Clayton has talked about the cultural influence on Tabla in his *The Rhythmic Organisation of North Indian Classical Music: tal, lay and laykari* (2017) and how we can see the knowledge of this particular system to be Quantitative, Qualitative and Cyclic. This work examines the rhythmic organization of North Indian music on all levels- from large-scale performance schemes, to metric structure, to the generation and variation of surface rhythm patterns. It does so by synthesizing two research methodologies- combining the study of indigenous concepts and hence of the music’s wider cultural context, with objective and empirical analytical techniques- to build up a comprehensive and culturally appropriate model of rhythmic organization. (Clayton, 2017, p.3). P. Allan Roda in his “The Tabla Past and Present: Analysis of Materials in India's Most Iconic Drums” has talked about the historiographic changes of Tabla that took place across time. Bikram Ghosh, one of the chief living exponents of Farukhabad Gharana, has talked about the vocalization of the language of Tabla and its implication through imitation of human activities. Ghosh delivered a discuss-performance on Tabla at INK 2014, Mumbai where he talked about Rhythm, Rhythm jamming, and how Human activities can lead towards the understanding of the imitative arts. (Ghosh, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILLU3921W_J8). Ghosh also talked about the influence of English prosodic meters over the vocalization of Tabla. But, unfortunately, neither of them addressed how the form of Imitation influenced the language of Tabla. Interestingly enough, the language which is used for Tabla, is influenced by the idea of ‘Mimesis’. The whole world of the Tabla, with its knowledge, system and language, creates a mimetic undertone in performance. This paper explores how the idea of ‘Mimesis’, put forward by Aristotle and other English scholars fits into the context of the Indian Classical Taal-system and helps us to contextualize the ordinary with the sublime.

THE OBJECTIVE OF THIS RESEARCH

There are maestros renowned for their artistry in playing Tabla. They play the same things; the same elements from the same Gharana; but what makes them different from each other is their sense of aesthetics. Maestros have different realizations regarding music and aesthetics and it is that sense of aesthetics that make them look at different elements of Tabla from different angles. It is this sense of ‘rasa’ which

makes them realize how far they are close in imitating a particular emotion in their performance. They have to realize the temperament of the audience, the sense of ‘rasa’ and the sense of representation of the emotion; and ‘Imitation’ becomes the mode through which this internalization of emotion can take place. The objective of this research is to provide an in-depth analysis of how the internalization of emotions into the ‘Rasa’ takes place through the imitative representation in Tabla. This is not only important for the players, but the audience as well. If the players should have a proper power of observation in to produce the exact ‘rasa’ through their performance, the audience also should have the power to appreciate and criticize the imitative representation to appreciate the musicians in a better way.

METHODS AND METHODOLOGIES USED

This research categorically followed the Qualitative approach so far as the primary method of research is concerned. The constructionist view and inductive angle of the qualitative approach helped in multiple interpretations. For example: how the idea of ‘Rela’ is seen differently in different Gharanas and how their understanding of the emotion is reflected differently in their performances. The principal orientation towards the understanding of the research is related to the theoretical perspective generated through critical views and discussions. So far as other methods are concerned, we have taken into account the primary ‘bols’ and structures of the different rhythmic circles which have provided us different Discourses in Tabla. Interview as a method has also been used and the help of electronic database helped immensely in forming the hypothesis.

ANALYSIS

The Indian Classical Music, popularly known as Hindustani Classical Music, is broadly divided into two categories according to their styles developed into two different regions- North Indian Classical Music and South Indian Classical Music. This paper will strictly encircle the first one. The definition of ‘Mimesis’ put forward by Aristotle in his Poetics has been viewed by many in different ways which created a lot of debate. But, on one point all of them agreed that by the term ‘Imitation’, Aristotle also emphasized ‘Creation’. He does not mean any mechanical copying. After all, in Aristotle’s conception, Art is much more than the exact representation of life. This is the same idea which Coleridge also possessed while he discussed secondary imagination in the case of writing poetry in Chapter- XVIII of *Biographia Literaria* (1817): “...that the composition of a poem is among the imitative arts: and that imitation, as opposed to copying, consists either in the interfusion of the SAME throughout the radically DIFFERENT, or of the different throughout a base radically the same.”(Coleridge, 1817, p.175). In the case of the vocal music, the Indian



