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Brahmans Beyond Nationalism, Muslims Beyond Dominance:
A Hidden History of North Indian Classical Music's Hinduization

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Music

by

Justin Scarimbolo

Committee in Charge:

Professor Scott L. Marcus, Chair

Professor Timothy J. Cooley

Professor George Lipsitz

December 2014

The dissertation of Justin Scarimbolo is approved.

Professor Timothy J. Cooley

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Professor Scott L. Marcus, Committee Chair

December 2014

Brahmans Beyond Nationalism, Muslims Beyond Dominance

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by

Justin Scarimbolo

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It was pure luck (or fate), but certainly not intention, that my initial efforts to find a sitar teacher in India led me directly to one of the most knowledgeable persons capable of helping with such a task, Allyn Miner of the University of Pennsylvania. It was due to her generous advise that I met my sitar teacher, Jyoti Thakar, whose

family, the Ashtewales, became the focus of this work. In her scholarship, performance and presence, I continue to be inspired by Dr. Miner's example.

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VITA

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- 2014 Review of *Singing a Hindu Nation: Marathi Devotional Performance and Nationalism* by Anna Schultz. *Notes* 70(1):116–118.
- 2011 Review of *Hip Hop Desis: South Asian Americans, Blackness and a Global Race Consciousness* by Natasha Sharma. *Notes* 68(1):67–69.
- 2006 “Trumping the Narratives of Transmission: Hindustani Classical Music and Its Recorded Dimension.” MA thesis, University of California, Santa Barbara.

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major area exams with Scott Marcus (with respect to Indian classical music): Gender; Nationalism; Religion; Theoretical treatises; History of the sitar.
 Minor area exams with Timothy Cooley: Music and globalization.

ABSTRACT

Brahmans Beyond Nationalism, Muslims Beyond Dominance:
A Hidden History of North Indian Classical Music's Hinduization

by

Justin Scarimbolo

This dissertation challenges two key assumptions that structure nearly all historical accounts of modern North Indian classical music: (1) that Muslim musicians imposed a “secretive” and “jealously guarded” monopoly over the field from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries and (2) that upper-caste Hindus eventually penetrated this monopoly only by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries under the protective umbrella of a nationalist musical reform movement. Both assumptions attempt to explain a demographic shift among musicians from a Muslim to a Hindu majority over the twentieth century. Though recent scholarship has begun to suggest a more complex reality, most accounts still presume a neat sequence of two consecutive “dominances” characterized by intrinsic cultural essences: the first, (intransigent, insular and pre-modern) Muslim; and the second, (nationalistic, communalistic and modern) Hindu. Nearly all of this research,

moreover, is based on a limited set of data generally dated no earlier than the 1870s and thus within the nationalist period of musical reform.

My research, reaching a full century earlier to a period that set the stage for a later Hindu-led reform, reveals a rather different picture. Specifically, I highlight the role of several overlooked factors that led Brahmans to take up music much earlier than is commonly recognized during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and that may have continued to inform Brahman participation well into the twentieth. These include: the British colonial policy of indirect rule (Chapter One); the legacy of pre-colonial traditions of Mughal patronage (Chapter Two); the persistence of the claim to continuities within the musical theoretical treatise tradition (Chapter Three); and—contrary to the stereotype—the pedagogical generosity of Muslim musicians (Chapters, Four, Five and Six). All of these factors are illustrated by a historical study of a prominent Brahman family from the central Indian city of Ujjain, the Ashtewales, who first entered music as patrons and apprentices of Muslim hereditary professionals in the early nineteenth century, but who eventually became hereditary professionals themselves in the mid-twentieth century. Their example suggests a need to reconfigure commonly held understandings of the roots of contemporary communal realities in music.

GUIDE TO PRONUNCIATION

Wendy Doniger, Mircea Eliade Distinguished Service Professor of the History of Religions at the University of Chicago, once suggested that the use of diacritics, though traditionally essential for the citation of texts among scholars, was less important for an audience “blissfully ignorant of any Indian language” (2009:695). The scholars for whom Doniger considered the use of diacritics essential, however, presumably already knew the correct spelling of the texts in view, and that, too, in the original script. Is, then, the only purpose of transliteration to prove to knowledgeable scholars that the author, too, is “in the know”?

For any reader unaccustomed to Indian languages, whom I prefer to think of as blissfully *interested* and not ignorant (especially if they have taken the effort to read this dissertation), careful transliterations can come as a welcomed relief to the barrage (or bounty) of foreign terms. My approach to transliteration attempts to extend this courtesy to interested and uninitiated readers without undue pedantry. Foreign words, including the names of people and places, are transliterated according to the table that follows this note, but only upon their first occurrence. Also, all foreign words, except for the names of people and places, are rendered in italic type on their first occurrence only. (For the convenience of the reader, I have attempted to repeat this process for each chapter, though inconsistencies will undoubtedly be found). Thereafter, all foreign terms are rendered according to their common Anglicized spellings and in plain type. They are no longer called out as foreign, but

assumed to have assimilated themselves into—and simultaneously transformed—the “culture” of this text.

Though this approach may appear straightforward, it is not without its problems. “Common” Anglicized spellings of Indian words are notoriously diverse. A term like *jāgīr*, which refers to a particular kind of land tenure (from *jai* or “place” and *gīr* or “hold”), might alternatively appear as “jagir,” “jahgir,” or “jahgeer” in different sources and sometimes within the very same source. For quotations taken from texts, I have chosen to retain all original spellings of foreign words. However, where the authors of English texts have themselves supplied transliterations, including diacritics and italics, I have usually chosen to ignore it, instead giving my own if the word is newly encountered. In the case of antiquated spellings of people and places, such as the city of “Oujein” (Ujjain), I have supplied modern equivalents in parenthesis, but again, only on the first occurrence. I have not followed this practice with respect to the renaming of former colonial cities like Bombay (Mumbaī) and Calcutta (Kolkātā), as these original names have continued to live alongside their official versions.¹

More challenging has been the question of how to spell in English Indian words taken from recorded interviews and general references (i.e., “transcribe,” not “transliterate”). In most cases, I have given preference to established usage even when it disagrees with strict transliteration. The honorific title “rao,” for example,

¹ For a consideration of the politics of identity that underlay this renaming, see the introduction to Thomas Blom Hansen’s *Wages of Violence: Naming and Identity in Postcolonial Bombay* (2001).

which is often appended to the first name of *Marāṭhī*-speaking men, has a well-established English spelling to which I adhere. That is because this spelling does more to communicate correct pronunciation than does a strict transliteration: *rāv*. Non-Marathi speakers, including *Hindī* speakers, would tend to pronounce the *v* in *rāv* as they would the *v* in *Rāvāṇa*, the principal protagonist in the Hindu epic, the *Ramāyaṇa*. Rao, in this case, would rhyme with the English “Slav,” a speaker of a Slavonic language. However, Marathi speakers pronounce the *v* of *rāv* by rounding the lips, attaining something closer to the English *w*. In its correct pronunciation, then, “rao” rhymes with “cow,” and is therefore better reflected through its common spelling. Additional cases of ambiguity, such as Hindi transliteration of the ligature *j* + *ñ* as *gya*, and the alternative Marathi pronunciations of *j*, *jh* and *c*, will be discussed as they are encountered.

Compound words, whether honorific titles such as the aforementioned “rao” (as in “Justin-rāv”) or the titles of texts such as the *Nāṭya-śāstra*, are left compounded except when transliterated for the first time. Although Indian scripts do not recognize capital letters, I capitalize the title of texts and proper names when they occur in an English sentence. I also add a plain text *s* to Indian words to indicate the plural. However, if pluralized on first use, I separate the *s* with a hyphen.

Most of the foreign words used in this text are taken from Marathi and *Hindī*, two modern spoken languages that share the same official script, *Devanāgarī*. Devanagari is a phonetic script, meaning that each of its characters represents one recognized sound or phoneme. This is unlike English, in which a single character can

have several different sounds, such as the *u* in “but,” “put,” “cure” and “rural” (Hunter 1885:xxi). (Devanagari is also an “alphasyllabic,” meaning that each consonant contains an inherent vowel, *a*, and is therefore a syllable as well as a letter, a point to which I will later return). The relatively straightforward relationship between the sounds and symbols of Devanagari has proven extremely useful for its transliteration, whether into Roman script or other Indic scripts, as has been the case with Tamil transliterations of Sanskrit.

Nevertheless, no single standard for the Romanization of Devanagari exists today. Instead, several standards have been proposed over the previous one and a half centuries, though most of them are closely related. One of the earliest to gain widespread acceptance was the system devised by Sir William Wilson Hunter and used for the first statistical survey of India, later abridged and published as the *Imperial Gazetteer of India* (1881). For this system, Hunter relied on the system then in use by the Royal Asiatic society, but purged of most of its diacritical markings. Justifying his approach, Hunter claimed, similar to Wendy Doniger, that, “such precision was impracticable for popular use” (Hunter 1885:xxi. Also see Skrine 1901:177-179 and 205-207).

Following the Hunterian system, the International Congress of Orientalists devised a new system that attempted to standardize the Romanization of Devanagari across its various scholarly societies. This system, which was adopted following the Congress’ tenth meeting in Geneva in 1894, became the most popular scholarly

system for much of the twentieth century. It later became known as the International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration or IAST.²

The late twentieth century saw a number of additional schemes vying for legitimacy. Among them were the United Nations Romanization System for Geographical Names (UNRSGN) in 1972 (UNGEGN 2007:25-27 and 37-38); the Kyoto-Harvard system in 1990, the first lossless system to utilize characters drawn only from the English character set (i.e., characters described by the American Standard Code for Information Interchange, or ASCII) (see Wujastyk 1996:5-9);³ the *Indian Script Code for Information Interchange* (ISCII) published by the Bureau of Indian Standards in 1991, which aimed to encompass all ten Indic scripts said to derive from the ancient Brahmi script; the system adopted by the American Library Association and the Library of Congress (ALA-LC) in 1997; and the system proposed by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) in 2001, commonly referred to by its publication code, ISO 15919:2001 (ISO 2001, Stone 1996-2013).

As a result of my effort to determine which of these systems I would use for the current study, I have compiled a comparative table, which can be found in the appendix. Though incidental, I have included it here because of its uniqueness.

Barring a few sources that compare two or three of the systems mentioned above (see

² See the report published by the translation committee following the Tenth International Congress of Orientalists in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, volume 24, issue 4, pp.879-892, 1895.

³ Two additional systems that utilize only this character set are the Velthius system and ITRANS system (ibid.).

Penderson, for example), I have found no comprehensive comparison of the various Romanization systems for Devanagari.

Of greater importance to the reader, however, is the accompanying guide to pronunciation. Here I describe how each of the characters used for transliteration should be pronounced. I do this by providing a close-to-equivalent sound in English followed by the character of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) that best corresponds. IPA characters are given inside slashes //, indicating a broad transcription of recognized phonemes, not specific shades of pronunciation that are possible (IPA 1999:27-29). For those already familiar with Devanagari and who wish to confirm my transliteration and pronunciation, I have also provided the corresponding Devanagari character. In addition to the sources already cited, I have relied on the work of Shapiro (1989), Snell and Wiegman (1989), McGregor (1997, 1986), and Ohala (1999) in compiling this guide.

My transliteration of Hindi and Marathi words follows the scheme used by the Library of Congress with two exceptions. First, I use ʃ to represent the retroflex silabant s instead of sh . The usual justification for the use of sh , which risks confusion with its palatal counterpart ʃ , is that Hindi speakers fail to distinguish the two in speech. Marathi speakers, however, retain this pronunciation to a far greater degree. Furthermore, the retroflex s , whether pronounced or not, is still indispensable to standardized spelling; for example, the name of the second degree of the musical scale is never spelled as ṛśabh , but as ṛṣabh . Disambiguating these consonants in the

transliteration allows for greater transparency should one wish to consult reference materials.

Second, like others in the field of Indian music studies (see Jairazbhoy 1972:79 n.2, for example), I do not transcribe the inherent vowel *a* unless it is vocalized in common speech. This practice is also explicitly suggested by ISCII-91 and is also followed by McGregor, who further transcribes “weakened” occurrences of this vowel with a breve, as in the word *nāṭyă*, the dramatic arts. (I follow this practice as well). By contrast, ALA-LC (as well as the UN scheme) suggests that the inherent vowel always be supplied in transliteration unless a mark known as a “viram” (*virām*, lit., “rest” or “pause”) specifically silences it.⁴ ALA-LC therefore transliterates viram as *virāma*, and thus retains the inherent vowel despite its occlusion in modern usage. For some words, however, the inherent vowel is either vocalized or dropped depending on the speaker and or writer. The name of North Indian classical music’s signature vocal genre, *khyāl* or *khayāl*, is a case in point, as are the names for Indian music’s melodic and rhythmic systems, *rāg* or *rāga* and *tāl* or *tāla*, and, indeed, the very word for music itself, *saṅgīt* or *saṅgīta*. I have not attempted to impose any consistency with regard to the transliteration of these terms.

Introductory grammars of Hindi and Marathi are largely silent on the issue of stress, or the relative prominence of syllables in a word. This may reflect the fact that Hindi is said to be more “even” in its use of stress than English (McGregor 1986:xxi, Snell and Weightman 1989:17). Still, stress is an important part of pronunciation, and

⁴ A vowel-deficient consonant is described as “halant” (*halant*, lit., “ending in a plough”).

linguists have generally agreed on the following two broad principals: (1) primary stress typically falls on the “heaviest” syllable of a word, usually the syllable that contains both a consonant and a long vowel or diphthong (*ā, ī, ū, e, o, ai, and au*); (2) if more than one syllable is of the same maximum weight, then stress falls on the rightmost of these, but not if it is in the final position (Dyrud 1997:4, McGregor 1986:xxi, Pierrehumbert and Nair 1996:3). Thus, the four-syllable *ra 'māyana*, mentioned above, receives stress on the second syllable, the only syllable that contains a consonant and a long vowel. (As per the conventions of linguistics, stress is indicated here by a superscript bar just prior to the syllable that receives it). *'kālā* (“black”) contains two equally heavy syllables, but as the rightmost of these is in the final position, stress falls to the first. Stress also falls on the first syllable of the word *'kalā* (“art”), despite the fact that this syllable is lighter than the second, as it contains only a consonant and a short vowel (*a, i* or *u*), the reason being the heavier syllable is in the final position. In the following pages, I transcribe stress only when it does not readily conform to these principles.

Finally, unless otherwise stated, translations from Marathi and Hindi are my own.

a	अ	like “u” in “cup” /ə/
ā	आ	like the first “a” in “a cappella” /ɑ/
ai	ऐ	either a pure vowel like the “e” in “pen” /ɛ/ (Hindi) or a diphthong like the “i” in “rice” /əi/ (Marathi)
au	औ	either a pure vowel like “au” in “author” /ɔ/ (Hindi) or a diphthong like “o” in “close” /əu/ (Marathi)
b	ब	like “b” in “ball” /b/
bh	भ	aspirated form of <i>b</i> , like “b-h” in “sub-heading” /b ^h /
c	च	either like “ch” in “Charles,” but with less aspiration /tʃ/ (Hindi and Marathi), or like “ts” in “cats” /ts/ (Marathi)
ch	छ	aspirated form of <i>c</i> , like “ch-h” in “catch-him” /tʃ ^h /
d	द	like “d” in “dead” but with less aspiration /d̪/
ḍ	ጢ	retroflex form of <i>d</i> , pronounced with the tip of the tongue touching the roof of the mouth between the alveolar ridge and hard palate /d̪ʁ/
dh	ध	aspirated form of <i>d</i> , like “d-h” in “dead-head” /d̪ ^h /
ḍh	ጢ	aspirated form of <i>ḍ</i> /d̪ ^h /
e	ए	like “a” in “gay” but as a pure vowel, not a diphthong /e/
ê	ऐ/अँ	like “a” in “bat” /æ/
f	फ़	like “f” in “friend” /f/
g	ग	like “g” in “beg” /g/
gh	घ	aspirated form of <i>g</i> , like “g-h” in “big-hearted” /g ^h /
gh	ग़	like <i>r</i> in the French “Paris” or the “gh” in Arabic “Baghdad” /ɣ/ or /ʁ/
h	ह	like “h” in “hope” /h/
i	इ	like the first “i” in “inside” /ɪ/
ī	ई	like “ee” in “seek” /i/
j	ज	either like “j” in “jump” /dʒ/ (Hindi and Marathi) or “z” in “zap” /z/ (Marathi)
jh	झ	aspirated form of <i>j</i> , either like “ge-h” in “badge-holder” /dʒ ^h / (Hindi and Marathi) or “zz-h” in “jazz-head” /z ^h / (Marathi)
k	क	like “k” in “spark” but with less aspiration /k/
kh	ख	aspirated form of <i>k</i> , like “ck-h” in “crack-house” /k ^h /
kh	ख़	like “ch” in the German “Bach” /x/
l	ल	like “l” in “like” /l/
ḷ	ळ	retroflex form of <i>l</i> /l̪/ (see <i>ḍ</i>)
m	म	like “m” in “mom” /m/
n	न	like “n” in “tent” /n/
ṅ	ङ	like “n” in “sing” /ŋ/
ñ	ञ	like “gn” in the French “champagne” /ɲ/

n	ण	retroflex form of <i>n</i> /ɳ/ (see <i>ḍ</i>)
o	ओ	like “o” in “no” /o/
ô	औ	like “a” in “all” /ɔ/
p	प	like “p” in “pin” /p/
ph	फ	aspirated form of <i>p</i> , like “p-h” in “top-hat” /p ^h /
q	क़	like “c” in “cut,” but with the mid-tongue further back in the throat /q/
r	र	either like “r” in “three,” but tapped /ɾə/, or like “r” in “three” but trilled /r/
r̥	ऋ	either like “ri” in “ridge” /ɾɪ/ (Hindi) or “ru” in “rut” /ɾu/ (Marathi)
r̄	ड़	like <i>ḍ</i> , but with the tongue flapped against alveolar ridge, like “rd” in “sword” /ɽ/
rh	ढ़	aspirated form of <i>r̄</i> /ɽ ^h /
s	स	like “s” in “song” /s/
ś	श	like “s” in “sugar” /ʃ/
ṣ	ष	retroflex form of <i>ś</i> /ʂ/ (see <i>ḍ</i>)
t	त	like “t” in “steer,” but with less aspiration /t̪/
ṭ	ट	retroflex form of <i>t</i> /ɽ/ (see <i>ḍ</i>)
th	थ	aspirated form of <i>t</i> , like “te-h” in “white-head” /t̪ ^h /
ṭh	ठ	aspirated form of <i>ṭ</i> /ɽ ^h /
u	उ	like “u” in “put” /ʊ/
ū	ऊ	like “oo” in “oops” /u/
v	व	either like “v” in “vice” /v/, “w” in “wine” /w/ or medial, like “w” in “wine,” but without rounding the lips /ʋ/
y	य	like “y” in “yawn” /j/
z	ज़	like “z” in “zap,” but with less aspiration /z/

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INTRODUCTION

HISTORY UP CLOSE

I did not expect much from this visit. My *sitār* teacher, Jyotī, had warned me that her uncle, whom she affectionately referred to as Ānand *kākā* (paternal uncle), could be moody at times. If he didn't feel like talking, he wouldn't. It didn't matter how far we had traveled to meet him. "That's fine," I reasoned to myself. "Nothing ventured, nothing gained." However, if there was anyone who could tell me about the history of the family, it was he, its oldest living member.

A crude looking, snout-nosed rickshaw, which locals called a "warrior pig" (*bhaṭ suar*), dropped us off at Anand kaka's front door. Though the house was now in a dilapidated state, its walls crumbling or partly collapsed, I could see that it had once been a grand stone mansion several stories high and probably enclosing more than one open courtyard. Its castle-like front door was wide and tall, large enough to accommodate the horse-drawn carriages that likely ferried its residents. It had been, I was told, one of the wealthiest mansions (*wādā-s*) in the city.

We entered through a small side door and found Anand kaka seated on the floor with his back turned to us, shirt off, and murmuring prayers from a book. I noticed the thread or *jānva* slung over his shoulder, indicating his *Brāhmaṇ* caste. His wife then emerged from the kitchen. Formalities were exchanged, and she returned to make tea while we waited for Anand kaka to finish his prayers.

In the half hour that passed, Anand kaka did not pay us any attention. Nor did he mind the comings and goings of various other people, who had also apparently come there for prayer. At the back of the hall in which we sat lay a large altar housing two life-size stone images of Kṛṣṇa and his consort, Rādhā. Anand kaka's house, it seemed, doubled as a local place of worship.

In the end, things turned out better than I had hoped. That night, in the upper story of the family's ancestral home and amidst the singing, clapping and bell ringing of the evening rituals or *ārāṭī* below, Anand kaka told stories upon stories of his family's history in music. Though I had yet to realize it, what I discovered that night ran contrary to conventional scholarly wisdom, which held that Brahmans were only recent, nationalist-inspired usurpers of a tradition jealously guarded by Muslims. Instead, this Brahman family had been playing the sitar for over six generations, since the second or third decade of the nineteenth century and long before the rise of the nationalistic movements that were thought to have brought Brahmans to music. Moreover, they took up this tradition after becoming both patrons and disciples of the very people who are thought to have tried to keep it from them, Muslim hereditary professionals.

In a single moment, then, the extenuating circumstances thought to have motivated Brahman participation in music (nationalism) and the primary obstacle they are thought to have faced (jealously guarded Muslims) had suddenly been thrown into question. Could the history of this family point to the limits of nationalism as a framework for understanding Indian music's modern social history?

What were the various circumstances beyond nationalism that led Hindus, and particularly Brahmans, to assume performing roles in this tradition? Why, moreover, had these circumstances failed to challenge the prevailing historical narrative of the Muslim-Hindu shift?

The Āṣṭevāle family to which Anand kaka and Jyoti belonged claim to originally come from somewhere near the city of Paiṭhan, which lies along the Godāvarī River close to the center of the modern state of Māhārāṣṭrā. Some time in the mid-eighteenth century, however, and along with the northern expansion of the Marāṭhā empire from this region, the family migrated to the North Indian town of Āṣṭa in the present-day state of Madhya Pradesh, the town from which they would eventually take their family name. There, an ancestor of the family managed the lands that provided revenue for a General of the Maratha army. When the British later invaded this region in 1818, however, this same ancestor helped British troops secure safe passage and fresh supplies. Following British annexation of the region, and on the eve of the rise of the British to becoming the self-proclaimed paramount power of the subcontinent, the Ashtewales received a colonial-mediated pension that literally changed their fortunes. With their income now expanded and freed from the land, the family moved to the nearby city of Ujjain, then under the independent rule of the Sindhyā (or Scindia) family of Gvāliyar (commonly Gwalior), where they built the gracious mansion that has remained in their family for almost two hundred years. As befitting their newly acquired status, and in emulation of the Maratha-ruling elite around them, the Ashtewales soon began to both patronize and apprentice themselves

to musicians affiliated with the surrounding courts, musicians who comprised the finest professionals of their day.

All of the musicians whom the Ashtewales patronized and learned from were Muslims and hailed from families of hereditary professionals. Subsequent members of the Ashtewale family continued to learn from the descendants and/or students of these same masters, thereby establishing a tradition of Muslim-Hindu discipleship that extended over several generations and throughout much of the nineteenth century. However, sometime in the early twentieth century, the flow of musical transmission that once brought these families together suddenly came to a halt. Instead of learning from Muslim teachers, succeeding generations of Ashtewales began learning from within the family itself. Some also began teaching in newly established institutions for music whereby they received their primary source of income. Thus, although the Ashtewales may have entered music as patrons of hereditary professionals, they eventually became hereditary professionals themselves.

HISTORY FROM AFAR

What makes the Ashtewale family's story so compelling at first glance, beyond its historical depth and its connection to such a wide cast of characters, is the way it appears to have embodied within its very lines of kinship and discipleship a larger social change in the history of North Indian (hereafter, occasionally, *Hindustānī*) classical music. This change is often described in scholarly literature, both implicitly and explicitly, as a shift from Muslim to Hindu and from hereditary to

non-hereditary. Its impetus, furthermore, is often solely explained with reference to a nationalist-inspired movement, beginning in the late nineteenth century, to “reform” music along lines originally defined by colonial commentators. Two notions allegedly bequeathed by colonialists and adopted *in toto* by nationalists are thought to have influenced this shift. The first: that Indian music’s “real” authors were not contemporary Muslim performers, but ancient Hindu composers of musical treatises. The second: that Muslims had not only degraded Hindu music, but were also holding it hostage by monopolizing the tradition and refusing to teach it to outsiders. These two notions of Hindu origination and Muslim usurpation served to justify a reformist agenda, identified in no uncertain terms by Regula Qureshi, “to take music out of the hands of the Muslim hereditary professionals and win it for the Hindu elite through discipleship and devotion” (1991:161).

There is much left wanting from this gloss on the ideological underpinnings of the reform. As with “the” nationalist movement more generally, efforts to reform music were varied, sometimes at odds with each other, and never static. But whatever might be said about the actual heterogeneity of reformist discourse or the disjuncture between its discourse and practice (c.f. Kobayashi 2003:168, 276-77 and Lubach 2006:28-33, 41-42), regardless of whether its outcomes were desired, unintended or unconscious (c.f. Bakhle 2005:123-24, Manuel 2008:395-396 and 1989:80-81, Kobayashi 2003:7, Lubach 2006:54, Subramanian 2007a.:554), and despite the continued, though vastly diminished, survival of Muslim celebrities at the national level (c.f. Dard Neuman 2004:412-424, 437-4388 and 2009:114-117, Bakhle 2005:8,

13-14, 133, 252-255, and Lubach 2006:36, 40), there is little doubt that the reform contributed to the Hinduization of the tradition. Muslim musicians, who had long held a position of primacy—since, I would argue in contrast to reformist claims, the birth of this music in the sixteenth-century Mughal court—became marginalized both materially in terms of their physical presence, and ideologically in terms of their supposed lack of contribution to the tradition (e.g., Katz 2012:291-292). Hindu musicians, moreover, and Brahmans in particular, not only came to hold positions of authority in newly created institutions of music education, but they also came to predominate in the area of performance. A change, in other words, no doubt occurred.

A FIELDWORK DILEMMA

The idea that the Ashtewale family with whom I had been studying might have played some role in this change, however remotely, was both exciting and worrisome. After all, I had become indebted to this family musically and socially over the past few years. My teacher, Jyoti Ṭhakār (Mangala Ashtewale prior to marriage) had embraced me as her *śiṣya* or student in the true sense of the term. I had lived with her and her immediate family for the period of roughly a year: with her husband Nārāyaṇ or *bābā* (father), as I referred to him, her daughter Prācī, who was my age, and her younger son Nākul, who was then studying to become a chemical engineer. During that time, Jyoti patiently guided my learning in several intensive sessions per day, each several hours long. If she had classes with other students, I was encouraged to sit in on those too. But my instruction was not confined to the music

room. Whether we were peeling winter peas atop her rooftop garden, preparing the individual spices that go into a *kālā masālā*, bringing the week's wheat berries to the mill for grinding, or making a deposit at the bank, music (discussed, heard, analyzed, felt) permeated all of our activities.

Though suffused in music, my relationship with Jyoti was not limited by it. As her constant companion, I attended all of the family's functions, calendrical and lifecycle. I was privy to the preparations that went into her daughter's wedding, such as the purchasing of gold, the booking of the marriage hall, the contracting of caterers, and of course, the sharing of meals and the showering of blessings. I had attended all the weddings of her nieces and nephews and, as per custom, slept in numerous marriage halls across Maharashtra with the wedding party. These gatherings proved useful in more ways than I imagined. Through them, I met other Ashtewales involved in music and learned more about the history of the family. In fact, it was after one such wedding in Dhār, not far from Ujjain, that we made a side trip to visit Anand kaka for the very first time.

Jyoti had therefore been much more than a music teacher to me; she has also been a mother, and her extended family treated me as her son. Indeed, as the years have passed and the demands of my work (and this dissertation) have taken me more and more away from music (though, ironically, closer to her in physical proximity) the portion of her role as mother has only increased. Much was at stake, then, in how I formulated my dissertation. How could this long-term project, which I had hoped to

bring me closer to my teacher and her family, instead implicate them in the marginalization of Muslims and in the appropriation of their tradition?⁵

AN EXCEPTIONAL STORY

As I become more familiar with the literature on the Muslim-Hindu shift, however, I began to see that the Ashtewales' story did not quite fit into existing categories as neatly as I had first thought. For one thing, it appeared that some family members, both historically and presently, could be considered "professional" musicians, particularly those who had earned their living through teaching, and those who had had the opportunity to perform before the rulers of various princely states. However, Hindus, and Brahmans in particular, though acknowledged to have been patrons and sometimes also disciples of professional musicians, were very rarely portrayed as professionals themselves, at least historically. Rather, the "profession" of music was thought to have been introduced by Muslims and gradually concentrated within their own families—that is until the reformist intervention of the twentieth century claimed to have democratized its transmission (for example, Neuman 1990:104-105, discussed below).

Secondly, the Ashtewales appeared to satisfy even the most stringent criteria of a "hereditary" musical family, as they had been playing for six generations, the last

⁵ Ethnomusicologists, particularly those who have become students in the traditions they study, are familiar with the conflict between loyalty to their teacher and their research. For statements on this problem in the context of South Asia, see Kippen (1988:xiii, 112-115; 2008), Slawek (1994), Weidman (2006:1-4), Qureshi 2007:512, and Dard Neuman 2004:234. For an outsider's critique, see Bakhle (2005:16-17, 48).

three of which were passed down within the family itself. However, like the term professional, “hereditary” was used almost exclusively for Muslim musicians. (The commonly noted exceptions—the Viṣṇūpūr lineage of *dhrupad* singers and the Banāras lineage of *tabla* players—are discussed below). In the end, the only available descriptors for the Ashtewales—“amateur” and “non-hereditary”—did not seem appropriate.

Finally, in none of the stories that present-day family members told about their past were Muslims portrayed as “jealously guarded,” wily, or as subjecting their Brahman students to humiliation and great difficulties, as was so often the case in the literature. Nor did it appear that the Ashtewales had been motivated by a reformist agenda to wrest music from their teachers’ tight grip. Instead, the stories I heard were of mutual respect, appreciation and concern. I had on more than one occasion heard family members utter the aphorism, “A Khan is always a good musician.” Of course, ethnographers need always take the statements of their interlocutors critically, knowing that narration, whether oral or written, is selective, creative and subject to the influence of social desirability. However, as some scholars have documented (Bakhle 2005:viii-ix) and my own experience has confirmed, it is not uncommon to encounter criticism of Muslim musicians today that resembles the criticisms made by reformist authors from the early twentieth century. In other words, I do not believe that the Ashtewales had anything to gain by describing their family’s relationship with their Muslim teachers as amicable or lacking the hardship that so often characterizes such relationships.

I finally came to realize just how out of place this family's story was in the historiography of Hindustani music when, as a young graduate student anxious to set about on my dissertation project, I managed to corner a leading ethnomusicologist of South Asia at a society meeting and broached the topic of my proposed research. To my surprise, this scholar immediately expressed doubt as to whether the Ashtewales were truly Brahman. Was it not possible, she suggested, that the family had managed to conceal their non-Brahman roots and thereby assimilate upwards into the caste hierarchy?

There is, of course, good reason to ask this question. Hindustani music is replete with tantalizing rumors of how, in James Kippen's words, "some prominent, high-caste, senior Hindu performers of today were once lowly, hereditary Muslims in their youth" (2008:138). In fact, Kippen's former student, Margaret Walker, has revealed how an entire community of musicians, the *kathaks*, made use of the late-nineteenth century British census project to elevate their caste standing from lowly entertainers to Brahmans (Walker 2004:133-139, Kippen 2008:137).⁶

⁶ Additionally, Daniel Neuman had earlier noted a similar attempt on the part of accompanying musicians such as *sārangī* and tabla players to disguise their family's origins and take up the more valued position of solo vocalists. Neuman suggested that the social transformation of accompanists into solo vocalists was "not unlike Sanskritization" (1977:239-40), a concept forwarded by Indian social anthropologist M.N. Srinivas (1952) and used to describe a process whereby an entire caste or group adopts the values or behaviors of a higher caste (Srinivas 1967:6). Dard Neuman, building on the work of his father, detailed some of the unique strategies that low-caste accompanying musicians used to become soloists (2004:266-334). However, he clearly rejected the label of Sanskritization, arguing that, although these processes appeared similar, sarangi players did not confine themselves to the adoption of the symbols of authority, but also, importantly, retained and relied on elements of their heterodox background (ibid:334-45). Others, however, such as historian Gyanendra Pandey, included under the purview of Sanskritization (and "Islamicization") certain caste mobilities of the nineteenth century that both supported and challenged the orthodoxy (2006:88-94).

Significantly, I do consider whether the Ashtewales had “passed” as Brahmans, particularly with respect to a purported change in their surname early in their history (see Chapter Two). However, even if this were the case, and I conclude that it probably was not, the Ashtewales’ participation in Hindustani music on a professional level prior to the reform need not be taken to indicate their non-Brahman past, a remnant of their life as something else. Instead, it could just as well be interpreted as a strategy to appear *more* Brahman, as such behavior was not as anomalous as current scholarship would lead us to believe. The history of the Ashtewale family, in other words, exceptional as it is to the standard historiography, was not, as I demonstrate in the following section, an exceptional story in the era prior to the reform.

ALTERNATIVE PATHS

Among the available accounts of early Brahman professional musicians, the name Bālkr̥ṣṇa-buvā Ichalkaranjīkar (1849-1926) figures prominently, as both he and his disciples, particularly Viṣṇu Digambar Paluskar (1872-1931), are routinely credited with having introduced and popularized *khyāl* singing in Maharashtra (e.g., V.H. Deshpande 1989:63). Balkrishna was undeniably a “professional” musician, having served as court singer or *darbārī gavāī* for several princely states in southern Maharashtra, including Miraj, Ichalkaranjī, and Sātārā. Furthermore, his methods of teaching, which occluded the use of notation or direct questioning, and his expectation that students perform domestic labor or *gurū sevā*, including such menial

tasks as collecting cow dung for cooking and feeding their guru his “hash pills,” conspire to portray Balkrishnabua as a traditionalist *ustād* as opposed to a modern reformer (Deodhar 174).⁷

Balkrishna’s career alone would probably suffice in demonstrating that Brahman professionalism predated the reform. However, when we consider the fact that several of Balkrishna’s teachers were also Brahman professionals, and that *they, too*, learned their craft in part from Brahman professionals, this point becomes irrefutable. From this vantage point, we see that the lineage of Brahman professional musicians standing behind Paluskar, the reformer who so infamously ushered Brahmans into classical music during the early twentieth century, was four generations deep and squarely located in the *early nineteenth century*.

Balkrishna first learned “classical music” (presumably dhrupad) from his father, Rāmcandra-buvā alias Rāmbhat, who was a singer in the service of a small principality called Jat (sometimes spelled “Jath”), located near the southern boarder of present-day Maharashtra not far from the city of Bijāpur, Karnātika.⁸ Ramchandra had earlier learned from one Bālājī-buvā, another Brahman court singer at the Maratha principality of Sātārā, which lay north of Jat and halfway towards the city of Pune. Following his father’s untimely death shortly after beginning his training,

⁷ Dard Neuman specifically placed Balkrishna in a list of other “ustads” that included Alladiya Khan (1855-1946) and Allaudin Khan (1869-1972), who in the early twentieth century taught “non-hereditary aspirants, principal among them Brahmins” (2004:9). Neuman’s formulation of the “Brahman ustad,” and the comparison of Balkrishna and other early Brahmans to ustads in general, is a subject I take up in Chapter Four.

⁸ The following details of Balkrishnabua’s teachers have largely been taken from Deodhar.

Balkrishna learned briefly with another Brahman dhrupad singer named Bhāurāv Kagwāḍkar, who served at the court of Kolhāpur, not far from Ichalkaranjī where Balkrishna lived with his maternal uncle following the early death of his mother, and from whence he later derived his last name.⁹ Balkrishna then received more extensive training from Rāmakṛṣṇa or “Devjī-buvā” Parānjpe (c.1798-1878), a Brahman singer who was employed at the central Indian state of Dhār at the time. He then moved on to Gwalior, where he learned from Vāsudev-buvā Jośi (d.1890), about whom little is known.¹⁰

The last two teachers of Balkrishna, Paranjpe and Joshi, are most famously known as having been among the first Brahman disciples of Hassu Khan (d.1859), who, along with his brother Haddu Khan (d.1875), founded the Gwalior School or *gharānā* of khyal singing. In fact, it was through these two Muslim brothers, as well as one of their cousins, Natthu Khan (d.1884) who preceded them at Gwalior, that many of the most famous Maharashtrian Brahman musicians came to khyal during the middle of the nineteenth century.¹¹ Nevertheless, Paranjpe (and perhaps Joshi,

⁹ I have not been able to find any information on Kagwadkar’s former training.

¹⁰ Both Paranjpe and Joshi were born into a politically powerful subcaste of Maharashtrian Brahmans that ruled much of Western Indian during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries known as the *Konkaṇastha* (after the Konkaṇ coastal region they inhabited) or the *Citpāvan* (“pure from the pyre,” after the supernatural process by which they are said to have originated) (Patterson 1968 and 1970; Johnson 1970; and Figueira 2002:121-122.

¹¹ In addition to Joshi and Paranjpe, the Brahman students of Hassu Khan included: Bābā Dīkṣit (d.1883); Gopāl Chandra Chakravarti alias Nalo Gopāl (1832-1899), a Bengali from Calcutta, who apparently taught Allauddin Khan of the Maihar gharana (Lubach 64-65); Kṛṣṇa Sāstrī Śukla of Ujjain (Wade 1984:41 citing Garg 1957:135, 256); one Lakśmaṇ-rāv; another Balkrishnabua not to be confused with Ichalkaranjīkar (Kobayashi 2004:175); and Masurekar-buvā (?). Among Haddu Khan’s Brahman students were: Viṣṇupant Chhatre (1840-1905); Bālājī-Sāheb Guruji (1846-1920); and Balaji-Saheb’s Guruji’s brother, Panna. Natthu Khan does not appear to have had any Brahman

though it is not known) also learned from Brahman singers, most notably Chintāman Mishra, a dhrupad singer who had been employed by the last Prime Minister or *Paiśvā* (commonly spelled Peshwa) of the Maratha empire, Bājīrāo II (r.1796-1818) in Pune, and who followed that ruler to his confinement by the British at Bithūr near Cawnpore (now Kānpur in present-day U.P.) until Bajirao's death in 1851 (G.H. Ranade 1989:29). It is further significant that Mishra, after Bajirao's death, moved to Gwalior where he taught two more Brahman professionals: Nārāyaṇ Śāstrī and Vamanbuvā Deśpāṇḍe (L.D. Joshi 1935:44-45).

Balkrishna's Brahman teachers, and even his teachers' Brahman teachers, were not the only Brahman professionals active during the early and mid-nineteenth century, or even the late-eighteenth century. I have already noted above some of the early Brahman disciples of the Gwalior gharana. In addition, at least one other lineage of Maharashtrian Brahman khyal singers, the Gokhale gharana, extends from the early nineteenth century to the present day, and is currently represented by Mādhav Ingle of Pune (L.D. Ingle 1935; R. Ingle [n.d.]; Kashalkar 2008; Bhiridkar 2007:221).¹² Other than these well-known, continuous traditions, there have been a

students of his own. However, his son, Nissar Hussain Khan (1844-1916), had a number of them. These included: Shankar Paṇḍit (1863-1917); Shankar Paṇḍit's younger brother, Eknāth Paṇḍit (1870-1950); Rāmākṛṣṇa-buvā Vajhe (commonly spelled "Vaze") (1871-1943), a court musician under Yaśvant-rāv Pawar at Dhār (?); Vaman-rāv Phaltankar (b.1830), and Shankar-rāv Pāṇḍe (Kobayashi 2004:174).

¹² The founder of the Gokhale gharana, Māhādev-buvā Gokhale (1816-1901), was originally from Miraj, and had gone to Hyderabad in his youth to learn khyal from one Zāin ul Abdīn Khān. There he had several Brahman co-disciples, including Antu-buvā Āpte of Rāmdurg and Rāvjī-buvā Masūrkar. An elder Brahman student of Zain with whom Mahadev had first learned in Satara, Bāpubuvā Budhkar, had originally sent Mahadev to Zain for further study (L.D. Ingle 1935:4). Yet another Brahman musician living in Hyderabad, though not connected to the Gokhale line and of Balkrishnabua Ichalkaranjīkar's generation (his brother-in-law, in fact), was Bālvant-rāv Nidhālkar

number of references to individual Maharashtra Brahman vocalists and their students attached to various Maratha courts going back as early as the mid-eighteenth century.¹³ Additionally, not all pre-reform Brahman vocalists were Maharashtra.¹⁴

(Deodhar 14).

¹³ Drawing on unspecified evidence from the *Peśvā Daftar* or the Maharashtra State Archives in Pune, L.D. Joshi (1935) and G.H. Ranade (1967) noted the presence of a number of Brahman dhrupad singers employed under various Peshwas beginning as early as Bāḷajī Bājīrāv alias Nānā Sāheb (r.1740-1761), who employed Pāvābhīmrao Bidnūrkar and Rāṇu Śimpī (Joshi 1935:36). Under “transitional” Peshwas of the eighteenth century (“madhye peṣvyācyā padarī hotā”), Joshi notes the singers Viṭhū Gurav in 1767, Trimbak Ātmārām in 1790, and Viṭhobā Pārnerkar in 1796 (ibid.:36, 39). Under Peshwa Bajirao II (r.1796-1818) are the aforementioned Chintamam Mishra and Vyankaṭ Nārsī (ibid.:45, G.H. Ranade 1967:29). Narsi had two well-known Brahman students in Pune: Sakhārāmbuvā Mircī from Satara, and Morya Gosāvī from Chincwad (Joshi 1935:45). Additional Maharashtra Brahman singers who G.H. Ranade placed in “the early nineteenth century” included: Rāvji-buvā Gogṭe of Bavda (a disciple of Devjibua?); Bhāu-buvā Gokhale of Kāgwād; Rāvji-buvā Belbāgkar; Bāpu-sāheb Budhakar, a dhrupad singer at the court of Chatrapatī Pratāpsinh Maharaj (of Satara?), who accompanied his master to Kāśī in exile (30); and Sākhārāmbuvā Kāshīkar (G.H. Ranade 1967:45). A notable Brahman dhrupad singer in the tradition of Chintaman Mishra and employed at the central Indian court of Indor under Tukoji-rāv Holkar (r.1844-1886) was Keśav-rāv Āpte (1862-1945) (Deodhar 190). Āpte’s nephew (sister’s son) was the prominent Gwalior khyal singer, Bālājī-Sāheb Guruji (c.1846-c.1920). One Pune-based Brahman professional singer from the later nineteenth century was Bālkrṣṇa Nārāyaṇ, alias Bālkoḃā Nāṭekar (1855-1910), who was also a bin student of Bande Ālī Khān, teacher of the Ashtewales (Rosse 1995:115).

¹⁴ Contrary to what is commonly believed, some of the earliest Brahman professional vocalists, even of khyal, were Bengali, not Maharashtraian (c.f. Daniel Neuman 1990:105). The most famous example of early Bengali Brahman vocalists is, of course, the Vishnupur gharana of Dhrupad singers, which was founded in the late eighteenth century by Rāmsānkar Bhāttacāryā (1761-1853?). Bhattacharya is widely believed to have learned from a Muslim ustād named Bahādūr Khan, though Charles Capwell (1991b) suggested he more likely learned from a panditji, Krṣṇmohan Gosvāmī. Sharmadip Basu (2011:275-279), drawing on lesser-cited Bengali language sources, has recently brought to light a number of even earlier examples of Bengali Brahman singers from the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century. They include the dhrupad singer Bishnuchandra Chakrabarty (1808-1900), who resided at the court of the Nadia family in Kriṣṇanagar east of Vishnupur; the khyal singer Raghunāth Roy (1750-1836), who served as chief revenue officer or *devān* in the area of Burdwan; and two early pioneers of *tappa* (another genre of raga-based music), though also singers of khyal, Rāmnidhī Gupta or Nidhu-bābū (1741-1839), a former Calcutta-based employee of the East India Company, and Kalīdās Chattopadhyāy (1750-1820), who was employed by Gopimohan Tagore of Pathuriaghata, grandfather of music reformer, Surendro Mohan Tagore (1840-1914). Leaving aside Chattopadhyay, who Basu described as the first “caste-Hindu” to become a professional exponent of raga music in Bengal (ibid.:279) and who is also discussed by other scholars (Rosse 1995:15, 25 n.6), all of these other Bengali Brahmans appear to have been professional-level amateurs in that they made their living, at least initially, from other means. Important for our purposes, however, is that *all* of these singers studied under Muslim teachers. Moreover, Chattopadhyay, like Balkrishnabua, was known for his ustādi-like idiosyncrasies for which he was accorded the alias Kālī Mirzā (ibid.). Imam, writing in the 1860s, made a noteworthy reference to a non-Bengali (and non-Maharashtraian) singer named Bābū

Nor were all pre-reform Brahman musicians vocalists.¹⁵ Crucially, for my purposes, many of these early Brahmans had Muslim teachers.

THE PROBLEM OF TWO DOMINANCES

A careful cataloging and discussion of these early Brahman professionals remains to be completed. Nevertheless, the basic outlines of many of their stories have long been available to scholars through a number of English-language publications (e.g., G.H. Ranade 1967; V.H. Deshpande 1973 and 1989; Wade 1984; Deodhar 1993). Remarkable, then, is the way in which these early Brahmans have been interpreted. For, rather than challenging the ascription of nationalist motivations

Rām Sahāi of Āllāhabād, who he described as “an outstanding exponent as well as a teacher of Hori, Dhrupad, Khyal and Tappa” and “a disciple of Jeewan Khan, brother of Chajju Khan” (1959a:20). Yet another notable figure was Jagannāth from Bhāvalpūr, who was apparently employed by the court of Shāh Jahān (r.1627-1676) (G.H. Ranade 1967:40).

¹⁵ The most famous example of a pre-reform Hindu (though not Brahman) instrumental tradition is that of the Banaras gharana of tabla players, which was founded at the turn of the nineteenth century by Rām Sahāi (1780-1826), also a student of Muslim ustads (Neuman 1974:151-52 citing Roach 1972 and Shepard 1976). In addition, one of the most well known traditions of *pakhāvaj* playing today, under which some tabla players also claim affiliation (e.g., Sureś Talwālkar), is named after Nānā-sāheb Pānse (1800-1885), a Brahman court musician under Tukoji-rāv Holkar II of Indore. Panse first learned mṛdang in the kīrtan style from his father, and later pakhawaj under Jodhsinh Pakhāvājī of Banaras (Shrimal 7). Two pakhawaj players of an older generation than Panse and employed by Peshwa Bajirao II (late eighteenth-early nineteenth century) were Banerjī and Nāgu Gurav (G.H. Ranade 29, Joshi 39). In addition to accompanists, there were also a fair number of early Brahman sitar and bin players, both amateur as well as professional. Nāro Āppajī Bhāve was employed at the court of the Peshwa Bālājī Bājīrāv alias Nānā Sāheb (r.1740-1761). Another sitar player, Bālājī Pant, was employed by Peshwa Raghunāth-rāv (r.1773-1774) at the rate of Rs. 500 per month (G.H. Ranade 28). Another sitar player of the early and middle nineteenth century was Viṇāyak Limye (1812-1872), a medical doctor by profession, who learned sitar with Biccu Khan, a court musician of the Maharaja of Satara (Rosse 1995:121). One of Limye’s students was Puruṣottam Gaṇeś Gharpure alias Anna Gharpure (d.1920), who Miner described as “a government employee from a family of Sanskrit scholars, who became quite famous as a sitar player in the early 20th century” (1993:157-58). I discuss other Brahman sitar and bin students of the famous nineteenth-century bin player Bande Ali Khan in Chapter Two.

to Brahman musicians or repealing the representation of Muslims as pedagogically intransigent, they have instead been used as evidence to hold up these very notions.

One might expect as much from an avowedly nationalist author such as G.H. Ranade, who understood even the earliest Brahmans of the Gwalior gharana as proto-nationalists, heralding the very same reform that many years later “reached its climax in the theoretical works of such great scholars as Pandit Bhatkhande and Pandit Vishnu Digambar” (1967:1, 36). Ranade also applauded the “hardship, privation, and even humiliation” (later, “daring and perseverance”) that these great nationalist men apparently went through in gaining knowledge from their inhospitable Muslim teachers (ibid.:34-35).

More surprising, however, is the continued reliance on these ideas in modern scholarly writing on Indian music, even in scholarship specifically critical of the reform. Beginning in the early 1990s with the work of Regula Qureshi, a growing number of scholars, guided by righteous intentions, have come to decry the chauvinism inherent in reformist discourse and champion the voices of Muslim musicians who have long been forced to negotiate the changes that it wrought. This includes, of course, Janaki Bakhle’s *Two Men in Music: Nationalism in the Making of an Indian Classical Tradition* (2005), the first monograph to focus critically on the reform.¹⁶ One of the main contentions of this dissertation is that despite—or indeed,

¹⁶ Bakhle’s book has undoubtedly generated productive discussion of music’s Hinduization, but it was not, contrary to the impression it conveyed, the first work to break the taboo of reading an exclusionary brand of nationalism or even communalism in Indian music. Seminal articles in this area by Qureshi (1991), Capwell (1991a) and Allen (1997), which go unreferenced in Bakhle’s text, earlier suggested these concerns. The work of these authors further complicates Bakhle’s critique of ethnomusicological scholarship on Indian music in general for lacking a “hermeneutics of suspicion” and for being

because of—these counter-hegemonic intentions, even this critical scholarship has tended to rely on, and at times reinforced, two assumptions inherited from reformist and colonialist discourse: (1) that the only thing conditioning Hindu participation in classical music was nationalist ideology, and (2) that the primary obstruction to Hindu participation was a jealously guarded Muslim monopoly over music. Though neither of these assumptions originated in this critical scholarship, they are nevertheless implicated in the critical project itself in that they actually lend support to its very claims. A focus on the more recent nationalist impetus behind Hindu participation in music, for example, may be used to challenge the claim to Indian music's alleged Hindu origins. Likewise, the existence of a previous Muslim dominance can be the measure by which the reform's marginalization of Muslims is criticized.

This unintended symbiosis may account for the undue staying power of these assumptions despite their obvious limitations. However, as expedient as these assumptions may have initially been, they have now hardened into truisms just as limiting as the ones they originally sought to displace; for the failure to look beyond nationalist motivations for Hindu musicians, together with the assumption of a previous and impervious Muslim monopoly over music, has inevitably led to the creation of a misleading historical paradigm of two consecutive dominances, one Muslim, the other Hindu, that reduces the complexities of musicians' identities and obscures the collaborations between Muslims and Hindus during an earlier era.

“unconnected to larger historical events” (2005:16).

THEORIZING BRAHMANS IN MUSIC

Over the course of several publications spanning more than a decade, Daniel Neuman has elaborated the most extensive theory of Brahmans in Hindustani music. The outline of that theory begins prior to the Muslim period, which for Neuman (and many others) is marked by the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate in the thirteenth century. Prior to that time, Neuman argued that Brahmans throughout the continent made up a significant portion of hereditary musical *specialists*, meaning either that their musical roles were auxiliary to their primarily religious roles, or that they took up music strictly as an avocation (i.e., they did not earn their livelihood from it). However, with the advent of Muslim rule, and the importation of foreign, Islamic conceptions of music, elite music was transformed into a professional occupation, an activity that was done for its own sake, not as a supplement to religion, and for which its remuneration constituted a livelihood. Brahmans started becoming professional musicians, Neuman argued, only relatively recently in the twentieth century and in conjunction with the efforts of reformers to elevate music's status.

Neuman's article, "Indian Music as a Cultural System" (1985), stands out as one of the most developed statements on this topic. Here, Neuman acknowledged that Brahmans participated in "cultivated" music prior to nationalism, and that they even predominated in both North and South India prior to the Mughal period, but they did not, apparently, take up music as a profession, which he defined as receiving remuneration for "performances" (elsewhere, he also included "teaching," 1990:94). Instead, Brahmans, along with members of the nobility, practiced music as a hobby or

“avocation,” not an “occupation.” Though Neuman acknowledged that some Brahmans may have practiced music at the professional level, he ultimately regarded them as insignificant, noting that we “hear little of them” (1985:102) and that such activity was antithetical to the “Brahmanical ideal,” according to which music was performed for “illumination” and “devotion,” not “remuneration” and “diversion” (ibid.:100, 102, 106). The very idea of music as a “profession” and separate from devotional contexts was, according to Neuman, alien to India and introduced by Islamic culture (ibid.:101. See also Neuman 1990:86, 104-105).¹⁷

Neuman did not cite any specific source for his theories of Muslim professionalization and pre-Muslim Brahman amateurism. However, they bear an uncanny resemblance to those forwarded by the colonial-period author, Charles Russell Day, whose biography I treat in more depth in Chapter Four. Day (1891) wrote nostalgically about a bygone era in which music was still the sacred preserve of virtuous and learned Brahman men, and not the lewd market commodity it had become under Muslim rule. For it was “especially under Mussalman rulers,” Day argued presaging Neuman, that music became a “distinct trade” and “passed into the hands of the lower orders and the unlearned” (ibid.:5).¹⁸

¹⁷ “There is no evidence that music was a hereditary profession among Brahmans in the pre- and early Islamic era, although as a specialty it was inherited, at least in the south. As I have indicated, the professionalization of art music as a hereditary occupation apparently began only with the coming of the Muslims. With two qualified exceptions, all gharanas have been founded by Muslims. The only Hindu hereditary traditions are the Banaras baj (style) of tabla playing and the Vishnupur gharana of dhrupad singers (and later) instrumentalists. In both these cases, the Hindu founders learned their art from Muslim ustads (Roach 1972: 30; cf. Shepard 1976; Owens 1969)” (Neuman 1990:104-05).

¹⁸ “The higher branches of the musical profession were formerly confined to either Brahmins (Bhagavatas) or to men of very high caste. Music being of Divine origin was regarded as sacred, and it was considered impious for any but men of the sacred caste to wish to acquire any knowledge of its

I deal more specifically with the relation of Neuman's theory to the history of a narrative of Muslim dominance in Chapter Four. More pertinent to our discussion here is Neuman's claim that the eventual adoption of musical professionalism by Brahmans was a direct result of the development of cultural nationalism. Neuman first hinted at this idea in an early article titled, "The Social Organization of a Musical Tradition: Hereditary Specialists in North India" (1977). Here, he proposed that the increase in the recruitment of non-hereditary and specifically Brahman soloists from Maharashtra and Bengal directly resulted from two larger movements: the physical exodus of hereditary Muslim professionals in the period following Indian independence and partition; and the "social respectability that the profession of music had begun to achieve" due to the reform (1977:240. See also 241, 244 n.15).

However, one of the clearest and most succinct articulations of Brahman musical professionalism with nationalism, as well as Muslim hereditary dominance, is found in the following passage from Neuman's book, *The Life of Music in North India* ([1980] 1990), which is still regarded today, more than thirty years after its initial publication, as one of the most authoritative sources on the social worlds and rituals of Hindustani classical musicians:

Historically, the profession of music had been hereditary, dominated by Muslim families whose knowledge of the art was a jealously guarded secret

principles.... In later years music became a distinct trade, especially under Mussalman rulers, and passed into the hands of the lower orders and the unlearned, and to this cause operating through a long succession of years the differences between the Hindustani and Karnatik systems must be in a great measure attributed" (Day 1891:5).

sanctified by similar traditions of caste specialization in other communities. Then [by the 1920s] in Maharashtra and Bengal, later in other regions, high-caste Hindus, usually Brahmans, apprenticed themselves to Muslim masters and became master musicians in their own right.... The social conditions prompting the transformation of Brahman interest in music from an avocational status to a professional one have yet to be systematically explored, but certainly it was a part of the cultural florescence accompanying the development of nationalism and the emergence of a public celebration of Indian civilization. Bengali middle-class interest in art music, for example, was decisively influenced by the views of Rabindranath Tagore. Whatever its genesis, however, Brahman attention to Indian art music gave it a respectable place in middle-class culture. (ibid.:20)

Neuman's explanation for what he saw as a shift towards Brahman professionalism was admittedly speculative; he noted that the issue had yet to be "systematically explored." However, it is curious that he nevertheless acknowledged that Hassu and Haddu Khan, two apparently "jealously guarded" Muslim hereditary musicians and the founders of the oldest gharana of Hindustani music "around the mid-nineteenth century," "had a number of Hindu disciples, most of them Brahmans from Maharashtra" (ibid.:105). In addition to Gwalior, Neuman also acknowledged that the Vishnupur gharana of dhrupad singers had been "almost exclusively Brahman," and that the Banaras "*bāj*" (playing style) of tabla players, which was

founded in the very early nineteenth century by Ram Sahai (1780-1826), constituted a “Hindu” hereditary tradition (ibid. and 1977:244 n.15).¹⁹ Moreover, as with the early Brahmans of the Gwalior gharana, “the Hindu founders” of these two traditions “learned their art from Muslim ustads” (ibid.:105).

It appears, then, that instead of taking these examples as challenges to his general theory, Neuman, like Ranade before him, understood these early Brahman professionals, particularly of the Gwalior gharana, solely in relation to the reform. Of course, Neuman did not directly impute nationalist motivations to these early Brahmans, as Ranade did. However, neither did he suggest any other impetus for Brahman professionalism in music beyond nationalism. In absence of an alternative, the burdensome historiography identified here is left to be assumed. In other words, so rare is a non-nationalist framework for discussing Brahmans in music, and so alien is the representation of Muslim teachers as being open and helpful, that even when these cases of early Brahman professionals are discussed, they tend to be read back through the filter of competing dominances. As we will see, this problem continues to reappear in the literature, like trying to fit a round peg of data into a square hole of theory.

Another ethnomusicologist writing around the same time as Neuman, Harold Powers, specifically recognized the existence of Brahman musicians prior to the “ever-growing flood of Hindu professional musicians like Vishnu Digambar”

¹⁹ Neuman described the Banaras tabla tradition as a “baj” or playing style and not as a gharana, as he viewed the use of the term “gharana” by accompanists as a very recent contrivance of non-hereditary musicians (Neuman 1977:239-240).

(1980:26). He pointed in particular to Palusakar's teacher's teacher, Vasudevua Joshi, who he described as being "part of the court musical establishment" (ibid.:23-24), and thus clearly a professional from before the reform. However, when pressed to offer an explanation for what he described as music's "Hinduization," Powers limited his response to various processes of "modernization," including the growing nationalist movement and the shift in patronage to a predominantly Hindu middle class (ibid.:26). Of course, there is no reason to doubt that Hindus, and Brahmans in particular, began to enter classical music as professional soloists in *large numbers* only during the twentieth century—that is, during a time in which the processes of nationalism and Hinduization were increasingly making this option available to them. However, even by Powers's own account, Brahman participation in music clearly had precedents for which nationalism could not account, but that had not been suggested.

Both Powers and Neuman took a somewhat conciliatory or at least uncritical approach to the Hinduization of classical music, Powers by claiming that Hindustani music's very survival in the modern twentieth century "depended... on its increasingly Hindu associations" (ibid.:27), and Neuman by limiting his description of the reformist agenda to what reformers claimed it to be: a celebration of Indian civilization and an attempt to bring back its respectability. Regula Qureshi (1991), by contrast, was one of the first to strongly critique the Hindu-lead reform movement.²⁰ Drawing on the writings of Viṣṇu Narāyaṇ Bhatkhaṇḍe (1860-1936), one of the most prominent figures of the reform and often discussed alongside Paluskar, Qureshi

²⁰ See Purohit's earlier critique of Bhatkhande (1988:463).

expressed her unflinching disapproval of what she saw to be the reform's marginalization of Muslim musicians.

Although Qureshi's overtly critical stance may be seen as a welcome relief to the heretofore-unquestioned adoption of the reform movement's own self-justification and praise, it was this same critical focus that may have discouraged her consideration any other force beyond nationalism for Hindu musical participation. Having said that, Qureshi did offer a single exception to the Muslim hereditary dominance of the profession: the kathaks (presumably) of Banaras, whom she described, without the benefit of Walker's later work referenced above, as Brahmans, "though of a relatively lower status" (1991:161). Important is the serendipity that Qureshi pointed to between "the presence of a Hindu Maharaja" in Banaras and "the religious requirements for music," which she claimed to have created the sole conditions "for the rise of a Hindu community of hereditary professionals" (ibid.). Thus, although Qureshi did suggest an alternative to Brahman professionalism via nationalism, it was strictly limited to Banaras. As we have seen, however, such alternatives were far more prevalent and geographically dispersed.

Since the foundational publications of Neuman, Powers and Qureshi, literature on Indian music, both North and South, has continued to portray Hindu and particularly Brahman musical professionalism as motivated almost exclusively by nationalism and set against an intransigent Muslim monopoly (see, for example, Wade 1984:42, 67; Capwell 1991a.:234, 238-239; Allen 1998:68-69; Kobayashi 2003:ix,1; Moro 2004:190-93; Bakhle 2005:4; Weidman 2006:4, 22, 115; Kippen

2006:4; Lubach 2006:8; Brown 2007:44; Manuel 2008:395-96; Peterson and Soneji 2008:7, 14; Gude 2009:43-51; Schofield 2010:488-489; Deo 2011:13; Utter 2011:52; Soneji 2012:22, 49, 54; Shultz 2012:112). I cite these examples not because I feel they are wrong in suggesting that a shift towards a Hindu hegemony was made possible by the discourses of nationalist reformers. Nor do I feel that they are unaware of the exceptions that exist to the nationalist-Brahman narrative or the stereotype of Muslim musicians. However, they have nevertheless relied on a rubric of nationalism that, at the very least, is inadequate to account for the many Brahmans who came to music as both amateurs *and* professionals prior to the reform, and who were often stewarded on their path to music by Muslim teachers.

BEYOND NATIONALISM

The scholar who has gone furthest in recognizing the shortcomings of nationalism for understanding Brahman participation in music is undoubtedly Lakshmi Subramanian, a historian who has focused on the nationalization of South Indian (*karnāṭak*) classical music in Madras during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Of course, Subramanian's primary aim has always been the opposite: to demonstrate how nationalism constituted a "powerful symbol" (2000:2) and significant "determinant" (1999:132) of the musical reform movement. Still, she has simultaneously reminded us that nationalism can also be an "overburdened concept" (2000:2). Most applicable to our concerns here are her assertions that nationalism has been "overestimated" in theorizing the "newly developing interest in music" among

the Indian elite; that nationalism was, at times, “only an afterthought in the individual pursuit of enthusiasts,” and that nationalist ideology, even when it did intervene, was sometimes deployed as an instrument to achieve more immediate and mundane goals, such as the building of institutions (1999:132). In these ways, Subramanian went beyond the claim I am making here—that early Brahman professionalism precluded nationalism because it *preceded* it.²¹ Instead, hers was a far more radical, even if partial, intervention: challenging the predominance of nationalism *within* the nationalist period itself. Subramanian, in other words, complicated the moment of the reform by suggesting there was more than nationalism going on even within it.

A similar attempt to open up a non- or extra-nationalist space within the reform movement was taken up by Erico Kobayashi in her dissertation, “Hindustani Classical Music Reform Movement and the Writing of History, 1900s to 1940” (2003). Kobayashi came out strongly against what she saw to be the over determination of Hindu nationalist motivations behind the activities of musical reformers in the early twentieth century. As a correction, she sought to “pluralize” the representation of the reform by pointing to the history of individuals who took different approaches or came from unexpected social positions. She also insisted on distinguishing the discourse of the reform from its practice, suggesting that even when reformers advocated exclusionary nationalist ideas in their writing, it did not necessarily reflect their lived experience, which was more mixed and socially

²¹ Elsewhere, Subramanian also briefly posited an earlier genesis of the “Brahmanization” of karnatak music in the seventeenth-century court of the Nayakas of Tanjore (2007b:22).

ambiguous. Nor did such discourse reflect reformers' "primary" or stated motivations and rationales. While any effort to disentangle discourse from practice is more problematic than Kobayashi appears to have admitted, her argument nevertheless allows us to read nationalism in reformist discourse without reducing its discourse to nationalism.

It should also be noted that Kobayashi is one of the only scholars to have mounted a direct challenge to the notion that Muslim musicians were reluctant teachers. To this end, she provided long lists of "non-hereditary" musicians (all of whom, problematically, happened to be Hindu, and some of whom, like Balkrishnabua, were also questionably non-hereditary) who learned from "hereditary" musicians (all of whom happened to be Muslim) at the very same time (the early twentieth century) that reformers were claiming such relationships to be impossibly hostile. Kobayashi further admitted that Hindus had been learning from Muslims even earlier, "from the mid-nineteenth century" and particularly in the context of aristocratic patronage, as in the case of the Ashtewales. However, she purposely chose to exclude such cases because they "existed before the reform" (2003:173-174, 245.). Here we again see that the reform (and its critique) has generally served to delimit the scope of scholarly investigations of Brahman musicianship in general. However, Kobayashi's explicit omission of these early pre-reform Hindu musicians is still important: it indicates a need to consider these musicians differently, that their participation can not be explained with reference to the typical nationalist narrative.

Bringing this partial state of our current understanding of early Brahman musicians into sharper relief is a brief remark made by Dard Neuman, son of Daniel Neuman, in two footnotes to his dissertation. Here Dard Neuman contended that non-hereditary Brahmans as late as the late-nineteenth century, “apprenticed themselves to this musical tradition out of multiple interests, needs, hopes and aspirations, none of which involved the sense that one was participating in a national cultural tradition” (2004:9 n.11). Taking the now familiar example of late-nineteenth-century Brahman disciples of the Gwalior gharana, he asserted, in contrast to his father, that, “Brahmanical interest did not fall under the umbrella of a national tradition, the desire to learn and perform must therefore be seen in another light” (ibid:437 n.508).

AIM AND SCOPE OF THE DISSERTATION

This dissertation is a partial response to the need, emergent in the foregoing works, to retheorize Brahman participation in classical music beyond the light of nationalism and thereby reframe our polarized understanding of the Muslim-Hindu shift. My focus on the Ashtewale family, who came to music through the elite path of patronage in the early nineteenth century, has admittedly predisposed me towards seeing early Brahman participation in terms of aristocratic patronage and discipleship, which remains an understudied, though commonly acknowledged, form of musical transmission. However, almost all of the early Brahman professionals mentioned above, such as Balkrishnabua, came from more humble backgrounds: their ancestors were the singers of devotional song (*kīrtan-kār-s*), the caretakers of temples (*pujārī-*

s), and narrators of India's great epics (*kathak-s*).²² Unlike the Ashtewales, these musicians *began* their musical journeys with the goal of becoming professionals, a choice that was no doubt related to their class position. As such, their particular stories may throw up different conclusions regarding the motivations and circumstances that led to Brahman participation in classical music. However, whatever those motivations and circumstances were, they are likely to have lain beyond the pale of nationalism.

For early Brahman musicians, whether patrons-turned-performers or lower-status professionals from other allied fields, the motivation to take up classical music cannot be reduced to any single determining factor. Part I of this dissertation therefore explores, in three separate chapters, three factors influencing early Brahman participation in music beyond nationalism suggested by the particular history of the Ashtewale family. Chapter One, "Colonial Consequences," reveals the indirect fillip that the colonial policy of "indirect rule" provided to newly wealthy colonial collaborators, such as the Ashtewales, as well as to the rulers of indirectly ruled princely states, in expanding their patronage and participation in music. In doing so,

²² The social linkages between these primarily religious genres and Hindustani music constitute a rich area in which little research has been done. Hindustani music's connection with the kirtankar tradition is most famously represented by V.D. Paluskar, the son of a kirtankar from Kurundwad near Miraj, who later became one of the most successful classical music reformers of the twentieth century. However, the transformation of devotional musicians into classical musicians appears to have been a much wider and older phenomenon about which little has been written. My own research has revealed several lineages of contemporary classical musicians who hail from families of hereditary religious specialists, one being the Umdekar family of Gwalior, currently represented by sitarist, Shriram Umdekar. Shultz (2012:47) noted that the Peshwas' patronage of various "Brahman performing arts" "led to a movement of performers and song genres between temple and court contexts." Both Jones (2009) and Ho (2013, 2006) discussed mutual borrowings between devotional and classical musics, but focused more on the musical-structural connections.

this chapter also counters two prevalent views of the consequences of colonialism for Indian music. The first, derived from the colonial assertion of non-intrusiveness, is that music, like religion, was granted a special *autonomy* from colonial governance. The second, often forwarded as a critique of the first, is that colonialism brought about unhindered *catastrophe*. Both of these views tend to overlook the temporal and geographic diversity of “colonialism” in India, while at the same time rooting themselves in North India during the late nineteenth century when colonial authority shifted from the East India Company to the British crown. This chapter focuses instead on the lesser-studied earlier period of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, during which the Company was more invested in creating the illusion of non-interference by encouraging rulers, who they otherwise divested of overt political authority, to bolster their conspicuous consumption and thereby project the appearance of independence.

While colonialism may have provided an economic ground for much Brahman patronage and participation in music, it does not help us to explain why this newly elite Brahman family, residing in one of the holiest Hindu cities of India (Ujjain) and in a state ruled by Maharashtrian Hindus (the Sindhyas of Gwalior), took up a music (the *sitār* and one of its ancestors, the *bīn*) practiced largely by Muslim hereditary professionals in the context of the Islamicate court. Chapter Two, “Mughal Precedents,” considers early Brahman musical participation in light of other cultural and political continuities that followed a shift from Mughal to Maratha rule in Central India during the eighteenth century. In addition to providing a context in which to

understand Hindu patronage of Mughal traditions, this chapter also serves to complicate the prevailing view of the Marathas as proto-Hindu nationalists, who sprang from an anti-Mughal resistance movement.

Reaching beyond this pragmatic understanding of Brahman musical patronage as a symbol of Mughal legitimacy, Chapter Three, “Hindu Continuities,” asks whether this music, though cultivated largely within an Islamicate milieu, nevertheless allowed early Brahman musicians to imagine their connection to an ancient Hindu past. This question necessarily situates us at the center of a contentious debate over the continuity and cultural identity of Indian classical music. This chapter argues extensively, perhaps more than any existing effort, against the actual (i.e., musical-structural) continuity between the music we today call “classical” and the music described in *truly* ancient treatises of music. At the same time, it also leverages existing scholarship in new ways to suggest that the very *claim* to continuity (and not actual continuity) is itself one of the most enduring and convincing continuities of this tradition. This view contrasts with one currently in vogue: that the idea of Indian classical music as ancient and Hindu is instead an Orientalist construction, which became widespread only after nationalists adopted it for their own purposes at the end of the nineteenth century. Without disregarding the specific form and contexts in which the continuity narrative took shape in both colonial and nationalist discourse, this chapter, by laying bare a deeper continuity behind the claim to continuity, argues for the need to keep open the possibility that Brahman musicians such as the

Ashtewales imagined their participation in music in Hindu terms and beyond Mughality even in the early nineteenth century.

Having established in Part I that nationalism was not the only sign under which Brahmans entered music, Part II focuses critically on the presumed obstacle to Brahman participation in music prior to nationalism: the miserly Muslim ustad from whom the tradition needed to be liberated. The notion that Muslims held a jealously guarded monopoly over music, while not new, has never been a static, but has developed in subtle increments over a period of more than a century and through the writings of authors from a diverse array of subject positions and divergent political agendas. Chapter Four, “Muslim Dominance,” provides a fine-grained look at the development of this narrative beginning with the earliest English-language sources from the late-eighteenth century and continuing to the present. Conventional wisdom assumes that the narrative of Muslim dominance as we know it today was introduced by colonial authors as a manifestation of their attempt to discredit Muslim rulers, whom they wished to succeed. National reformers allegedly adopted this narrative wholesale, along with the earlier mentioned narrative of Hindu origination, finding in them an acceptable way, while living under a colonial government, to maintain pride in native traditions (albeit, anciently remote) and also rationalize their current distance from them. What Chapter Four reveals, however, is that the Muslim dominance narrative, though *partly* seeded by colonial authors, truly came to fruition only in the writing of reformers. I furthermore show how even the colonial preface to the narrative drew heavily on a variety of preexisting criticisms, both European and

Indian, thus priming this narrative with contemporary salience. Lastly, I reveal the inconspicuous reproduction of this narrative in present-day writing on Indian music—even in the work of scholars critical of the reform movement and its consequences for Muslim musicians.

If Chapter Four reveals the construction of and continued investment in the idea of an intransigent Muslim past, then Chapter Five, “Contingent Identities,” unearths a deeper, more epistemological problem that plagues our understanding of Indian music’s “Muslim” period, as well as its pre-Muslim, “Hindu” past: a reliance on a homogeneous, static and non-contingent form of Hindu and Muslim identities. This problem is registered in the literature in a number of subtle ways. We find it, of course, in the very claim to a shift in the twentieth century from an undifferentiated class of Muslim hereditary professionals to a fully conscious Hindu bourgeoisie. It informs a counter-response to this historical claim: that Indian music was really “Hindu” before it was “Muslim,” and so the twentieth-century shift should more accurately be characterized as a “re-Hinduization.” It crops on in a related insidious argument that those Muslims who did dominate the past were not truly Muslim at all, but Hindus who reluctantly converted to Islam. It lies behind an important explanation for why Muslims came to dominate Indian music in the first place: that the practice of endogamy in the Muslim community naturally encouraged their secretiveness. Finally, this dichotomous understanding of Hindu and Muslim identity is embedded in the very terms we use to refer to Muslim and Hindu musicians respectively, “ustad” and “guru,” “hereditary” and “non-hereditary.” I explore all of

these problems in Chapter Five, the aim of which is to bring greater awareness to the historical contingencies of musicians' identities. I suggest that instead of understanding what happened in the twentieth century as a shift from "Muslim" to "Hindu," the primary shift, which was never as complete as the term "shift" implies, was towards the greater defining of those very categories.

Chapter Six, the last of the dissertation, dives deeper into the history of Hindu-Muslim discipleship in the Ashtewale family, thereby providing a specific case of non-hereditary Hindus who, in contrast to the narrative of Muslim dominance, learned directly—and successfully—from Muslim masters. Their story suggests that it was in fact due to the pluralism with which Muslim musicians approached their art and their willingness to teach Hindus that a Hinduization of music was even made possible. This does not mean, however, that the Muslim musicians with whom the Ashtewales learned failed to enact a certain amount of resistance toward sharing their art, especially when it came to playing for ill-mannered audiences or having their records played in public commercial spaces—situations, in other words, that were felt to compromise their honor and integrity as elite musicians. This type of resistance has often been misconstrued as demonstrating Muslim musicians' insularity and their reluctance to teach outsiders, but it is not unlike the reluctance that these Muslim musicians' Hindu patrons and disciples had towards these very same activities, though usually understood as reflecting their elite class position. The upper-class conceit of Hindu patrons and the anti-populist "orthodoxy" of Muslim ustads are not, to be sure, generally seen as related. This chapter, however, views them as emerging

together out of the same crucible of aristocratic discipleship, wherein both the Ashtewale family and their Muslim teachers forged mutually reinforcing dispositions of elitism that nevertheless spoke to their specific, albeit ambiguously defined, social identities.²³ Certainly there is much that has threatened to divide the Ashtewales from their Muslim teachers, be it the narrow politics of Hindu nationalism or the cultural expression of this politics in the musical reform movement, topics I address here as well. Indeed, the fact that ties between the Ashtewales and their Muslim teachers did not generally last past the mid-twentieth century, the point up to which I follow their story, might be considered evidence for the eventual success of these forces. Stories of a tradition of Hindu-Muslim discipleship nevertheless remain. If nothing else, they may serve as an alternative imaginary beyond the social limitations of the present.

Taken together, the two parts of this dissertation aim to move beyond a binary understanding of historical change, highlighting the negotiations and concessions that contributed to what might more accurately be described as a Hindu hegemony and not a simple “dominance.” Although the cursory outline of the family’s history given at the outset of this introduction appears to analogize the shift from one dominance (Muslim) to another (Hindu), I suggest that their story better shows us the limits of the paradigm of dominance on either side. In this family, as in so many others, neither do we see an impenetrable Muslim past in which Hindus were occluded, nor a past Hindu participation built on the pretext of nationalism. It may have been the case that

²³ I refer here to the temporary inversion of patron and performer in the context of discipleship. See, for example, Qureshi 2000:16-17 and Brown 2007.

the growth of a Hinduized public sphere privileged the continual and increasingly professionalized presence of the Ashtewale family in music at the same time that it forced Muslim hereditary musicians to seek other professions. However, it is anachronistic to say that nationalism motivated or influenced the entrance of early Brahmans such as Ashtewales into this field at such an early period.

In historicizing the prevalence of Brahmans in North Indian classical music, in teasing out their multiple points of entry and the various circumstances that led to their assumption of performing roles in this tradition, my project is akin to others that seek to place the reform, or at least the elements that came to define it, in a longer perspective (e.g., Capwell 1985; Bor 1988; Ashok Ranade 1989 and 2010; Rosse 1995; Bakhle 2005; Subramanian [2006] 2011; Schofield 2010). Most of these works begin either in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, positing a short and rather sudden shift from princely court to middle-class populace. As Schofield (2010) has convincingly revealed, however, the elements that contributed to this change clearly have their roots in earlier formations. This dissertation is more concerned with the precedents of this struggle to forge a national, hegemonic music tradition, the alternative paths of Hindu musical participation that preceded the processes of nationalization and Hinduization.

In arguing for an alternative to the paradigm of competing dominances, it is not my aim to excuse or deny the real injustices and exclusions that resulted from a Hindu-led reform movement. I do not hold up the stories of early Brahman musicians and their Muslim masters to discredit the existence of a later-day Hindu hegemony or

to alternatively suggest that Hindustani music is somehow immune to the antagonisms that plague society at large. Though Hindustani music offers numerous examples of people and practices that transcend such problems, it is not, as is sometimes suggested, an “island of communal harmony” (Manuel 2008:81) or what Regula Qureshi has called, in critique of this idea, a “magic circle” (2002:87) or social “bubble” (2000:32). Surely it is important to acknowledge that the celebration of Hindustani music’s “secularism”—understood as the equal acceptance of all religions—often stems from a noble desire to critique communalism (I address this conflict in Chapter Five). However, as the activist anthropologist Charles Hale has reminded us, we need not, as scholars critical of social inequities, forsake social complexity to promote truths that are politically instrumental (2008:2). The stories of Brahman musicians and their Muslim teachers I present here serve as reminders of the risk of essentialism inherent in our work as social and cultural historians. In bringing attention to these risks, it is my hope to come to an even more nuanced critique of the inequalities that lay hidden in the history of this art form.

I. BRAHMANS BEYOND NATIONALISM

1. COLONIAL CONSEQUENCES

DOCUMENTING A PATH TO MUSIC

I removed the document from its cylindrical, wooden container and gently unfurled its coiled edges. The paper was thick and despite its age it held up well. A large paragraph in Persian adorned the primary side of the page. Perpendicular to this was a smaller, but similarly ornamented paragraph in English. Signatures and seals graced both the front and the backside. Fragments of yet another script, *Modī*, a cursive shorthand of *Marāṭhī* that was widely used for business and administration from at least the sixteenth century to the early twentieth (Prachi Deshpande 2007:84), could be seen embedded in the page, indicating that the paper had been recycled from portions of older documents. It was thus a palimpsest, which revealed aspects of its own physical history in addition to the history to which the later writing referred.

Ethnographic methods brought me to this document; it was an heirloom of the *Āṣṭewāle* (hereafter *Ashtewale*) family from the central Indian city of Ujjain with whom I had been studying sitar. Like their tradition of music, it had been handed down from father to son for six generations. Though I came to it through ethnography, this document quickly became my entry point into working with historical materials. I refer to it at the outset because it reflects both my own process of coming to history, and the central historical issue this chapter seeks to address: it was this document that allowed the *Ashtewales* to become one of the most renowned

families for both the patronage and performance of North Indian classical music in their home city during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The document is a hereditary pension or *sanad* granted to an ancestor of the family in 1818 by the ruler of the state of Bhopāl, but arranged for and guaranteed by the British Government on the eve of its rise to becoming the self-proclaimed “paramount” power of the subcontinent. Fixed at the considerable amount of six thousand rupees per year, this pension literally changed their fortunes. Not only did it enhance their income, but it also freed that income from dependence on the land they had administered. Soon after receiving it, they moved from the village of Āṣṭā (hereafter Ashta), after which they later took their family name, to the nearby city of Ujjain. There they built a gracious mansion or *wāḍā* that has remained in their family for almost two hundred years. Thus, once the rural managers or workers of a class of landed gentry, the Ashtewale family soon became members of the urban elite.²⁴

As befitting of their newly acquired status, and in emulation of the rulers of their region, the Ashtewales began patronizing musicians affiliated with the surrounding courts, musicians who comprised the finest professionals of their day, and who hailed from hereditary families of Muslim musicians. At the same time, the Ashtewales also learned from these musicians, partaking in a venerable tradition of aristocratic discipleship, which for them lasted into the early twentieth century. Thus

²⁴ Their official designation was *amil*, meaning worker or manager (Persian). As I discuss in the second section of this chapter, the Ashtewales managed the collection of revenue (*jāhgīr*) for the person who held this right in Ashta, the *jāhgīrdār*. Bayly described amils as a “service gentry,” “an intermediate class between the state and the substantial peasant in the form of a group of hereditary office-holders” (Bayly 1983:466).

began this family's journey into music on a path that was paved by their opportune connection to India's new colonial government.

This chapter focuses on the force that both helped prepare the ground for the Ashtewale family's participation in music, and that provided an unlikely fillip to musical patronage in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth more generally. Taking this family's history as a point of departure, I argue that British colonialism, expressed through the policy of indirect rule, which aimed to make local rulers politically dependent on the Company while preserving their symbolic legitimacy and ability to deliver the state's resources for British use (Fisher 1984:420), "indirectly" created conditions by which musical patronage flourished in native princely states during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

The significance of this argument lies in the fact that colonialism is more often assumed to have had disastrous consequences for musical patronage—that is when it is considered to have had any consequences at all. Indeed, in an attempt to overturn the longstanding assumption of music's colonial autonomy, historian Janaki Bakhle argued that the intrusion of indirect rule in India during the early nineteenth century transformed princely patronage into "a regime of colonial discipline," a highly bureaucratized system of contract labor in which musicians, like wrestlers, jugglers and other court entertainers, faced dismal working conditions and severe penalties (2005:12).