classical system believed that all the seven notes with which different ragas are created are imitations of the natural animal sounds as Swami Vivekananda and Boishanab Charan Basak remarks: “মড়জ [SA]- ভ্রমররে গুঞ্জন হইতে [from the humming of the bees]... ঋষভ [RE]- ঋষভরে ধ্বনি হইতে [the voice of ox]... গান্ধার [GA]- ময়ূররে ককো হইতে [the voice of peacock]... পঞ্চম [PA]- ককলিরে স্বর হইতে [from the voice of Cuckoo]... ধবৈত [DHA]- কাহার মতে অশ্ব হইতে [some believed to be the sound of a horse]... নষাদ [NI]- গরুদভরে ধ্বনি হইতে [from the voice of a donkey]...” (Datta, 1983, p.153). Krishnendu Dutta, a scholar at Sikkim University, argued in one of his articles that there is indirect contribution of the vocal-system in the case of developing the language of tabla. (Dutta, p.63). This is not true though in every case. In the case of Tabla, the language and the art is extremely mimetic as they are influenced by the idea of ‘Onomatopoeia’. Pt. Bikram Ghosh is of the view that: “...the rhythms in Tabla are defined by a sense of ‘Onomatopoeia’, which means the sound echoes the sense. Everything we play is an imitation of what we say and vice versa.” (Ghosh, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILU3921W_J8). This onomatopoeic nature is attributed to through a philosophy and thought which we encounter in day to day life conversation.

To deal with the idea, how the process of imitation works in the case of Tabla, I would like to refer to one of the articles (commentary) made by Prof. Ramkrishna Bhattacharya. Among the six very components of ‘Tragedy’, it is ‘Dianoia’ or ‘Thought’ which works in a more profound way in the case of Tabla. Though to name ‘Dianoia’ as thought is a debatable issue as Prof. Bhattacharya remarks: “Almost all English translations of the *Poetics*, therefore, render *dianoia* as ‘thought’ and wittingly confuse students, who take ‘thought’ to mean ‘the controlling idea’ of a play...Margaret Hubbard boldly deviated from the existing practice. She translated... *dianoia* as ‘the *mimesis* of intellect’...” (Bhattacharya, 2007, p.130). In the case of Indian Classical compositions, ‘Thought’ is a binding force in a performance. From observations, the artists get the idea of what they are going to imitate and how they should do it, and this leads them to think critically about the compositions. The most important factor to the artist now becomes how far s/he is successful in achieving the level of mimesis. Philip Sidney while discussing his idea of poetry, remarks in his *An Apology for Poetry* (1595): “Poesy, therefore, is an art of imitation, for so Aristotle termeth it in his word Mimesis, that is to say, a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth; to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture, with this end, to teach and delight.” (Sidney, 1595, p.78). I would take up Dryden as well who, in a way, also talked about the same thing in his *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (1668) while defining ‘Drama’: *A just and lively image of human nature, representing its passions and humours, and the changes of fortune to which it is subject, for the delight and*

instruction of mankind.”(Dryden, 1668, p.55). If one takes a close look on these two definitions, then one would notice, for both Sidney and Dryden, the ‘vibrance of representation’ has the prior importance as both of them used the terms ‘Speaking picture’ and ‘just and lively image respectively’. Now, if I try to contextualize these with the Indian Classical system, then it also works. For the musicians, the presentation of the real in its most apt nature is the higher task. All the artists try to imitate; some perform it in a just way; some are close enough, and; some are inspired by the original idea. That is why, in the case of tabla we can see three kinds of imitations and I term them as – ‘Just Imitation’, ‘Close Imitation’, and ‘Mimesis Inspired’. Aristotle, Sidney, and Dryden talked about how poetry is superior to other forms as it tried to imitate everything in a just way. But as time progressed, we have deconstructed every possible definition of art. All post Marxists believe that there is nothing called originality; ‘Reality’ does not even exist, as Samuel Beckett observes in his *Malone Dies* (1951): “*Nothing is more real than nothing.*”(Beckett, 1951, p.193). So, what the classical scholars have mentioned as ‘Just’, that sort of imitation is not possible. North Indian Classical Taal-System primarily believes in ‘Close Imitation’ where the artists try to imitate the trivial and colloquial sounds in the best possible way they can. And ‘Inspired Imitation’ takes place where the idea of ‘Close Imitation’ is not achieved for some reason, and the artists take the composition as an adaptation of the original one. The ‘Thought’ behind every composition is important as it tells the artist how s/he can achieve close imitation. So the Bangla idea ‘ভাবনা’ and ‘Thought’ are similar in this case. According to the representation of ‘Dianoia’, I have observed three categories of imitations which work in Tabla- ‘Mimesis of Emotion’, ‘Mimesis in Traditional Forms’ and Mimesis in Style’. These are the three ways which help the artist to achieve the ability of ‘Close Imitation’.