Beyond its deleterious effects on musical patronage, colonialism has also been credited with a host of other musical calamities. Colonial writings are routinely

identified, for instance, as the source of the justifications that Hindu nationalist reformers used to marginalize and largely displace Muslim hereditary performers in the twentieth century—the primary justifications being that Indian music was originally and authentically “Hindu,” and that it had been usurped and jealously guarded by families of illiterate Muslim professionals. (I provide a more nuanced interpretation of each of these narratives in Chapters Three and Four). The imposition of Victorian sexual mores, furthermore, is customarily seen as having first debased and then criminalized an esteemed tradition of courtesan song and dance performed by women known in the North as *tawaif*-s and in the South as *devadāsī*-s (e.g., Post [1987] 2007:104; Srinivasan 1985:1873; Oldenburg 1991:265–66; Allen 1997; Maciszewski 1998:130–134; Walker 2010:290; Anurima 2010:310–312; and Soneji 2012:6–7).

Finally, scholarly debate on the social and cultural impact of colonialism in India in general and outside of music has tended to focus on its more divisive and ruinous consequences, such as the hardening of divisions between castes, languages, and religious communities;²⁵ the underdevelopment of the Indian economy;²⁶ and the demise of traditional knowledge systems in the wake of European modernity.²⁷

²⁵ For a recent example focusing on colonialism’s social divisiveness, see Peter Gottschalk’s *Religion, Science, and Empire: Classifying Hinduism and Islam in British India* (2012), which “offers a study of how, through the British implementation of scientific taxonomy in the subcontinent, Britons and Indians identified an inherent divide between mutually antagonistic religious communities” (from the book’s description). An early well-known example is Nicholas Dirks’s work on caste (1992, 2001), which argued that the modern notion of caste emerged from “a social system that was *decapitated* by colonial rule” (1987:8, my emphasis). Even for scholars skeptical of Said’s critique of Orientalism, colonialism still forces social rupture, even if unintended. Madison Mines, for example, demonstrated how the Company’s introduction of a more institutional, bureaucratic and legal means of regulating civic life at the end of the eighteenth century, though meant to protect against the Company’s own abuses, worked instead to dissolve an earlier type of relationship between the British and Indians based

Against this tendency to assume either catastrophe or autonomy in the face of colonialism (the latter of which is explored further below), I argue for an intermediate perspective, one that sees the consequences of colonialism for music as neither necessarily direct nor unambiguously disastrous. This is not to deny colonialism's more dire consequences, but to suggest that the consistent foregrounding of them has had a disturbing consequence of its own: it has obscured the role of colonial policies in actually propelling the musical efflorescence that occurred during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, even if the function of that efflorescence in British eyes was to obscure colonial intrusions into the political life of the court. As a way of moving beyond a monolithic understanding of colonialism's effects, this essay reveals an under-appreciated connection between the policy of indirect rule, and the

on pragmatic and personal alliances, which Mines described as "hybrid" (2001:38–40).

²⁶ Gyan Prakash, for example, discussing the wretched living conditions of Bombay's working poor in the late nineteenth century that eventually led to an epidemic of bubonic plague, noted that, "the unsanitary and disease-prone living conditions, after all, were the result of the industrialization-on-the-cheap forced upon by colonialism" (2010:71, also 65). See also Prasannan Parthasarathi's *The Transition to a Colonial Economy: Weavers, Merchants and Kings in South India, 1720–1800*, in which he argued that poverty in South Asia was even more deeply tied to colonialism than has been currently assumed. As he put it, "poverty in South Asia did not originate with deindustrialization in the nineteenth century, as an earlier stream of writings argued, but with the profound political reordering which accompanied British rule" in the late eighteenth century (2001:5). Earlier, David Washbrook's work on law and agrarian society under colonialism (1981) attempted to bring a more nuance perspective to earlier functionalist and economic theories of colonial underdevelopment in India by looking more closely at the social and political institutions through which "colonial exploitation" was nevertheless articulated. Washbrook thus continued to see "colonial rule as having had definite and negative consequences for the development of advanced capitalist forms of production" (ibid.:720).

²⁷ Sheldon Pollock's publications over the first decade of the twenty-first century, for example, have generally assumed a direct link between the establishment of European colonialism in the mid-eighteenth century and the collapse of a two-millennia-long Sanskrit tradition. Europe, Pollock claimed, "produced a very different, uncompromising modernity that, through colonial dissemination, would eventually contest and undo the Sanskrit intellectual formation" (2001b:6, 24). Another of his contemporaneous essays (2001a), though it begins by casually linking European colonialism to "the death of Sanskrit" (ibid.:393-394), ends by insisting on more "multifarious and sometimes elusive" reasons for its death (ibid.:416. See also Pollack 2002:431).

expansion of musical patronage, the latter of which is commonly perceived to have developed independently and in spite of the former.

The first section of this chapter illustrates this argument within the broad context of native state patronage for music during this period. Here I demonstrate how princely states that became constrained politically under indirect rule simultaneously flourished musically. I follow this with an explanation for this apparent paradox, and then suggest, using a number of specific examples, why scholars have yet to account for it.

The second section focuses in on a specific example in which indirect rule had indirect consequences for promoting musical patronage among existing—and in this case—new elites: the Ashtewale family. It is true that as gentry, the Ashtewales existed on a different social level than did the rulers of states, who I take as my primary examples in section one. However, the dynamic I identify here between musical patronage and colonial policy is similar for each of these groups. I do not, furthermore, follow the Ashtewale's example past the point of their colonial connection to demonstrate their actual journey into the world of aristocratic patronage. This is taken up in Chapter Six. Here, I instead focus on the history leading up to their receipt of their colonial-mediated pension, the moment, I argue, that made possible their life in music.

The story of this pension takes place in the context of the displacement of one empire (the Marāṭhās) by another (the British). The historical narrative of the second section therefore hinges on this shift in empires, situating the role of the Ashtewale

family therein. I begin with the lead up to the British war against the Piṇḍārī (1816–1818), the “predatory hordes” of mercenaries whose raids on British territories from their bases in the wild and mountainous areas of Mālwā in central India served as a pretense for British incursions into Maratha-controlled regions. Drawing on archival sources of dispatches between British officers in the field, I reveal how an ancestor of the Ashtewales, who was strategically situated in this region, provided crucial aid to invading British forces, an act that later came to justify the grant of the pension. I then detail how the events of the third and final Anglo-Maratha war of 1818 led to the pension’s conferral. Finally, I continue to follow the developing relationship between the Ashtewale family and the British during the settlement of Central India (1818–1823), during which the Ashtewale family supplied British officials with intelligence on the secret communication of Maratha rulers.

From the density of historical details considered in this section, a clear image of the Ashtewales’s role in the political events of western India in the early nineteenth century emerges. This image most immediately helps us to appreciate the circumstances that led to the conferral of the family’s hereditary pension by the British and by extension, the role of colonialism in creating new opportunities for patronage among native elites during this period. For the larger goal of this dissertation, however, the realization of colonialism’s contribution to this process is significant, for it suggests an alternative history of Brahman participation in Hindustani music that precedes the development of modern nationalism in the later part of the nineteenth century.

THEORIZING COLONIAL IMPACT

Indirect Rule

The Ashtewale family emerged as patrons of music during an extraordinary period in which many of India's native states—those ruled by princes and technically outside of British-ruled India—signed treaties of “subsidiary alliance” with the British. On the surface, these treaties granted British protection to autonomously functioning states by requiring them to host and support (subsidize) a British contingent on their territory, otherwise known as a “subsidiary force.” In reality, however, these treaties attempted to deprive local rulers of their political independence by stripping them of their territories, dismantling their armies, banning them from engaging with other states without oversight, and placing British officials (titled Residents from 1764), who were exempted from local laws, in control of crucial aspects of internal affairs as royal succession (Fisher 1984:420-22 and 1991). Of course, colonial officials were not always successful in imposing these conditions; nor were local rulers without their own methods of subverting them, as recent work on princely India has argued (e.g., Bhagavan 2003; Ramusack 2004; Hira Singh 2007; Ikegame and Major 2009; Zutshi 2009). Nevertheless, the aim of these treaties as they developed over the course of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was to leave Indian rulers, in C.A. Bayly's evocative phrase, with “nothing more than a husk of royal grandeur” (1983:6, 199-200, 464), or what Nicholas Dirks has called a “hollow crown” (1987). Though nominally outside of British controlled India,

indirectly ruled states came under a system of rule that was politically invasive, but that also, ironically, proved beneficial for patronage.

The first generation of native states to sign treaties with the British, such as Sūrāt in 1759, Āwadh in 1765, Haiderābād (commonly Hyderabad) in 1798, Tanjāvur (hereafter Tanjore) in 1799, and the Karnātak or Carnatic in 1801, did so before the end of—and in the majority of cases, within—the period of Richard Wellesley Governor-Generalship of the East India Company (1798–1806), known for its bold political and military initiatives (Harrington 2009:65).²⁸ Following a period of British disillusionment with the subsidiary alliance system that Wellesley extended, as well as the subsequent appointment of several Governor Generals committed to stemming and even reversing British expansion (Lord Cornwallis in 1806, Sir George Barlow 1806–1809, and Lord Minto 1809–1813), British rule, both direct and indirect, rose dramatically during the period of the next Governor General, the Marquis of Hastings (1813–1823).²⁹ This was particularly the case between 1816 and 1819, the more restricted period under consideration in the second section of this chapter in which the Marathas were defeated and when the Ashtewales received their hereditary pension.

By 1823, the year that Hastings left India, indirectly ruled “princely India” as opposed to directly ruled British India had largely been defined on British maps

²⁸ A helpful visualization of the growth of early indirect rule is found on the map titled, “The Expansion of British Power, 1766–1819,” in Schwartz ([1974] 1994:55), freely available online via the University of Chicago’s *Digital South Asia Library*, <http://dsal.uchicago.edu>.

²⁹ Following the Nepalese war of 1814–1816, Governor General Francis Rawdon-Hastings (1754–1826), whose previous title was the Lord of Moira, was given a new title, the Marquis of Hastings. For the sake of clarity, I refer to him here by this latter name.

(Ramusak 2004:80), though expansion continued until 1841 (Fisher 1984:402). It is a period that has been described by the British government's own contemporaneous historians as "the epoch in which the complete supremacy of the British power all over India was avowed and acknowledged" (Malcolm 1826:v; see also Aitchison 1876:7; Chowskey 1948). While such sweeping and vainglorious statements are inappropriate for any period of British rule in India, it is nevertheless the case that by this time, the British ruled around one third of the subcontinent directly (Harrington 2009:136 citing Fisher 1993:xvi).

The largest province of princely India in the early nineteenth century was the Central India Agency, a colonial assemblage of six major native states that included Gvāliyar (hereafter Gwalior), Indor (Indore), Bhopāl, Dhār, Devās, and Jāvrā (Jaora), ninety-four minor states, and an area of 53,285.46 square miles and 6,325,240 "souls" (Aitchison 1893:2). It is here, in the context of the formation of this province by the East India Company, that the Ashtewale story takes place. Under the direction of skilled colonial administrators such as Brigadier-General John Malcolm, later Sir John Malcolm, Governor of Bombay (1769–1833), the British concluded hundreds of treaties and agreements with a wide range of subjects in Central India, from powerful princes, to petty grant holders, to the leaders of plundering groups. Malcolm, in fact, was the primary official who negotiated the Ashtewale pension, which was appended to a treaty of subsidiary alliance with the central Indian state of Bhopal in 1818.

Malcolm was a vocal proponent of indirect rule, which he sought to enact through the treaties he concluded. Writing to his former assistant, Josiah Stewart, who

helped finalize the Bhopal treaty just two years prior, Malcolm openly expressed his intention behind this “new and different species of rule” to preserve British rule in India far longer than any direct means:

A new and different species of rule is to be tried which is to control clusters of states and communities, and to preserve them in temper and in peace without interfering with their internal administration or arrangements....[T]he consequence of the establishment of our direct authority—that our empire should last fifty years; but if we can contrive to keep up a number of Native States without political power, but as royal instruments, we shall, I believe, exist in India as long as we maintain our naval superiority in Europe. (Kaye 1856, 2:371–72; also quoted in Fisher 1984:421)

The logic of indirect rule as Malcolm here defined it relied on an ambiguous relationship that existed between political power and royal display due to which native states could be kept up, in Malcolm’s words, as “royal instruments,” though “without political power.” We will return to this point later. However, it may be worth pointing out here, preliminarily, that it was this very ambiguity that contributed to the profusion of musical patronage in indirectly ruled states.

A Profusion of Patronage

The Ashtewale pension as mediated by Malcolm, the details of which I explore in the second section of this chapter, was a specific manifestation of a broader colonial policy of pacifying newly acquired territories in Central India through the establishment indirect rule. As I have noted, one of the consequences of this pension was that it contributed to the family's social mobility and indirectly allowed them to become patrons of music. However, the creation of new patrons such as the Ashtewales was not the only musical consequences of this particular colonial policy. In the years following the creation of the Central India Agency (Malcolm "settled" the country from 1818–1822), many of the native states that signed treaties with the British became renowned throughout India for the musicians and musical innovations they produced.

The state in the Central India Agency most known for its patronage of music during this time was undoubtedly Gwalior. Under Daulat-rāv Sindia (alternatively "Sindhia" or "Scindia," all English forms of the Marathi Śinde), who ruled from 1794 to 1827, Gwalior reemerged as an important center for Hindustani music following its earlier prominence in the sixteenth century (Miner 1993:98–99; see also Bor and Miner 2010:201–202). Under Daulat Rao's rule, Gwalior grew to attract musicians such as Nathan Pīr Bakś, whose sons Hassu (d.1859) and Haddu Khān (d.1875) are credited with establishing Hindustani music's first known school or gharāna, the

Gwalior gharana (Daniel Neuman 1990:148–149; Meer 1980:152).³⁰ However, Gwalior had received its first British Resident under Daulat Rao’s predecessor, Mahādījī Sindia, following the conclusion of the Treaty of Salbai in 1782. During Daulat Rao’s time, Gwalior had come under a series of even more restrictive treaties beginning with the Treaty of Sarjī Anjangao in 1803, which required Daultarao to host a subsidiary force of six British battalions and relinquish many of his territories in Hindustan (Aitchison 1893:12–13).

Looking beyond the Central India Agency, we see that patronage for South Indian music and dance peaked in the state of Tanjore under Serfojī II, whose ascension to the throne in 1798 corresponded with the assumption of the state under the British-ruled Madras presidency. In the treaty that Serfoji signed in 1799, the Company claimed complete control over both revenue collection and civil and criminal justice. These areas, the Company asserted, “shall in no instance whatever be subject to the control, authority, or interference of the said Rajah” (Aitchison 1876:388). At the same time, it was during Serfoji’s reign, which lasted until 1832, that the celebrated Trinity of music composers, Śyāma Śāstrī (1762–1867), Tyāgarājā (1767–1847) and Muṭhusvāmī Dikśitar (1776–1835), as well as the dance masters known as the Tanjore Quartet, Chinnayya Pillai (1802–1856), Ponnayya Pillai (1804–1864), Sivanandam Pillai (1808–1863) and Vadivelu Pillai (1810–1845), began to

³⁰ Ethnomusicologist Bonnie Wade alternatively asserted, drawing in part on interviews with Gwalior gharana vocalist Lakshman Krishnarao Pandit, that Haddu-Hassu’s father was actually Kadir Baksh and that Nathan Pir Baksh was instead their maternal grandfather (1985:39). She also suggested that the source upon which Neuman appeared to have based his assumption of Haddu-Hassu Khan’s parentage, Vilayat Hussain Khan’s *Sangeetayon ke Samsamaran* (1959), presented “discrepancies in several details in the genealogies presented” (Wade 1985:37).

lay the foundations for what would later become the “classical” traditions of the South.

In the northwestern kingdom of Awadh, patronage for music and dance reached mythic proportions under a series of rulers beginning with Shuja ud-Daula (r.1754–1775) and culminating more than a century later with Wajid Ali Shah (1847–1856), under whose rule the genres of *thumrī*, *ghazal*, and *kathak* are said to have achieved “unprecedented prominence” (Manuel 2010:242). Coterminous with the steady rise of Awadh as the preeminent center for musical patronage in North India, however, was an equally steady rise in the interference of the colonial government in the affairs of the state. Treaties made with Shuja ud-Daula in 1765, 1768 and 1773, for instance, imposed restrictions on external affairs, disbanded a sizable portion of the ruler’s army, and requiring the presence of a British force for which the ruler was required to support (Aitchison 1892b:59). A treaty made in 1775 with Shuja ud-Daula’s son and successor, Asaf ud-Daula (r.1775-1797), extended these impositions and additionally annexed several important territories, including Banaras. Upon Asaf ud-Daula’s death in 1797, Governor-General Sir John Shore engineered a succession dispute in which Asaf’s son, Vazir Ali, was declared illegitimate and exiled to Banaras. Under his pliant replacement, Sa’adat Ali Khan (r.1797–1814), Awadh’s military and territories were severely reduced through the treaty of 1801. Awadh’s status thereafter largely remained stable until 1856 when, in the words of that treaty, it became “the imperative duty of the British Government” to claim “sole and

exclusive administration of the civil and military government of the territories of Oudh... forever” (ibid.:67).

The state of Rāmpur, located east of Delhi in the greater area known as Rohilkhand,³¹ is famous for having cultivated a tradition of Afghani *rabāb* performance that gave rise to one of Hindustani music’s most common instruments, the *sarod*, beginning in the early nineteenth century.³² Also associated with Rampur during this early period was the development of instrumental music’s first recognized compositional form, the *Firoz-khānī gat* (Miner 1997:91–9; Trasoff 1999:375–77, 367; McNeil 2004).³³ Yet the very state of Rampur was born out of a colonial-mediated treaty in 1774 between Shuja ud-Daula, ruler of the British “protected” state of Awadh, and the leader of the Rohillas, Faizullah Khan, whose rights over the greater part of Rohilkhand were abolished and given to Awadh excepting the lands of Rampur where Faizullah was permitted to establish a state under British supervision

³¹ Rohilkhand (literally, “land of the Rohilla”) is named after the military adventurers and horse traders from Roh, Afghanistan, who began to settle this area in the late seventeenth century (see Gommans 1994:113).

³² David Trasoff’s discussion of the earliest known reference to the sarod—James Prinsep’s *Benaras Illustrated in a Series of Drawings* (1830)—reveals the early nineteenth-century sarod to be similar to the Afghani rebab with its wooden fingerboard, four gut strings, horizontal playing position, and narrow bridge (Trasoff 1999:220-224). The addition of a metal-plate fingerboard, metal strings, and drone or *cikārī* strings—crucial elements of the modern sarod—are thought to have been drawn from another instrument, the *sūrsingār*, which itself was a modified version of the *seniyā rabāb*, a long-necked, barbed lute. Theories relating to the physical development of the sarod are treated in detail by Miner (1997:66–71); Kippen [1988] 2005:20–21; Trasoff (1999); and McNeil 2004).

³³ Firoz Khan, the sitar player credited with the creation of this form, is commonly said to have come from Delhi to “Rampur” in 1761. However, the state of Rampur, as the rest of this paragraph reveals, was established only in 1774. Prior to this, the leader of the Rohillas, Ali Muhammad Khan, ruled Rohilkhand from his court at Bareilly, and before that Aonla. Therefore, it must have been to Ali Muhammad Khan’s court at Bareilly, and not Rampur, that Firoz Khan first came. It is conceivable that Firoz Khan continued to stay on following the establishment of Rampur state, though I have found no information to confirm this.

(Aitchison 1892b:2–7; Bayly 1983:121; Gommans 1994:178, 153). Following Faizullah’s death in 1793, the British ousted the throne’s successful usurper, Faizullah’s younger son Ghulam Muhammad Khan, and instead installed Faizullah’s grandson (from his eldest son), Ahmad Ali Khan (r.1794–1840), who—significant for the point being made here—became the first ruler of Rampur famous for his patronage of music. Under Ahmad Ali Khan’s rule, a number of important musical personalities emerged, including: Natthu Khan (also known as Ghulam Ali Khan); his son, Ghulam Raza Khan, who is credited with having invented what is now a standard compositional form for sitar, the *raza-khānī gat*, though he later become associated with Lucknow (Miner 1997:112); and Ghulam Ali (d.1850), widely credited with having “invented” the modern-day sarod, though he eventually settled in Gwalior and his association with Rampur appears “loose” (Miner 1997:124).

Finally, to the West, in the state of Jaypur (hereafter Jaipur), Sawāī Rām Singh II, who ruled between 1835 and 1880, is said to have employed more than four hundred musicians at his court (Owens 1987:184). Most notable among them was the dhrupad singer Behrām Khān Dāgar (1753–1852)³⁴ and the sitar player Amṛtsen (1814–1893), both of whom became seminal figures in the history of Hindustani music. Jaipur had earlier entered into a subsidiary alliance with the British in 1818

³⁴ Some scholars, such as Widdess and Sanyal (2004:30) and Dard Neuman (2004:263) use a later date—1878—for Behram Khan’s death. Others, such as Bor and Bruguiera (1992:54) and Thielemann (2000:137) use the earlier one taken here. I have found no discussion of this discrepancy. Nor have the authors revealed the reason behind their choice. The later date appears less probable given that Behram Khan would have aged 125 years by the time of his death. Of course, this assumes that Khan was born in 1753, an assumption for which I have found no disagreement. If the earlier date were to be taken, as it is here, then Behram Khan would more accurately be described as an *early*-nineteenth century musician (c.f. Dard Neuman 2004:38 n.49), and therefore more relevant to the discussion at hand.

under Ram Singh's grandfather, Jagat Singh (Aitchison 1906:92). By the time Ram Singh inherited the throne in 1835 at the tender age of two, Jaipur's de facto ruler had become a British Agent, who assumed guardianship of the infant heir. Ram Singh was not officially ordained until the age of twenty. His rule and history of musical patronage is therefore more properly located in the middle and later part of the century. Even the abovementioned Amritsen became associated with Jaipur only by the late 1860s, as he had earlier been employed at the court of Jhajjar near Delhi, then Alwar from 1858–1864, and finally Jaipur in 1866 (Miner 1997:130). Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that Ram Singh literally grew up within a system of indirect rule with roots in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, and that this had a formative influence on the musical patronage for which he was so well known.

Considering the details discussed here, it would not be an exaggeration to say that patronage for music and dance across India underwent something of a “golden age” in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It was a time when the gharanas were first coming into being, when the genre of khyal was taking hold across the North (Miner 1993:108), and when the sitar and tabla achieved their modern forms (Clayton 2007:84 citing Farrell 1997:52). Yet underlying—and underwriting—this profusion of patronage was a colonial presence that scholars of Indian music have yet to fully acknowledge. The fact is, however, that at the very same time these courts grew to prominence musically, treaties made with the British East India Company crippled them politically. How might we make sense of these two simultaneous, yet apparently contradictory, developments?

Traditional Imperatives of Patronage

A partial explanation for this problem lies in the aforementioned ambiguity between royal display and political power. Christopher Bayly (1987:57–59) has argued persuasively for the need to see aristocratic patronage as a necessary expression of royal legitimacy and not a frivolous or socially irresponsible form of idle consumption—a view that was later promoted by colonial administrators and that has continued to inform some evaluations of patronage under colonialism. Indeed, so significant was the outward display of royal expenditure, Bayly argued, that during the eighteenth century—prior to Company rule—it came to outweigh the actual control of particular territories. Rulers in need of a ready and steady supply of cash to fulfill the demands of both royal patronage and war began “farming out” or “commercializing” the perquisites of kingship, such as the collection of revenue. Taking the example of Banaras, Bayly showed how merchant-banking corporations, by making advances to the ruler on the state’s revenue, eventually came to control a greater share of the state’s resources than the ruler himself (1988:460–464). In Bayly’s formulation, then, British indirect rule was, at least until the 1840s, an extension of an ongoing process of the commercialization of kingship that began during the late-Mughal period, and not a sharp break from the past (1988:2, 112; see also Price 1996).

This ambiguous relationship between display and power was not lost on the Company, which provided rulers who signed treaties with generous pensions to encourage their patronly activities. This allowed the Company to then quietly assume

control many of the political functions of the ruler himself. At the same time, under the increasing political restrictions of indirect rule, the traditional imperatives of patronage for establishing the legitimacy of a ruler became ever more important.

One of the most striking examples of this process is seen in the case of Serfoji II, ruler of Tanjore mentioned above, whose authority—and physical movement—was confined to his residence and its immediate vicinity from the very first year of his rule. Nevertheless, within that extreme confinement, and supported by a generous pension of twelve-lakh (1,200,000) rupees per year, Serfoji literally created a microcosm of the universe—a “cabinet of curiosities” inspired by the German *Kunstkammer* of the seventeenth century (Peterson 1999).

Peterson addresses musical patronage only peripherally (*ibid.*:85, 89 n.2). However, the way in which she considered Serfoji’s creativity in relation to his confinement mirrors the kind of indirect musical consequences of colonialism for which I argue for here. To be clear, money was not the only mechanism by which indirect rule contributed to the flourishing of musical patronage. The constraints that the British imposed on native rulers’ political and military authority also encouraged rulers to rely even more heavily on patronage for projecting their royal legitimacy. This dynamic, moreover, was acknowledged by colonial administrators, who granted rulers both the scope and resources to fulfill their royal obligations and thereby obscure British influence. The benefit, as John Malcolm put it (see earlier citation), would be to preserve British power longer than any direct means. Thus, within Serfoji’s microcosm I believe we can see yet another microcosm: the indirect

stimulus that indirect rule gave to the patronage of music and dance, evidenced in Serfoji's case by the aforementioned Trinity of music composers and Tanjore Quartet dancers.

Colonial Catastrophe

As obvious as this argument may be, the efflorescence of musical patronage in early-nineteenth century India is rarely attributed to colonialism, whether directly or indirectly. Some important exceptions are worth discussing, however. James Kippen, for example, noted that the “independence and security” that British indirect rule brought to Awadh in the late eighteenth century helped that kingdom replace Delhi as “the major centre of patronage for the arts in North India” ([1988] 2005:2–4; see also Kippen 1997:182). Peter Manuel similarly reasoned that the rulers of Awadh, having been “denied (or relieved of) fiscal and administrative responsibilities” by treaties made with the British, “concentrated their energies on cultural patronage” (2010:243; see also Sundar 1995:223). Harold Powers had earlier argued for a similar dynamic at work in the later, post-1857 period, during which “Pax Britannica” indirectly created “an explosive development of Hindustani classical music and much rivalry and exchange among the many princely musical centers” (1980:23; see also Trasoff 2010:351).

All of these statements acknowledge the indirect benefit that indirect rule brought to musical patronage. However, they also project a rather benign, or at least non-intrusive, view of that process. The burgeoning of musical patronage is here

correlated with a British imposed peace that allowed rulers to spend greater sums of money on cultural activities and less on defense—an interest they would have presumably pursued on their own had they not been busy either defending or expanding their territories. But recognition that the British were actually invested in keeping up this cultural display as a cover for their own interference in local government is for the most part absent.³⁵ So, too, is the dynamic eluded to earlier, whereby the traditional imperatives of patronage became endowed with even greater significance due to this very interference.

The scholars who have come closest to making this connection between political disenfranchisement and musical growth are Jon Barlow and Lakshmi Subramanian, who very briefly suggested in an article focusing on the cultural history of Hindustani music from the eighteenth to the early nineteenth century that, “in politically disempowered indigenous states,” musical patronage, which they note had already been important “for the cultural politics and profile of indigenous kingdoms,” become exaggerated. “In such a curiously changed atmosphere,” they explain, “the Awadh sovereign Wajid Ali Shah’s (regnal dates 1847–1856) obsessive engagement with music and poetry, ranging from the sublime to the ridiculous becomes easier to comprehend” (2007:1784).

Curiously, however, the authors do not provide any explanation as to why, how or by whom indigenous states such as Awadh had become disempowered at this

³⁵ Drawing on the insights of scholars such as Rosie Llewellyn-Jones (1985) and Veena Talwar Oldenburg (1984), James Kippen did acknowledge that the British encouraged Awadh rulers’ “seemingly eccentric behavior,” not because it obscured British power, but “because they [the British] believed it distracted them [rulers] from having any designs on political power” ([1988] 2005:4).

time. Of course, we know from our previous discussion that Awadh had become increasingly dependent on the British from the late eighteenth century—from the very same time that Awadh become renowned as a center of patronage. However, in the broader narrative of musical florescence that these authors present, colonialism plays no obvious part. Only with the Mutiny of 1857, which they describe as having “marked the moment of rupture with a pre-modern past” (1786), causing Hindustani music to eventually adapt to “an even more profound and disruptive series of transitions” (ibid.:1785), does colonialism come into clear view. Barlow and Subramanian’s suggestion that political disempowerment of indigenous courts at the turn of the nineteenth century may have resulted in cultural aggrandizement is certainly important, and is, of course, the argument that is being forwarded here. What I hope to do is make the colonial role in this process more apparent, and also thereby resist the tendency to associate colonialism only with rupture and loss.

It should be apparent by now that part of the reason for the tendency to see the growth of musical patronage and the expansion of colonialism as unrelated, I submit, is a broader propensity to focus on colonialism’s most catastrophic consequences, such as the displacement of hereditary musicians mentioned at the outset of this chapter, or the dismantling of the courtly patronage apparatus and the dispersal of musicians from traditional centers following the establishment of direct rule in 1857–58. As a result, colonialism is most often shown to have been at odds with musical patronage—that is when music is not viewed as a realm safely removed from the effects of colonialism (see the following section).

For historian Janaki Bakhle, whose work most represents the current critique of the colonial influence on North Indian or *Hindustānī* classical music (previous critiques belonging largely to early-twentieth century nationalist reformers), the impact of indirect rule on musical patronage was unambiguously catastrophic: it transformed princely patronage into a “a regime of colonial discipline” (2005:12), a “panoptic” system of “bureaucratic rules” (ibid.:34) in which “musicians had little independence and the ruler had little interest in music” (ibid.:21). Bakhle takes the princely state of Baroda in Western India (present-day Gujarat) as “exemplary” of this phenomenon (ibid.:34). Her greatest evidence is the 1899 publication of the *Book of Rules for Artists* (kalāvānt khatyāce niyam), which itself recounts the history of the standardization of patronage at Baroda beginning with the hiring of the court’s first permanent employee (a male singer) in 1819 and the founding of what Bakhle has translated as the “warehouse of artists” (*kalāvānt karkhāna*) in the same year.

Bakhle’s purpose in relating the details of how musicians’ lives were strictly codified in the *Book of Rules*—including the restriction placed on their salaries, pensions, and gifts; allowances for transportation and permissions to travel; methods for hiring via applications and exams; penalties for bad behavior and tardiness; details of whom could be taught; material deemed appropriate to perform; clothing to be worn; etc. (ibid.:29–30)—is to dispel what she claimed is an unwarranted, yet commonly expressed nostalgia for the grandeur of musical patronage during the nineteenth century. On this point, her judgment is firm. These narratives are: “symptomatic of [twentieth-century] musicians’ anxieties and desires rather than a

statement of the real” (ibid.:13); “deployed solely to criticize the modern character of contemporaneous circumstances” (ibid.:35); and “script[s] for the nostalgia for *rajashraya* [*rājāśrayā*, royal patronage] despite massive evidence to the contrary about musicians and maharajas” (ibid.:48).

However, instead of ascribing the growing standardization of musical patronage at Baroda solely to the imposition of colonial bureaucracy, as Bahle does, I believe it is also possible to interpret this trend towards systematization as responding to a very real need to cope with an unprecedented *surge* in musical activity that resulted from the conditions created by indirect rule. The claim made by the authors of the preface to the *Book of Rules*, that “[n]o systematic expenditure was associated with the comings and goings of entertainers until 1817” (ibid.:25), the very same year in which the sovereignty of the ruler of Baroda, then Ānand Rāv Gāykwāḍ (commonly Gaikwad or Gaekwad), who ruled from 1800 to 1818, was vastly diminished by an enhanced treaty of subsidiary alliance (see Aitchison 1892c:134–138), could just as easily have been due to a lack of need to do so, rather than the *absence* of colonial imposed procedures.

Moreover, Bakhle’s sole ascription of efficiency, organization, and systematization to colonialism calls for further scrutiny, for it comes close to reinforcing Orientalist stereotypes of Indian feudal states as disorganized and in need of colonial parenting. For example, the *kalāvant kārkhānā* (translated by Bakhle as “warehouse of artists”), which for Bakhle functions as a symbol of colonial discipline, was, in fact, neither a “colonial” nor particularly “modern” institutional

framework. Instead, the *khānā* or “department” was an important organizing structure of the Mughal court (see Greig 1987:102). In emulation of this Mughal—not colonial—system, a particularly well-known “department of virtuosos” (*gunījan-khānā*), which housed “permanently employed” court musicians, was instituted in 1725 by Sawāī Jai Singh II (r.1699–1743), the first ruler of the state of Jaipur in present-day Rajasthan (Erdman 1978:345, 355 and 1985:28–115). Furthermore, the Urdu word *kārkhānā*, which Bakhle translates as “warehouse,” could just as easily been translated as “workshop” (Greig 1987:102) or “department” (Erdman 1978:345, Rosse 1995:140).³⁶ Bakhle’s choice of “warehouse,” which carries the cold overtones of industrial capitalism, better reflects her own aspersions toward the ruinous impact of indirect rule.

We need not look beyond Bakhle’s own text, moreover, to find exceptions to Baroda’s “exemplary” status in the world of courtly patronage for music. In fact, the picture Bakhle invariably presents of the state does more to depict it as *exceptional* than as exemplary. She notes, for example, a discrepancy between the substandard salary that Baroda provided to Faiyāz Khān, a male singer and celebrity of the early recording industry, and the “extraordinary gifts of money for performances [that he received] at other princely courts” (Bakhle 2005:33). She follows this with a

³⁶ Rosse noted that the kalavant karkhana of late-nineteenth century Baroda was referred to in the State’s official English-language documents as the “Department of Entertainment” (1995:140), though he also noted the additional meanings of both “workshop” and “factory” (ibid.:151 n.3). Though Erdman translated karkhana as “department” (1978:355, 359), she also noted that in the context of the Mughal court of Akbar, “each karkhana... was a factory or store rather than a department” (ibid.:356). Significantly, she is explicit about the fact that Sawai Jai Singh’s use of the karkhana was in emulation of the Mughal court and not a colonial imposition (ibid.:357).

discussion of musicians' accounts of the grandeur of royal patronage in general, concluding that, "[f]ew of these claims hold good for the princely court of Baroda" (ibid.:33). In fact, this discrepancy between Baroda and other princely states appears to be the primary reason why Bakhle chose Baroda to begin with: "I chose Baroda to argue my case for a feudalistic modernity that was *unconcerned with music as music*" (ibid.:34, my emphasis). The portrait Bakhle paints of Sayājīrāv Gaikwād, ruler of Baroda from 1831 to 1839, further solidifies this impression. Unlike rulers of other princely states, who were known as musical aesthetes, Sayajirao is depicted as a ruler who not only "cared little for music" (ibid.:46), but was also critical of it; he suggested that Indian singers break their habit of singing while seated to instead emulate the western tradition of singing while standing (ibid.:33).

Despite this acknowledgement of Baroda's atypical stance towards music, Bakhle proceeds to use Baroda as a case to argue *against* the nostalgic claims about musical patronage made by singers of other courts more renowned for music. Most frequently voicing this nostalgia in Bakhle's text is Bālkr̥ṣṇa-buvā Ichalkaranjīkar (1849–1926), teacher of Viṣṇu Digambar Paluskar (1872–1931), a primary figure in Bakhle's work. Ichalkarajīkar had been employed as a court musician in several southern Maharashtrian states, including Ichalkaranjī, Miraj and Sātārā—not in Baroda—and had earlier learned from several court musicians, including his own father. Bakhle quotes Ichalkaranjīkar as he reminisces about events he apparently witnessed himself, such as the arrival of musicians in palanquins or on the backs of elephants for special court occasions (ibid.:30) and others that were reiterations of

commonly told stories, such as how the Maharaja of Gwalior, Jayajirao, once stood on the street in the rain to hear Bābā Dikṣit (commonly Dixit) sing (ibid.:48). As shown above, Bakhle is unambiguously skeptical of these narrations; she compares them unfavorably to the “embittered” descriptions made by Baroda court musicians, such as Abdul Karīm Khān, regarding the deplorable conditions at Baroda (ibid.:34).

Instead of drawing on the insights derived from Baroda to make an argument regarding the depravity of music in princely India as a whole, I believe it would be better to extend to music the same caution taken by Waltraud Ernst and Biswamoy Pati, editors of a collection of essays on India’s princely states, in generalizing “about the ways the rulers of the over 500 or so Indian states and the colonial power negotiated the boundaries between ‘princely’ and colonial rule” (2007:1). Of course nostalgic accounts of the halcyon days of musical patronage need to be taken critically and seen in relation to the moment in which they are made. This point is therefore well taken, though Bakhle was not the first to make it. Anthropologist Joan Erdman, who Bakhle otherwise called out for “deny[ing] colonial influence” (2005:48) and providing “cultural details without history” (ibid.:227 n.122) (see further discussion of this critique below), argued that, “the nostalgia of many contemporary Indian musicians and dancers for princely patronage of the past, and blaming of present-day difficulties on its demise is, perhaps...selective memory” (1992:171, 175). As necessary as such skepticism may be, the unique conditions that informed musical patronage at various courts in different regions and—perhaps most importantly—during disparate periods (most of Bakhle’s evidence concerns the late

nineteenth and early twentieth centuries), surely deserve our consideration.

Admittedly, further research on musical patronage in princely states is wanting.

No scholar has argued as adamantly for the impact of colonialism on South Indian or *Karnātak* classical music than Amanda Weidman. In her book, *Singing the Classical, Voicing the Modern: The Postcolonial Politics of Music in South Asia* (2006), Weidman took colonialism head on, arguing that, many of the “practices of and attitudes about music that have become identified with the notion of classical music in South India,” such as its focus on composers and composition, “are the products of a particular colonial and postcolonial history” (ibid.:23). More pertinent to our focus here is Weidman’s assertion that, “The consolidation of British rule in South India,” which she dates to after the mid-1700s (ibid.:13), “had direct consequences on the very nature of patronage itself” (ibid.:15), consequences that were decidedly disruptive. Following Dirks ([1987] 1993) and Appadurai (1981), Weidman maintained that kingship in South Asia had traditionally “operated according to the principle of the gift” and that “the ability to give gifts was a fundamental sign of a king’s sovereignty” (Weidman 2006:15). “Under British colonial rule, however,” continued Weidman also following Dirks, “the flow of gifts was interrupted even as the British tried to keep the ‘little kings’ in positions of apparent power as a kind of ‘native aristocracy’” (ibid.).

Weidman’s evaluation of the destructive impact of colonial rule on patronage for Karnatak music played out in her particular account of Tanjore under Serfoji. Given her larger aim of “revealing the complex political encounters [including the

colonial] from which the institution of classical Karnatic music emerged” (ibid.:23), it is fitting that Weidman gave emphasis to the imposing British presence at Serfoji’s court. Though she additionally emphasized the important fact that it was during Serfoji’s reign that Tanjore “reached its peak as a hub of musical and artistic activity” (ibid.:61), the only direct connection made between these heights of musical activity and colonialism is when, following Serfoji’s death, the British intervened to put an end to such “extravagance” (ibid.:62), resulting in the forced migration of musicians to other courts (ibid.:63).

Weidman followed a similar outline in her discussion of musical patronage at the southern court of Travancore under Swati Tirunal (r.1829–1846). As in the case of Serfoji, Weidman gave critical importance to colonialism’s intrusive aspects: it was a British resident, Colonel John Munro, who appointed Tirunal as ruler, and who directed the young prince’s (b.1813) education. Also as in Serfoji’s case, Weidman brought attention to the fact that Tirunal endeavored to make his rule “an example of enlightened leadership” with his patronage of Karnatic music and dance being central to this effort (ibid.:63). However, no connection between “Tirunal’s liberal patronage of music” and colonialism was made until this patronage became “curtailed by the administration of the Madras Presidency” in the early 1840s, several years before his death (ibid.:64–65).

In these passages, explicit connection between musical patronage and colonialism occurs only when the consequences of the latter are clearly disastrous. The continuity (and, indeed, extraordinary expansion) of the pre-colonial rituals of

kingship and gift giving are portrayed as having occurred *despite* colonial influence, not because of it.