‘MIMESIS’ OF ‘EMOTION’ IN TABLA: EXPLORATION OF ‘RASA’

‘Emotion’ has always been a major concern for writers as it is a very delicate issue to be dealt with. The emotion that the artist thinks in his mind and the emotion that comes up through the performance, have to be the same. Performance is nothing but the reflection of the mind. But here the concept of emotion is slightly different. In the case of performing arts, the emotion that we talk of is different from the day-to-day emotion, and here they are linked with the primordial aesthetic concept ‘Rasa’. The primary emotions that work within the human mind are being portrayed in literature so as in music, and we can come to know about this in Sage Bharata’s *Natya Shastra* (800-500 BCE). Though the text is primarily attributed to Drama and Dance, both the forms are inextricable linked with Music and Rhythm. And that is why we can see the idea of ‘Rasa’ is Taal-system as well. Rasa and Emotion, though, are not same. Rasa

emerges from the emotions as Bharata exclaims: “Rasa arises from the conjunction of factors, reactions, and transitory emotions.” (Quoted in Pollock 50). On describing the Rasa, the great Sage remarks:

रतिहासश्च शोकश्च क्रोधोत्साहौ भयं तथा।

जुगुप्सा विस्मयश्चेति स्थायिभावाः प्रकीर्तिता ॥ (6.17)

Bharata primarily mentioned eight ‘*Bhavas*’ [Emotions]- ‘*Rati*’ [Love], ‘*Hasya*’ [Mirth], ‘*Soka*’ [Sorrow], ‘*Krodha*’ [Anger], ‘*Utsaha*’ [Energy], ‘*Bhaya*’ [Terror], ‘*Jugupsa*’ [Disgust] and ‘*Vismaya*’ [Astonishment]. These eight bhavas respectively correspond to the eights ‘*Rasas*’ as Bharata remarks:

“...the erotic [*Sringara Rasa*], comic [*Hasya Rasa*], tragic [*Karunyam Rasa*], violent [*Roudram Rasa*], heroic [*Veer Rasa*], fearful [*Bivatsam Rasa*], macabre [*Bhayankam Rasa*] and fantastic [*Advutam Rasa*] are the eight dramatic rasas.” (Quoted in Pollock, 2016, p.50).

The later Philosopher Abhinavagupta (950-1016 AD) added the ninth Rasa along with the eight existing once and named it as ‘*Santam Rasa*’ as it invokes peace:

“Thereafter comes the peaceful, whose ethos is in essence the cessation of all acts in contrast to the ethos of engagement in the group of three ends of man, love, wealth, and morality; its end result is spiritual liberation.” (Pollock, 2016, p.206).

The Indian Classical System is divided into Gharanas. The term ‘*Gharana*’ originated from the word ‘*Ghar*’ which means a school in this respect that is developed due to a distinct style as well as for the geographical locations. Kedar R Mukadam, a former Ph.D. Scholar from Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, remarks in his thesis:

“The word *Gharānā* has come from the word *ghar*. Just as *ghar* means 'home', or tradition and family, the word *gharānā*, in the language of music theory, *gharānā* means a personal style or tradition. The word *ghar* is actually an apabhransha of the Sanskrit word *gruha*. The meaning of *gharānā* can be said to be 'family tradition' as well, which means the continuation of a personal or family style over generations. In earlier times, the meaning of *gharānā* was associated only with royal *gharānās*. But with time, it came to be used in other areas as well. The family tradition of a single family is also now seen as a *gharānā*.” (Mukadam, 2009, p.08).

In North Indian Classical Taal-System, we have six distinct Gharanas and they are- Delhi Gharana [considered to be the first Gharana and also the Mother Gharana],

Lucknow Gharana, Punjab Gharana, Benaras Gharana, Farukhabad Gharana and Ajrada Gharana. Delhi Gharana is said to be set up first as Delhi was the center of Royal services, and Classical Music is basically the Royal Music of India that was nurtured under the able leadership of the court-singers of different Kings and Sultans. Apart from Punjab, all the other Gharanas are born from Delhi Gharana. Dr. Chirayu Srinivas Bhole, another former Ph.D. scholar from the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, discussed the characteristics of the Delhi Gharana and remarks that there is “sweet and soft look of the compositions so that they may well be said to be winsome even from the viewpoint of sheer musical quality” and “very liberal use of the first two fingers of both hands which lends crispness, accuracy and sonority to the bols.” (Bhole, 2009, p.5). Considering the argument, it may be presumed that Delhi Gharana emphasized production of ‘musical’ rather than anything else. To them, the ‘melody’ is the prior importance which may lead us to draw the hypothesis that the tabla compositions of Delhi Gharana are primarily influenced by ‘*Sringar Rasa*’ and ‘*Santam Rasa*’. ‘Kaida’- the traditional form, originated from this Gharana as well where the playing is divided into binaries as if they are partners. And this leads us to claim this Gharana to be the one which imitates *Sringar Rasa* as Pollock Mentions: “... the erotic rasa is established by virtue of its own functions and is named because it has the nature of ‘lovely’...its cause is a woman and a man: its characters are a young couple of high status.” (Pollock, 2016, p.52).

Lucknow Gharana imbibed the knowledge of tabla from Delhi Gharana. Some of the nawabs of Lucknow had recommended some artists of Delhi Gharana for Lucknow. Ut. Bakshu Khan and Ut. Modu Khan came to Lucknow and the new atmosphere of music had a great impact on their playing style. Similarly, Benaras Gharana was established by the great maestro Pt. Ramsahay. Benaras and Lucknow both have a great impact on each other in their playing style, because both the Gharanas have Kathak-dance style tabla accompaniment. In both of the Gharanas, one thing is common- i.e. the use of the open sound [Khula Baaj] style. Specifically in Benaras Gharana, the vocal music has always promoted Dhurapd, Dhamar where the use of open sound or ‘chati’ [Use of palm sound] is prominent, as Dr. Bhole observes: “It is completely open baaj. In other words, whole hands are used here, as against mere fingers; and therefore the sounds produced are, at times, a bit loud too...” (Bhole, 2009, p.17). Considering the argument it can be said that the Gharana tried to imitate the ‘*Roudram Rasa*’ and ‘*Veer Rasa*’. The influence may have been there since Varanasi is a religious place and Lord Shiva [Rudra], who incarnates lordship and masculinity, has been the preceding deity in all their rituals and cultures.

The Punjab Gharana was an independent Gharana that developed in Lahore under the able guidance of the famous Pakhwaj player Lala Bhabani Das. Later, Ut. Kadir

Baksh-I introduced a change in the playing style. He tried to use the pakhawaj playing style on tabla which was later changed completely by Ut. Allarakha Khan Sahab. Ut. Zakir Hussain, one of the chief exponents of this Gharana, along with his father, introduced the use of 'Peshkar' instead of 'Uthan' that is primarily seen in Benaras and Lucknow Gharana. 'Peshkar', traditionally, is a low pace rhythmic form where there is a sheer balance between the Dayan and the Bayan. The balance creates a melody that philosophically tried to imitate life- its balance of happiness and sorrow. So, following the argument, it can be said assumed that Punjab Gharana has compositions that tried to imitate the '*Hasyam Rasa*' and '*Karunyam Rasa*'.