These notions cannot be attributed to Weidman, of course, but constitute a commonplace understanding of the relationship between colonialism and princely patronage for Indian music in both the north and the south. This understanding is not always made explicit, but it underlies statements in which the simultaneous growth of patronage and indirect rule is presumed to have been somewhat paradoxical. Take, for example, the following passages:

Serfoji II and his heir Sivaji II (r.1832–1855) deployed courtesan dancers in their rituals of display, casting themselves as rulers who, *though* incrementally divested of political authority by the British, were *nevertheless* effective, modern patrons of culture. (Soneji 2012:29, emphasis mine in both cases)

Lucknow had become the center of gravity for North Indian musical life upon the mid-eighteenth-century collapse of Mughal power in Delhi. From 1775, *however*, Awadh was firmly under British influence, and from this time it was also a major center for Mughal-British cultural and political interaction. (Schofield 2010:506–507, my emphasis)

Banaras was a part of Avadh until 1775 when Asaf ud-Daula surrendered Raja Cait Singh's land to the East India Company. *Despite* the British

control, a Hindu ruler was maintained there, and the Banaras court was the scene of a high level of musical patronage through the late 18th and the entire 19th century. (Miner 1997:97–98)

My point, which has been made by scholars such as Bayly with respect to patronage under indirect rule more generally, is that this simultaneous expansion of musical patronage and colonialism was not paradoxical, but was a specific design of indirect rule.

In the book, *From the Tanjore Court to the Madras Music Academy* ([2006] 2011), Lakshmi Subramanian's portrayal of Serfoji's court as a "cross-cultural intersection" that produced a "proto-modern" form of South Indian classical music is nuanced in its accounting of music's colonial consequences. Subramanian is clearly skeptical, for example, of attributing "modern" developments such as the use of notation, the focus on the individual composer, and other "new modes of listening or evaluating musical performance" (ibid.:19) to a specifically western form of modernity. She instead insists on seeing these developments as "extended linkages," drawing on David Washbrook (1976), of the pre-colonial Maratha period and the even earlier Nayak period of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (ibid.:47).

When it comes to discussing the colonial influence on musical patronage, Subramanian does not emphasize or reference disaster as such. However, she does appear more inclined to view "conventional modes of display and patronage" as having operated "quite independently of the colonial presence" during the early

nineteenth century (ibid.). In contrast with the “new consuming elite” of “the colonial city of Madras” in the later part of the century, for instance, Subramanian described early-nineteenth century elites as having “patronized music and performing arts as part of an older regimen of status and ritual practice involving the sharing and contesting of honour” (ibid.:11). My point is not to argue against the continued relevance of pre-colonial modes of patronage in the early nineteenth century. Instead, I suggest that even here we can see the fillip given to these modes by colonial (indirect) rule. Colonialism may not have changed the forms that patronage took at this time, but these forms did not operate “independently of colonial presence.” Rather, the colonial presence, as Bayly and others have suggested with respect to patronage more generally (e.g., Price 1996), operated *through* conventional forms.

Musical Autonomy

Beyond the assumption of colonial catastrophe, there may be other reasons why scholars of Indian music have tended to view the simultaneous expansion of indirect rule and princely patronage for music as unrelated. One possibility, as suggested at the outset of this chapter, is the belief that colonialism, regardless of the period in question, had little or no effect on music in the context of the court, catastrophic or otherwise. This was one of the primary assumptions that Bakhle set out to correct in her account of musical patronage at Baroda. It is also the assumption (again, assumed to be mistaken) that Bakhle points to in the very first sentences of her book:

India was colonized by the British for close to two hundred years. Virtually no aspect of Indian society remained untouched through the course of that long occupation.... The one (and perhaps only) art form said to have successfully resisted colonial influence during the nineteenth century was Indian classical music (2005:3; see also Bakhle 2008:259).

Taking the work of anthropologist Joan Erdman on the state of Jaipur (1985), Bakhle alleged that, “scholars writing on music,” among whom she also included ethnomusicologists though without example, “deny colonial influence, positing instead a romantic and exotic princely India as the living spirit of an ancient tradition” (2005:48). In Bakhle’s view, which is more fully laid out in her dissertation, Erdman provided “fascinating detail[s] about the quotidian workings of these departments [such as the *gunijan khana* referred to above], and the members therein, but culture, as enacted by members of the royal family within the inner world of the princely court, or in the larger performative space of the *darbar* [*darbār*, royal court], is still viewed,” she contended, “as autonomous of the power of colonial epistemology” (2002:7–8).

Bakhle further suggested, drawing on Dirks (1987, 2001), Mani (2000) and Fisher (1991), that in denying colonialism and seeing courtly culture as autonomous, scholars such as Erdman had naïvely accepted colonialist historians’ own benevolent portrayal of colonial rule as having been non-intrusive (Bakhle 2002:7). To be sure,

the colonial projection of non-interference was the general principle behind the policy of indirect rule itself. As discussed, it was believed that in maintaining native rulers' kingly munificence (Malcolm's "royal instruments"), the British Resident could stand "masked in the shadows" (Bayly 1988:112–113; see also Ernst and Patil 2007:4).

While the perceived colonial autonomy of music in the context of the court is certainly important for understanding the impetus behind Bakhle and other scholars' insistence on colonial influence, there is good reason to question her portrayal of Erdman as representing the tendency she criticized. Contrary to Bakhle's presentation, Erdman—in both the work Bakhle referenced and in others that she did not—did not "deny" colonialism. She did assume (1992:351) that the British were generally disinterested in Indian culture and in Indian music more specifically, an assumption with broader currency that I will discuss below. She also did not make it a point to ascribe to colonialism any of the rigid procedures she significantly discovered to have prevailed over the administration of Jaipur's *gunijan khana* in the *late* (pace Bakhle) nineteenth century, such as the fact that, "even the respected and honored *grandees* were subject to the same bureaucratic formalities as other *Gunijankhana* post-holders," and that performers were "in communication with their royal patron only through bureaucratic channels, or at obligatory performances as entertainers" (1978:364–65).

However, Erdman also interpreted princely rule as having been "underwritten by the British Empire," and, in fact, correlated a shift in the royal patron's "pleasures" to a colonial relationship (Erdman 1992:172; see also 1992:144–145). Though Bakhle

claimed that Erdman viewed the “performative space of the darbar” as “autonomous of the power of colonial epistemology” (see above citation), Erdman noted to the contrary that, “darbar audiences and public processions seemed to have been altered on the basis of a more European model” (1978:350–351).

I am not the only one to have made such observations about Erdman’s work. Ethnomusicologist Amelia Maciszewski (1998:130) credited Erdman (1985) for arguing that, “the colonial presence, particularly in the 19th century, actually resignified boundaries between public and private, which profoundly affected female musicians.” The profound changes alluded to here are furthermore significant in view of the previous section’s discussion of colonial catastrophe, for “it was the British,” Maciszewski claimed with reference to Erdman, “who actually articulated oppositions between the *zenānā* (women’s quarters in the interior of the compound) and the outer part, which included the court. Thus, though no change of their own practice, professional female musicians (courtesans) became labeled as ‘public women’” (Maciszewski 1998:130–131).

Thus, in recognizing the influence of colonialism on at least some aspects of darbar practice, however limited, Erdman’s appearance in Bakhle’s text as representing a larger denial of colonialism among scholars of music appears to be somewhat unwarranted. In fact, in a number of ways, including this partial nod to colonial presence at Jaipur, but also the skepticism expressed toward nostalgic accounts of royal patronage, and the identification of a bureaucratic framework for the gunijan khana—including a comparative reference to the Baroda book of rules

(1992:153), which Erdman was unable to locate—Erdman’s work appears to have been an important precursor to Bakhle’s.

So what, then, of Bakhle’s broader claim, beyond Erdman, that scholarship on Indian music has tended to “deny” colonial influence? It does appear to be the case that prior to Bakhle’s pioneering work, scholarship on Indian music has given short shrift to the influence of colonialism on princely patronage, at the most correlating rising levels of patronage during the nineteenth century to the peace imposed by British suzerainty (discussed above), or in the case of Erdman, suggesting that some actual changes to *darbar* practice took place. It may be, as Bakhle suggested, that underlying this weak *admission*—and not outright denial—of colonial influence is a colonial-derived narrative meant to disguise the extent of British power. This is certainly a significant and provocative suggestion, but it remains to be demonstrated.

Additional underlying factors that may have steered earlier scholarship away from a thorough engagement with colonialism deserve brief mention. The first relates to the alleged autonomy of Indian musical aesthetics. In my reading of the literature, specific declarations of Indian music’s autonomy from colonialism have almost always been narrowly predicated on the evaluation of musical form or sound—not on patronage or some other aspects of social-cultural practice, meaning or structure. In this more limited sense of the term, Indian “music” is often contrasted with visual art and even literature for having been untouched by western influence (e.g., Powers 1980:26; Qureshi 1991:160; Miller 1992:13; Dan Neuman 1990:17 and 1992:255 n21; Lelyveld 1994:112).

Bakhle herself provides the best example I have found of this form of colonial denial. Assessing changes in music “born out of a colonial situation,” for example, Bakhle asserted that, “The changes around music may not have affected the *formal properties* of the music, but they were nonetheless significant and long lasting” (2005:7, my emphasis). Bakhle was clear that it was not the case that music *resisted* western influence, which would have implied a relation of opposition and therefore influence. Instead, Bakhle explained that, “The fundamental form of the music—both its grammar and its aesthetic logic—did not so much actively resist colonial influence as stay indifferently impervious to it” (ibid.:14). Finally, Bakhle provoked her reader to look beyond “the music itself” so that it would “become possible to write about both continuity and rupture, colonial discipline, and nationalist control” (ibid.), issues she apparently believed were not possible to read in form as well.

It is beyond the focus of our discussion to consider the ways in which this claim to musical aesthetics may or may not be substantiated. Suffice it to say that scholars of music have long argued for (and practiced) bringing together (or refusing to see as separate to begin with) music’s formal and social realms (e.g., Feld 1982, 1984; McClary 1991, 2000; and more recently, though postdating Bakhle, Born 2010:218–221, 231-235; and Solis 2012). Calls for a less dichotomous approach have additionally come from within the narrower field of South Asian ethnomusicology (Qureshi 2000, 2002:87). More recently, Amanda Weidman (2006:9, 24, and 2009) thoroughly disabused the idea that Indian music as sound has remained uniquely free of colonial influence, arguing that, “classical music in South India—not only

discourse about it but the very sound and practice of the music—[was] produced in and through the colonial encounter.”

It is unclear whether this aesthetics-focused notion of music’s colonial autonomy has bled over into scholarly considerations of royal patronage for music. Of those cited above for having subscribed to this kind of autonomy, viewpoints are on royal patronage are mixed or inconclusive. Neuman (1990:169–172 and 1992) did not make any reference to colonialism in his discussions of nineteenth century patronage for music in the courts of Baroda, Rampur, Lucknow and Jaipur. Although Qureshi (2002:84) described the kind of economy that underlay the simultaneous exploitation and nurturing of hereditary professional musicians in nineteenth and twentieth century courts as “feudal colonial,” she did not explicate its colonial elements. Powers (1980:23) admitted to a stimulating, yet indirect and non-intrusive, influence of colonialism on princely patronage in the late nineteenth century, as cited above. Bakhle of course has been the primary mover for exposing the pernicious influence of colonialism on musical patronage. Lelyveld’s perspective is not apparent.

Yet another narrative entangled with the claim of Indian music’s colonial autonomy is that the British were utterly disinterested in and even disgusted by Indian music. Leaving aside the limited veracity of this notion (see Schofield 2010:505–506), it is typically the case that when British indifference to Indian music is asserted, it is shown to have actually been the *cause* of some profound transformation in—and therefore influence on—patronage for Indian music. One line of argument, for instance, holds that British disinterest led Indian music to deteriorate due to a lack of

patronage, an interpretation that appears to have developed first among nationalist authors and that also constitutes an earlier focus on colonial catastrophe (Coomaraswamy [1908] 2010:23; Bhatkhande [1916] 1974:29; Nayar 1989:7–8, 20–21; Sundar 1995:223; see Kobayashi 2003:149 for a summary statement). Another contends that British disinterest in Indian music imbued it with an indigenous distinctiveness suitable for resisting colonial rule and mobilizing national community (Powers 1980:26; Qureshi 1991:160; Daniel Neuman 1992:251–252; Deodhar 1993:xiii; Clayton 2007:83–85). In either case, music in the context of princely patronage bears the mark of colonial modernity.

Conclusion

For Bakhle, denying colonial influence was tantamount to denying the havoc that colonialism caused music. As this section has tried to impress, however, an even more overlooked aspect of colonial influence in scholarship that both preceded and followed Bakhle's work is the indirect stimulus that indirect rule provided musical patronage. If denying colonialism (i.e., musical autonomy) is no longer acceptable, then the greatest impediment to acknowledging the full scope of colonial influence is now a virtually singular focus on colonial catastrophe. Though meant to counter the notion of music's autonomy or to critique colonial injustice, it has become limiting both theoretically and historically. It has encouraged a focus on the later part of the nineteenth century, which is generally regarded as the highpoint of colonial interventionist politics, a period during which indirectly ruled territories came under

the direct rule of the British crown, and when the kinds of concessions that were necessary to make to local interests under indirect rule no longer became necessary. If we only look to the late nineteenth century, perhaps we will find all the confirmation we need of colonialism's disastrous consequences. However, by looking to the early nineteenth century, which remains a relatively obscure period in the literature for music, we might move beyond a monolithic understanding of colonialism that is neither necessarily direct, nor unambiguously disastrous.

GROUNDING COLONIAL IMPACT

In October of 1813, Francis Earl of Moira (b.1754-d.1826), better known, after February 1817, as the Marquis of Hastings, succeeded Lord Minto as Governor General of the British Government in India. With this shift in Governor-Generalship came a shift in the British posture towards conquest in India. Though the English East India Company had long been involved in all aspects of governance from revenue collection to jurisprudence,³⁷ their official position since the declaration of the India Act of 1784 was that conquest was repugnant to national policy (Pasely 90). However, direct interference in the affairs of the native states nevertheless increased dramatically throughout the late-eighteenth century, as we have seen. In the region of the Maratha states, the broad geographical focus of this section, the British had as

³⁷ As early as 1685 the English were involved in a military campaign against Śaista Khān, governor or *subedār* of Bengal, for the oppression and extortion he is claimed to have subjected the English (Aitchison 1892a:2). In 1757 the Company defeated then Subedar of Bengal, Siraj-ul-daula, who was furnishing the French with arms and money to fight against the English, and replaced him with Mir Jafar Khan (ibid). By 1765, the Company itself secured the rights to collect revenue and administer law in Bengal (see Ramusak 5).

early as 1778 attempted to place their choice of candidate, Ragunāth Rāv, in the position of Prime Minister or *Paiśvā* (hereafter Peshwa), which had become the most powerful in the Maratha kingdom during the eighteenth century due to the commercialization of kingship discussed above. By 1785, the British had appointed their first Resident at the court of the Peshwa in Poona, Charles Warre Malet. By June of 1818, the British had disposed of the Peshwa himself. Malcolm, who was primarily responsible for compelling the Peshwa to surrender, described this period leading up to and shortly following the conquest of the Maratha states (1784 to 1823) as “the epoch in which the complete supremacy of the British power all over India was avowed and acknowledged (Malcolm 1826:v).

This section follows the British conquest of the territories held by the Peshwa with special emphasis on the events, people and places that inform the particular history of the Ashtewale family. The aim is to provide a thorough understanding of the circumstances that led the Ashtewale family to receive their colonial-mediated pension, which I argue allowed them to become aristocratic patron-disciples of professional musicians. The significance of the pension, as earlier stated, lies in its ability to demonstrate the indirect role that indirect rule had on the flourishing of musical patronage during the early nineteenth century, albeit on a smaller scale than considered in section one. The pension therefore serves to focus the historical information considered herein. By the time we arrive at its conferral a little more than half way through this section, the actors involved and the reasons for their involvement should be clear.

Building an Alliance Against the Piṇḍārī-s in Mālwā

From their base in the lawless areas of Central India’s Mālwā region, a motley group of wandering, armed plunderers or “freebooters” known as the *Piṇḍārī* had been making forays into British-controlled areas in the first years of the nineteenth century.³⁸ British historians justified the conquest of Central India and the Maratha states as a defensive measure to curb this growing Pindari “menace.” They blamed the Marathas for the unchecked growth of the Pindaris, claiming that the Maratha subjugation of petty chiefs in the region caused the dispossessed to resort to plundering, which was then imitated by others. Soon, larger states were compelled to buy the good will of these plunderers, and so the situation became institutionalized (Aitchison 1893:2-3).

Initially reluctant to take up offensive measures in a region officially governed by other states, the British reached out to those who could help curb the Pindaris from the inside. It was for this reason that they contracted with a highly regarded General or *sardār* of the Peshwa’s army, Narsiṃh Khande-rāv Vincūrkar (d.1808) who, as we shall see, was an important character in the Ashtewale story. Vinchurkar had been granted a *jāhgīr*—the right to hold (-*gīr*) the revenue of a particular place (*jā-*)—for the area of Malwa known as the Panj Mahal or “five districts,” which included Ashta,

³⁸ British writers used the term *piṇḍārī* (from Prakrit, *piṇḍāra*) to describe a “Maratha freebooter” (McGregor). Variant spellings include “Pindarie” and “Pindri.” Malcolm (1832, I: 433) noted that the term probably derived from *pinda*, an intoxicating drink in which the Pindaris were known to have indulged.

Ichhāwar, Sehor, Bhilsa, and Devīpura. Narsinh is therefore referred to in the English records as “the Vinchoor *jāhgīrdār*” or the holder (*-dār*) of a jahgir.

Despite his claim over the region, Vinchurkar had initially done little to exercise it. As a result, Ashta had become a stronghold of Pindari leaders by 1806 (Luard 1908:81-92; Prinsep 1820:25). It was around this time that Vinchurkar was deployed to assist the British under Colonel Wallace in quelling the Pindaris in the region (Vinchorkar 1909:73). Soon after, Vinchurkar appointed a local manager to look after his jahgir at Ashta. This manager was none other than the ancestor of the Ashtewale family who eventually received the British-mediated pension. His name was Khaṇḍe-rāv. As we will see, it was thus through Vinchurkar that the British eventually came to communicate with Khanderao.

In addition to Vinchurkar, an important anti-Pindari alliance was formed with the neighboring state of Bhopal, a Mughal satrapy to which Ashta had once belonged. Beginning in the 1720s, Bhopal suffered a series of attacks from various Maratha rulers who slowly, but significantly reduced its territories. By 1745, Ashta, as well as the larger region of the Panj Mahal, was finally annexed by the Peshwa, who later granted it as a jahgir to Vinchurkar (Gordon 1977:19). (This earlier history is considered in Chapter Two). Thereafter, Bhopal’s territories were adjoined to the east of Ashta, making Bhopal (in the eyes of the British) an important potential buffer-region between the Pindaris’ haunts in Malwa and the Company’s Western frontier.

In the early second decade of the nineteenth century, however, Bhopal acted as less of a buffer and more of a conduit for Pindari activity. The Pindaris were

employed not only by Maratha states to menace Bhopal, but also (reluctantly) by Bhopal to fight off Maratha incursions. Using Bhopal's territories as a base, the Pindari leader Karim Khan succeeded in raiding villages governed by the British as far away as Mirzapur—more than 400 miles northeast of Bhopal near Banaras—in 1812 (Prinsep 1820:25). Seeing that Bhopal's increasing reliance on and threat from Pindari forces played against their own interests, the British finally decided to answer Bhopal's call for support and enter into a treaty in 1814.

Though the treaty of 1814 was eventually terminated the following year due to long-standing uncertainty regarding Bhopal's intentions, the correspondence that passed between British officials provides details of a plan for a massive anti-Pindari campaign in Central India that would eventually bring the British into direct confrontation with Maratha forces, and importantly, in contact with the Ashtewales.³⁹ A major component of the plan was to establish a British force along the Narmada River, which formed Malwa's southern border, the objective being to “form an effectual check upon Pindari incursions across that river and place the whole line of its own frontier and that of their Highnesses the Nizam and the Paishwa in a state of permanent security” (Adam 1814b). The Governor General was optimistic that the alliance with Bhopal would not only stem Pindari movements across Malwa's western border, but also “enable us to extend the same protection to the territories of

³⁹ It is clear from Governor General Moira's dispatch to Mountstuart Elphinstone on December 6th 1814 (see Adam 1814b) that plans for an anti-pindari campaign had been established before the Bhopal treaty, which simply served to facilitate and augment them. For a statement on the termination of the treaty, see Moira's letters to Warschope and Elphinstone dated 29 and 30 March, 1815 (Adam 1815a and 1815b).

the Vinchoor Jaggeerdar” (ibid:54–56). As we will see, the first measure that British forces took when they entered Malwa in November of 1817 under John Malcolm was to secure the Vinchurkar’s possessions at Ashta.

The Bhopal treaty established the expectation that upon the success of the campaign, the British would recover and restore territories, such as Ashta, which were formally possessed by Bhopal. In a letter dated December 6, 1814, the Governor General directed John Wauchope Esq., Superintendent of Political Affairs in Bundelkund and British agent with Bhopal, to provide incentive for Bhopal’s cooperation in the treaty by pledging to recover territories formerly possessed by Bhopal, but seized by both the Pindaris and Sindhia (Adam 1814b). Because these territories had yet to be recovered, their discussion was confined to a “secret article.”⁴⁰ Names of particular territories are not mentioned, however. This fact, among others, distinguishes the 1814 treaty from the later, formalized treaty with Bhopal of 1818 wherein the Panj Mahal—and only the Panj Mahal—was restored to the Bhopal. The lack of any mention of the Panj Mahal in the earlier treaty is likely due to the fact that the British had not yet considered it possible to confer. Though presently overrun by Pindari forces, the Panj Mahal was still officially possessed by the Peshwa and held by Vinchurkar, both of who were British allies at the time. It was only after the momentous events of 1817, during which the forces of the Peshwa attacked the Poona residency and the British finally seized the Panj Mahal through

⁴⁰ For the contents of the letter see Ibid:63-82. For the fourteen-article treaty, see Ibid:83-90 treaty. For the secret article see Ibid:92-93.

the Treaty of Poona, that these territories became available for the British to bestow upon Bhopal. It is to these events that we now turn.

The Treaty of Poona

Relations between the British and the Poona court began to sharply deteriorate following the appointment of Trimbakji Dengaḷiyā as minister to the Peshwa. In July of 1816, Trimbakji was alleged to have murdered Gangādhar Śāstrī, an emissary from the Maratha court of Baroda, who traveled to Pune under special British protection. Following Shastri's murder, the British dictated terms to the Peshwa for surrendering Trimbakji, failing which the British imposed restrictions so severe that the Peshwa was compelled to rebel against them (Choksey 1948:2–3). The Peshwa's plan for a united Maratha resistance against the British was finally revealed in April of 1817, following which the British Resident at Poona, Mounstuart Elphinstone, forced the Peshwa to sign off on an even more devastating treaty in June of the same year. The fourteenth article of the Treaty of Poona is most important for our considerations: it required that the Peshwa cede all of his possessions in Hindustan to the British Government, including the Panj Mahal.

With the Panj Mahal now in their hands, the British faced the question of how to compensate the Vinchurkar jahgirdar's family for annexing their territories. The family had faithfully served the British since Narsinh Khanderao Vinchurkar fought with General Wallace against the Pindaris in 1804. More recently, Narsinh Khanderao's son, Viṭhaḷ Narsimh Vincūrkar, had been deployed to assist General

Smith in the Pindari war and was even asked to put down the rebellion of Trimbakji Dengaliya (Vinchurkar 1909:78). As recompense, the English offered Vithal Narsinh districts in the Deccan of equal value. However, Vithal Narsinh requested that he be allowed to continue the same jahgir in Malwa under the name of the British Government. The British initially agreed, and thus for a short time, Vinchurkar became the jahgirdar of the Panj Mahal for the British on the condition that he maintain a force of 800 horsemen to serve the Company. Governor General Hastings (formerly Moira) discussed this arrangement with both Captain Close, Resident with Daulat Rao Sindhia, and Elphinstone in a letter dated July 13, 1817, the subject of which was the disposal of rights and possessions of the Peshwa in Hindustan (Adam 1817; see also Vinchoorkar 1909:81–2):

The object of the arrangement projected is to secure to the British Government to the utmost practicable extent, the command of the Vinchoorkar's territory and military resources, especially of the Punj Mahal of Ashta for purposes of general security and defense, and for imposing a restraint as far as it can have that effect, on the lawless and violent proceedings of Scindia's Government in that quarter. Such conditions as shall most effectively attain these objects with the least practicable embarrassment with relation to neighboring states, will constitute the most desirable arrangement.... The number of Horse to be maintained by the Vinchoorkur out of the revenues of his territories in Hindustan must be determined by you with reference to his means. It appears

to the Governor General that he might be able to furnish a body of 800 Horse at the least, without absorbing too large a proportion of his resources, but this is a point of detail in the consideration of which many circumstances may be taken into account which may be overlooked by Government from a want of that minute information which you and Captain Close will be able to acquire.... You will be prepared to execute a sunnud to the Vinchoorkur for his possessions North of the Nerbudda, specifying the conditions of the Grant. Your sunnud may be hereafter replaced by one having the seal and signature of the Governor General or the Governor General in Council.

Soon after Vinchurkar's re-appointment under the British, however, the Peshwa called Vinchurkar back to Pune. Vinchurkar knew that a fight against the Company would be futile, but he nonetheless decided to stand by the Peshwa hoping that this demonstration of fidelity would be perceived by the British as honorable and worthy of a good position with the British in the future, should they triumph (Vinchurkar 1909:83). As an act of good faith, Vinchurkar left behind a force of 1500 horsemen under Kṛṣṇjī Śyām-rāv for the assistance of General Smith (ibid.:82). However, as tensions with Poona escalated in November of 1817, Smith required the contingent to leave or be treated as enemies.⁴¹

⁴¹ This must have been in November of 1817 and not earlier because Malcolm, in his letter to Hislop from Hoshangabad on October 23, 1817, says that he expects to receive word from Elphinstone in the next few days regarding his communication from the "Vinchow Jagheerdar" commanding his "Deputy in Malwa" to offer his "active cooperation" in expelling the Pindarries (Malcolm 1817a:12).

Preparing for War Against the Pindaris

In the meantime, the situation with the Pindaris was worsening. In early 1816, they raided more than three hundred of the Company's villages at Masuliatam in the Bay of Bengal (Pasley 1982:89–90). As a result, authorities in England became convinced that, “to hesitate any longer in sanctioning the punishment against such aggressions would be a dereliction of the first duty of government, the protection of its subjects” (Malcolm 1826:485). Thus, in September of 1816, the Secret Committee in England wrote to Governor General Moira granting him full approbation to “pursue” and “chastise” the Pindaries by any means necessary.

Moira (now the Marquis of Hastings) began mobilizing his forces to converge on Central India soon after he received the Secret Committee's letter in March the following year (ibid.:487). Two armies were deployed in October of 1817. Hasting himself commanded a force of more than 40,000 coming from Bengal in the East. Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas Hislop commanded a massive force of 70,000 coming from Hyderabad in the South—the Madras or Deccan Army. Brigadier-General John Malcolm commanded the third division of Hislop's five-division army (Pasely 1982:92). In addition, Malcolm was also appointed political agent of the Governor General with the army of the Deccan (Duff [1818] 2000:284). Hislop's army was therefore prepared to deal with much more than the Pindaries. It was expected, in fact, that a British advance on the region would incite resistance among the Maratha chiefs, who had already been plotting with the Peshwa for a united

Maratha attack on the English. The stage was set, in other words, for the Third Anglo-Maratha War, the events of which will soon be discussed.

Prior to the movement of troops, the British had done much to prepare for the expected retaliation of Maratha forces. For one, they assumed greater control of the Maratha state of Nāgpur after an unsuccessful attempt by that leader, Mādhojī Bhonsale or “Apa Sahib,” to attack the British Residency (Aitchison 1876:494–95). They also compelled Daulat Rao Sindhia, ruler of Gwalior, to sign a Treaty of Concert and Alliance against the Pindaris, which forced him to give up control of several forts along the Narmada River and effectively put his troops under British control (Aitchison 1893:14). Finally, the British had also considered resuming negotiations with their one-time ally, Bhopal, ever since Wazir Mohammad’s second son, Nazar Mohammad Khan, submitted fresh conditions for placing Bhopal under the protection of the British Government in January of 1817. But it wasn’t until October of that year, after British forces had already begun to converge from all sides upon Malwa, that the British reopened negotiations.⁴² This protraction was purposeful; it gave them more time to see how events played out with other, mutually hostile players. It wasn’t until the events of the year “compelled” British imperialism in Central and Western India, contemporary sources claimed, that talks with Bhopal resumed.

⁴² Aitchison alternatively claimed the resuming of negotiations with Bhopal was among the first measures taken by the British at the commencement of the Pindari war (1893:248).

Hastings declared his assent to the Bhopal's conditions in a letter from Robert Jenkins, Resident at Nagpore, dated October 13th 1817 (ibid.:257–59). Hastings further demanded the subordinate cooperation of the Bhopal's troops, and the free passage of British troops and supplies through Bhopal's territories at all times. Bhopal's location in the vicinity of the Pindari positions, the character of its troops, and the ruler or Nawāb's personal qualities enabled Bhopal to become, according to Jenkins, "a most useful auxiliary in the approaching crisis" (ibid.:258). Similar to Wauchope's letter to the Wazir Mohammad in 1814, Jenkins' letter held out the promise not only to protect Bhopal's existing territories, but also "recover and restore" those territories seized by the Pindarees, and even show additional marks of "favour and kindness" as circumstances may put in their power to confer (ibid.). The Panj Mahal, though it would eventually become one of these unnamed marks of favor, was, at the time of this letter, still held as jahgir by Vinchurkar under the British.

Following Malcolm into Malwa

Upon the Nawab of Bhopal's required "instantaneous" and "unequivocal" assent to these conditions, Colonel Adams, the commander of the Nagpore Subsidiary force and through whom Jenkins' letter was sent, was instructed to inform the Nawab on the immediate measures to be taken. One of the matters that Adams was to take up with the Nawab was the support and supply of British troops who would soon be entering Malwa across the Narmada River at Hoshangabad (ibid.:259). The Narmada

River (transliterated in the British correspondence as “Nerbuddah”) formed a natural border between Malwa to the north and the Maratha state of Nagpur to the south. The town of Hoshangabad, which lay on the south side of the river, was thus a convenient place for Colonel Adams to amass his forces. He began doing so as early as May with the object of maintaining a defensive line on the river until June, after which the rains made the river impassable. By the rainy season, Adams planned to have collected one regiment and three troops of regular cavalry, five hundred Rohilla horse, and five battalions and six companies of Native infantry, including a light battalion—in other words, “a force perfectly adequate to any exigency,” wrote Jenkins to Hastings on May 30th 1817 (Choksey 1948:138–139).

On October 19th, just days after Adams returned from transmitting Jenkins’ letter to Bhopal, Brigadier-General John Malcolm arrived in Hoshangabad along with the advanced corps of the third division of the Madras army under his command. Malcolm and Adams then began formulating a plan to enter Malwa and expel the Pindaris from the territories North of the Narmada. On October 23rd Malcolm (1817a) wrote to his commanding officer, Sir Thomas Hislop, informing him of the plan in detail. A major component of the plan was the formation of two columns that would simultaneously cross the Narmada at separate locations and proceed North into Malwa along two parallel lines. The first column, headed by Adams and consisting of the Nagpur Subsidiary Force, would cross at Hoshangabad and continue to Bhilsa near “Rahseen” or Raisen just east of Bhopal (ibid.:10). The second column, headed by Malcolm and consisting of the advanced corps of the first and third division of the

Deccan Army, would cross at the small ford of “Jog” or Joga), several days march West of Hoshangabad, and continue to Ashta, “the principal Town of the possessions of the Vinchow Jagheerdar,” just West of Bhopal (ibid:11). Bhopal’s territories would thus lie in between these two advancing columns, making it possible for them to join if required or open lines of communication and supply between them. Bhopal’s cooperation was thus “invaluable at the present moment,” and Malcolm had every reason to expect this cooperation due to a meeting he and Adams had with a representative of the Nawab, Khazad Mussiah, just that morning (ibid.:14-15).

In addition to the advanced columns, Malcolm considered it necessary to secure all fords along the Narmada, as the level of water was falling rapidly (ibid.:7). Therefore, a detachment from Adams’ forces would occupy the river from Hoshangabad West to the “Gunjal” or Ganjal River tributary (ibid.:6).⁴³ A detachment of corps under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Scot, who was due to arrive at Harda on 22 November, would secure the river from the Ganjal West to the town of Harda (ibid.:7). Finally, the corps of Salabat Khan, governor or subedar of Berar (Varhād in Marathi), a province of Hyderabad, would secure the river from Harda as far West as Chooly Mahaisin, and thus facilitate communication with forces on the frontiers of Gujarat and prevent the passage of the Pindaries by that route

⁴³ Malcolm says that the Ganjal River lies slightly east of Harda. The only tributary I was able to find east of Harda is slightly east of Chhipaner, which lies on the North side of the river.

(ibid.:8-9).⁴⁴ In addition, the “Gonnd” and “Grassian” chiefs, located on both sides of the river at Hindia, promised their cooperation. Malcolm, therefore, entertained “no doubt that the British force advancing will not only expel the Pindarries without hazard, but be able to secure the resources of the country for a distance of fifty to sixty miles north of the Nerbudda (ibid:13).

Malcolm’s primary concern was to advance quickly across the river and arrive at Ashta at the earliest possible date. This was partly due to the scrutiny that the Nawab of Bhopal and the Vinchurkar faced from the “publicity” of their connection with the English (Malcolm 1817b:18). An early movement across the river to Ashta, Malcolm contended, would not only give the Nawab of Bhopal “immediate possession” of “Chipanea” and “Gossalpole” Talukas, but would also accelerate the settlement of the Vinchor Jahgirdar’s possessions in the immediate vicinity and allow for a good entrance into Malwa for supplies (1817a:12). Malcolm planned to move across the river toward Ashta on 10 November, but said he would be ready to do so earlier should he find that the Nawab was ready to take charge of his districts on the river before that date (ibid.:22).

It is here, in connection with his desire to arrive early at Ashta, that Malcolm first mentions his communication with “the manager of the Vinchor jahgirdar at Ashta, who is most anxious as I believe are all the inhabitants of that country for our advance” (ibid.:12). Later, when Malcolm wrote to Hislop from his camp at Harda on

⁴⁴ Before arriving at Harda, Malcolm intended to meet with Salbat Khan in “Seonee” on November 26. This is likely to have been “Seoni Malwa,” which lies directly between Hoshangabad and Harda, and not the “Seoni” that lies between Southeast of Hoshangabad between Nagpur and Jabalpur.

30 October 30, he again mentioned the urgency of arriving at Ashta to support the manager: “I also deem it of importance to give some countenance to the manager of the possession of the Vinchoor Jagheerdar, who writes me that he is making every effort to enable him to aid us, but that he dreads if not supported that his country will be overrun by the Pindaries” (1817b:22–x23).

As mentioned earlier, the Vinchurkar’s manager at Ashta during this time was none other than Khande Rao, the ancestor of the Ashtewale family who received the British-mediated pension discussed at the beginning of this chapter. But why was Malcolm communicating directly with Khande Rao and not with Vinchurkar? Earlier it was noted that the Peshwa had called the Vinchurkar to his side soon after the Treaty of Poona had been finalized. Despite the fact that Vinchurkar had been made a secret jahgirdar of the British, suspicions were held about his allegiance to the Peshwa as the inevitability of war unfolded in late October. Elphinstone, for example, wrote in October noting, “Vinchorkur's hourse, with some infantry and guns, were encamped between the residency and the village of Bambooree” (Duff iii:295). Khande Rao therefore served as an important direct connection to the territories the British were desirous to assume.

Malcolm did not cross the Narmada until 16 November and did not arrive at Ashta until the 23rd (Hislop 1817:39a; Duff iii:284, 325). In this interim, momentous events were unfolding at Poona, the outcome of which bears directly upon the history of the Ashtewale pension. It is towards these events that we now turn.

The Third Anglo-Marāṭhā War

On 5 November 1817, the Peshwa's forces plundered and burned the British Residency at Poona, causing the Resident, Elphinstone, to take refuge at his cantonment in nearby Kirkee (Khaḍkī in Marathi). On the November 12, Elphinstone wrote to General Smith regarding the positions of the "enemy," noting Vinchurkar's position on the river beyond the Paishwa's Brigade (Choksey 1948:163). Following a brief battle in which the Peshwa lost many men, the Peshwa fled under the pursuit of General Smith, thereby initiating a chase that lasted until June of the following year and spanned across the Deccan, Karnataka, and finally ending in Central India. During this chase, a battle broke out between the Peshwa and the English at Ashta on February 19, 1819. During the battle at Ashta, the head of the Peshwa's army and several other persons of distinction were killed. The Raja of Satara, who had earlier been captured by the Peshwa along with his mother and brothers, were also rescued. Of this battle, Elphinstone wrote to Hastings on February 26, 1818: "Either of these events would have a material effect on the progress of the War, but the deliverance of the Rajah in the present state of public feelings holds out the strongest hopes of its early termination" (ibid.:193–4).

After the Battle of Ashta, the Peshwa managed to continue to elude his pursuers, arriving first at Kopargāv and then at Berar to the east. He soon found, however, that the English had surrounded him on all sides. He therefore initiated a protracted series of negotiations with Malcolm, finally surrendering himself in Malcolm's camp on June 3, 1818. Three days later, Malcolm wrote, "The war is over,

and the voluntary submission of the first Hindoo Prince in India to become a pensioner of the English Government will make a wider impression of our irresistible power than any event that has yet occurred” (Kaye 1856:254). The Peshwa was then exiled to Biṭhūr near Kānpur, and was granted a pension of 8 lakhs (800,000) rupees per year. After his death in 1851, Bajirao’s adopted son, Dhondū Pant, better known as Nānā Sāhib, was denied this pension, a motivation for his leadership in the revolt of 1857 (Ramusack 2004:78).

The Vinchurkar had remained along side the Peshwa up until the very end, and it was for this reason—his adherence to the cause of the Peshwa—that the British withdrew his rights as jahgirdar of the Panj Mahal. As Hastings wrote to Captain Close, Resident with Scindhia, in February 1818, “...the adherence of the Vinchoorkur to the Peshwa's cause had rendered it necessary to resume all his Jaggeers, and that those part of them to the North of the Nerbudda which under other circumstances would have been managed by his Agents must now be administered directly by the officers of the British Government” (Adam 1818d:328).

The Treaty of Bhopāl

The repeal of the Vinchurkar’s jahgir in the Panj Mahal proved to be a boon for British negotiations with Bhopal; it became the only territory the British could hold out to ensure Bhopal’s cooperation in the war. All of the territories that the British taught Bhopal to expect, namely Islamnagar, Shujawolpore, and Barseeah, were still under negotiation with Sindhia months after the Nawab had agreed to terms

at Hoshangabad in November of 1817. The British delayed concluding the treaty for want of these territories. By February of 1818, however, it became necessary to allay the Nawab's anxiousness.

On February 9, 1818, Hastings wrote to Bhopal's first political agent, Captain Josiah Stewart, confirming his new appointment and instructing him on how to negotiate with the Nawab (Adam 1818c). Hastings hoped that restoring the Panj Mahal to Bhopal would "more than compensate" for any disappointment the Nawab would feel of the delay with Sindhias territories. And should the Nawab require further incentive, Hastings was prepared to verbally assure the award of additional territories without, however, "stating more explicitly the particular objects in contemplation, the knowledge of which, if the arrangement should prove impractical, will augment his disappointment" (ibid.:339).⁴⁵

At the treaty's conclusion, Hastings instructed Stewart to proceed to put the Nawab in possession of the Panj Mahal and to assign a provision to the manager of these territories, whom Hastings refers to as "Kundy Row." This provision was to be charged to the Nawab under the guarantee of the British Government. The amount had yet to be decided, but Hastings was clear that it should be sufficient enough to fulfill the assurances held out to Khande Rao by John Malcolm:

As soon as the Treaty [with Bhopal] is concluded you will proceed to put the

⁴⁵ Stewart, who had recently served as Malcolm's first political assistant, had fought with Malcolm in the Battle of Mehidpoor against Holkar, and had earlier accompanied Malcolm on his second mission to Persia. It is therefore likely that Malcolm was responsible for Stewart's appointment at Bhopal, though Hastings says Hislop officiated.

Nawaub in possession of the Punj Mahaul.... The Governor General does not apprehend that any opposition will be offered by the Vinchoorkur's manager whose interests are to be provided for, a benefit which he would forfeit by opposing our views. The Governor General is not sufficiently informed of the nature of the questions which may be pending between the Nawaub of Bhopaul and Kundy Row, but it will probably be necessary to investigate and adjust them besides settling the future provision for him. You will accordingly apply yourself to this object with a view to which indeed you have probably already been collecting information. His Lordship is not prepared to specify the nature and extent of the provision to be assigned to Kundy Row. It must be charged on the Revenue of the Punj Mahaul and must be made by the Nawaub of Bhopaul under the guarantee of the British Government and must be on a sufficiently liberal scale to fulfill the assurances held out by Sir John Malcolm to the manager on his advance and which the subsequent conduct of the latter appears fully to have justified (ibid.:341-42).