The disciple of Ut. Bakshu Khan, one of the chief proponents of Lucknow Gharana, pioneered Farukhabad Gharana. Ut. Bakshu Khan's daughter got married to Haji Vilayat Ali Sahab, whose residence was at Farukhabad. As a dowry, the art of tabla playing with unique compositions were given and thus, the art of tabla reached Farukhabad. What is characteristically more interesting about this Gharana is that, unlike Benaras or Lucknow, the artists of this Gharana put emphasis on the use of fingers instead of palm and this led their experimentations towards analysing the 'subtlety' of music. That is why the proponents of this Gharana have a peculiar tendency not to use 'Chatusra Jati' [Four micro beats in one single beat] in a direct manner. Rather, they divide it in a deviating improbable diplo-mathematical scanning which makes the compositions sound more interesting. So, naturally there is '*Advutam Rasa*' present very much in their compositions. Same thing happens with Ajrada Gharana. Ajrada is close to Delhi style. But the specific feature which differentiates between these two is the subtle use of 'Tisram Jati' [three micro beats in one single beat] in Chatusra rhythm and the gradual increase of speed while playing 'Rela' with beauty and speed. So, like Farukhabad, this gharan also tries to imitate the '*Advutam Rasa*' in their compositions.

'MIMESIS' IN TRADITIONAL FORMS: THE PHILOSOPHICAL 'THOUGHT' BEHIND THE FORMS

In the case of North Indian Classical Taal-system, there are certain traditional structural forms in Tabla that can be discussed as a form of imitation. The structures in the case of the presentation may vary but so far as their structure or its philosophy is concerned, they always serve as interesting examples of experimentation. When the artists think of the compositions, s/he tries to represent that 'idea' through the performance and tries to establish the idea of 'Close imitation'.

In literary practices, we talk about 'Binary Opposition'- something on which the idea of 'interpretation' very deeply relies. The world is created out of binaries that emphasis a sense of balance. The importance of presence can only be understood

through the idea of absence. This idea of binary has been presented through the form of 'Kaida'. Kaida is a fixed composition that is divided into two components popularly categorized as 'Khuli' or 'Khulla' [Open sound], and 'Mudi' or 'Bandh' [Closed sound]. Together, these two components contribute to develop a meaning for the compositions. Just like a binary, where one component is incomplete without the other. Similarly, in a kaida, the same meaning is implied. On one plain, one can also see a kaida as an exploration of the most primary binary in a language- Vowel and Consonant. It is because vowels are basically the open sounds where there is no coarsion [Khulla]. On the other, the consonants are produced with strictures [Bandh]. On another plane, it reminds us of something else as well. On discussing *Sringara Rasa* earlier, I mentioned what Pollock observed that there is a strict sense of man-woman relationship. In the case of the understanding the point, one can also see the form of Kaida as an imitation of the idea of 'Androgyny' put forward by Virginia Woolf in *A Room of One's Own* (1929): "It is fatal to be a man or woman pure and simple; one must be woman-manly or man-womanly." (Woolf, 1929, p.168). The idea of a mental equilibrium has always been present in Indian classical literature as religious influences were coming from the 'Shaiva'[the worshippers of Lord Shiva] and 'Shakta' [the worshippers of Shakti] sects who believed in the concept of 'Ardhanarishwar'[Half man- half woman]. There is a strict disciplinary structure in the kaida, and that is why we can also call it an imitation of 'discipline'.

Human beings are social creatures and that is why we have to communicate in the environment for our survival. But what is the very tool of this communication? - It is conversation. What is more important in a conversation is a sense of dialogue that is shared by two beings ['dia-' means two]. Interestingly enough, this whole idea of a dialogue is presented through the traditional classical form 'Dwipalli'. 'Dwi-' in Sanskrit means two. And 'palli' means a sense of repetition. In a Dwipalli, therefore, the composition is made in a way where each phrase comes twice when recited. It is a feature that we see in every Gharana and their traditional compositions. To some extent, it can also be seen as a typical conversation where a mother-like figure tries to grow the speaking ability of the child and the child imitates whatever he hears.

In the case of the earlier concepts of Delhi Gharana, it was a tradition to begin with a performance with a particular compositional form called 'Selaami'. Selaami is again an imitative gesture as if one is bowing down before the kings presented in the courtyard and the court musicians take permission from the kings through an obeisance to begin their performance. 'Selaami' typically tries to imitate the gesture of salutation and that is evident in the traditional compositions.