Analysis of the Khaṇḍe-rāv Pension

Stewart's mission to Bhopal lasted less than a month, but proved successful. The treaty between the East Indian Company and the Nawab of Bhopal, Nazar Mohammad Khan, was concluded at Raisen on February 26, 1818 A.D., corresponding to the 20th of Rabbee-ul-sanee, 1233 of the Hegira.⁴⁶ Stewart signed on

⁴⁶ A translation of the complete treaty can be found in Malcolm (1826, ii:402), Aitchison (1893:260–62), and Luard (1908:127).

the part of Hastings. Kuram Mohammad Khan Bahadur and Shahzad [Musseeh] Saheb signed on the part of the Nawab. The treaty was later ratified by both Hasting and the Nawab on March 8 at Lucknow. Of the treaty's eleven articles, the tenth grants the five districts of the Panj Mahal to the Nawab and his heirs in perpetuity:

The Nawab having exerted himself and employed the resources of his Government with zeal and fidelity in the late service against the Pindarees, the British Government, in order to mark its approbation of its conduct and to enable him to maintain the stipulated contingent, hereby grants to the Nawab, his heirs and successors, in perpetuity the five mehals of Ashta, Jehawar, Sehore, Dooraha, and Daveoora to be held by them in exclusive authority.

The contingent required to be maintained for British service on the revenue of these districts included six hundred horse and four hundred infantry.

A provision for Khande Rao and his posterity of rupees six thousand per year was also charged to the district of Ashta and guaranteed by the British Government. The assignment is not mentioned in the treaty itself, but was detailed in a separate sanad concluded at the exact time and place as the Bhopal Treaty.⁴⁷ Aitchison provides a translation from the original Persian (*ibid.*:268):

⁴⁷ A translation of the Khanderao sanad is available in Aitchison (1893:263). An original, untranslated copy is available in the National Archives of India, New Delhi, Bhopal Political Agency, Vernacular File No. 437. Two original, untranslated copies are also held by the Ashtewale family, one of which I was able to obtain. Photographs of this copy appear in Figure 1 and 2.

Be it known to the present and future Amils of the Ashta Mehal that the Government of the Company being well disposed towards Khundee Rao Bhao the Amil on the part of the jagirdar, for the services rendered by him to the officers of the said Company, it has been settled under the advice of Captain Stewart to grant the annuity of Rupees 6,000 to the said Khundee Row and his posterity. It therefore behooves the Amils to continue to pay the promised annuity out of the revenue of the said mahal to him and his posterity and in this manner they (the Amils) should in no way depart from the order, as it is an opportunity for them to meet the wishes of the said Company's Government and please its officers. Annuity Rs. 6,000 dated 20th Rubli-ul-sani Sun Joloos 12, corresponding to 1225 Hejira.

I hereby certify that the grant bestowed in this sanad of Rupees 6,000 per annum to Khandee Rao and his posterity is guaranteed by the British Government.

Raiseen,

26th February 1818.

(Sd.) J. Stewart,

On a mission to Bhopal.

The sanad is addressed to the new Amils of the district of Ashta and directs them to pay six thousand Rupees per year from Ashta's revenues to Khande Rao

“Bhao” and his descendents.⁴⁸ Special mention is made of the fact that this pension has been concluded under the advice of Captain Stewart due to the “services” Khande Rao rendered towards the Company. The final sentence is separated from the main body of text and certifies the British guarantee. This is followed by Stewart’s signature and accompanying English date and location.

The Hejira year given in the original sanad appears to have been mistaken.⁴⁹ Instead of 20th Rubli-ul-sani 1225 Hejira, which corresponds to May 24, 1810, the Hejira year should have been written as 1233, which would then correspond with the English date given next to Stewart’s signature, February 26, 1818, and with the Hejira year given on the Treaty of Bhopal, which was concluded simultaneously with the Khanderao sanad. The writer of the original sanad appears to have instead substituted the term Hejira for Fasli, the calendar that measures time from the accession of Akbar to the Mughal Emperor in 1556 A.D. Aitchison silently corrected this in the title he gave to Khande Rao’s sanad: “Translation of a Sanad granted by Nawab Nazir-ul-Dowla Nazar Muhammad Khan Bahadur to Khandee Rao Bhao, dated 20th Rabi-ul-sani, 1225 *Fusli*—1818” (my emphasis). A look at the untranslated sanad provides further proof of this. For example, “1225 Fasli” is clearly visible in the signatures of the Nawab’s representatives found on the reverse of the document and written in Persian (Fig. 2).

⁴⁸ “Bhao” or *bhāv* is the Marathi word for “brother” and is often used as a term of respect.

⁴⁹ The Hejira calendar (alternatively “Hijra,” “Hijrah,” or “Hegira”) measures years since the Islamic prophet Muhammad and his followers journeyed from Mecca to Medina, which occurred in 622 A.D.

Original copies of the untranslated sanad shown in Figures 1 and 2 also allow us to see several details not available in Aitchison's translation. For example, in the original sanad shows the English text to lay perpendicular to the Persian text, on the right side of the page. In addition to Stewart's signature, which is the only one included in Aitchison's translation, we can also see the signatures of John Malcolm and Warren Hastings. Other small details include the heading at the top of the document, which begins with an "alif" for the name of Allah. This is followed by the words "naqal" (copy), declaring this document to be a copy of the original, and "mohur" (seal), indicating that the original document contained an actual seal. A small box follows, meant to approximate the original seal in which is written, "Nazar Muhammad Khan, Bahadur, Nawab Nazar-ud-daulah." The sign, "saad," is then given, a short form for "sahih" meaning "signature."

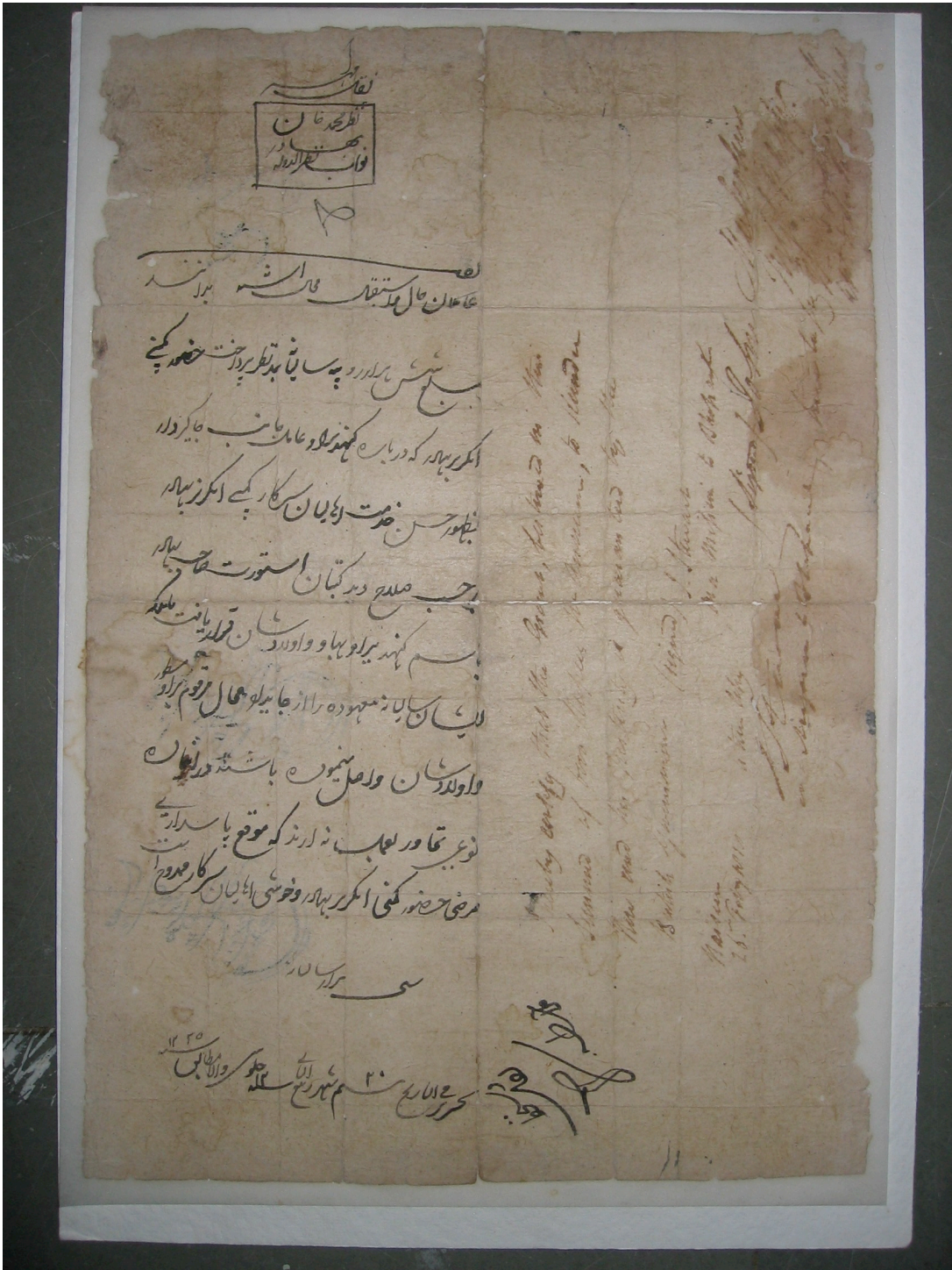


Figure 1 A copy of the Khande Rao sanad held by the Ashtewale family (front).



Figure 2 Detail from a copy of the Khande Rao sanad held by the Ashtewale family (back).

Malcolm's Letter

Fortunately, a letter, written by Malcolm on June 16, 1821, explains the circumstances surrounding the Khande Rao pension (Malcolm 1821).⁵⁰ In it, Malcolm praises Khande Rao for his integrity in dealing with his former employer, his demonstrated attachment to the British, and his qualifications as a “man of business.” In short, Malcolm's letter amounts to a testimony of Khande Rao's character:

Kunde Row Bhow was manager of the Punj Mahal/ Ashta Sehore _____ on the part of the Vinchorkar Jaghirdar when I entered Malwa in November 1817. I took military possession of his countries but left him in civil authority till the war ended when the [Districts were] made over to the Nawab of Bhopal who settled a pension of 6,000 as per annum on Kunde Row which was guaranteed by the British Government. Kunde Row first attracted my attention by [the] manner in which he performed his duty to his employer the [Vinchorkar] and [kept] by his correct fulfillment of the temporary engagements [he] entered into with us. His favorable impression had been confirmed by all my subsequent intercourse with this intelligent Brahman. He considers himself and really is a dependent of the British Gov.,

⁵⁰ This typed transcription of the letter is based on a hand-copied transcription that I made before the document went for photocopying and came back significantly more damaged and therefore less readable.

under whose avowed protection he resides at Oojein. He is very anxious to serve that state and had I required a native of his character and calibre I should certainly have employed him as a person whose qualifications as a man of business are undoubted and upon whose integrity and attachment we have more reason to [receive] from the gratitude he has evinced for the liberal manner in which he has been treated.

/Signed/ John Malcolm

M. G. P. A. L. L.

Mandoo

16th June 1821

Malcolm most likely wrote this letter to supplement the Bhopal Agent's records and provide further verification of the pension, whether for present or future concerns it is not known. It is the only English document in a file of approximately 585 pages found within the papers of the Bhopal Agency now housed at the National Archives of India, New Delhi. It largely contains receipts of payments made to succeeding generations of Ashtewale pension holders and is mostly written in Persian, the language used by the Amils of the district of Ashta, which was held as a personal jahgir of the Nawab of Bhopal. A significant portion is also written in Modi, though this largely summarizes the Persian material. A smaller amount is written in an older form of Hindi, though it was not possible for me to have this material translated.

Malcolm's letter is also important because it allows us to consider when the Ashtewale family first moved from Ashta to Ujjain, where they began patronizing classical musicians. A brief article on the history of the family written in Marathi by Shripad Mirikar of Ahmednagar says that it was Khande Rao's son, Sardār Raghunāth Khaṇḍe-rāv Ashtewale (also known as Ābā Sāheb), who first came with this entourage to Ujjain and built a wada in Dānā Darvāzā (1994:3). However, it is clear from Malcolm's letter that Khande Rao himself settled in "Oojein" (Ujjain). Malcolm's letter further suggests that Khande Rao moved to Ujjain soon after February 26, 1818, as Malcolm left Khande Rao "in civil authority" of his districts "til the war ended" and the districts were made over to the Nawab. More significantly, an additional letter written by Malcolm on July 11, 1818 from his camp at Mhow, approximately fifty miles to the South of Ujjain, says that Khande Rao had "come from Oojein" to meet him, indicating that Khande Rao had already shifted to Ujjain by this date (Malcolm 1818c). As June-July is the monsoon season, it is unlikely that Khande Rao and his entourage would have moved house during this time, despite the fact that the journey from Ashta to Ujjain, comprising some seventy miles, would not have posed any great difficulty. It is more likely, therefore, that Khande Rao moved to Ujjain sometime between March and May of 1818, and probably very soon after his districts were officially made over to Bhopal on February 26. Coincidentally, Malcolm was also in Ujjain for most of the month of March and wrote Hastings and Elphinstone from there, though without mentioning Khande Rao (Malcolm 1818a, 1818b).

Becoming Āṣṭewāle

It is important to note that the family began using the Ashtewale surname only after having left Ashta. This post-departure use of the name is, in fact, consistent with the way that other “wale” names are used in India. In such cases, “wale” functions as a suffix that, when attached to the name of a place, takes on the meaning “from the place of.”⁵¹ This usage is, in fact, similar to the use of the suffix “ley” in names of Irish descent. The name “Wellesley,” for instance, as in Arthur Wellesley, the Governor General of India from 1798 to 1806, refers to a person originally from “Wells” in Ireland (Butler 1973). This explains why the name Ashtewale was not used on the pension document. However, I am still at a loss as to how to explain the absence of any surname on the document, even Gosāvāi, the name that the family claims to have had prior to Ashtewale, which I discuss in Chapter Two.

Khaṇḍe-rāv and the Colonial Information Order

Malcolm’s letter from Mhow is interesting for more reasons than defining the beginning of Khande Rao’s residence at Ujjain. It also shows the degree to which Khande Rao continued to aid the British in matters of intelligence gathering. According to Malcolm’s letter to Hastings, Khande Rao briefed Malcolm on the public sentiment relating to Sindia’s culpability in the recent rise of the British:

⁵¹ The suffix *-wāle* or more particularly *-wālā* can also mean “one who does” or deals with the noun to which it is attached, so that *kacarā-wālā* is “garbage collector” and *dhāru-wālā* is “alcohol seller,” the latter also being a surname. In Maharashtra, a more typical suffix indicating “from the place of” is *kar*. In fact, there are those who hail from a different Ashta located in southern Maharashtra who have taken on the name *Āṣṭekar*.

He give me an account which fully confirms all that I had before heard of Oujein and its vicinity. He tells me that from the moment Bajee Row advanced towards Boorhanpoor, the utmost activity prevailed among the principal persons in that city, every day brought a report more unfavorable than that of the day before to the English. The submission of the Paishwa was long unbelieved, but when its truth could be no longer denied it spread a general gloom. It was spoken of, he said, as the death of the Mahratta Empire, and Scindia was loudly blamed, as one cause of this misfortune. (Malcolm 1818c.:525)

Of even greater consequence is Malcolm's claim that Khande Rao told him about the private—and forbidden by the British—communications that Scindia was known to have had with Baji Rao:

Two days after he came here, Kunder Row said, as he was sitting with Balloba,⁵² he had a letter from Gunput Row, Ganess Rajah Ram, the Vinchoorkar Vakeel at Gwalior, which mentioned a letter from Dowlut Row Scindia to Bajee Row, suggesting the latter to come to Gwalior. Whether this request was a matter of mere civil attention, whom however failed, Scindia

⁵² Balloba was a manager for Vinchurkar who resided at Mhow and it was to meet Balloba and settle some private accounts held with him that Khande Rao ostensibly came to Mhow.

might still consider his Chief, or connected with any intrigue hostile to our interests, Khundee Row said he could not tell, but enjoying a pension as he did through the favor of the British Government, he thought it his duty to communicate the circumstance to me. He knew, he added, that Gunput Row and a person named Govind Punt, were in the habit of making a number of communications from Scindia to Bajee Row, but how these were received or answered by the latter he was, as yet wholly ignorant. (ibid.:525–26)

Malcolm's description indicates that Khande Rao voluntarily offered this politically useful and potentially incriminating information against his Maratha associates; Khande Rao had come to Mhow on his own volition and provided this information without solicitation. He did so because he "thought it his duty," as he enjoyed a pension "through the favor of the British Government." Whether such communications continued, it is not known. However, that it could and did happen shows us that the British continued to have a hand in the political as well as the pecuniary matters of "independent" states such as Sindia's.

In his book, *Empire and Information*, Christopher Bayly cautions against interpreting the actions of Indian informants to the British—the running spies, secretaries, news writers, etc., who were recruited to secure military, social, and political information about British subjects—as traitors. Not only did these informants live in a time before modern nationalism (Bayly's book focuses on the period, 1793-1818), but "it was from the descendants of the informants," Bayly

argued, “that many of the future nationalists would be drawn” (1996:ix). Going by Bayly’s reasoning, a similar argument might be made taking the Ashtewale family as an example. Though Khande Rao may have shared a close political affiliation with the British, his grandson, Dhunḍirāj Kṛṣṇa Āṣṭewāle, whose biography I discuss in Chapter Six, was a founding and active member of the Ujjain branch of the *Rāśtrīya Svayamsevak Saṅgh* (RSS) or National Volunteer Corps, a Hindu nationalist organization. Adopting an alternative, but still nationalist perspective, Dhundiraj’s son, Govind, translated his Gandhian values into setting up a cottage factory for spinning wheels in Ujjain.

It would be incorrect, however, to assume that just because the progeny of eighteenth and early-nineteenth century British informants were nationalists that the informants, too, harbored some latent form of nationalism (the implication, I believe, of Bayly’s statement), or that they should not be considered “traders” on this basis. The descendents of British informants did not necessarily hold the same views and imperatives as their forefathers. Instead, the assertion that these informants not be considered traitors—an assertion that I agree with—is better supported by referencing the complexity of the contemporary political situation at the time, coming as it did before the era of modern, popular nationalism. In this way, Bayly’s point is significant for the broader aim of this dissertation, which seeks to complicate the perception of Brahmans in classical music by pointing to their pre-nationalist precedents.

Malcolm and the Submission of India

In January of 1818, one month prior to the conferral of the Ashtewale pension, John Malcolm was appointed Agent for the Governor General in Central India, his primary duty being to “settle” or “pacify” various groups like the Pindaries, and to make arrangements for all of the land that had been ceded to the British from the Paishwa and from other Maratha chiefs such as the Raja of Nagpur and Holkar. In a letter he wrote to Hastings on May 10, 1818, Malcolm provided an intimate, and overly righteous, portrayal of his work:

It is six weeks since I left Oujein and from that date to the present moment this force has been divided into small detachments, which have traversed every path and every ghaut of the forests between Hindiah and Moheysir, and it is a remarkable fact, that though the country abounds with Bheels and robbers, under numerous chiefs, alike celebrated for their habit of rapacity and violence, not a rupee of property has been stolen or a camp follower hurt. These plunders have sought my camp and that of officers whom I detached, and expressed their earnest hope that I would take their condition into consideration, and provide means of livelihood less criminal and hazardous than that to which they had long been compelled by necessity. I am now engaged in a very minute inquiry into their real and supposed rights, and I hope I will be able to effect some arrangement that will preserve the tranquility of the country. (Kaye 1856, ii:234)

Malcolm continued this work for four years, after which he submitted an official report that later became the basis for his *Memoirs of Central India* ([1824] 1832). Summing up the success of his efforts, Malcolm wrote in a letter to Major Stewart, “The large work has been done. India is subsumed. The very minds of the inhabitants are for the moment conquered” (Kaye 1856, ii:372).

Within Malcolm’s story of India’s suppression, Bhopal, and by extension Khande Rao, played a significant part. Contemporary British historian James Grant Duff wrote, “amongst the natives of India, where the recollections of benefits and injuries are treasured up for generations, nothing in the whole administration of the Marquis of Hastings conveyed so deep an impression of the value of British friendship, as the conduct of its government to Boondee and Bhopaul” ([1818] 2000, iii:334–45). Malcolm was appointed Governor of Bombay in 1827, a position he held until 1831, two year before his death on May 31, 1833.

Comparison with Ganpat-rāv

Though the story of Khande Rao’s relationship with Malcolm is particular, it is not unique. It is instructive to briefly mention the case of another manager or agent of Vinchurkar in Hindustan, Ganpat-rāv, both because of the context his case provides for situating Khande Rao, and because of the direct comparison that is made between the two in Hastings’ letters. Ganpat Rao (d.1823), also known as “Gainaish Rajaram Karkoon,” was originally the manager for Vinchurkar’s territories near

Gwalior, specifically those on the Bundelkhand side of the Sindh River.⁵³ This is the same “Gunput Row” who was accused by Khande Rao in Malcolm’s letter of July 11 of “making a number of communications from Scindia to Bajee Row.”

As a result of the Treaty of Poona, the British assumed command over the territories that Ganpat Rao managed for the Vinchurkar near Gwalior just as they assumed command over the possessions that Khande Rao managed for the Vinchurkar in the Panj Mahal. And just as the Panj Mahal was restored to the Nawab of Bhopal for his cooperation in the Pindar war, the British granted Ganpat Rao’s territories to a ruler in the vicinity, the Raja of Dutteah, who Hastings claimed, “manifested exemplary zeal in furnishing supplies and other aid to this division of the army which has chiefly been encamped in his territories” (Adam 1818a:313). A provision was made for Ganpat Rao for similar reasons it was made to Khande Rao: to compensate for the loss of these territories and “in consideration of his ready obedience to our order in the transfer” (Fieldings 1829:30–43).⁵⁴ Furthermore, Ganpat Rao’s provision was charged to the Raja of Dutteah through the newly transferred districts just as Khande Rao’s pension was charged to the Nawab through the district

⁵³ In his letter of April 22, 1829 to A. Sterling, Resident at Gwalior, M. Ainslee, Agent to the Governor General at Kanpur, referred to these territories only with respect to their location “on the Bundelcund side of the Sind” (Ainslee 1829:43–47). A letter from G. Fieldings, Acting Resident at Gwalior, to Sterling on July 20, 1829 indicates that at least part of the territories referred to came under the district of “Barugang” or Burranganga (Fieldings 1829:39–43).

⁵⁴ It is possible that Captain Josiah Stewart concluded Ganpat Rao’s provision just as he did Khande Rao’s. Through Fielding claims it was “Major” Stewart who concluded Ganpat Rao’s pension, Hastings’ letter to “Captain” Stewart on 9 February 1818 directed him to proceed to Gwalior as soon as his work at Bhopal is over (Adams 1818c). This Stewart (Josiah) served as Bhopal’s first Political Agent from January to March 1818 (___). After Bhopal, Stewart was deputed to Gwalior—during the same time that Ganpat Rao’s provision was concluded. See “History of the Bhopal Political Agency: Office of the Officer on Special Duty (1818-1947)” in National Archives of India (1992:106).

of Ashta (*ibid.*:42). The provisions made for Khande Rao and Ganpat Rao were even considered together, as is shown in Hastings' letter to Captain Close, Resident at Gwalior on February 8, 1818:

Both policy and liberality suggest the propriety of making suitable provision for Gunput Row which will be equitably charged upon the lands in question. You will be pleased therefore to report the amount and nature of the provision which will in your judgment be proper and you will apprise Ganput Row of the intention of the Governor General in his favor. A similar provision for Kundy Row the manager of the Punj Mahaul will be charged on that territory when it is assigned to the Nabob of Bhopaul. (Adam 1818a:313–14)

There were, of course, differences between the two. Ganpat Rao's pension was considerably higher than Khande Rao's at Rs. 10,000 per annum, and was not granted in perpetuity, thus ceasing upon his death. However, Ganpat Rao's case shows us that Khande Rao's sanad was not unique, but part of the general way in which the British oversaw the settling of territories in central India, territories that were eventually subsumed under the largest conglomerate of princely states in British India, the Central Indian Provinces.

CONCLUSION

The Ashtewale pension illustrates how changes brought about by indirect rule had indirect consequences for musical patronage, for it was due to the receipt of this pension that the family could become patrons and disciples of professional musicians. However, in contrast to the rulers of princely states who may have inspired the Ashtewales in patronizing music, such as Daulat Rao Sindhia, ruler of the state of Gwalior in which the Ashtewales lived, the dynamic between colonialism and musical patronage appears to have been less direct. In the case of princes under indirect rule, it was suggested that the encouragement of kingly munificence was, in fact, a specific desire of the Company, the assumption being that demonstration of the rulers' largesse would sustain their legitimacy (and their ability to collect revenue for the Company) in spite of the loss of political power. John Malcolm had no such direct investment in Khande Rao's demonstration of patronage, though perhaps it could be argued that in providing liberal reward for Khande Rao's cooperation, Malcolm was sending a message to all of his would-be collaborators that it would behoove them to do the same.

Seen in relation to the larger goal of this dissertation, this chapter suggests that for at least some Brahman families, one precondition for their participation in music prior to nationalism was colonialism. This was not purposeful on the part of the British. However, as we learn in the following chapter, many of those with whom the Company needed to negotiate for settling the ceded territories of the Peshwa—jaghirdars, *zamīndār*-s and lessor amils such as the Ashtewales—were, in fact,

Brahman, and had become so under the Peshwa's rule. Some of these families may have benefited from their association with the British to the extent that they became patrons or increased their patronage. However, colonialism did not provide the motivation to patronize the specific form of music that they did, which was largely produced by Muslim families of hereditary professionals and in the context of Islamicate courts. The following two chapters explore different ways of understanding this motivation.

2. MUGHAL PRECEDENTS

INTRODUCTION

Flowing through the holy city of Ujjain is the river Kṣiprā (Shipra), along which the Hindu god Rām is said to have performed the death rites of his father at the place now called Rām-ghāṭ (Eck 2012:417). For years, Ragunāth-rāv Āṣṭewāle, son of the original Ashtewale pension-holder, would arrive at the banks of this holy river every morning after having set out from his home in the Dānī Darvāzā area of the city some three kilometers away. One morning, however, Ragunathrao came to the river and heard an unusual sound: the soft strains of a sitar coming from the *ghāṭ* below. Curious, he approached the stranger-musician, whose name was Mugalū Khān.

Ragunathrao, or Dādā Sāheb as he was more commonly known, was the first Ashtewale to cultivate an interest in music, which is said to have stemmed from this first meeting with Mugalū Khan sometime in the second quarter of the nineteenth century.⁵⁵ The family had moved to Ujjain not long before this in 1818 following their receipt of a hereditary pension (see Chapter One). It was here, among the city's oldest temples and wealthiest families, that the Ashtewales constructed a sprawling mansion that not only became the family seat, but also served as a renowned place for the patronage of musicians and artists from all over North India (Mirikar 1994).

⁵⁵ I first heard this story of how the Ashtewale family came to music from Anand Ashtewale, the great-great grandson of Ragunathrao and currently the family's oldest living member. I was unable to locate any reference to Ragunathrao's date of birth or death. The oral history of the family recorded by Mirikar (1994) suggests that Ragunathrao was alive when the family moved to Ujjain from Ashta, which is likely to have been sometime in 1818 (see Chapter One). Ragunathrao's only child, Kṛṣṇa-rāv, was born in 1841.

Though the Ashtewales were Hindu Brahmans, all of the musicians they patronized and apprenticed with were Muslim—hereditary professionals attached to princely courts in the region and considered the finest musicians of their day. The instruments they played, the *sitār* and the *bīn*, had been popularized in the Mughal court during the mid-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.⁵⁶ Mughal miniature paintings from earlier periods sometimes depict a lone bin player sitting in a bucolic setting, recalling the image of Mughal Khan in the story of how music first came to the Ashtewale family.⁵⁷

Continuing with the example of Ashtewale family, this chapter explores the social and political imperatives that lay behind Hindu and particularly Brahman interest in classical music during the early nineteenth century. Why would this elite Brahman family residing in one of the most holy Hindu cities of India (Ujjain)⁵⁸ and within in a state ruled by Maharashtrian Hindus (Gwāliyar, commonly Gwalior) take so strongly to a music practiced largely by Muslim hereditary professionals and

⁵⁶ The sitar took on its modern form only in the early decades of the twentieth century. However, its first appearance in writing dates to 1739 Delhi, its first noted players to late-eighteenth century Delhi (Masit Khan), and its first visual evidence from about 1790 (Miner 1997:32, 92). Its basic form had been taken from the Persian setar, a lute (Miner 19937:18, 33), and modified along the lines of the bin or rudra vina, a stick or tube zither made from a bamboo attached to two full-gourd resonators. Though the bin's ancestors have been found in stone sculptures dating to the middle of the first century CE, the instrument took on its modern form and function as a solo instrument in the court of Mohammad Rangile (r.1719-1748) (Neuman [1980] 1990: 134–35).

⁵⁷ See, for example, the Mughal miniature painting titled, “The vina player Naubat Khan [Misri Singh, husband of Tansen’s daughter, Saraswati] Kalawant,” attributed to Mansur and dated circa 1590–1595 and held by the British Museum (Crill and Jariwalla 2010:70–71).

⁵⁸ Ujjain is one of the four places in India where the Hindu pilgrimage fair and bathing festival called the kumbh mela takes place. It is also one of the twelve sites in India to contain a *jyotirlinga*, a shrine that marks the place where Lord Shiva is said to have appeared as a fiery column of light (Eck 1999:107).

developed largely within an Islamicate courtly milieu? Ethnomusicologist Bonnie Wade suggested a similar question when she pointed to the apparent conflict behind the fact that the Sindhia rulers of Gwalior, though they “were not Muslim, and though the Muslim population in Gwalior was far outnumbered by the Hindu, the singers whom the Scindias fostered and who established the oldest of the *khyal gharanas*, were Muslim—a heritage of the then defunct Mughal Empire” (1984:37).

Chapter One highlighted the role of colonialism in encouraging princely patronage for music in general, and in providing the means (a hereditary pension) by which the Ashtewale family could become patrons of music in particular.

Colonialism, in other words, was shown to have influenced the degree of patronage for music during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. However, as for questions related to the quality of this patronage, the kinds of music patronized, and the meaning this patronage held for the patrons, different perspectives and explanations need to be sought.

The position explored here, which is adapted from the field of medieval and early modern South Asian history, is that the appropriation of an elite form of courtly music associated with Mughals allowed newly empowered or aspiring elites such as the Ashtewales (and, indeed, the rulers under whom the Ashtewales lived) to assert their inclusion in a pan-regional Mughal culture, what Kumkum Chatterjee has more broadly described as a “Mughal cosmopolitanism” (2009), an act that had direct consequences for claims to cultural and political legitimacy.

The gist of this argument is not completely new to studies of music. The patronage of Hindustani musicians by newly wealthy zamindars in Bengal at the end of the nineteenth century is regularly interpreted as a way of imitating, and thereby inheriting, the mantle of Mughal legitimacy (e.g., Van der Meet 1980:121; Mishra 1981:128; McNeil 2004:116). Katherine Butler Brown (now Schofield) has allowed us to see this process in a longer perspective by arguing that even earlier within the Mughal center of Delhi during the mid-seventeenth century, “the patronage of classical music had become central to the notion of what it meant to be a *mirzā* or nobleman” (2007:30).

In order to understand the Mughal legacy behind early Hindu participation in classical music, this chapter takes a step backwards chronologically to examine a pre-colonial shift in the political and administrative control of the region in which the Ashtewales lived (Mālvā) from Mughal to Marāṭhā during the middle of the eighteenth century. Drawing on the work of historians of eighteenth-century India, such as Stewart Gordon (2000), who has mapped both the ruptures and continuities in the patronage of cultural institutions between Mughal and Maratha administrations, I argue that the patronage of Islamicate music by newly aristocratic families of Maharashtrians in North India served as an important strategy to legitimize their position. That is, despite the decline of Mughal power during the eighteenth century and the rise of independent states, several of which were “Hindu” in their leadership, Mughal practices in the areas of patronage and administration largely continued even into the colonial period. The Ashtewales’ decision to become patrons (and

performers) of an Islamicate music can thus partly be seen in the light of other continuities that accompanied the shift from Mughal to Maratha control; it helped mitigate this shift by lending greater legitimacy to the new occupiers.

Thus, a theme developed in the first section of this chapter is the Mughalness of the Marathas, the ways in which they emulated rather than disassociated themselves from the Mughals. As my phrasing suggests, this theme, in addition to providing a context in which to understand Maratha patronage of Mughal traditions, also serves to complicate a common notion, expounded early on by nationalist leaders such as Justice M.G. Ranade (1842–1901) and promulgated by all manner of popular and academic works, including the longstanding and historical-focused comic book series *Amar Chitra Katha* (McLain 2009); nationalist historical literature from the 1930s and 1940s (Gordon 1993:5–6); and present-day performances of plays such as *Jāṅtā Rājā* by Bāḷvant “Bābā-sāheb” Purandare (b.1922); that the Marathas under the leadership of the seventeenth-century king Shivājī Bhosle (r.1674–1680) sprang from a “Hindu resistance movement against the Moguls” (Pasley 1982:3). Many scholars have complicated the notion of the Marathas’ anti-Mughal identity, and my attempt to do so here is in no way new (e.g., Wink 1986:7; Cooper 2003:3, 22). Nevertheless, any suggestion that Maharashtrian Brahmans such as the Ashtewales took up Hindustani music to articulate some kind of relationship with a cosmopolitan Mughal identity will undoubtedly have to be considered against this common, received notion.

In the second part of this chapter we look more specifically at the expansion of Maratha power in Mughal North India. My consideration of the larger political and military history in this section is meant, as it was in the relevant sections of the previous chapter, to help situate the more particular history of the Ashtewale family. I therefore focus on the territories (Māl̥wā and Āṣṭa), events (the Battle of Bhopāl), and figures (*Peśve* or Prime Minister [hereafter Peshwa] Bājī-rāv I and the Vincūrkar *jāhgīrdār*) that played a significant role in the family's history. I defer to the third and final section any specific consideration of the family's history, including their move from their southwestern Maratha homeland in the region of Paṭhan sometime in the mid-eighteenth century and its possible conjunction with the Battle of Rākśasbhuwan; their settlement in Ashta, which had previously come under the Mughals and their associates, particularly Bhopal; and the possibility of their life as warrior ascetics prior to their universally accepted identity as Brahmans.

THE MUGHALNESS OF THE MARATHAS

The narrative of eighteenth-century Indian political history, briefly put, begins with the decline and decentralization of the Mughal empire, continues with the rise of a host of different regional “post-Mughal” states such as the Marathas, and ends with the ultimate success of a foreign rupturous power, the British (Cohen 1962:312, Bayly 1988:9, Alavi 2002:1, S. Chandra 2002:1, Marshal 2003:3). Christopher Bayly (1983) divided the post-Mughal states of the middle period into several categories, two of which are central to the history discussed in this chapter: the Mughal satrapies

and the Hindu princeling states.⁵⁹ The Mughal satrapies (provinces administered by a “satrap” or governor for the empire) were founded by local agents, typically leaders who descended from Mughal military and administrative families, as had the founder of Bhopal upon whom this chapter is focused.⁶⁰ Hindu princeling states were established by former Hindu landholders (*zamīndār-s*) and other revenue officials of the Mughals, which was the role the Marathas had played prior to their proclaimed and infamous anti-Mughal crusades.⁶¹ One of Bayly’s points about these princeling states is that their leaders either came from or held close ties to the peasant classes. With respect to the Marathas, for example, the Holkars, the Maharashtrian family who ruled from Indore, were said to have been “Sudras of the Dhangar or shephard caste” (Aichison 1893:153). Ranoji Sindhia (d.1745), the Maratha leader who established his rule at Gwalior, was said to have begun his career first as a “slipper-

⁵⁹ Bayly’s three other categories included: (1) new “Muslim conquest states,” such as Rohilkhaṇḍ and Farrūkhābād, which were carved out of existing provinces by Afghan mercenaries who had once served the Mughal empire (ibid.:17); (2) the “new power” of the East India Company, which defeated the ruler of Āwadh in 1764 and secured annual tribute and revenue from Banāras a decade later; and (3) the “unsettled powers,” which included herdsman Bhattī bands from present-day Hariyānā, “plunderers,” such as the Piṇḍārī-s discussed in the previous chapter, and other wandering groups, such as the Banjārā pack-bullock traders, and Gosain corporations, discussed below. Bayly insisting on including this last group, despite the fact that its members are not easily be described as “states,” because they nevertheless controlled large areas of North India during the eighteenth century (ibid.:29).

⁶⁰ Bayly did not specifically designate Bhopal as a Mughal satrapy, but I find the title fitting. Not only was the founder of Bhopal, Dost Mohammad Khan, assigned to administer Malwa by the emperor Aurangzeb, but Bhopal is also described by Aitchison as “a principle Muslim state in India” ranking “next to importance to Hyderabad,” which Bayly did recognize as a Mughal satrapy (1983:247).

⁶¹ Barbara Ramusack (2004:28–37), using a different set terms to categorize princely states, includes both the Marathas and the Nawabs of Bhopal under the admittedly diverse title of “Warrior or conquest states.”

bearer” and then as the bodyguard or “paigah” for Balaji Rao Peshwa (Malcolm 1832:116-117, Pasley 1982:11).

Both the Mughal satraps as well as these new “plebian” leaders (Bayly 1983:21) tended to model the ruling practices and styles that preceded them as a way of bolstering their own legitimacy. In the case of Bhopal, Hannah Archambault (2013:3, 5) suggested that the state’s “appropriation of a Mughal aesthetic” (made evident through a self-fashioned history modeled on the well known memoir of Babur, founder of the Mughal empire in India) was intended to project the state as “the inheritor of a Mughal panache that had become synonymous with political legitimacy in both ‘Hindu’ and ‘Muslim’ ruled states.” In the case of the Marathas, Andrew Wink (1986:155) drew out “elements of continuity” between the structures of rule established by the Mughals and the kind of sovereignty or *svarājya* that the Marathas sought to establish over Mughal domains in the eighteenth century. So that despite the consolidation of their rule, the Marathas remained “in form” humble zamindars of the Mughals, whose job it was to populate and settle the country” (ibid.:154). Indeed, “the most Persianized zamindar of the period,” noted Wink, was “the Maratha king Shāhu” (ibid.:155).

Thus, although the eighteenth century was once commonly understood as constituting a period of significant rupture between the Mughal and colonial periods, historians have for some time now acknowledged that the divide between the two was not as wide as was once thought (e.g., Marshal 2003:3; for continuity between Mughal and Maratha rule, see Wink 1986). Though increasingly restricted physically to its capital of Delhi, the Mughal Empire continued to act as a primary source of political authority and legitimacy within post-Mughal states beyond its decline

throughout the eighteenth century, and even into the British period. Earlier in the century, for example, even when the imperial center had become immobilized by the murder of Aurangzeb's successor Furrukhsiya in 1718, "Indian notables and Europeans trading from the ports of the coast still regarded the Mughal emperor as one of the great kings of the world" (Bayly 1988:7, my emphasis). Later in the century, claimed Marshal (2003:6), "[t]he breaking of the links between Delhi and the provinces in no way marked the end either of the ideals or of the practice of Mughal governance. Both survived into the nineteenth century to influence even the British." Satish Chandra (1982:183–184, cited in Marshall 2003:6) went even further to suggest that at the very same time that the Mughals' political power diminished, "the cultural dominance of the Mughal court may actually have become more pervasive." Seema Alvai (2002:6), summarizing the contributions of historians Hermann Goetze and Bernard Cohen, argued that there was a "continued survival and growth of social and economic referents of the empire even when the edifice of its revenue-extraction structure has collapsed." The survival of Mughal legitimacy even up to the war of 1857 is symbolized by fact that the war itself was centered around the last Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar, who was nevertheless "physically decrepit and surrounded by a territorial and political void" (Mukhia 2004:14).

The reason for the longevity of Mughal legitimacy, as Bayly suggested, was a practical one: it helped post-Mughal states maintain "a coherent body of supporters" and consolidate their control (1985:181; see also Cooper 2003:76). Again, this imperative of state building continued right down to British suzerainty in the early nineteenth century. We see it reflected in John Malcolm's insistence (as late as 1826) that it still behooved the Company to seek Mughal approbation for its activities, as it had done since the time when Lord Clive laid the foundations for the British empire in the east. Malcolm reasoned with those who would "deem such conduct a sacrifice to prejudice, a reverence to a shadow. But the fact cannot be denied, that by making that sacrifice, and by reverencing that shadow, Lord Clive went in unison with the feelings and opinions

of millions of men” (Malcolm 1826:540).⁶²

Thus, despite the eighteenth century being “post-Mughal” in terms of political power, an “umbrella of Mughal legitimacy,” as Bayly has called it—the forms and style of kingship developed by the Mughals, and their syncretic religious practice—was still very prominent even among rulers who ostensibly opposed the Mughals or Islam politically, such as the Marathas. The Marathas modeled the architecture of their temples in a way that spoke to “the cultural and social values established under the Mughals” (C. Asher 2008:17–18). The Marathas represented themselves in the Mughal-style miniature paintings as wearing Mughal dress. They participated in the Islamicate practice of giving and receiving robes of honor or *khilat* (Gordon 1996:237). They patronized Muslim holy men and their places of worship. They made obeisances at the tombs of deceased Mughal emperors.⁶³ They sought and acquired imperial rights and titles (Bayly 1988:15). And they used Persian-derived titles for the officers of their own administration, such as *Peśva* (prime minister), *Mazumdār* (finance minister) and *Sūr-Nawīs* (Secretary), *Sarnobat* (commander-in-chief), and *Dubār* (emissary).⁶⁴ In short, they became “domesticated into a Mughal life style” (Bayly 1985:181, 147).

However, the notion that the Mughals served as an important source of legitimacy or inspiration for the Marathas runs counter to their common depiction as having waged an anti-Mughal resistance movement, as discussed above. This notion has been particularly amplified by retellings of the life and achievements of the

⁶² These observations are complicated (though not negated) by the most recent work of Francis Robinson, who showed that while the British were embracing Mughal models as a strategy for projecting authority, Indian Muslims were abandoning such models or supplementing them with European ones for the very same reasons (2013).

⁶³ “The Maratha king Shahu had walked barefoot and made obeisance at the tomb of the Emperor Aurangzeb at Khuldabad in 1714” (Bayly 1988:15).

⁶⁴ Shivaji changed many of these office titles to Sanskrit ones upon his enthronement, but “none of the new distinctions were preserved after Sivajee’s death, except the eight ministers, or Asht Purdhans” (Duff 2000:193; see also Wink 1986:37).

seventeenth-century Maratha King, Shivājī, who is consistently been represented as the ideal Hindu ruler who successfully struggled to remove the oppressive yoke of a foreign Muslim government. What these heroic tales of Shivaji tend to gloss over, however, is the ambiguity of political, ethnic, and religious affiliations in the seventeenth century. As James Laine argued in his book, *Shivaji: A Hindu King in Islamic India* (2003b), Shivaji himself came from a family of Mughal servants and generals. That is not to say that Shivaji was all Mughal and no Hindu. It is true, as some nationalist historians have argued, that Shivaji and his ancestors were somewhat restricted in fulfilling their apparent desire to take on a more obvious or direct Hindu style of rule by their Muslim overlords. And even despite these restrictions, Shivaji managed to promote a “Hindu” identity by, as noted, replacing Sankrit titles for Persian ones, or by infusing religious elements into his coronation ceremony. However, it would be presumptuous to say that Shivaji and the Marathas of his time saw Mughal as opposed to Maratha on the basis of religion. Such identities were likely less distinct, exclusive, monolithic or recognizable (and more complementary) than they seem to us today. That is not to say, of course, that pre-modern religious identities were without distinction, ambiguous or “fuzzy” (e.g., Sumit Guha 2003:4). In the end, we might do better to take Lane’s suggestion to be weary of imputing either a sense of Hindu-Muslim communalism to the past *or* insisting that religious and ethnic identities of the time had no cohesive meaning or understanding at all. However, whether imposed and resisted, unassumingly adopted, enthusiastically embraced, or strategically utilized, there is no doubting the Mughal influence on the

Marathas. And following the era of Shivaji, we might say that the influence of Mughal practice and style became even more pronounced as the Maratha focused their attention on the north in the eighteenth century. It is to these events that we now turn.

THE MARATHAS IN MALWA, 1720S-1760

During the period that the Ashtewales moved to the North in the mid-eighteenth century, the Maratha polity grew to its largest size, encompassing areas as far East as Orissa, as far West as Gujarāt and Rājasthān, as far South as Tanjāvar or Tanjore, and as far North as Dillī or Delhi. Many of these areas had previously been administered by the Mughal Empire and in the wake of their waning authority after the death of Aurangzeb in 1707, the Marathas became for a brief period the subcontinent's most unifying power. By the 1720s, they controlled around seventy-five per cent of the subcontinent (Cooper 2003:8). Expansion continued until the end of the century when the Marathas had managed to extend either direct control or at least collect revenue from a major swath of the subcontinent.⁶⁵

All of this expansion was made under a series of prime ministers or Peshwas to whom more and more power was accorded over time. Of these Peshwas, Bajirao I (r.1720–1740) is most famous for having extended Maratha control into areas of North India, which again were formerly ruled directly by the Mughals. With the

⁶⁵ For a useful map that traces the expansion of Maratha power throughout the subcontinent from 1708 to c.1800, see Schwartz (1994:54), a copy of which is freely available at the University of Chicago's Digital South Asia Library website: <http://dsal.uchicago.edu/reference/schwartzberg/>.

spread of their power in the North, the Marathas thus brought an already Mughalized way of doing things, evident in our previous consideration of the Mughalness of the Marathas, to the Mughal center. This harmony of cultural and geographical proximities reinforced the influence of Mughal practice and style in the Maratha courts of the regions, exemplified, perhaps in the title that the Maratha general who ruled from Gwalior, Mahādījī Sindhiyā, received in 1784 after he became dominant in Delhi itself: Regent Plenipotentiary (Bayly 1988:15).

Mughal Malwa

The primary region concerned with here is that of Malwa, an oval-shaped tableland roughly one hundred and fifty miles by one hundred and twenty miles lying immediately north of the Narmada River and Vidhya mountain corridor (Gordon 1977:2). It is flanked to the east by the hills of Bundelkhaṇḍ, and to the west by the Arāvalī mountain range in presentday Rajasthan. Its northern rim is about fifty miles south of Agra, once the capital of the Mughals under successive emperors beginning with Akbar, Jahāngīr and Shāh Jahān.

With the exception of a brief period in the middle of the sixteenth century when it fell to several Sultans (Bahadur Shah of Gujrat in 1531, Habib Khan in 1532), Malwa itself formed a central part of the Mughal Empire from 1568, when it was officially made a province (*subah*) of the empire under Akbar until [1743], when it was finally wrested from the Mughals by the Marathas. Under the Mughals, Malwa was divided into three main districts or *nizamat*: the eastern district (*nizamat-i-*

mashrik), the western district (*nizamat-i-maghrīb*) and the southern district (*nizamat-i-janub*). Each district was further divided into nine *tahsīl*-s headed by their own *Tahsīldār* (Luard 1908:60–61).

In addition to being a town, Ashta was also a tehsil of Malwa, the largest one in the eastern district, encompassing some 326 square miles (see Luard's appendix table 144). In 1713, Ashta, along with the whole southeastern part of Malwa, fell to Dost Mohammad Khan, an Afghan immigrant who was appointed superintendent of the nearby district of Bairsiyā (commonly, Berasia) under Aurangzeb. In the revolutions that followed the death of emperor in 1707, Dost Mohammad Khan established his independent authority in Bhopal, a city that he founded (Aitchison 1893:247). Dost Mohammad Khan and his heirs managed to hold Ashta on and off with great difficulty against the attacks of Nizam-ul-Mulk, the Marathas, and the Pindaris until the Peshwa (Bālājī Bajirao or Nānā-sāheb) finally wrestled it from them in 1744.⁶⁶

The following subsections of this section describe how the Maratha conquest of Malwa was accomplished, the aims being to understand the specific role that the Ashtewale family had in this history, and to substantiate our broader argument for the Mughalness of the Marathas, which provides a lense for understanding the patronage of Hindustani music by Maharashtrian Hindus in North India. I do not, therefore, attempt to be comprehensive in covering the events of this period, but to focus more

⁶⁶ Dost Mohammad's eldest (though illegitimate) son was Yar Mohammad, who succeeded his father as ruler (but not Prince) of Bhopal. Dost Mohammad's younger son, Sultan Mohammad Khan, was made to carry the noble line (Hough 1845:2-5).

specifically on those events, peoples and places that have a direct bearing on the history of the Ashtewale family.

Vinchurkar and Maratha Incursions

In less than a year following his ascension to the Peshwaship in 1720, Baji Rao I conducted his first campaign in northern India at Burhānpur in the Khāndesh region of southwestern Malwa. Alongside him was Viṭhaḷ Śivdev, founder of the Vinchurkar family, who would later employ the founder of the Ashtewale family, Khaṇḍe-rāv, discussed in the previous chapter, as his manager in Ashta. Vithal Shivdev was the youngest son of Śivājīpant Dānī, a grain accountant in the town of Sāswaḍ near Pune.⁶⁷ Due to the family's meager earnings, the young Vithal Shivdev was sent to live with a relative in the town of Mardhe near Sātārā (Vinchurkar 1909:3). There he was employed to manage the house and horse of a respectable servant of the King of the Marathas in Satara. Upon a chance demonstration of his prowess while accompanying the King's hunting party (he successfully wrestled a wild boar!), Vithal Shivdev was appointed to command ten of the King's horsemen (ibid.:4). Upon distinguishing himself yet again in a campaign against the ruler of Janjira, he was promoted to serve Peshwa Bālājī Viśwanāth (ibid.:4–5). Two years later, Balaji died and was succeeded by Baji Rao I, with whom Vithal Shivdev expanded Maratha control in Malwa.

⁶⁷ The family's name derives from the term *dān*, meaning, "grain." They took the name Vinchurkar after receiving a grant of property in the central Maharashtrian town of Vinchur near Nāśik in northwestern Maharashtra.

Vithal Shivde's first expedition with Baji Rao in 1723—and Baji Rao's first expedition to Malwa—marked the beginning of a long and successful career of conquest in North India for the both of them. Throughout the 1720s and early 1730s, either together or in league with other Maratha leaders, Baji Rao and Vithal Shivdev unleashed a damaging series of defeats against successive Mughal governors in Malwa, beginning with Daud Khan (the governor's genral) in 1723 at Burhanpur (ibid.:5); Azmullah Khan in 1724 (Gordon 1994:30); Girdhar Bahadur in 1728 (ibid. and Sarkar 1949:152); Daya Bahadur in 1730 (Vinchoorkar 1909:6; c.f. Sinh 1936:153, 214); and Mohammad Khan Bangash in 1731 (Sinh 1936:153, 214; c.f. Vinchoorkar 1909:7). By 1736, Sawai Jai Singh, then Governor of Malwa, had requested the emperor to grant Baji Rao the title of Deputy Governor or *naib subedar*, probably as an attempt to stave off further military incursions (Sinh 1936:243).

Battle of Bhopal

Though the Mughal Emperor had agreed to make Baji Rao deputy governor, Baji Rao demanded more: the full governorship of Malwa and the jagirs of all of the states connected to it, including Bhopal (Sinh 1936:246). Intent on realizing these terms, Baji Rao left Poona for Malwa, and by December of 1736, he besieged Bhopal. He then moved on to extract tribute from the surrounding areas of Bhilsa, Bundelkhand, Bhadāwar State, and even Kalkādevi near Delhi (ibid.:247–249). In retaliation, the imperial government enlisted Nizam-ul-Mulk to drive out the Marathas, promising him Malwa's governorship in return (ibid.:250). The Nizam

finally met the Peshwa at Bhopal in December of 1737, but the Marathas confined him to the fort of Bhopal until a treaty was concluded several weeks later (ibid.:253).

The Treaty of Bhopal, signed on January 7, 1738, required the Nizam to persuade the Emperor to grant Bajji Rao the governership of whole of Malwa, sovereignty over the territories between the Narmada and Chambal Rivers, and fifty lakhs of rupees to cover the expenses of war (ibid.:262). Ratification of the treaty, however, was slow in coming. Delhi had been crippled by the Persian invasion of Nadir Shah between February and May of 1739 (ibid.:264) and was therefore in no rush or condition to comply with Bajji Rao's demands. The Marathas were also distracted in bringing distant areas of the subcontinent under their control. In late 1739, for example, Vithal Shivdev was deployed to root out the Portuguese from various places along the west coast (Vinchoorkar 1909:7). Later, in the early months of 1740, he aided Bajji Rao in a successful campaign against Nasirjang, son of Nizam-ul-Mulk, in the vicinity of Aurangābād (ibid.:8). Vithal Shivdev was granted several jahgirs in the vicinity of the Narbada River following these campaigns. However, it was not until much later, following his successful defeat of the Nizam of Hderabad at the Battle of Rakshasbhuvan in 1763 (explored in section three), that his family was granted the jahgir of the Panj Mahal (including Ashta) and made Khande Rao (Ashtewale) his manager there.

The Marathas as Mughal Representatives

With the death of Baji Rao in May of 1740,⁶⁸ the imperial government finally attempted to oppose the Maratha claim on Malwa. Emperor Muhammad Shah (d. April 18, 1748) appointed the Nizam's cousin, Azimullah, as Governor of Malwa and ordered him organize a campaign against the Marathas along with Sawai Jai Singh, Samsamud-daulah, and Azam Khan (Sinh 1936:267). Meanwhile, Baji Rao's adopted son Balaji, also known as Nānā Sāheb, who had assumed the title of Peshwa in June of 1740, caught wind of these plans. In December of 1740 he sent his leading generals including Vithal Shivdev to counter Delhi's attack (ibid.:267). However, before even putting up a fight, Jai Singh opened up peace negotiations with Balaji in March of 1741. By July 4 of that year, the emperor issued a farman granting both the provinces of Malwa and Gujarat, including criminal jurisdiction (*faujdārāi*), to the Peshwa (ibid.:269).

Historians have described the granting of Malwa to the Peshwa in an imperial farman as finalizing the "loss" of Malwa by the Empire (ibid.: 210, 270). Though unquestionable in regard to Malwa's direct rule and the collection of its revenue, several elements of the Peshwa's grant undermine the comprehensiveness of this claim. First, the Peshwa was only granted the title of Deputy Governor, not the Governor. Second, before the Emperor agreed to the Peshwa's demands, Balaji was required to submit a petition promising his unwavering loyalty to the Mughal

⁶⁸ Sinh (1936: 266) says Baji Rao died on May 19, 1740. Sarkar claims it was the April 28, 1740 (1949:172).

emperor. In addition, the Peshwa's generals stationed in Malwa (Ranojī Sindhia, Malhārjī Holkar, Jaswant-rāv Pawār, and Pillaji "Jadhoo") were required to submit in writing a promise to forgo their allegiance to the Peshwa should he turn against the emperor.

Both Sarkar and Sinh disregarded these elements as "device[s] for disguising the fullness of the imperial surrender and saving the emperor's face" (Sarkar 1949:172–173; Sinh 268–70). While it is true that these elements helped save face for the imperial government, it is also true that the Peshwa required the imperial government's association to be seen as legitimate. Aligning with the Mughal center—even while simultaneously fighting to overtake their territories—was a strategy the Marathas used for maintaining legitimacy. Rather than asserting an anti-Mughal stance, Wink (1986:33) argued, the Marathas posed "as the servants of the Mughal Emperor"; they maintained the guise of Mughal zamindars whose job it was to "populate and settle the country" (ibid.:154). In this way, the Marathas were able to lay claim to the larger part of India "without denying the legitimacy of Muslim universal domination" (ibid:32–33). Thus, instead of seeing the Marathas as fighting *against* the Mughals, we can see them as fighting for the right to be considered Mughal representatives.

Claiming Ashta in the Name of the Emperor

It was "in the name of the Mughal Emperor, whom he represented as Soobahdar or Governor of Malwa," wrote John Malcolm (1832:359-60), that the

Peshwa finally seized the territories of Ashta and the Panj Mahal from Bhopal in November of 1744. Stewart Gordon (1977:18) described the seizure of Ashta as “the most dramatic example” of a larger process of administrative regularization by which the Marathas were able to gain control over more and more areas of Malwa. This process was as follows.

Earlier during their campaigns of the 1720s, the Maratha’s simply collected tribute via military leaders called *rakhwālī-s*, who led small and irregular bands of less than a thousand men. They concentrated their raids on moveable wealth, avoiding the towns and garrisons (Gordon 1994:58). They also struck during opportune times, such as the fair-weather season of October–April, and retreated back to the Deccan during the summers and monsoons (ibid.:30). With the growth of their forces in the 1730s, the Marathas were able to extend their focus to the towns. The town of Ashta, for example, had become a known tribute location by 1731 (ibid.:36). A significant change in the collection of tribute came when the Marathas signed contracts with the larger zamindars for the annual collection of a fixed sum. This type of collection, called *khandānī*, was distinguished from earlier forms by its regularity, fixity, and execution by a civilian called the *kamāvīsdār* (ibid.:38–40; see also Sinh 1936:292–295). Though the kamavisdar still required military force to realize payment, the khandani contract enabled the Marathas to impose greater penalties for non-compliance, such as the annexation of territories.

It was through this method that the Marathas finally ended up acquiring Ashta and the Panj Mahal from Bhopal. After the defeat of Nizam-ul-Mulk at Bhopal in

1738, the ruler of Bhopal, Yar Mohammad Khan, signed a khandani treaty with Ranoji Sindhia and Malhar Rao Holkar. After several years of non-payment, the Peshwa marched on Bhopal in 1744 demanding not only the arrears, but also full administrative control over the lands Bhopal was said to have usurped from the empire (Gordon 1994:42).⁶⁹ Bhopal, now under the rule of Yar Mohammad's eldest son, the thirteen-year old Faiz Mohammad (Aitchison 1893:247; Malcolm 1832:357), made a deal whereby they retained half of their territories, but lost virtually all their possessions in Malwa.⁷⁰ After this, the Panj Mahal districts of Ashta, Devipura, Duraha, Bhilsa, Shujalpur and Sehore make their first appearance in the revenue records of the Peshwa as directly administered areas (Gordon 1994:42).

The Shift from Mughal to Maratha

Now that the Peshwa was the acknowledged ruler of Malwa, he faced the task of its responsible administration. For this purpose, some tracts were handed over as personal fiefs or "saranjam" lands to his officers. These became the basis for the Maratha states of Gwalior, Indore and Dewas (Sinh 1936:324). However, for areas

⁶⁹ For the specific terms of the 1738 khandani treaty, Gordon drew on a description by Judunath Sarkar (1949), which Gordon noted, did not supply a source. For the record of Bhopal's payment and arrears, Gordon pointed to two bundles from the Hindustan Rumals (rumals no. 179 and 185) found in the Peshwa Daftar or the Pune Archives (Gordon 1977:16). Gordon's understanding of the annexation of these territories was culled from Hough (1845:8), Sardesai (1946), and an unpublished dissertation from Vikram University in Ujjain by O.P. Malhotra. However, Gordon's narrative is almost verbatim of John Malcolm's (1824). As the earliest source, Malcolm's narrative may have served as the Ur text for all of these sources. The only point that remains a mystery is why Malcolm claimed that it was Bajirao Peshwa who had finally wrestled the Punj Mahal from Bhopal in 1744, since he died in 1740.

⁷⁰ Yar Muhammad Khan died in 1742 and was succeeded by Faiz Mohammad, who was eleven years old and ruler at the time of the new settlement in 1745 (Aitchison 1893:247). However, Malcolm claimed that it Faiz Mohammad's minister, "Byjeeram," who negotiated the settlement (1832:360).

directly held by the Peshwa, including the area of the Punj Mahal, a new system of administration needed to be implemented, an understanding of which will help us explain why and how the Vinchurkar family became associated with Ashta.

The character of this new system of revenue collection, termed *Ainjama*, was incredibly similar to the Mughal one that preceded it, as Stewart Gordon has revealed. Everything from the terminology used, the manner in which payments were assessed and received, the calendrical system employed, the description of the duties and responsibilities of collectors, the honoring of pre-existing settlements, and the manner in which justice was dispensed, all spoke of continuity, which Gordon extrapolated to be a “key point...about the nature of the eighteenth-century successor states” (1977:37; 1994:60).

Significant changes were made, of course, the most important for this chapter being social.⁷¹ Prior to Maratha rule, the majority of zamindars and kamavidars in Malwa, particularly in the eastern territories, had largely been Rājpat. Gordon revealed, however, that the Marathas gradually began replacing these Rajputs with Hindu Brahmans from Maharashtra. While the Peshwa specifically employed

⁷¹ Other differences between the Mughal and Marathas systems noted by Gordon included: (1) the streamlining of the Maratha ranking system or hierarchy; (2) the rigid division that existed in the Maratha system between civilian administrators who were Brahmins, and military commanders who were mostly from Maratha castes; (3) the lack of a Malwa-wide administrative head or subehdar; (4) the greater dispersion of Maratha administration across Malwa compared to the Mughal concentration in the sarkar towns; (5) the promotion of long tenures in single areas under the Marathas compared to the regular rotation of officials under the Mughals; and finally (6) the patronizing of new capitals under the Marathas, such as Gwalior, Indore, Bhilsa, Mehidpur and Sironj instead of the former Mughal sarkar towns like Saurangpur and Shajapur, which had the effect of redirecting trade and financial networks towards the Maratha heartland (Gordon 1994:61).

Citpāvan Brahmans who, like the Peshwa himself, originated in the coastal areas of Maharashtra known as the “Konkan” (ibid.:42–44), Holkar and Shinde employed *Sāraswat* Brahmans originally from Goa. Alternatively, the Gāykwād (commonly Gaikwad or Gaekwad) rulers of Baroḍā and the Bhonsale rulers of Nāgpur largely employed non-Brahman administrators from the *Candraseniyā Kāyastha Prabhū* caste, who were nonetheless Maharashtrian (Gordon 1993:145).

The Brahmanization of kamavidars in Malwa probably reflected a common practice of new rulers during other times and places. Greig noted, for example that, “the policy of the Lodis and Surids was the ‘Afghanization’ of the Jagirdars, i.e., Jagirs were increasingly assigned to immigrants from the rural tribes of Afghanistan” (1987:109).

The territories of the Panj Mahal where the Ashtewale family resided did not, it seems, readily conform to this new ainjama system of collection, which was headed by a kamavidar. Perhaps this was due to the fact that the Panj Mahal was held as a personal territory of the Peshwa’s, who used it to grant jahgir to his generals, such as Vinchurkar, as we will see. Perhaps it is because Gordon focused on the system only until 1761 (pre-Pānāpat, see below), before Vinchurkar became the jahgirdar, as we shall see. Nevertheless, the presence of the Ashtewale family in Malwa and their new administrative responsibilities under the title of *āmil*, which we discussed in the previous chapter, mirrored this general trend toward replacing existing administrators with Maharashtrian Brahmans.

This change in population also led to a further change in both the style and distribution of patronage, which Gordon described as the most radical change of all. It is also the change that has the most bearing on the focus of this chapter, as it demonstrates the increasing Mughal affinity of Maharashtrians living in Malwa (i.e., outside of the southern homeland). In terms of distribution, greater flows of money went from north to south, fueling a growth in the building of Maharastrian cities like Pune in the eighteenth century (ibid.:145). However, the personal consumption of these new Maharastrian administrative families in Malwa, as well as the elite patrons of Pune, demonstrated an increased demand for luxury items, “especially those not produced in Maharashtra” (Gordon 1993:145). Many of these items, which included shawls, inlaid stone, mirrors, pan boxes, paintings, etc. demonstrated a newfound affinity for Mughal style. Gordon additionally mentioned the maintenance of poets, bards and singers by these families, though their regional affiliations are unclear.

Notwithstanding the continuities of Mughal practices, Malwa was eventually integrated into the Maratha state. Gordon (1994:61) puts the success of this integration at 1760. Sinh (1936:291) pushed this date forward. Though he acknowledged that by 1765, “the Maratha domination of Malwa had become an established fact,” he nevertheless argued that, “full-fledged Maratha rule in Malwa was a later affair, and it was only after 1775 [under Mahadji Sindhia] that the Maratha administration of Malwa (as distinct from legal possession) was established” (1936:320).

In this section, we have seen how Ashta came into the hands of the Peshwa Balaji in 1745 as penalty for Bhopal's failure to pay khandani tribute. With the stage of the Maratha presence in Malwa now set, we turn to a more specific consideration of the manner in which the Ashtewale family may have participated in this history. Specifically, we learn how Ashta became the personal jagir of the Vinchurkar family, and how the ancestors of the Ashtewale family became the amils or workers of the Vinchurkar jagirdar at Ashta.

THE ASHTEWALES IN MALWA, 1760-1818

The Battle of Rakshasbhuwan

Balaji Peshwa died in June of 1761 about five months after the Marathas suffered their worst defeat ever by the hands of the Afghans in the Battle of Pānīpat (explored further below). Balaji was succeeded by his twelve-year old son Mādharāv, whose mother ruled during his youth. Madhav Rao's paternal uncle, Ragunāth-rāv, however, had his own designs to pursue the Peshwaship. With this aim in mind, he garnered the support of several of the Peshwa's generals, including Vithal Shivdev. He then conspired with the Peshwa's enemy, the Nizam of Hyderabad, to defeat Madhav Rao's forces. However, due to some deception within his own contingent, he was caused to flee from the pursuit of the Nizam (Vinchurkar 1909:24–29).

It was in the midst of this pursuit that Ragunath finally met up with the Nizam at Rākśasbhuwan on August 10, 1763. Rakshasbhuwan is a small town on the banks

of the Godāvarī River in the north-central region of Maharashtra known as Marāṭhwāḍā, Bīḍ (commonly, Beed) district. As discussed below, this is the very same town from which the Ashtewales claim to have originated. Madhav Rao's forces purportedly came to Rakshabhuvan to rescue Rangunath Rao and help him defeat the Nizam. Vithal Shivdev is said to have contributed much to the success of this battle. He pursued the Nizam across the Godavari River all the way to Aurangabad, finally forcing him to retreat into that walled city (ibid.:31).

As a result of the battle of Rakshabhuvan, Madhav Rao was reinstated as Peshwa, and several districts in Malwa were allotted to his generals for the maintenance of their forces.⁷² It was in this way that Vithal Shivdev acquired the jaghir of the five districts of the Panj Mahal, which included Ashta, Sehor, Devīpura, Icchāwar and Bhilsa.⁷³ In addition, he was also granted several other districts, including Bhitārwar near Gwalior (Vinchoorkar 1909:31–32)—the place where one of his future relatives employed Ganpat-rāv, the amil who was considered in comparison with Khande Rao Ashtewale in the previous chapter. Hereafter, Vithal Shivdev became the first Vinchurkar jahgirdar at Ashta.

⁷² Rangunath Rao was later awarded the Peshwaship in 1778 due to “the will of the Bombay and the Supreme Government” (i.e. the British) despite the displeasure this gave to the principal party at the Court, says the British historian Hough (1845:i). Rangunath had conspired with the British even during his earlier attempted claim to the Peshwaship in 1767.

⁷³ As noted, Vithal Shivdev had earlier conspired with Rangunath Rao against Madhav Rao, a fact that was not easily forgotten, for soon after the battle of Rakshabhuvan, the Peshwa had suspicions of Vithal Shivdev's loyalty. A skirmish erupted between the troops of the Peshwa and Vithal Shivdev, and this led to an all-out conflict in which the Peshwa almost took Vithal Shivdev down. Holkar interceded and convinced the Peshwa to back down (Vinchurkar 1909:34). Soon after, Vithal Shivdev proved his loyalty to the Peshwa in a battle against Hyder Ali in the Karnatic (ibid.:37).

Malwa Reprised

Following the succession of Madhav Rao, the Marathas began refocusing their energies on Malwa, which they had largely ignored since the receipt of the imperial farman in the 1740s. This renewed interest, Sinh argued, is better understood in the context of the Marathas' crushing defeat at Panipat in January of 1761. Briefly stated, this battle, which is known as the Third Battle of Panipat,⁷⁴ was precipitated by repeated incursions into Hindustan the Afghani King Ahmad Shāh Abdālī throughout the 1750s. In an attempt to drive Abdali out of India, the Marathas, led by Sadāshiv Bhav, marched north in March of 1760. In January of 1761, they met up with Abdali's forces at Panipat and were decisively crushed. The battle was considered a watershed event that precipitated the eventual disintegration of the Maratha forces (Sinh 1936:30). In the short run, however, the wake of the Marathas' defeat encouraged many chieftans, zamindars and landholders in Malwa, particularly those who had been newly displaced or dispossessed by the Marathas, to stage various rebellions. The Marathas' focus on Malwa at this time was thus part of an effort to put these upheavals in check (1936:309). In addition, the focus on Malwa served as a sort of contingency plan for the Marathas, now that their influence over the imperial capital of Delhi had been challenged (ibid.:319). Powerful Maratha figures in the region, such as Malhar Rao Holkar and Mahadji Sindhia, thus began consolidating their control over Malwa following their defeat at Panipat (ibid.:310–11, 318–20).

⁷⁴ In the first battle of 1526, Babur defeatd Ibrahim Lodi and established the Mughal dynasty. In the second battle of 1556, Akbar (represented by Bairam Khan) defeated Hemu.

Vithal Shivdev was an active part of these efforts towards the consolidation of Malwa. Following his participation in Panipat, he was ordered by the Peshwa to move north to help quell Hindustan's rebellious subjects (Vinchoorkar 1909:19, 23; Sinh 311–12). From 1765–67 he assisted Raghunath Rao in taking tribute from Bhopal, and in fighting against the Jats of Gohad and Bhāratpur (Vinchoorkar 1909:37–8; Sinh 318–19). In 1767, he briefly returned to his ancestral home of Vinchur, shortly after which he died.

Despite Vithal Shivdev's demise, successive generations of the Vinchurkar family continued to focus their efforts on this volatile Malwa region, even after it became a focus of British conquest in the late 1810s, as discussed in the previous chapter. Vithal Shivdev was succeeded by the eldest of his five sons, Shivājī Viṭhal, who fought alongside the Marathas in Malwa.⁷⁵ The fifth and youngest son, Khaṇḍe-rāv Viṭhal, who was born to Vithal Shivdev's second wife, Yamunābāi of Kālpī, succeeded his half-brother as the primary heir.⁷⁶ He lived for a short time, and was thereafter succeeded by his own son, Narsinh Khande Rao, who was only twelve years old at the time (ibid.:44–62). With Narsinh, we begin to see a connection with the British. He was said to have assisted Colonel Wallace in a campaign against the Pindaries and other rioters during “the famine year” of 1804–5 (ibid.:73). When

⁷⁵ Interestingly, the next youngest brother after Shivaji, Narsinh-rāv, had a difficult time accepting his brother's succession and, due to the disturbances he caused, was confined along with his wife to the family's jahgir at Ashta by the order of the Peshwa. He lived only for a short time thereafter.

⁷⁶ The elder four sons of the family (Shivaji Viṭhal, Narsinh Rao Viṭhal, Malhār-rāv Viṭhal, and Bājī Rāv Viṭhal) were all born to Vithal Shivdev's first wife, Rakhambai, daughter of the Kulkarni of Kenjal.

Narsinh Rao died without heir in 1808, Peshwa Bajirao II ordered the adoption of Gopāl Paraśaram, who was renamed Vithal Narsinh. Like his father, Vithal Narsinh was deputed to help Colonel Wallace fight the Pindhari. He later assisted General Smith in the same endeavor (ibid.:78). He was then asked by the English to put down the rebellion of Tr̥mbakjī Dhengale, “one of the unworthy favorites of Bajirao” (ibid.). Vithal Narsinh directed much of his attention toward solidifying his control over his possessions in North or “upper” India, which had been “unrighteously” seized by Ābājī Ingle and others (ibid.). It was this Vithal Narsinh who was the Vinchurkar jahgirdar at the time that Malcolm met with Khande Rao (Ashtewale) in Ashta, as discussed in the previous chapter.

Parallel Movements

Vithal Shivdev’s presence at the battle of Rakshasbhuwan, his grant of the Panj Mahal as a result of that battle, and the subsequent efforts of he and his family in Malwa all provide enticing points of connection to the oral history of the Ashtewale family. According to that history, which was narrated to me by Anand Ashtewale and earlier recorded from now deceased family members by Shripad Mirikar (1994), the Ashtewales originally hailed from the village of Rakshasbhuwan where they went by the name of “Gosāvī.” It is not known exactly how or when the family moved from Rakshasbhuwan to Ashta. Mirikar believed that they fought with Sindhia in a campaign against the ruler of Bhopal, under whose jurisdiction Ashta had formally come. The first member of the family thought to have gone to Ashta as a soldier in

this campaign was named Govind Gosavi, father of the pension-holder Khande Rao, who was discussed in the previous chapter.⁷⁷ Accordingly, it is possible that Govind Gosavi, if there ever was such a person, joined Vithal Shivdev's army during the latter's presence in Rakshasbhuwan, and later moved with Vithal Shivdev to Malwa during the campaigns of 1765–67.

No evidence, however, has yet been found to verify this proposition. With the assistance of Pāṇḍuranga Bālkavḍe, a historian associated with the Bhārat Itihās Samshodhak Maṇḍal in Pune, I have located some information related to Vinchurkar's jahgir in Ashta in the Maharashtra State Archives in Pune.⁷⁸ However, no mention is given of either "Khande Rao," "Govind" or "Gosavi" among the Vinchurkar's employees there. I am hopeful that further research at the archive will reveal evidence regarding Khande Rao's position as amil for the Vinchurkar jahgirdar at Ashta. For now, however, the only source I have from which to construct a history of the family prior to their association with the British, which began in the second decade of the nineteenth century, remains oral.

⁷⁷ Mirikar claimed that "Khande Rao Govind Gosavi" was the first to come from Rakshabhuwan to Ashta, but this seems unlikely, as we know that it was Khande Rao who moved the family from Ashta to Ujjain in 1818 (see previous chapter). Alternatively, Anand Ashtewale claimed it was Govind Gosavi.

⁷⁸ In the collection titled "Prant Aajmaas Hindusthan," we have located rumals no. 172 "Pargane Mandle (Ashte)," no. 180 "[dhadpi] Ashte," and no. 190 "Hishob [Beh_] (Pargane Ashte). In the collection titled "Hindusthani Jamav," we also located several rumals that give accounts of the Vinchurkar's jahgir holdings in North India, particularly rumal no. 35, mudle no. 408-410, and "dahdpic rumal" no. 601-603, which shows Vinchurkar's "dharba sandbhitil," an expenditure list from 1808, and an account of Vithal Narsingh's total jahgir from 1803.

The Gosavi Question

It is important to diverge briefly from this chapter's focus on Mughal continuities to consider the Ashtewale family's assumed former name, Gosavi, as it may offer us a way of explaining the family's soldiering past. In the period and region in which the ancestors of the Ashtewale family were known as Gosavis—late-eighteenth century, Central and Western India—the term gosavi, or “gosain,” as it is known outside of Maharashtra, was predominantly associated with a fraternity or monastic order of “warrior ascetics,” religious men who were known to take up bow, arrow, shield, spear, and discus, and enter into the service of different military chiefs (Pinch 2006:60).⁷⁹ Though some of these men pursued “ordinary,” non-ascetic professions as merchants and traders (Russell 1916:151, 159; Broughton 1813:83; Duff 2000:12), the gosavis/ gosains are widely recognized as having formed an important part of the military labor market in North India during the medieval and early modern periods (Pinch 2006:x; 1996). William Pinch, the foremost authority on this community, reconciled the seemingly incongruous occupations of the Gosains as both warriors and renouncers by arguing that asceticism, though commonly understood as a denial of the world, was actually used by the gosains, as well as by their medieval European brethren, as means to realize worldly power and conquer death. “With death as the common denominator, the armed yogi is not a contradiction

⁷⁹ According to K.S. Singh (1996:398, 1311), who consolidated data from six censuses taken between 1881 and 1941 among other sources, the term “Gosavi” is “equivalent” to both “Gosain” and “Goswami” and is specifically associated with Maharashtra. Mitchell ([1885] 2000:162) also noted the equivalency of these terms.

in terms,” Pinch suggested. “His conquest of death requires that we see him as religious, and his conquest of death guarantees worldly power” (2006:16).

Several facts seem to lend support to this connection between the gosain monks and the Ashtewale family. Shivaji Vithal, ancestor of the Vinchurkar jahgirdar under whom Khande Rao was employed, was known to have harbored at least one gosain in his army, the infamous Himmat Bahadur (Vinchoorkar 1909:55-56). Mahadji Sindhia, the Maratha leader with whom it is believed the family’s ancestors fought against Bhopal and in whose state of Gwalior the family came to reside, was famous for employing large bodies of gosains in his army and for being the first among the Marathas to have done so (Duff 2000:23). Furthermore, some of the commanders of Mahadji’s gosain contingents were given the title of *sardār* (Pinch 2006:136), a title (Persian for “captain”) that was also used by several of the Ashtewale family members in recognition of their own solidering past. In fact, until recently, the family retained a few heirloom swords, which they worshipped ceremonially during the seasonal festival of Dasshera. Interestingly, William Pinch similarly described how present-day descendants of the famous gosains Umraogiri and Anupgiri retained the gosain practice of weapon-worship, but did so under the guise of the Vaishnav festival of Dasshera. Pinch considered this act as part of a strategic accommodation made by contemporary gosains to the “Vaishnavization” of religious practice in North India (2006:229-30).⁸⁰

⁸⁰ In order to understand Pinch’s argument on the Gosain’s strategic accommodation to Vaishnava religious practice, it is important to realize the terminological ambiguity embedded in the cognate terms “gosain,” “gosavi,” and “goswami.” The ending of each of these terms, “-sain,” “savi,” and “swami,” though apparently different in form, all have the same meaning: “lord” or “master.”

Despite these enticing points of connection, the proposition that the Ashtewale family, who self-identify as Maharashtrian Brahamans and are so recognized by their general community, actually descended from a community of warrior ascetics is somewhat problematic. Several Maratha historians, including the aforementioned Panduranga Balkavde of the Bharat Itihas Samshodhak Mandal, and Dr. Mandke of

Ironically, it is the identical first portion, “go,” which carries a double meaning. Though often assumed to mean, “cow,” it can also mean “the senses.” Thus, the ambiguity arises from the fact that Gosavi can be understood in two different ways: as “Lord of Cows” and “Master of the Senses,” each of which connotes a distinct, yet overlapping religious community. The latter of these meanings, “Master of the Senses,” refers to the physical and mental austerities performed by ascetic monks who are devotees of (or more precisely, embodiments of) Lord Shiva, a god who forms a part of the Hindu trinity, Brahma-Vishnu-Shiva. The meaning, “Master of the Senses,” therefore locates the term gosavi (and the person to whom it applies) within the Hindu tradition of “Shaivism.” The founder of the Shaivite Gosains, Shankar Acharya, was a ninth-century sage known for his philosophy of non-dualism or “advaita,” according to which unity with the divine is possible only through a recognition of the falseness of plural reality and the perfection of knowledge (Pinch 1996, chapter one, n.35; see also Russell 1916:151). His followers are individually known by one of ten different names, and are therefore collectively known as the “Dasnami” or ten-named (see Duff 2000:12 n.2 for a list). Though Pinch recognized that the twentieth-century Dasnamis claim descent from Shankaracharya, he noted that he has “yet to discover a specific reference to the term that is earlier than the nineteenth century” (2006:37).

The other meaning of Gosavi, “Lord of cows,” refers to the followers or devotees of Lord Krishna, who is often depicted as a young and peaceful cow herder. As Krishna is considered a manifestation of the Hindu god Vishnu, his worship falls within the tradition of “Vaishnavism.” The founder of the Vaishnava sect, Ramanuja Acharya, in distinction to Shankar Acharya, argued that although duality was indeed false, divinity is expressed in a plurality of forms and the best way of reconciling the contradictions of existence was not to set about discerning the falseness of dualism, but rather to experience the oneness of the divine through devotion or “bhakti.” The term “goswami,” however, has been more specifically associated with the Bengali Vaishnava followers of Chaitanya, such as Rupa Goswami, who established themselves in the Mathura-Vrindaban region in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, making that region “a center of early modern bhakti” (ibid.:230).

The term “gosain,” Pinch argued, had originally applied to the Dasnamis, but expanded in the twentieth century to “become fully applicable to both Shaivas and Viashnavas” (1996, chapter one). The reason for this terminological expansion, he explained, lies in the large-scale “Vaishnavization” of religious practice in north India, which began in the seventeenth century from within the Vaishnava community itself, but was later given further impetus by British interests in the nineteenth century (2006:18). From the Vaishnava side, Pinch speculated that as Ramanandis gained control of major monastic centers in the north during the eighteenth century such as Ayodhya, “much of the terminology and religious practices associated with those places would have been absorbed by the Vaishnava newcomers” (1996, chapter one). From the Shaivite side, he suggested that Shaivite gosains deliberately disguised their Shaivite roots by exploiting the ambiguity of their name, adopting Vaishnava tenets, and melding into Vaishnava institutions, thereby adopting a more beneficial social position.

the Maratha Itihas Sangrahalay at Pune's Deccan College who also served as my Modi instructor during a summer language program with the American Institute of Indian Studies, have attempted to disabuse me of making any connection between the Ashtewale family and the warrior ascetic monks known as the gosavis. They contend, firstly, that "Gosavi" could not have been the family name during the eighteenth century, as it was used as a title of respect and honor at that time. Dr. Mandke in particular argued that gosains would never self-identity as Maharashtrian, even though they have lived in Maharashtra for some time, and would furthermore probably not be Brahman. The Ashtewales, who claim and are universally accepted to be both Maharashtraian and Brahman, should therefore not be associated with the gosavi community.

Apart from these arguments, it is also important to note that soldiering in the eighteenth century was not the sole preserve of gosains. As historian Dirk Kolff argued (1989:23; 1990), soldiering was a normal and even necessary part of the required skill set of all peasant classes across pre-colonial India, a part of their "occupational multiplicity." Nor was soldiering unknown to Brahmans: the very first Peshwa, Shamraje Pant, was, like all of the Peshwas who followed him, a Brahman who "likewise held a considerable military command" (Duff 2000:110).