As opposed to ‘Uthan’ or ‘Selaami’, Farukhabad and Lucknow developed the idea of ‘Peshkaar’. The word originated from the Urdu word ‘Pesh’ which means ‘to present’. There is a structural similarity between Kaida and Peshkar as there are divisional patterns. But unlike Kaida, Peshkar is played at a very low pace to create a resonance and balance between two hands. This idea of ‘Balance’ is very important as philosophically it may represent life itself. Life is a balance between ‘being alive’ and ‘death’; sorrow and happiness, dream and reality, everything and nothing. The imitation of life, and the idea that life is a juggling, is presented through the idea of ‘Peshkaar’.

Another traditional form in Tabla, is ‘Rela’. There is a contradiction regarding the origin of the term as the two schools think about it in a different way. Ut. Zakir Hussain, in one of his concerts, remarks:

‘रेल जो शब्द है उससे रेला आया है। रेल को जब सुना ... किसि तन्त्रबादक ने, तो उसका जो लय तेखा, तो उसके हिसाब से उनहोने अपनै एक रचना बनाइ... वो इतनि लोगोको पसदं आई, और किसि नबाब को बोहोत पसदं आई, और उनहोने काहा कि आजसे ईसका नाम रेला रखते है...’

(The word ‘Rela’ originated from the word Rail [Railways]. When some artist listened to the rhythm of Rail coaches, he tried to compose something accordingly by imitating the rhythm. Audience liked it very much, and above all, the Nawab liked it so much, that he named the composition after it –‘Rela’. (Hussain, 2017, <https://youtu.be/5G9C74eOwIQ>).

So, it is believed in the Punjab Gharana that the traditional form ‘Rela’ is an imitation of the movement of railway coaches and trains. The introduction of Railways in India was made under a proposal in Madras in 1832 and the first train in India ran from Red Hills to Chintadripet Bridge in 1837. (Darvill, 2011). And Lala Bhawani Das was active 1670 onwards and Ut. Kadi Baksh-I, 1720 onwards. So, whether they heard the rhythm of railways from foreigners or how they come to know about the rail-rhythm is a debatable issue. It may have happened that the idea developed and flourished after 1840s. In this case we can take into account what Pt Tanmoy Bose, one of the Farukhabad exponents, believes. He argued that there is a philosophical idea behind the Rela. The ideology may remain same for the form, but there are lots of Relas which have nothing to do with the Rail. So, what is important here, is the idea of imitating the emotion which Bose thinks, is ‘Monotony’. As one looks at nature when it is constantly raining for hours, one develops a sense of isolation and monotony, as if there is a constant playing of memory that makes one feel aloof and bored. But, at the same time, it gives you a strange peace of mind and a sense of eternal existence. Rela tries to capture this essence. The very reason behind this thought could be that

Farukhabad, from the very beginning, developed a keen interest towards Nature and Romanticism. In a very different way all together, one can think that Classical music is not so ‘classical’ in that sense. There is Modernist exploration as well because monotony itself can relate to the idea of metaphysical absurdity. So, the sense of ‘classical’ is missing in some respect and what becomes important is how to make sublime out of the trivial.

‘MIMESIS’ IN ‘CHALAN’: EXPLORING STYLISTIC GESTURES

The term ‘Chalan’ has originated from the Urdu word ‘Chal’, which means a particular stylistic gesture [body language, in some cases]. Each Gharana is different from each other in the ways of imitation, as I mentioned earlier. But, so far as the chalan is concerned, the idea of close imitation has developed much through these compositions, as they very craftily tried to imitate the styles of different animals.

Gaja-Ki Chal

The word ‘Gaja’ in Sanskrit means elephant. ‘Gaja Ki chal’ is a mimetic representation where the artist tries to imitate the walking style of the elephant. There is a sense of lumber in as the animal is healthy and heavy. And that is why the sound that the artists imitate becomes grave and loud enough to give the composition that particular sense of lumber. This is widely seen in Benaras Gharana as the production of the loud sound is a typical characteristic of this school. This may have a religious influence as well as most of the artists of this school are followers of Lord Shiva and Lord Ganesha [the elephant God]. Technically the bol ‘Dhete’ is used to imitate the grave and powerful sound as it demands a loud throwing in Tabla.