Though Mandke's claim that gosains would not likely have been Brahman is largely supported by existing literature, some evidence suggests that this was not always the case. In their 1916 book, *The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India*, R.V. Russell and Rai Bahadur Hira Lal claimed that, though gosain

membership is now open to any caste, “formerly only Brahamans or members of the twice-born castes could become Gosains” (1916:152). Similarly, James Grant Duff had earlier noted that a Brahman can become a gosain, but when he does, “he forfeits all claim to caste as a Brahmin” (2000:11–13). However, William Pinch went furthest in insisting that Gosains, in fact, were not Brahman. The very notion that Gosains used to come from the Brahman caste, he suggested, is a nineteenth-century invention. Referring to an early British attempt to categorize the purported “Sanadhya” caste of the infamous gosains Anupgiri and Umraogiri, Pinch stated, “[i]t is possible that this detail about the *gosains*’ Brahman pedigree reflected an attempt by later *gosains* to lay claim to a high status” (2006:207). There are, of course, other examples even among musicians in which a specific community sought to enhance their caste position by either adopting a new name or inventing a Brahman past, as I briefly discuss in the introduction.

The idea that the gosains had effected their own historical transformation into Brahmans is itself interesting, as it extends that community’s purported transformative abilities from the supernatural to the social. But such abilities may have additional implications for how we decode the Ashtewales’ possible former Gosavi identity and their present Brahman identity. Could it be, for instance, that the Ashtewales’ claim to Brahmanhood is a result of the “attempt by later *gosains* to lay claim to a high status,” as Pinch suggested of the gosains? This explanation would surely fall in line with the skepticism that Regula Qureshi expressed about the family’s Brahmanhood, noted in the introduction. However, even if such a claim is

unfounded, and we can assume that the Ashtewales had not been gosains based on their Brahman background, the question still remains, why do they claim their last name to have been Gosavi?

I have no acceptable explanation for this conundrum. As noted, there is a lack of evidence for the family's history prior to their association with the British. In fact, the first piece of evidence regarding the family's Brahman credentials comes from John Malcolm, who wrote that his "favorable impression" of Khande Rao "had been confirmed by all my subsequent intercourse with this intelligent *Brahman*" (Malcolm 1821, my emphasis).

Additional evidence on the family's Brahman roots might come from a deeper investigation of the family's specific location within the Brahman social universe (O'Hanlon 2010:205–07). Of the five major Brahman communities of Maharashtra, which include Deśastha, Citpāvan or Konkaṇastha, Karhāḍe or Karāḍe, and Goud Sārāswat, the Ashtewales belong to the Deshastha, or those who originated in the interior regions of Maharashtra. Of the two Deshastha sub-groups or *śāka*, which includes *ṛgvedi* or *yajurvedi*, the Ashtewales belong to the former. And of the seven different rishi lineages or *gotra*, the family belongs to *kauśik*. The family male deity or *kuldevtā* is Venkatesh Bālājī. Their female deity or *kuldevtī* is Kolhāpur Māhālakṣmī (Jyoti Thakar, personal communication, 2009). Though it is not clear what conclusions we might draw from this information, it should be noted that one of the gotra's specifically associated with Gosavis in Maharashtra is, indeed, "Vashishta" (K.S. Singh 1996:1311). Singh (ibid.) additionally noted that the district of

Beed, where Rakshasbhuwan is located and where the Ashtewales claimed to have originally lived, is one of the areas from which the Gosavi community was reported to have lived.

Another potential source for the pre-British history of the family are the records kept by the tīrthopadhyāya-s or the priests associated with the important pilgrimage centers of Maharashtra, such as Tryambakeśvar (commonly, Trimbakashwar) at Nāśik. As historian V.D. Divekar noted, “there has been a long tradition on the part of the pilgrims who visit Nasik to register with the local priests, Teerthopadhyayas, past and present details regarding their families.... These family information-sheets, thousands in number, are regularly classified and bound in appropriate volumes, and the material is capable of throwing light on such subjects as the caste, occupation, migration, family size, etc. of the pilgrims” (1978:90). Though I have yet to visit Trimbakeshwar myself, I have been in contact with a priest there who claimed to have found no information regarding either Ashtewale or Gosavi. I have also inquired with the priests connected to the temples frequented by the Ashtewales in Ujjain, who similarly found no record of pilgrimage for the family.

CONCLUSION

This chapter attempted to provide both the specific and general historical background related to the Ashtewale’s shift from the Maharashtra heartland to the peripheral regions of the expanding Maratha empire in the eighteenth century. It has also attempted to provide a framework of the Mughalalness in which to understand

the Ashtewales adoption of the elite type of music prevalent in the area to which they moved. However, that framework is not the only one through which the activity of early Brahman musicians like the Ashtewales should be understood. The next chapter looks beyond Mughality to understand the motivation of early Brahman musicians.

3. HINDU CONTINUITIES

INTRODUCTION

The first lesson was straight, “*sā re ga ma pa dha nī sa*”.... However, in Bhayyā Sāheb’s language, it became “*jay śrī rā mā, jay śrī rā mā.*”... All exercises [*ālankār-s*] were in the language of Rāmā. (Kirin Ashtewale, Interview, September 9, 2009)

Muslims taught the Ashtewales how to play music, but what drove this Brahmin family to take up a music largely practiced by another community? The previous chapter answered this question by pointing to the broader emulation of Mughal forms of patronage, governance and even religious practice by Maratha rulers in North India during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The Ashtewales’ participation in an Islamicate musical tradition thus makes sense when taken as a reflection of this larger adaptive strategy. However, as suggested by the opening epigraph, the Ashtewales did more than simply imitate the practices of their Muslim teachers. They also brought to them other ways of knowing and relating to the music they played, some of which drew on Hindu traditions. In Kirin Ashtewale’s recollection of his great-uncle Bhayyā Sāheb’s teaching methods, for example, the chant “*jay śrī rāmā*” (hail to lord Rama) was substituted for the syllables of the seven notes of the diatonic scale, thus transforming a musical practice into a prayerful one.

What other cultural referents to this music beyond Mughality may have influenced the family’s decision to adopt it? How did the Ashtewales of the early nineteenth century imagine their connection to the music they learned from Muslim

professionals? Did they see themselves as participating in a syncretic Indo-Islamic tradition espoused by their immediate successors, or did they think of this music, though taught to them by Muslims, as an ancient Hindu tradition that had adapted to centuries of change?

Evidence to answer these questions is woefully insufficient. Even though Bhayya Saheb's example might provide some clues as to how later generations of the family imagined their participation in music (considered in Chapter Six), it occurs long after the family had already taken up the tradition. Nevertheless, I still consider these questions important to ponder, if only to keep us from assuming either the insignificance or overriding importance of religious identity. This chapter, therefore, proceeds to investigate these questions indirectly, via the ongoing debate over Indian music's origins and historiography.

Since at least the late-nineteenth century, the vast majority of scholarly and popular histories have asserted that Hindustani classical music, though largely patronized and performed by Muslims from as early as the sixteenth century to the twentieth century, is *essentially* a Hindu tradition; like Hinduism more broadly, it has been likened to a sponge, capable of absorbing and assimilating myriad influences, yet remaining true to its preexisting structure. The possibility that the Ashtewale family may have understood their participation in music in Hindu terms, beyond Mughality, squares well with this pervasive, albeit socially exclusive, notion of music's original Hindu identity.

At the same time, however, more recent scholarship on Hindustani music influenced in general by postcolonial criticism would suggest that such an historical imagination for music would have been alien to the early nineteenth century, that the very idea that Hindustani music was both timeless and Hindu is instead an Orientalist construction, which became widespread only after anti-colonial nationalists adopted it for their own purposes at the end of the nineteenth century. Had the Ashtewale family entered music under nationalism's protective umbrella, only then, according to these scholars, would it have been possible to understand their participation in Hindu terms.

Yet another recent and evolving perspective is derived from scholars influenced by a long-standing trend in South Asian history to look to the pre-colonial or "early modern" roots of various elements of modernity, including the notion of a Hindu continuity.⁸¹ Taking her cue from this trend, Katherine Butler Schofield argued that Mughal authors in the seventeenth century, like the colonial authors who followed them, also considered "Hindustani music's ur-tradition" to lie "in the past, in Sanskrit, and in the South" (2010a:499).⁸² Schofield's argument thus provides a

⁸¹ For a historiographical review of the development of an early modern periodization, see Daud Ali's article, "The Historiography of the Medieval in South Asia" (2012:10-12). As Ali explains it, the concept of the early modern, particularly as propounded by Sanjay Subramanyam and others, was meant to counter "colonial arguments [and by extension later post-colonial arguments] for the exogenous origins of historical change in South Asia," and instead argue that, "various elements of 'modernity' may be found in 'indigenous' cultural forms between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries" (Ali 2012:12).

⁸² Lakshmi Subramanian is another scholar who has posited some early-modern precedents of modern, institutionalized classical music in South India at the court of Serfoji II in Tanjore (r.1798–1832), such as the development of an individual artist-composer ([2006] 2011:2, 6–10, 21), traditions of musical notation (ibid.:64), and standardized song exercises. Much of these "essentials of an accepted classical music of the southern region...had all coalesced by the late seventeenth century to enable an articulation of a distinct regional musical art form" (ibid.:10). She therefore described the music that came out of Tanjore as a "proto-modern form of classical music" (ibid.:36–37).

longer view of the *claim* to music's continuity, thereby allowing us to retain the possibility of the Ashtewales' Hindu imagination.

However, unlike the field of South Asian history, the field of Indian music studies has only recently come alive to the above-mentioned postcolonial critique via the work of scholars such as Subramanian (1999; [2006] 2011), Weidman (2001; 2006), Bakhle (2002; 2005), Kobayashi (2003), Walker (2004; 2010), Dard Neuman (2004), Peterson and Soneji (2008), Katz (2010; 2012), and others.⁸³ Moreover, this critique has not come without resistance (e.g., Slawek 2007; and perhaps also Jairazbhoy 2008:374 n.11). Though the critical interpretations forwarded by these authors appear to have gained traction, it is nevertheless the case that many have yet to question the reality of the notion of Indian music's Hindu continuity, let alone accept the idea that colonialism had a role in influencing its formation. This, of course, was also one of Bakhle's main criticisms (2005:48).

For this reason, Schofield's argument—that the narrative of Indian music's ancient Sanskritic “golden age” actually preceded its articulation in colonial discourse—risks being taken by scholars such as Bakhle not as an intervention *within* critical theory, but as a defensive reaffirmation of the status quo and aligned with a conservative nationalist history. Such was the accusation that postcolonial historian Gyanendra Pandey levied against Schofield's counterpart in history, the social and economic historian Christopher Bayly, whose work on nationalism, communalism,

⁸³ This more recent “critical turn,” as Peterson and Soneji have termed it (2008:3), is not without precedent, of course. Inspiring it has been the work of Regula Qureshi (1991), Mathew Allen (1997), and Gerry Farrell (1997), among others.

and British imperialism in India drew out continuities that extended before the colonial divide (Pandey [1990] 2006:15–16).⁸⁴

This chapter opens itself up to the same critique, however unwarranted I believe it may be. Pushing Schofield’s critique of Indian music studies’ critical turn even further, I argue that the very *claim* to Indian music’s continuity—and not its actual continuity—is, ironically, one of the most enduring and convincing “continuities” in the history of Indian music. This is not to deny the fact that either the colonial or Mughal articulations of this narrative were unique. Instead, it is to point out that the authors of the very Sanskrit treatises so often taken by both Mughal and British historians as evidence for music’s actual “continuity” (which I distinguish below from the identification of “similarity” across disparate historical articulations) were themselves engaged in a project of creating the illusion of continuity with texts that had long become antiquated. Though scholars of early Indian music have long acknowledged this fact, it has remained under-utilized in the debate over music’s continuity.

The project of laying bare the continuity behind the claim to continuity is significant for a number of reasons. Most directly, it allows us to consider the possibility that Brahman musicians such as the Ashtewales had the discursive means to imagine their participation in music in explicitly Hindu terms even as early as the second decade of the nineteenth century. This sense of continuity may not have

⁸⁴ For a similar critique against what he called “revisionist” historians like Bayly (in this case, David Washbrook), see Partha Chatterjee (1993:26–34).

resonated in the same way that it did during a later period of cultural nationalism. Nor did it likely have the same meaning in the Sanskritic past or in various Mughal courtly milieus. Contextualizing these different articulations of continuity is therefore an important task that this chapter takes up (see Conclusion). Nevertheless, the claim to continuity was far more continuous than is commonly acknowledged, and this realization not only challenges the claim to the continuity narrative's recent, colonial origins, as posited in postcolonial-influenced scholarship, but also questions the more commonplace understanding of the actual continuity of Indian musical form, structure and theory going back to the beginning of the common era. At stake, in other words, are two different kinds of claims to continuity made by a variety of different actors, nationalists, colonialists, postcolonialists, historical revisionists, indeed Mughal ideologists and Sanskrit musical theorists.

Thus, even as this chapter argues for a longer duration to the claim to Indian music's continuity, it argues even more vigorously and comprehensively against the actuality of this continuity in practical terms. Whatever similarities might be said to exist between what is today understood as Indian classical music and the system of music expounded by its alleged textual ancestors from the turn of the first millennium, the disparities are so great, I argue, as to warrant their consideration as different musics all together. The majority of this chapter is given over to demonstrating this point, which has yet to be done in such an extensive form. In the process, I identify a broader methodological problem in the study of early Indian music: that claims to continuity tend to rest not on a seamless tracing of concepts

across time, but on the identification of similarity between concepts separated by yawning gaps of many centuries—gaps that the later authors who outlined these concepts deliberately sought to obscure.

The issue of music's actual continuity or disparity is admittedly of less consequence to the question of whether the Ashtewale family imagined their participation in music beyond Mughal terms; any conclusion regarding the former has no necessary bearing on the latter. Rather, it is the persistence of the claim to continuity that is of primary importance. Nevertheless, the debate over music's actual continuity is a significant parallel issue that underlines the primary argument put forth in this chapter and in the dissertation as a whole. If the majority of this chapter's pages are imbalanced toward this secondary issue, it is because debate in this realm is far more varied, and because understanding that debate necessitates a concomitant understanding of voluminous technical details upon which claims to actual continuity often rest.

By contrast, most of the scholars who have argued in favor of Indian music's modernity (i.e., its distinction from the music of the past) have rested their cases on the more accessible, yet no less important, ruptures in music's social and cultural realms, which generally paralleled a shift in the patronage of music from rarified court and salon to the public. My examination of the disparity between modern and ancient musics instead focuses on the level of structure, which, as indicated, has traditionally served as the primary source of evidence for claims to continuity.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ A notable exception includes the corpus of work by Nazir Jairazbhoy, which I discuss further below.

Perhaps the deepest level of disparity uncovered herein is what I refer to as the “linear polytonality” of the *jātī-s*, the musical system expounded in the early-first millennium treatise, the *Nāṭya-śāstra*. At the same time that I show this system to be wholly incongruous with modern norms, other scholars place this same evidence on an evolutionary trajectory that stretches directly to the present.

The significance of my argument for disparity, therefore, becomes apparent only when viewed in relation to prevalent historiographical trend of the field, which overwhelmingly emphasizes continuity. For this reason, I begin this chapter with a discussion of what I argue to be Indian music’s primary mode of historical representation, which I have termed the “additive approach.” By this I refer to the ways in which scholars have routinely sought to accommodate changes they otherwise admit have been fundamentally altering within a narrative of continuity, examples of which are discussed here in detail. By interpreting these changes as evolutionary, not revolutionary, and by refusing to see modern music as syncretic, hybrid, composite, etc., scholars have ended up bolstering the exclusionary claims of nationalist history.⁸⁶

Parts of Richard Widdess work (1995) may also be considered exceptional in this case, though his views on this point, which I consider throughout the chapter, are surprisingly ambivalent.

⁸⁶ Matthew Rahaim’s article, “What Else Do We Say When We Say ‘Music Evolves?’” (2006), posited a useful distinction between (and critique of) “progressive” claims to music’s “evolution” (i.e., development) in which change is assumed to move in the direction of greater complexity and improvement (à la Hubert Parry and Curt Sachs), and “situated” claims in which change occurs as an adaptive response to local conditions. While the kind of evolutionary claims that I point to here can, in most cases, fit into one of Rahaim’s categories, I focus on their tenacious insistence of continuity *in spite of* change, whether progressive or situated. In other words, the narrative of change that I highlight here is, paradoxically, a lack of change. Indeed, it is sometimes the case, as we shall see, that Indian is portrayed as the constant against which “foreign” musics are compelled to adapt.

The order of topics in this chapter therefore reverses the order in which I have introduced them here. I begin with the additive approach, move on to consider an alternative view (the disparity between ancient and modern), and then return to consider the continuity of the claim to continuity. In this way, the chapter seeks to set the continuist perspective in relief against a striking backdrop of change. Of course, all history entails both continuity and rupture. My assertion of rupture (in terms of musical form) is not meant to deny continuity, but to point out that in emphasizing the latter, we risk losing site of more inclusive ways of understanding the complex history of this art form.

THE ADDITIVE APPROACH

The possibility that the Ashtewale family may have imagined their participation in music beyond Mughal terms, perhaps in connection with an ancient Hindu tradition, squares well with a pervasive notion, here expressed by the late sitarist Ravi Shankar, that “Rāga Sangīt can be traced back nearly two thousand years to its origins in the Vedic hymns of the Hindu temples, the fundamental source of all Indian music” (2009).

Scholars, too, have tended to “eternalize” Indian music by understanding it, above all else, as a continuation of an ancient, even Vedic, Hindu tradition (Niranjana 2009:361; and 2013:44; see also Walker 2010:279–80). Lewis Rowell, for example, Professor Emeritus of Music, Ethnomusicology and India Studies at Indiana University at Bloomington, has made a number of bold assertions regarding Indian

music's continuity over the course of his career, some of which bear remarkable similarity to the statement made by Shankar above:

Indian musicians today can thus rightly claim the support of a continuous tradition extending back more than two thousand years. We may know the early stages of this tradition only through the surviving documents, but the past is clearly audible in what we hear today. (2000a:37)

Contemporary Indian music...is informed by a rigorous body of melodic, rhythmic and aesthetic theory whose roots are clearly discernable in the earliest surviving texts from more than 2,000 years ago. (1981:218)

Ancient and medieval Indian music is alive in contemporary practice. (2000a:17–18)

Despite a tendency to emphasize modern Indian music's continuity with (and similarity to) the music of antiquity, even scholars such as Rowell have acknowledged that change did, in fact, occur. One such change, which Rowell described as "crucial in the overall raga system" (1992:178), was the development of a common tonic pitch, Sa, across all ragas sometime in the sixteenth century. This "system tonic," as Powers earlier described it, in turn paved the way for yet another

monumental change also recognized by Rowell: the introduction of a ubiquitous “drone” accompaniment, easily Indian music’s most recognized sonic signifier.

Although Rowell duly acknowledged these two changes, even describing them as “innovations,” he ultimately diminished their significance by interpreting them as “evolutionary, not revolutionary.” Their function, as he saw it, was to “reinforce existing tendencies or preferences” in the system, not to transform it. In fact, so stabilizing an effect did these changes have that, “all later accretions would be in harmony with the preexistent functions and structure of the system” (1992:178). Indian music’s apparent ability to weather significant change was not new, however, according to Rowell. Indeed, we might say that for Rowell, it was one of Indian music’s original defining characteristics, for as he explained, “for the last two thousand years, Indian culture has maintained a central core of musical understanding that can assimilate new musical ideas and yet withstand innovations incompatible with existing tradition” (2000a:17).

If I have dwelt inordinately on Rowell’s statements, it is not only because I find them to be more emphatic than most, but also because they are particularly clear articulations of broader tendency among scholars of Indian music to acknowledge change while simultaneously insisting on the permanence of identity. That is, instead of taking these changes to be transformative or challenging to music’s original identity, scholars have instead tended to interpret them, like Rowell, as “accretions,” “assimilations,” or “absorptions.” I describe this method and logic of coping with change as *additive*; more than a millennium of continuous “innovation,” nearly half

of which took place in the context of “foreign,” Muslim rule, has simply added to a preexisting, continuous and singular music tradition without truly transforming it. Like the Greek king Theseus’s fabled ship, which was argued to have maintained its original identity despite its rotted wooden planks being gradually replaced by new ones over hundreds of years, Indian music is thought to have preserved its original identity despite its musical innards being swapped out for new.⁸⁷ It is this additive approach that I argue serves as Indian music’s normative mode of historiography.

Significant exceptions to the additive approach certainly exist and appear to be growing. I discuss them below. However, I disagree with Katherine Butler Schofield (*nee* Brown’s) assertion, made at the opening of her article questioning the meaning of Indo-Muslim “synthesis,” that, “it has long been accepted wisdom [later stated as, “usually taken for granted”] that North Indian classical music as we know it today developed as a synthesis of Indian and Persian influences, largely under the Mughal patronage between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries” (Brown 2006:89). Instead, I see Indian music’s history as a far more contested terrain, and the roots of its

⁸⁷ The story of the Ship of Theseus, which was first recounted by the Greek philosopher Plutarch in his *Theseus* of 75 A.D., follows the Greek hero and King of Athens, Theseus, who returned to Athens from Crete after having slain the man-eating Minotaur. In commemoration of this feat, the Athenians preserved the ship that Theseus used on his voyage. However, as time wore on, the ship’s wooden planks began to decay, and one by one, they were replaced with new planks until finally, after hundreds of years, all the planks of the original wooden ship had been replaced (Clough 1859:21). The question originally posed by Plutarch is whether we consider the original ship to have survived, or whether this wholly refurbished ship is, indeed, the same ship as the original. If we take the position that the ship’s identity has indeed persisted, what I see as analogous to the additive approach in Indian music, then it can be deduced that our conception of identity lies not in the material that constitutes an object, but in the form that the material takes. The ship (or Indian music), in other words, though constituted by the planks (*śruti*-s, lack of tonal fixity, etc.), is not identical to them; new planks (twelve-tone temperament, fixed *sa*, etc.) can replace old planks and the ship will still survive. Identified as the “constitutional view” or the “formal cause,” this position is considered to be the standard one, and is summed up with the slogan “constitution is not identity” (Wasserman 2013).

primordialism far deeper. This discrepancy between Schofield’s assessment of the field and my own lies in the fact that what for her serves as evidence for scholarly claims to Indo-Persian synthesis—she cites S.N. Ratanjankar and S.M. Tagore, who respectively celebrated and criticized Muslim influence—I see as façade.⁸⁸ That is, instead of reflecting these authors’ hybrid or composite understanding of Hindustani music, such statements instead conceal a deeper allegiance to music’s pre-Muslim, Hindu origins.⁸⁹ Though they admit that Indian music was either enriched or diluted by Muslim influence, they reject the idea that it was forged *anew* in some medieval crucible of polyculturalism. Instead, they view these influences as additive. In doing so, they inevitably draw on different versions of a perennial Orientalist metaphor of Hinduism as a “sponge,” which “absorbs all that enters it without ceasing to be itself” (Spear 1958:57).⁹⁰

Before moving on to consider additional examples of the additive approach, it is important to disclose the fact that my use of this term has been adapted from Asian

⁸⁸ The passage of Ratnakar’s to which I presume Brown pointed was the following: “In Northern India the Mahomedan rulers proved to be great patrons of music and dancing. They brought with them their own music which, as it always happens in this country, was *assimilated* into the then Hindu music. New melodies, new styles of interpretation, new types of songs, new Talas were introduced. Thus today we have got what we know as Hindustani music which is a beautiful monument of the fusion of Hindu and Islamic Culture” (see Ratanjankar’s “Forward” in Bhatkhande 1941, my emphasis).

⁸⁹ Of course, there are others who simply argue that the music of the Hindu temple “is the prototype of the court-descended, north Indian classical music” (Ho 2006).

⁹⁰ British social historian Thomas George Percival Spear (1901–1982) most famously articulated this metaphor in his book, *India, Pakistan and the West* (1958). Though American Religious Studies scholar Brian K. Smith was one of the first to critically evaluate the use of this metaphor, pointing to Spear in particular (1989:8), its critique is more famously associated with the postcolonial theorist and American Indologist, Ronald Inden, who briefly alluded to this and other related metaphors in his book, *Imagining India* (1990:xiii, 85-87, 96). Inden’s criticism was later subject to criticism of its own by Religious Studies scholar David Smith for “conjuring up an ascription of femininity [in the authors he cites] where it does not exist” (2003:97–99 reprinted in Flood 2003).

American literary theorist Susan Koshy (1996), who used it to identify the inability of her field to come to terms with the challenges posed by transnationalism to the theorization of ethnic identity. Specifically, Koshy pointed to the fact that demographic changes resulting from new waves of immigration from different parts of Asia following 1965; the legal reclassifications of ethnic groups in the United States; and the increasing tendency to form notions of ethnic identity across multiple national boundaries; have failed to incite a reconsideration of the existing categories, definitions, paradigms and epistemologies on which her field was founded. Instead, scholars have simply relied on what she described as an “additive” approach to the formation of the Asian American literary cannon whereby the new is simply added on to the existing structure without truly transforming it. What Koshy instead argued for was the need to theorize “the multiple, conflicted, and emergent formations that constitute Asian American literature” (ibid.:318), to “examine the impact of the recent demographic and geopolitical changes on the reconstitution of ethnicity among all the Asian American groups” (ibid.). Though the intentions behind Koshy’s rejection of the additive approach may be different from my own, I feel that the problematic dynamic of cannon formation she highlighted is nevertheless useful for thinking about the prevailing approaches to interpreting historical change in Indian music.

As Rowell’s discussion of the system tonic shows, one of the characteristics of the additive approach is to acknowledge change before attempting to incorporate it. It should therefore come as no surprise that one of the most cogent statements of the

additive approach comes from a scholar who admitted, as Janaki Bakhle reminded us, that contemporary Hindustani music “had a history going back two hundred years, not two thousand” (Bakhle 2005:121). Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande, whose biography I treat in greater detail in Chapter Four, was considered a maverick among early-twentieth musicologists for insisting that there was not enough evidence to establish a direct connection between Indian music’s modern practice and its ancient theory (Powers 1992:11; Bor 2010:15). Referring to the received notion of music’s Vedic roots, for example, Bhatkhande was plainly skeptical: “We are constantly told that our music has had for its source the great *Sama Veda*, a work of some three or four thousand years old, but no scholar either ancient or modern seems to have yet successfully established an intelligible and satisfactory connection between Sama music and that of the succeeding writers (1974:3).⁹¹ He even looked askance upon the thirteenth-century *Sangitaratnakara*, claiming that, “there is not a single scholar in India, at present, who has been successful in solving the ragas elaborated in *Ratnakara*” (ibid.:13). In fact, it seemed that Bhatkhande went far beyond merely accepting Hindustani music’s hybridity by effectively crediting “Mahomedan professional artists” for its introduction: “We find today that the standard high class music of North India is no other than that which the Mahomedan professional artists have introduced during the last five centuries or so” (ibid.:34).⁹²

⁹¹ One of the reasons for this lack of a satisfactory connection, according to Bhatkhande, was lack of knowledge of the Sama scale: “For myself I have already confessed that I am unable to throw any light on the Sama scale just at present. In any case, I suppose it would not be of any practical use to enter into the subject of Sama music for the study of our present music” (Bhatkhande 1990:7).

⁹² Nevertheless, Bhatkhande was not necessarily happy about this situation. He felt that the

However, as is the case with many other sympathetic statements of Hindustani music's hybridity, these statements disguise Bhatkhande's actual tenacious investment in continuity. This is nowhere better expressed than in the analogy Bhatkhande made between the changes wrought upon Indian music by Muslim rule to something as trivial as a change in wardrobe:

It cannot be denied that with the advent of the Mohammedan regime a material alteration [pun intended?] took place in the outlook of music represented by the ancient Sanskrit Granthas.... The putting on a different suit of clothes does not change the individual clothed, and similarly, though there may be, and are changes in the music as it is now, from what it was then, there is no such fundamental alteration in it as to make the modern music an essentially different thing.... Though the external appearance of our music has to some extent changed, the framework, to my mind, appears the same.... in the main the substratum of our music is undoubtedly the music of the past, and that being so, a study of the past music, in my opinion, is essential.

(Bhatkhande 1941:1–2)

In light of Bhatkhande's reputation as a rebellious champion of Indian music's modernity, the relegation of eight centuries of change to something as ornamental as

inapplicability of the treatises to modern practice caused scholars such as himself to be "thrown on the mercy of our illiterate, ignorant, and narrow-minded professionals" (ibid.:34).

clothing on an the otherwise familiar “individual” of music will no doubt come as a surprise. However, Bhatkhande’s wardrobe analogy was meant to drive home a larger point regarding the importance of studying “old Sanskrit texts, which [he nevertheless admitted] do not directly [operative word] relate to the music of the present day” (ibid.:1). The importance of studying these “ancient Sanskrit Granthas,” as he indicated at the end of the passage quoted above, lies in the fact that the music they describe, though changed in its appearance, is “essentially” the same as “modern music.” Their study, he concluded, would therefore be helpful in constructing “a good workable system for our present music” (ibid.:2).

The problem, however, is that it is not immediately apparent which of these ancient texts Bhatkhande had in mind or how “ancient” they really were. The fact that he singled out their lack of direct relation to contemporary music suggests that he was referring to texts that predate the fifteenth century, such as the *Sangitaratnakara* and the *Natyashastra*. In this book, *A Comparative Study of Some of the Leading Music Systems of the 15th, 16th, 17th and 18th Centuries* ([1930] 1990), Bhatkhande deliberately chose to focus only on those texts “of great practical importance” (ibid.:8), all of which happened to fall after the fifteenth century and thus squarely within Indian music’s “Muslim period,” which he elsewhere defined as beginning in the eleventh century (1974:3). Having said that, Bhatkhande also hinted that the music of the *Natyashastra* and *Sangitaratnakara* might not be related to these Muslim-period treaties at all: “I do not suggest that the music of those books [those he lists and proposes to cover] is the same as that of Ratnakara or of Bharata, but

these treatises are likely to throw considerable light on the music we sing and play today” (ibid.:9).

Bhakhande clearly had reservations about the applicability of these earlier texts to contemporary practice. Their authors, he argued, had assumed practical knowledge on the part of the reader, and as a result, two crucial points—the precise value of the *śruti* or the smallest unit of pitch measurement, and the placement of the tones or *svara*-s of the natural scale—had yet to be clearly understood. The current inscrutability of these texts therefore rendered them inappropriate for “the ordinary music student,” whom Bhatkhande most hoped to reach. However, they nonetheless constituted interesting and important foci of study for the research scholar (ibid.). Thus, despite their remove from modern practice, Bhatkhande still saw these texts as important sources for understanding Indian music’s ancient roots and he encouraged their thoughtful and “disinterested” study.

Janaki Bakhle’s interpretation of Bhatkhande’s stance towards these texts vis-à-vis his insistence on Indian music’s modernity is important to consider here. Bakhle claimed that Bhatkhande’s failure to simply dismiss these ancient texts and instead incorporate of them into his narrative as texts of “faded importance” was a way for Bhatkhande to accommodate a nationalist desire for antiquity without being seduced by that desire himself (2005:117). While this argument has its merits, I feel that it goes too far in attempting to rescue Bhatkhande from any personal interest in establishing a “connected history,” which Bakhle nevertheless admitted he demonstrated at other times: “While he acknowledged that the sources exercised a

‘veto power’ over his desire for a connected history, he never fully let go of this ideal” (ibid.:106). Instead, I think we can see both of these elements operating in Bhatkhande’s work. That is, despite the fact that Bhatkhande remained skeptical of the applicability of ancient texts to modern practice, he nevertheless believed and hoped that such a connection might be found.

It is also not a coincidence that Bhatkhande’s nationalist chroniclers picked up on his latent desire for continuity and ran with it. In an overview of Bhatkhande’s two English works, which form the basis of the discussion above, Sobha Nayar conveniently omitted Bhatkhande’s cautionary remarks on music’s most ancient texts. Instead, she simply noted that, “[h]e found that the subject matter of our present music is of the same nature as that of ancient music” (Nayar 1989:109). With indirect reference to the sponge metaphor, she described how “[w]ithin its traditional framework music goes on absorbing new modes from the environment.” This “special character of our music,” she concluded, “established an unbroken link between the past and the present” (ibid.:138).

Had Bakhle commented on Nayar’s statements, she would probably have considered them demonstrative of the failure of Bhatkhande’s legacy, a co-optation of his progressive approach to history by a larger and more exclusive (of the Muslim period) nationalist narrative of continuity. It was in a similar vein that Bakhle interpreted the widespread religious devotionalism and institutional secrecy of Bhatkhande’s followers despite his belief in music’s secularity and the importance of its accessibility (Bakhle 2005:134, 213). Instead, we might see Nayar’s comments as

resonating with an important “additive” strand of Bhatkhande’s thought, albeit one that coexisted alongside his insistence on the disparity between the ancient and the modern.

Bhatkhande and the writers who came before him, including early nationalists such as S.M. Tagore, and even early colonial-administrators such as William Jones, had promulgated their claims to the resilience of Indian music’s ancient roots in response to allegations of foreign influence that was understood have been corruptive and damaging.⁹³ Muslims (either rulers or performers, see Chapter Four) were understood as the agents of that influence, though this is more often implied than directly stated. However, when we turn to contemporary authors, particularly ethnomusicologists and other academics, we find that reassurances of Indian music’s living ancient roots are aimed not at countering allegations of destruction, but at refuting the celebration of its hybridity and transformation (i.e., reasserting its presumed continuity and authenticity).

Typifying the latter approach, Dutch ethnomusicologist Wim van der Meer dismissed what he saw as the “compromised” notion of “Western and westernized Indian commentators” that the vocal form of *khyāl* was the product of some “happy blending of two cultures,” which he described as “Muslim” and “Indian” (thereby assuming a direct correspondence between religion and nation). Instead, Meer insisted that Muslim influence was both literally and figuratively ornamental, as khyal

⁹³ Barlow and Subramanian similarly identified a tendency in the work of unnamed “others” (presumably nationalists) who, following the allegations of “early orientalist historians” that Muslims corrupted Indian music’s purity, claimed that, “indigenous music was able to absorb these without losing its identity” (2007:1781–1782).

differed from its pre-Muslim predecessor, dhrupad, merely in its *gamaks*, *murkhis* (both forms of ornamentation) and other “surface features.” In additive fashion, he acknowledged that “the advent of the Muslim rulers in Northern India brought certain changes in culture, including musical culture,” but he ultimately claimed that, “the musical features of khayal indicate a largely Indian [i.e., Hindu] basis” (1980:51, 57, 69).

Framing the debate in which Meer’s comments may be read, another Dutch ethnomusicologist, Joep Bor, pitted against each other those who argue that Indian music had existed “side by side” with Central Asian and Persian musical traditions, and those who argue that these traditions instead came together to produce the hybrid “crossover” that is today Hindustani music (2010:16). In this essay, which serves as an introduction to an edited volume on Hindustani music history, Bor refrained from taking a position on this debate himself. However, in the question and answer session that followed an earlier spoken version of this essay transcribed and published in the *Journal of the Indian Musicological Society*, it appears that Bor’s may have agreed with the former of the two positions he described. In response to the question, “Have the Indo-Persian interactions *enriched* the performing traditions of Indian music?” (my emphasis), Bor answered affirmatively. Taking the sitar as an example, which though Persian in origin became “an Indian instrument,” Bor explained, “This is how musical systems existed side-by-side influencing each other. However, we often hear that Hindustani music is a crossover between the indigenous music and the Persian-Central Asian music” (2006:14-15). The suggestion, as I read it, is that “Indian”

music (i.e., that which existed before and along side of Persian-Central Asian music), though certainly “enriched” by these Muslim-based traditions, nevertheless retained its distinct identity. Influences were assimilated, but that which was assimilated never challenged the identity of the body into which it became a part.

An unexpected expression of this model of assimilation can also be found in American ethnomusicologist Peter Manuel’s (1996) account of the *syncretism* that underlies Hindustani music. As the term syncretism suggests, Manuel’s overall point can not be described as additive as I use the term here. Indeed, he argued that Hindustani music is a “fundamentally syncretic art form that cannot be characterized as Hindu or Muslim” (ibid.123), a “collaborative product of Hindu and Muslim artists and patrons” (ibid.120). However, in accounting for the specific contribution of Muslims to this syncretic product, Manuel forwarded a more additive view of Indian music’s structure. Though admitting that Muslims contributed to Hindustani “musical culture” through their ardent *patronage*, the actual musical system they patronized was, in Manuel’s terms, “inherited.” It (the musical system) did not experience any “revolutionary changes” by way of its encounter with Muslims. Instead, musical elements “imported” by Muslims were “woven seamlessly into its fabric”:

The inherent pluralism of Hindustani musical culture was to a large extent a product of the combination of Muslim patronage with an inherited musical system that was to some degree imbued with Hindu extra-musical associations. (ibid.:121)

Muslim rulers did not introduce any revolutionary changes in the music system they inherited. Whatever imported elements that Muslim performers incorporated into Hindustani music were on the whole *woven seamlessly into its fabric*. (ibid.:124, my emphasis)

Similar to earlier invocations of the sponge metaphor, Manuel's fabric metaphor is meant to describe how a non-Muslim-originated Indian music seamlessly wove into itself "all that enters it without ceasing to be itself" (Spear, as cited above). Both metaphors flip the traditional understanding of conqueror and conquered, for in reality, it was not the Muslims who conquered India, but India who conquered the Muslims by transforming and absorbing them. Manuel concurred, "As has often been noted, what transpired was a process of Indian reconquest of the Muslim invaders through assimilation and acculturation" (ibid.:121).

Additional examples of the additive approach (e.g., Powers 1980:26; Slawek 2007:507–508; and Martinez 2000) will be considered elsewhere. The point that this section has sought to emphasize is that the understanding that today's Indian music represents a continuous, pre-Muslim tradition that has managed to preserve its ancient roots despite myriad influences from Muslim rulers and musicians who are routinely characterized as "foreign" is not behind us, even though it may be losing ground. The opposing view, that the Hindustani music we know today was born in the early modern period out of an amalgamation of elements drawn from across South and

Central Asia, however vague and superficial some of the specific iterations of this view might be, is not, unfortunately, something that can be “taken for granted” (Brown 2006). From these disagreements, debate undoubtedly ensues. The following section aims to push that debate further in favor of Hindustani music’s more recent pedigree by drawing on evidence more often used to support the claim to more ancient origins: musical structure.

A DISPARATE VIEW

Bhatkhande’s understanding of the disparity that existed between ancient and modern music—or of contemporary music’s “inescapable modernity” (Bakhle 2005:115)—rested on his belief that its melodic system was built upon an intonation and scalar structure alien to contemporary raga music. “Our old Sanskrit *Granthas*,” he wrote, “even such as are available to us now, are scarcely looked upon as binding authorities because the practical music in use now contravenes their directions on some of the most important points” (Bhatkhande 1974:34).

Most other commentators at the time, however, disagreed. One of Bhatkhande’s younger adversaries on the issue of continuity was Gwalior gharana vocalist and Dean of the first program in Music at Banāras Hindu University, Omkārnāth Thākur (1897-1967). Thakur, Harold Powers noted, was “diametrically opposed to Bhatkhande’s belief that the oldest works, however significant for the history of Indian music, have no discernable connection with present practice” (1992:19). Instead, Thakur held the conviction that “today’s *śāstriya sangīta*

[classical music] and the *sangīta-śāstra* [musical treatises] of ancient India have their fundamentals in common” (ibid.).

Thakur’s belief in the fundamental continuity of ancient Indian music remains alive and well in scholarship today, as I hope to have demonstrated in the section on the additive approach above.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, there has been a growing corpus of scholars who have expressed similar kinds of skepticism toward music’s continuity that Bhatkhande had.⁹⁵ The work of Nazir Ali Jairazbhoy, one of Bhatkhande’s major commentators, stands out in this regard for regularly problematizing scholarly attempts to make direct links between modern practice and ancient theory (i.e., 1972a:295; and my discussion of Jairazbhoy in the following chapter).⁹⁶ John Andrew Greig’s dissertation, for which Jairazbhoy served as a committee member, contains important evidence for seeing modern Indian music as an acculturative product of the

⁹⁴ Incidentally, Lewis Rowell, a central proponent of this approach as I outlined it, might be considered the intellectual grand-student of Thakur, having studied with Thakur’s leading student, and head of Musicology at Banaras Hindu University, Prem Lata Sharma. See Rowell’s memoir essay of his teaching stint at BHU (2002).

⁹⁵ The work of one of Bhatkhande’s younger contemporaries, Devadatta Ramakrishna Bhandarkar (1875-1950), the son of “the father” of Indian Indology, Ramakrishna Gopal Bhandarkar (1837-1925) in whose honor the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute of Pune was founded in 1917, has been described as an exception to the uncritical adoption of the shruti issue (Jairazbhoy 2008:351). Interestingly, in addition to the article of Bhandarkar’s that Jairazbhoy described, “Contributions to the Study of Ancient Hindu Music” (1912), another of Bhandarkar’s articles from the same journal, “Foreign Elements in the Hindu Population” (1911), has similarly been celebrated for having attempted to “break down entrenched beliefs about the purity of Hindu caste and race boundaries” (Koirala and Pritchett 2004).