Ghore-ki Chal

‘Ghora’, a Hindi word, means Horse. So the riding style of a horse which is onomatopoeically popular in Bengal as ‘Tok-Bok’, is imitated through the bol ‘Tete’ or ‘Tere Kete’. Although, the history of the use of first ‘tete’ or ‘terekete’ is questionable, yet, all the exponents of every Gharana have agreed that it originated with Delhi school. As, Delhi and Punjab, both the schools emphasized the use of Index and Middle fingers, that is why, ‘Tete’ has primarily been seen in the compositions of these two Gharanas. The use of ‘Tete’ or ‘Ka-tete’ serves the kind of best of the close imitations.

Kabutar-Ki Chal

‘Kabutar’ in Urdu and Hindi means pigeon. The idea of this style came from the flittering sound of the pigeon. One may argue that a pigeon is after all a bird, so the



composition can be an imitation of any bird. But, there is a sense of weightage as well when we talk of fluttering of the birds, as they do not take flights with the same kind of force. So, the way a pigeon flaps has more to do with the idea of close imitation. The bols which are employed in this case are 'Dhere Dhere' which are played with the help of two sections of our palm. Originally, this is a product of the Lucknow Gharana, but in recent times, artists of every Gharana try playing Dhere-Dhere.

Hiran- ki Chal

'Hiran' means Deer in Hindi. The idea was first developed in Farukhabad under the guidance of Pt. Shankar Ghosh. This is an imitation of a story where some hunters went into the hunting of the deers, and they can't hunt them down because of their unrestful nature. Sometimes, it jumps; sometimes it runs; sometimes it halts; sometimes it's hidden and sometimes it's alert. The sense of 'Chasing' is present throughout the composition. What is interestingly beautiful, is that Guru Ghosh composed the piece in Teentaal [16 beats] and broke the composition in 7 [2+12 +212 +2] and 9 [2+2+12 +212 +2] instead of 4+4+4+4. This is a very unusual kaida composed by him and the melody of this composition lies in its uneven structure which ultimately ends up in making it a 16 beats cycle.

Rail – Ki Chal

I have already pointed out in the earlier portion that the traditional form 'Rela' has evolved from the idea of Railways and the rhythm of the coaches. Lucknow, Delhi, and Punjab have tried their hands in experimentation but I think the idea of close imitation can be discussed with the experiments of Ut. Tari Khan of Punjab School who tried to imitate the sound of the steam-engine in tabla with the help of 'Kre-The-Kre-Na'. On the contrary, Pt. Tanmoy Bose prioritized 'Dhene-Dhati-Ghene' and 'Dhene-Ghene' as close imitations of the same. (Bose, 2020, Personal Interview)

CONCLUSION

There are technically two problematic areas of my paper. One, is, that the ideas which I have presented, demand a practical demonstration. It is because the person, who has a pure literary background and does not have a musical one, would not be able to understand the arguments. And this leads to the second problem, as I am primarily trained in Farukhabad style; the compositions of the Gharanas can only be learned under a Guru-Shishya parampara, and, therefore, cannot be written down or published without copyright. But, the demand of the demonstration proves my hypothesis with which I began writing this paper i.e. like Tragedy, Indian Classical Music is extremely mimetic in nature. There can be any story that may serve as a 'thought' for a particular composition, but when it is presented, there is no 'Diegesis' or narration.



Whatever story or plot is thought by the artist, s/he tries to represent it before us through 'Imitation'. The idea of 'Close Imitation' philosophically leads every artist towards their ultimate goal through discipline and practice. In this respect, they are not less than a 'Yogi' for whom the entire session of practice becomes 'sadhana'; a journey for achieving 'Close Imitation', as Dr. Shveata Misra observes:

“At the higher level, it should also have the capacity which can liberate the artist/listener from the worldly problems. It should have the power of "self-liberation". In Indian philosophy, this "self-liberation" has been called as "moksha". "Moksha" or "bhav-Bhanjan" is said to be very important in the four "Purusharthas". These four "purusharthas" are as: Dharma, Artha, Kaamand , Moksha.”(Shveata, 2015, p.1112)

Classical Music arouses a sense of deep meditation and unexplainable happiness that help us to realize anything metaphysical. It is that path that leads the trivial to realize the sublime through the mimesis of emotion, thought, and intellect.

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