⁹⁶ I have found only one exception to Jairazbhoy’s otherwise skeptical stance towards claims to continuity, and that is in the following statement, which concludes one of his earliest articles: “From Bharata’s writing on the practical aspect of Indian music, one notices several points of similarity in these modern days which suggests a tenacity of musical tradition. Subsequent developments have augmented the system without ever having changed the basic structure” (1958:60). The last sentence in particular is a clear expression of the additive approach and similar to Bhatkhande’s quoted above.

sixteenth century (1987:34–35). Richard Widdess, though advocating for some “genuine” continuities in the practice of early medieval and modern day musics, as explored below, nevertheless has routinely reminded his readers of the aims of treatise writers to obfuscate historical gaps (also discussed below), and has often denounced claims to continuity based on limited evidence by authors both old, such as Abhinavagupta (1995:38) and new (e.g., 1985; 1994). And one of Widdess’s former pupils, Katherine Butler Schofield (formerly Brown), though already discussed in regard to the continuity behind the claim to continuity, deserves additional mention here for her work on the history of khyal, in which she dismisses the “nationalist group of theories” for positing a pre-Muslim origin of the genre (Brown 2010:159). Briefer statements on modern Indian music’s acculturative origins in the Muslim period can be found in many other places (e.g., Ahmed 1984:4-5; Miner [1993] 1997:28; Wade 1998:27–32, 136–159; Trivedi 2000; Khan 2000:1; Brown 2001:16; Simms 2001:46; Barlow and Subramanian 2007:1779, 1782; Walker 2010:280; Niranjana 2013:44). Others have brought greater awareness to the social and cultural upheavals that further distanced modern music from even its less remote precolonial antecedents (e.g., Qureshi 1991; Farrel 1997; Allen 1997; Subramanian 1999 and 2011; Bakhle 2005; Weidman 2006; Kippen 2006; Peterson and Soneji 2008; Walker 2010; Katz 2010).

In all of this scholarship, however, there has been no sustained argument for the disparity between ancient and modern Indian music that draws on structural evidence (dealing with form and its theory) to make its case. Arguments against

continuity from the aforementioned work of Jairazbhoy and Greig, for instance, while drawing on elements of structure for evidence, are not the focus of those works per se, but constitute peripheral, yet significant, results.

Having described how scholars have attempted to accommodate musical change within a narrative of continuity (the additive approach), I now seek to demonstrate just how precipitous the changes they have attempted to accommodate in fact were, or at least how precipitous they can be interpreted to have been. I do this first by challenging the claim to Indian music's continuous "unbroken" history, and second by challenging the claim that its ancient roots are clearly discernable in or similar to present-day practice. These two different claims of continuity and similarity have often been confused, the latter generally being mistaken to demonstrate the former. It is therefore important that we disambiguate them, which the following two subsections of this section of the chapter, divided along these lines, hopes to accomplish.

Although the second subsection, which focuses on the dissimilarity between modern and ancient music, constitutes the largest portion of this chapter, it bears only an indirect relationship to the larger question that justifies this chapter's existence, that is whether Brahmans like the Ashtewale family imagined their participation in music beyond Mughal terms. For this question, it is obviously more important to determine whether continuity was claimed or not, regardless of the similarities that may or may not support it. It is this claim to historical continuity, and more importantly the reality that it contradicts, that is the subject of the first subsection. Its

size, however, is comparatively far smaller. One reason for this imbalance is the simple fact that there is little to debate on this issue; that the authors of musical treatises fostered an “appearance of continuity” despite sizable gaps in history (Widdess 1995:368) is a well-known and uncontroversial fact, though the application of this fact to an argument for disparity has had surprisingly few takers, even among the scholars who focus on rupa cited earlier. Claims to similarity, on the other hand, which nevertheless stand in for claims to continuity, are both highly debatable and highly diverse. They require reference to and understanding of a considerable amount of technical detail. They therefore take up a considerable number of pages. However, in spite of this section’s bulky obliqueness, it does provide us more ways to know about the claim to continuity via the alleged similarities with which it is often confused.

The Historical Gap Between Jātī and Rāga

The historical claim that Indian music can be traced back two thousand years is in part based on the assumption of an unbroken history connecting the present raga system to its most distant alleged ancestor, the *jātī* system. However, the system of jatis described in *truly ancient* treatises of music,⁹⁷ those dated to the early first

⁹⁷ Some of the most important sources for the study of early Indian music are dated to a period that has posed historiographical problems for historians due to its failure to fit neatly into either the ancient or the medieval. Simultaneously post-ancient and pre-medieval, this “early medieval” period, as it came to be dubbed, potentially stretched nine hundred years from the beginning of the Gupta dynasty to the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate in the thirteenth century (Ali 2012). Among the musical “texts” of this period are the Kudumiyamalai rock inscription of the seventh-eighth century, and the *Brahdeśi* of Matanga (ninth-tenth century), and according to Baker (1957:208), the *Nārādīya-śikṣā* of the tenth-eleventh century. None of these texts are truly “ancient,” though they are sometimes erroneously claimed to be. More often, however, they are simply considered together with ancient and medieval

millennium or prior, is separated from the earliest evidence of the raga system in the middle of the first millennium by a yawning gap of around five hundred years.⁹⁸ Later authors obscured this gap by retaining and recuperating antiquated concepts and terminology for the purpose of authorizing more recent changes and thus reconciling modern practice with ancient theory. This section seeks to draw back these obfuscating tendencies and lay bare a break in the tradition. Though most scholars acknowledge this lacuna (e.g., Rowell 1987:136; 1992b:107–108), they do not always understand it as challenging the claim to continuity. This subsection is therefore concerned with the way in which the history of the jati system and its relation to the earliest system of raga known as the *grāmārāga* has been written (i.e., historiography), not with the more specific workings of these individual systems themselves, which I nonetheless take up in the subsection that follows.

The first and only texts known to have discussed the jatis during the period in which they are thought to have actually existed were the turn-of-the-first-millennium treatises the *Naṭyaśāstra* and the *Dattilam*. The *Natyashastra* was primarily a work of dramaturgy that included chapters on music. It is attributed to the sage or *muni* Bharata, and is dated as early as the third century B.C. and as late as the fifth century A.D. (Jairazbhoy 1995:16).⁹⁹ The jatis described in the *Natyashastra* constitute the

texts as representing “the musical documents of early India” (Rowell 2000a:18), which for Rowell “reveal a tradition of relative cultural continuity” (ibid.).

⁹⁸ The earliest “securely dated” reference to the gramaragas, the first in a series of raga-based systems, occurs in a passage from the Chinese text, the *Suishu*, which is dated to 656 A.D. (Widdess 1980:120; See also Picken et al. 1987:8).

⁹⁹ Jairazbhoy did not provide a citation for this range of dates. The earliest claim to a date that I have

only known system of music at this time outside of the chanting of the hymns of the *Sāma Veda*, one of the four texts said to have been revealed to the ancient sages.¹⁰⁰ Though the term *rāga*, which is related to the Sanskrit root *ranj* meaning “to color” or “delight,” is briefly mentioned on two occasions in the *Natyashastra*, it is not given any specific musical or technical meaning, but instead refers to the passion or emotion that certain songs may evoke (Widdess 1995:38, 42, 368). The *Dattilam*, which takes its name from its author, Dattila, was relatively contemporaneous to, though probably slightly younger than, the *Natyashastra* and its treatment of the jatis is considered to have been consistent with that text. Taken together, they constitute the oldest treatises to discuss the subject of music and the only contemporaneous sources that address the jati system.

Following the work of Bharata and Dattila, any mention of the jati system disappears from extant texts until Maṭaṅga’s *Bṛhaddeśī*, which is dated as early as 750 A.D. and as late as the tenth century A.D.¹⁰¹ Based on the notations of jati

been able to find is from Ghosh (1961:23), who citing his support of the view of Haraprasad Sastri, said that the *Natyashastra* belonged to the second century B.C. Jairazbhoy also suggested this date in his most recent article (2008:352). Te Nijenhuis (1970:2) alleged that “the date commonly given to Bharata’s *Natyashastra*” was the first century B.C. Rowell (1987:136 n.2) put it in the fifth century A.D., though he added a question mark next to the date.

¹⁰⁰ This system of music is described in the *Nārādīya-śikṣā*, which Rowell placed in the late-Vedic period (i.e., first to fifth century), though he acknowledged the problem of “accumulation by later authors” (1977:72). As mentioned above, Baker placed significantly later in the tenth or eleventh century. Regardless, this text does not engage in a discussion of jatis.

¹⁰¹ For the earliest date of 750 A.D., see Sharma and Deohar (1992). Te Nijenhuis similarly placed it sometime before “the beginning or in the middle of the eighth century” (1970:1). Lewis Rowell believed that while “much of the material may have originated early in the first millennium... the treatise as we know it was assembled sometime during the few centuries prior to A.D. 1000” (1987:139; see also Rowell 1992b:107). However, Raghavan (1932), Bor (1975) and Widdess (1995) held it to be either from the ninth century or later.

melodies (one for each jati) that appear in Matanga's text, the earliest known jati notations to exist, scholars have largely concurred that the jatis had become a "closed tradition" by this time (Rowell 1992a:173; Ghosh 1961:i; Bor 1975:25), meaning that "all later developments occurred within a framework of the idea of *raga*," not jati (Rowell 1992a:173). However, when in this echoing chasm that divided the *Natyashastra* from the *Brhaddeśi* the jatis ceased to exist as a living tradition—the period is potentially more than a millennium long—is any one's guess.¹⁰² If we were to rely solely on evidence contemporaneous to the jatis (Bharata and Dattila), then we might say, provocatively, that the jatis ceased to exist as living tradition around the very same time that they appeared.

Despite this lacuna, Matanga claimed that the jatis constituted the primary source material from which the musical modes then current, the *gramaragas*, were derived. Although Matanga was the first to have described the *gramaragas* in detail, there is evidence of their earlier existence, most notably in the seventh-to-eighth century *Kudumiyamalai* rock inscription in present-day Tamil Nadu (Widdess 1980; and 1995). However, neither in this "text," nor in any other from the interim between the *Natyashastra* and the *Brahdesi*, were the *gramaragas* claimed to have been derived from the jatis.¹⁰³ Matanga was the first to make this connection, which he did

¹⁰² The gap between the *Natyashastra* and the *Brhaddeśi* is acknowledged to have been large even by continuist scholars such as Rowell (1987:136 and 1992b.:107-108). How large depends on the dates one ascribes to each of these texts. For Rowell, who puts the *Natyashastra* at the fifth century A.D. (the latest of all dates given) and the *Brhaddeśi* at the eighth century, it was at least three centuries long. However, if we take the earliest date ascribed to the *Natyashastra* (third century B.C.) and the latest date of the *Brhaddeśi* (tenth century A.D.), this gap swells to thirteen centuries!

¹⁰³ Widdess makes this claim regarding the lack of any specified connection between *gramaraga* and

by ascribing each gramaraga a particular combination of source jatis. The exact relation of gramaraga to source jatis was never defined either by Matanga or later authors. Widdess claimed to have uncovered evidence for the “continuity of musical substance” between them (1995:65), and I discuss his findings later under the subsection titled, “The Gramaragas and their Source Jatis.” Despite these findings, however, Widdess also claimed that, “in reality, the gramaragas may have originated independently” of jati (ibid.:82), their origins being “almost wholly obscure” (ibid.:64). As far as I can tell, Widdess did not attempt to reconcile these two seemingly contradictory conclusions, which he came to in different parts of his text. However, we might conjecture, based on some of his other statements regarding the continuity of continuity discussed in the following paragraph, that the connection between jati and gramaraga, though admittedly demonstratable on a theoretical level, was not born out of a continuous tradition of practice.

The resurfacing of the jatis in Matanga’s text after such an extensive gap should not, therefore, be taken uncritically as proof of the common ancestry of the jatis and the later ragas, which te Nijenhuis noted was “the traditional Indian opinion” (1980:570). Alternatively, Richard Widdess suggested that Matanga’s allusion to the jatis, rather than reflecting a real continuity, might instead be seen as an early instance of the invention of tradition (without using this term), a deliberate attempt to claim legitimacy for a new and divergent system by casting it in terms already set down by

jati in relation to the *Kudumiyamalai* inscription (1980:120; and 1995:19). However, it appears to apply to these other texts just as well.

Bharata, whose text had by then achieved canonical status (1995:11, 59, 368–69; and 1994:124). The approach proved wildly popular, for all of the treatises that followed Matanga’s up to and including the thirteenth-century *Sangita Ratnakara* understood the ragas to be the direct descendants of the jatis with the object, Widdess and others claim, of legitimizing later changes.¹⁰⁴ We might say, then, that the relationship Matanga forged between the jatis and gramaragas was strictly theoretical; it did not stem from a continuous process of development, but a purposeful appropriation of concepts that had long ceased to exist.¹⁰⁵ Barring the similarities brought about by this appropriation, which were largely terminological, the two systems differed significantly. It is towards a focus on that dissimilarity that we now turn.

Structural Dissimilarities

As the previous section argued, the history of Indian music when measured by the chronology of its texts clearly contains a gaping hole separating jati from raga.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ For a recent consideration of how the author of the sixteenth-century *Svara-Mela-Kalānidhi* portrayed a radical new innovation in tonal schema to represent a continuity with the *Sangitaratnakara*, see Rahaim, Reddy and Christiansen (forthcoming).

¹⁰⁵ Though it appears that Widdess held ambivalent opinions on the connection between jati and raga, as noted in the introduction, statements of his that assert continuity are almost always careful to qualify that continuity in theoretical terms. For example: “It can hardly be doubted, however, that jati provides the foundation on which the later *theories and systems* of raga were erected” (1995:45, my emphasis); “This Gupta or pre-Gupta system [as described in BhNS and DD] is thus the foundation for the later *theory of raga*” (ibid.:368, my emphasis); “In all these respects raga may be compared with jati, a concept and system that, as we argued in Chapter I, preceded and was the basis for the early raga system as formulated in the *theoretical tradition*” (ibid.:29, my emphasis); and “The raga system evolved later than that of jati, but its *theoretical formulation* was based on the latter” (ibid.:82, my emphasis).

¹⁰⁶ Rowell additionally posited a second gap of a few hundred years that followed the *Brhaddesi* and continued until about 1000 A.D., at which point we encounter another group of medieval treatises that culminate in the thirteenth-century *Sangitaratnakara* of Sarngadeva (1987:136. Also in 1992b.:107-

However, gaping holes in the chronology of texts do not necessarily equate to a lack of similarity between them. For as we have noted, it was the particular preoccupation of post-Gupta theorists to present current practice in the guise of ancient theory, thereby creating an illusion of continuity through theoretical confabulation. The problem arises when we mistake this similarity for evidence of actual continuity. In his review of Rowell's book, for example, Stephen Slawek claimed that, "clear evidence of the remarkable continuity of India's art music traditions" is to be found in the fact that, "the topics addressed by treatise writers remained remarkably constant and the terminology of their concepts relatively consistent throughout such a vast time span" (1997:116). In light of the previous disclosures, however, the similarity between the topics covered and terminology used by treatise writers across this vast span of time is not a reliable source for claiming an actual, unbroken continuity.

I do not take issue with the project of tracing long-scale changes or with comparing aspects of *jati* and *raga* favorably. Certainly there are similarities between *jati* and *raga*. Indeed, some of these similarities may even point to genuine, albeit overly general, continuities, and not the result of anxious theorists trying to close the possible millennial gap. The point is that this gap in the chronology of texts and the effort made to disguise it has received minimal attention in claims to similarity. Without cautionary reference to these historical inconsistencies, it is likely that continuities will be implied, if not directly stated.

108). Rowell saw the *Brhaddesi* as existing "splendidly" in between these two gaps.

Leaving aside the problem of chronological continuity, it is my view that the similarity that purportedly existed between ancient theory and modern practice is equally overblown. The present section, which constitutes the majority of this chapter, aims to deflate this notion of similarity with specific reference to elements of structure. Although a few aspects of similarity between jati and raga appear convincing, most are shown to be problematic. Those readily admitted, moreover, are so general as to diminish their significance.

Broadly speaking, the ancient jati system is incongruous with the modern raga system in a number of important and obvious ways. Foremost among them is the fact that a jati's tonic not only changed from jati to jati, but also changed during the course of a single jati, leading some to describe jatis as "bitonal" or even polytonal entities that progressed linearly instead of cyclicly (i.e., returning again and again to the same tonal center). This is in contrast to ragas, which maintain a single tonic not only throughout an entire performance, but also across the entire system, a phenomenon that Powers described as the "system tonic" (2001b).¹⁰⁷ This system tonic was not evident in extant sources until as late as the sixteenth-century *Svara-mela-kalānidhi* of Rāmāmātya, at which time we also find evidence for the development of a continuous drone. Though today the drone serves as an important sonic signifier of Indian music, it was completely absent from the jati system.

¹⁰⁷ An exception to the system tonic, as noted by Jairazbhoy, is the "*madhyama sruti* ragas of South India... where the note *Ma* serves as a kind of tonic" (1972a.:295).

Additional factors distinguishing jati from raga include the fact that the gamut of principle pitches available in the jati system was seven, not twelve; the intonation of its pitches was derived from a system (*śruti*) in which three sizes of intervals were recognized, not two; its primary scale resembled today's *kāṛṭi* scale (what is sometimes compared to the ecclesiastical dorian mode with its lowered third and seventh scale degrees), not the *bilāval* scale used today; both its melodic *and* rhythmic structures progressed in a linear, not cyclical, fashion, emphasizing the last beat and the Final note, not the first beat and the Initial note; it functioned as a system for classifying pre-existing, composed melodies performed in ensemble contexts rather than as a model for improvisation in a solo context; it emphasized instrumental music instead of vocal music; it placed little emphasis on ornamentation; and it had little in the way of extra-musical associations. In sum, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the jati system exhibited none of the basic elements commonly associated with Indian classical music today, whether Hindustani or Karnatak. As Widdess humorously put it, “the authors of the *Natyashastra* would find very little familiar in a modern sitar recital” (Widdess 1994:124).

What follows is a more specific consideration of the disparities between the jati and raga systems building towards what I perceive to be one of the jatis' most definitive distinctions, their linear polytonality. Along the way, several other aspects of disparity mentioned above will be considered. In accounting for these differences, I pay particular attention to how authors have interpreted them as being either evolutionary or revolutionary (i.e. where they stand in relation to the additive

approach described above). In general, additivists have argued that the developments that contributed to the raga system were already latent in the jati system's tendencies or preferences. Alternatively, some scholars, including Roy (1937:25), Brahaspati (1969), Bor (1975:26), te Nijenhuis (1976:4, 7), Daniel Neuman (1985:108), Miner (1997:29), Jairazbhoy (2008:353) and others, have suggested that at least some of the important changes that led to today's system can be attributed to "foreign" influence, as they occurred within Indian music's "Muslim period," though there appears to be some disagreement as to when the "Hindu" period ended and the "Muslim" began.¹⁰⁸ Among these changes are: the displacement of harps by stick zithers sometime between the seventh and ninth centuries;¹⁰⁹ the shift to monotonal ragas by the thirteenth century (monotonal being defined by the correspondence of the primary note-functions, see further explanation below); the transposition of all ragas to a common ground note; the adoption of twelve semi-tones per octave; the jettisoning of

¹⁰⁸ Bhatkhande placed the beginning of the Muslim period in the eleventh century, when "Mahomedans came into contact with this country as a ruling nation" (1974:3). His reference, presumably, was the beginning of the rule of the Ghaznavid dynasty over Northwestern India, which lasted from 1010 to 1187. By this reckoning, the *Sangitaratnakara* by Sarngadeva, which is dated to the mid-thirteenth century, would fall squarely within Bhatkhande's Muslim period. Others, however, often view this text as "sum[ing] up the achievements of the Hindu period" (Roy 1937:22; see also Greig 1987:284; and Widdess 1995:368). Nevertheless, both Greig and Widdess (*ibid.*:24) point to aspects of Muslim influence in Sarngadeva's text, particularly in the names accorded to ragas. Ambiguities in the placement of the *Sangitaratnakara* in one or another period may be attributed to differences in the geographical spread of Muslim rule in India, which is presumed to have begun in the North West before its move south. This is the sense that we get from Jairazbhoy's claim that the *Sangitaratnakara* was written "shortly before the Muslim conquest of *this area* [the southern capital of Devagiri, or modern-day Daulatabad] and is, to a large extent, free from Islamic influence" (1995:16, my emphasis).

¹⁰⁹ For the theory that Bharata's vina was a harp, see Coomaraswamy (1930:244), Dubois (1941:90–91), Tarlekar (1965), te Nijenhuis (1970:74–78, 84), Greig (1987:17), Rowell (1992a:154), and Widdess (1995:210). An alternative theory was forwarded by Bake (1957), though apparently without recognition of these earlier claims. Napier added a new wrinkle, but did not go so far as to question whether Bharata's vina was, in fact, a harp (2005:227).

the sruti system in favor of something resembling a combined Just-Pythagorean system;¹¹⁰ the adoption of a continuously sounded drone; and the classification of ragas based on scalar types known as *mela* and *thāt*. Most of these changes will not be discussed here, as they occur within systems already recognized as raga-based. However, they nevertheless point to significant disparities within the more specific history of the raga system itself.

Grāma, Svāra and Śruti

As elaborated in chapter twenty-eight of the *Natyashastra*, the jati system, on its most basic level, was founded on two parent scales or *grāma*-s composed of seven notes or *svāra*-s each. The primary grama, the *ṣaḍja-grāma*, so named because it began on the note named *ṣaḍja*, contained the following sequence of svaras: *sadja*, *ṛṣabha*, *gāndhāra*, *madhyama*, *pañcama*, *dhāivata*, and *niṣāda*. These notes were further indicated by the following syllables: Sa, Ri, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, and Ni. The secondary parent scale, the *madhyama-grāma*, also named after the note on which it began, *madhyam* or *Ma*, included the same notes, but with a different starting point: Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni, Sa, Ri, and Ga.

It will be obvious to any casual student of Indian music that the names of the seven svaras as presented by Bharata, as well as the order in which they appear are the same as they are today. For some, this fact stands out as an important symbol of

¹¹⁰ Greig (1987), Widdess (1995:245–246), Brown (2003/04; and 2006) and Jairazbhoy (2008:354) all rejected the notion that the jettisoning of the sruti and the establishment of a twelve-semitone scale could be attributed to Muslim influence.

continuity between the two systems. “The musical notes...as we know them today,” proclaimed the website of the Sangeet Research Academy, India’s premier institutions for training performing musicians, “must have had their origins in the Samavedic times” (ITC, n.d.). Widdess supported this notion, saying that, “simple melodic solmization...has remained virtually unchanged down to modern times” (1996:392). Even scholars like Jairazbhoy, who tended to express skepticism towards claims to ancient continuities, admitted that the names of the notes were “the only element of continuity that remains” (2008:353).

What is important to keep in mind, however, is that the values for which these note names stood, as well as the method by which they were obtained, were drastically different. Unlike the diatonic system followed today, which theoretically recognizes only two sizes of intervals (the semi-tone and whole-tone), the jati system recognized three different sizes of interval, each distinguished by the number of “component intervals” or *śruti*-s they contained: either two, three or four (Jairazbhoy 1958:55 and 1975:40-41).¹¹¹ The note Ri, for example, the note on which Bharata began his description of the shadjagrama, contained three srutis; Ga, two; Ma, four;

¹¹¹ The precise value of a shruti is an issue that has eluded scholars from the very beginning. Following Bharata’s two-vina experiment, which was meant to demonstrate the placement of all twenty-two shrutis, Jairazbhoy posited that all of the shrutis were of equal value, at least in theory. However, in practice, he noted, this could not have been the case (1975:41-42). Rowell rejected any attempt to claim the value of the shruti either theoretically or practically. Instead, he noted with impass that, “a consensus on the exact sizes of the intervals was never achieved—they were determined on the basis of oral instruction and were never more than rough approximations of the intervals mentioned, except perhaps within a particular teacher-student line” (1992:147). The reason for this lack of consensus, he suggested provocatively, was “the relative indifference with which early Indian musicians viewed the abstract relationships between the *svaras*...” (ibid.:148). Widdess briefly commented on the protracted controversy over the issue of equal-value vs. variable sized srutis, suggesting that we instead move on to more useful topics, such as the functionality of the notes rather than their acoustics (1995:209).

Pa, four; Dha, three; Ni, two; and Sa, four. These values were only slightly different in the madhyamagrama, which accorded just three srutis to Pa instead of four. However, this single difference engendered a number of other differences as well; Dha, for example, acquired an additional shruti in the madhyamagrama as a consequence of Pa's lowering, and no longer was the relationship between Sa-Pa considered to be consonant, for only intervals of nine and thirteen shrutis were declared to have a consonant relationship, termed *samvādi* (see section on lakshanas below). Instead, the interval between Ri and Pa in the madhyamagrama was now considered consonant. The corollary of this, which Bharata never actually stated, is that Ri and Pa were not consonant in the shadjagrama. This deduction proved to be important in determining the scale of each grama, as explained below.

This single-shruti difference between the Pa in each grama is significant firstly because it demonstrates that the shruti was actually a functional element in the jati system, at least theoretically (Jairazbhoy 1995:16). However, due to the gradual confinement of the later modes, the gramaragas, to the shadjagrama, and the eventual elimination of any distinction in practice between three- and four-shruti intervals, the individual sruti eventually lost significance as a unit of tonal measurement. Widdess conjectured that this might have occurred as early as the eighth century. His analysis of gramaraga melodies notated in the *Kudumiyamalai* inscription show that there was no functional distinction between theoretically consonant fourths and fifths (those of nine and thirteen shrutis) and theoretically non-consonant fourths and fifths (those of

ten and twelve shrutis). From this he concluded that the scale of the gramaragas “comprised steps of two sizes only—tones and semitones” (1995:212-22).

As the notated melodies of the *Kudumiyamalai* inscription are the earliest gramaraga melodies available, we may further hypothesize, if Widdess’s conclusion is to be accepted, that the shrutis did not actually survive beyond the jati system. Of course, they continued to live on as a theoretical device until at least the sixteenth century when they were officially replaced by a theory of twelve semitones, and, as Jairazbhoy has argued, far into the twentieth as an ideological (i.e. non-rational) device of “Indo-Occidentalists,” whom he otherwise referred to as “*śrutiwālās*” (2008:352).

Even if we disregard the fact that Bharata’s svaras were measured in terms of shrutis and not semitones, another significant fact marks these notes as being different from those used today: they stood for a qualitatively different scale. Scholars debated what the actual pitches of this scale were, however, until as late as the mid-twentieth century. At issue was whether the svaras were measured from the first of the shrutis accorded to them or the last (i.e., whether Sa, which was accorded four shrutis, fell on the first shruti or the fourth shruti).¹¹² This difficulty apparently arose from Bharata’s ambiguous description of the relation of svara to shruti, coupled with the assumption

¹¹² Kolinski (1963:67-68), following Strangways (1914) and others, alternatively argued that the svaras were “intervals” and not “single notes.” Sa, in other words, was “the interval between the first and second scale degree,” not a single note. Kolinski therefore saw as irrelevant the question as to whether Bharata’s svara was measured from the bottom or the top of the shrutis accorded to it. This was a point of argument he had with Powers (1963). Nevertheless, Kolinski did recognize that, “when a svara was used to denominate a single note, it was, according to the generally admitted opinion, not the lower but the higher tone of the interval-svara that was meant in antiquity, contrary to the modern Indian usage where the name of an interval-svara is identified with its lower note” (1961:15).

of similarity to modern practice in which the note is placed on the lower end of the interval. If this modern understanding were applied, then the shadjagrama scale would end up resembling the Western Ionian or “C” mode, and the madhyamagrama, the Lydian or “F” mode. If the alternative interpretation were applied, wherein the svara fell on the upper portion of the interval or the last of its shrutis, then the shadjagrama scale would resemble the Western Dorian or “D” mode, and the madhyamagrama, the Mixolydian or “G” mode.¹¹³ However, only the second understanding satisfies the condition laid down by Bharata that the intervals of Sa-Pa in the madhyamagrama and Pa-Ri in the shadjagrama should not be consonant (i.e., they should not have either nine or thirteen shrutis between them).¹¹⁴

The significance of this interpretation of the location of the svaras in relation to the srutis, which Bhatkhande insisted had yet to be understood by scholars in his own day, should not be lost upon us: that the natural scale of the jati system was similar to the modern-day kafi scale marks an important difference from the system

¹¹³ Comparisons between these scales are, of course, approximate and assume that both the three- and four-sruti intervals are taken as whole tones. By referencing these European terms I do not mean to suggest any kind of continuity between them and Indian theoretical terms, but to give the reader who is not aware of terms like bilaval and kafi a general sense of their meaning.

¹¹⁴ For a detailed summary of this process, see Jairazbhoy (1975). To whom this discovery of the correct placement of the svara in relation to the shrutis can be attributed, Jairazbhoy does not say. He pointed to the continued debate over this issue between Kolinsky and Powers with Powers arguing on the side of a shadjagrama-dorian resemblance. Though Powers did not cite any previous authors for this idea, it is clear that it was not new. Levy (1982:7) additionally cited Deva, Clements, Danielou and Sachs as proponents of this theory, though without corresponding dates of publication. Te Nijenhuis (1970:111-112) added Prajnanananda (1956) to this list, which appears to be slightly earlier than the rest. The second earliest, Bake, did not refer to Prajnanananda or any other authority when he revealed “the astonishing state of affairs that in an ascending scale the name of the note is placed on the last of its component srutis” (ibid.:62).

followed today, which uses the *bilāval* scale as its natural scale (i.e., Ionian).¹¹⁵ In other words, even though both the names of the notes and their order might have survived since ancient times, their continuity is literally *nominal*; it is limited to the continuity of names and not meanings.

Murcchana

From the two gramas, additional scales called *murcchana* were derived through a process often described as “systematic rotation” and compared to the western “octave species” (Rowell 1992:153).¹¹⁶ Briefly, each step of the parent scales served as the starting note for building a new scale. As each parent scale had seven pitches, a total number of fourteen scales could be derived.¹¹⁷ On the surface, half of these *murcchanas* would appear to be duplicates. A *murcchana* that began on the fourth step of the *shadjagrama*, or *Ma*, for instance, would seem to duplicate the pitches of the *madhyamagrama*. However, strict duplication was avoided, at least

¹¹⁵ Bilawal did not become the default natural scale of Indian music until the early nineteenth century, up until which time the natural scale remained similar to *kafi* and was called the *shadjagrama*—an interesting case of both the continuity and modernity of Indian music. Jairazbhoy noted that the adoption of bilawal was first evinced in the Persian treatise, *Naghmat-i-Asafi* (alternatively *Usul al-Naghmat* or *Usul-I Naghmat al-Asafi*), written in 1813 by Muhammad Reza, a nobleman of Patna (1995:22). Bhatkhande had earlier pointed to Reza’s treatise as an important marker of this transition (1974:30). Schofield, however, was not convinced that Reza had adopted bilawal as his natural scale, as she found no evidence of it in his treatise (2010:507). However, Bhatkhande had also pointed to another contemporaneous text, perhaps slightly younger, which he claimed to take bilawal as its natural scale: the *Sangīt-sara*, which was written under Maharaja Pratap Singh Deva of Jaipur (r.1779-1804) (Bhatkhande 1974:31). Neither Jairazbhoy nor Schofield mention this.

¹¹⁶ In this context, the word “*murcchana*” is used to mean “spreading” or “expanding.” However, its literal meaning is “fainting” or “swooning,” and was also used to refer to the preparation of mercury for traditional Ayurvedic medicine (White 1996:266).

¹¹⁷ This is without the inclusion of the two intermediate notes or *sadhārana-svaras* named *antara* Ga and *kākalī* Ni. For more on these, see Jairazbhoy (1958:58).

theoretically, due to the fact that the Pa of each grama was assigned a different number of srutis, as discussed above. This, again, demonstrates the srutis' functionality in the jati system.

Unfortunately, it is not clear what larger function the murcchanas had in the jati system. They did not “give rise to” the jatis or serve as a kind of intermediary between the jatis and the gramas, as is often claimed (Levy 1982:6; Jonathan Katz 1992:3–4; Jairazbhoy 1995:16). It is also unclear why the murcchanas were laid out in descending rather than ascending order of their first pitches, as was the case with both the gramas and the jatis.¹¹⁸ The division of the murcchanas into the four classes of heptatonic (*pūrṇa*), hexatonic (*ṣāḍavakṛta*), pentatonic (*auḍavitikṛta*), and “overlapping” (*sādhāraṇakṛta*) is further puzzling. Given the fact that all of the murcchanas are derived from heptatonic parent scales, how could they be anything but heptatonic?¹¹⁹ Finally, it remains to be understood why the non-heptatonic murcchanas were referred to as *tāna*-s, a term that furthermore is not defined.

In light of these difficulties, Ghosh remarked that Bharata “does not seem to be quite clear about the function of murcchanas and tanas which they include” and

¹¹⁸ As Bharata explained, the first murcchana in the sadjagrama, *uttaramandrā*, began on high Sa; the second, *rajanī*, on Ni; the third, *uttarāyatā*, on Dha; the fourth, *śuddhaṣaḍjā*, on Pa; the fifth, *matsarīkṛta*, on Ma; the sixth, *aśvakrāntā*, on Ga; and the seventh, *abhirudhatā*, on Ri. Bharata also listed the murcchanas of the madhyagrama in descending order of their first notes. Thus, the first madhyagrama murcchana, *sauvīrī*, began on Ma; the second, *hariṇāśvā*, on Ga; the third, *kalopanatā*, on Re; the fourth, *śuddhamadhyā*, on Sa; the fifth, *mārgavī*, on Ni; the sixth, *pauravī*, on Dha; and the seventh, *hr̥ṣyakā*, on Pa.

¹¹⁹ Regarding the “overlapping” murcchanas, Bharata explained that they are “combined with the kākālī notes or the intermediate notes (*antarasvara*), and this belongs to both the gramas” (Ghosh 11). Thus, we might understand this class of murcchana to use notes outside the ones provided in the two gramas.

that, “The murcchana in its original sense seems to have disappeared from the later Indian music” (1961:10 n.1). Given this state of confusion, we have no choice but to leave the issue of the murcchanas to future scholars of early Indian music. At present, their significance for this dissertation is limited to the fact that they demonstrate the functionality of the shrutis during Bharata’s time, and more importantly, that they point to an aspect of Indian music that has been long forgotten, thereby challenging, albeit on a small level, the claim to continuity.

The Jātīs and their Lakṣaṇas

The jātis are often described as modes; neither were they undifferentiated selections of notes like the gramas or murcchanas, nor pre-composed melodies that prohibited variation. Instead, jātis (and modes in general) are said to lie somewhere on a continuum between “scale” at one end and “tune” at the other (Powers and Widdess 2001b).

Jātis did have a delimited set of pitches that were used for melody. However, what made the jātis neither scales nor melodies was the fact that they contained prescriptions for how these pitches could be used. These prescriptions were collectively referred to as *lakṣaṇa* (characteristics), and they included the following ten as described by Bharata: the the Final note (*nyāsa*), the Predominant note (*aṃśa*), the Sub-final or Cadential note (*apanyāsa*), the Initial note (*graha*), the highest note (*tāra*), the lowest note (*mandra*), the lesser-used note (*alpatva*), the frequently used note (*bahutva*), the note omitted to make the mode hexatonic (*ṣāḍava*), and the two

notes omitted to make the mode pentatonic (*auḍavīta*). Of these ten lakshana, the first four identify specific functions accorded to specific notes. They are therefore referred to collectively as the four “note-functions.”

Modern ragas also contain prescriptions for the use of their notes, some of which appear to mirror the lakshanas of the jatis. We examine several purported continuities between the jati and modern raga based on the lakshanas in the smaller sections that follow. For now, however, it is important to emphasize the commonly known fact that what made the lakshanas of the jatis unique was both their variability and their focus on the function of particular notes. For each jati, the Initial, Predominant, Sub-final and on some occasions, the Final were allocated multiple options or “alternatives,” any one of which could stand in for that note-function.¹²⁰ Some of the other non-note-function lakshanas mentioned were also invariable, such as the omission of particular notes.

A raga’s prescriptions, by contrast, have always been fixed or without alternatives. In the course of time, they also become less focused on the function of particular notes. Thus, the only remaining note-centric prescriptions applicable to modern ragas, the *vādī* and the *samvādī*, are never given alternatives, but are instead designated as a single note. There is, however, much disagreement over which notes

¹²⁰ The quotations around “alternative” are meant to highlight the fact that this is an interpretation. It is not certain whether the multiple notes accorded to the note-functions represented possibilities that, once taken, were fixed throughout a performance (i.e., “alternatives”) or whether they represented possibilities that could be exploited during the course of a single rendering, perhaps in succession. Most scholars have simply assumed the former. Jairazbhoy was one of the few scholars to suggest the latter possibility, though he thought it was unlikely (1972b.:63–64).

fulfill these functions and, indeed, whether these functions exist at all outside of their imposition by theorists, aspects that I outline below.

Instead, the majority of raga's prescriptions focus on the movement between notes. These may include: the omission of certain notes in either ascent or descent, which Jairazbhoy defined as "directional transillience" (1995:14, 39); the requirement to approach a note only from above or below; a crooked, zig-zag or otherwise oblique movement between certain notes (*vakti*); special ornamentations, such as a preparatory glide from an adjacent note; greater or lesser time spent on one note before moving on to another; and even "catch phrases" (*pakar*) that combine rhythmic and melodic motifs.

These distinctions in the nature of the prescriptions accorded to jatis and ragas point to a fundamental distinction in their function: while the ridged prescriptions of a raga serve to guide solo improvisation, the variable prescriptions of a jati served to collect and categorize preexisting melodies based on melodic similarities and performed by ensembles (Widdess 1995:32-33, 45).¹²¹ The very word *jātī*, which means "class" or "type," and is also analogous to the English term "caste," implies this classificatory function. Jatis were therefore neither highly defined modes like ragas, nor undifferentiated scales like murcchana, nor pre-composed melodies, but rather "classes" of pre-composed melody. Like the Japanese *choshi* and the Javanese

¹²¹ Widdess suggested that early ragas may have straddled this line and that "a shift of emphasis from classification to composition/ improvisation coincided with the expansion of the raga system" in the early second millennium (ibid.:33).

pathet, they lay closer to the “scale” end of Powers’s continuum, and raga, closer to “tune” (Rowell 1992a:168, Widdess 1995:32).¹²²

Despite these distinctions in the prescriptions given to ragas and jatis and the functional incongruity that it reveals, the lakshanas are generally believed to constitute important evidence for the continuity between the two systems. Though the lakshanas of the jatis do, in fact, appear to have been “bodily transferred” to the earliest ragas (Jairazabhoy 1972b:64), this was not without considerable changes in meaning, or significant omissions, additions, and diminutions. By the sixteenth century, only three lakshanas were referred to commonly in the available texts on music, the Initial, Predominant and Final. In many instances, a single note represented all three. The fact that medieval texts on raga “never neglected to mention what the Graha, Amsa and Nyasa of a Raga were,” despite their apparent emptiness, led Greig to view them as uncritical appropriations of older terminology, perhaps with the intention of creating a greater sense of continuity (1987:37).

The following divisions of this subsection on lakshanas consider several ways in which the lakshanas have been implicated in claims to continuity. In particular, we look at two aspects of modern raga said to stem directly from Bharata’s lakshanas: the linked concepts of vadi and samvadi, or the most predominant and second most predominant notes of the raga (comparable to the Western “sonant” and “consonant”) and the concept of *calan*, or the characteristic “movement” of a raga’s pitches over

¹²² Might we question, then, whether a “jati,” being a theoretically constructed category for classification, was ever actually performed? How does one perform a category? Should we say instead that melodies were played, which were assigned to particular jatis?

the ascent and descent of its scale, which is thought to stem from lakshana-related concept of *antara-mārg* (internal pathway). We will also briefly consider how the lakshanas governing the omission of particular notes were used to conclude that continuity existed between the gramaras and their source jatis.

Vādī and Samvādī

As mentioned above, vadi and samvadi are understood today to be the most prominent and second most prominent notes of a raga respectively. As specific notes that are accorded specific functions, they are therefore similar to the note-functions of Bharata's time. The meaning of today's vadi, in fact, closely resembles Bharata's Predominant. Even Bharata claimed the two were intimately related: "That which is an amsa [note] anywhere, will, in this connection, be called the Sonant (vadin)" (Ghosh 1961:5).

Upon closer inspection, however, it becomes clear that the meaning of vadi and samvadi in Bharata's text is considerably different than what it is today. In Bharata's time, vadi and samvadi formed parts of a larger theory of consonance known as *samvāditva*. In that context, the samvadi was defined not as a specific note, but as an abstract interval measured in srutis: "those two notes which are at an interval of nine or thirteen srutis from each other are mutually consonant (samvadin)," said Bharata (ibid.:5–6). As discussed in the section on shrutis above, the interval of nine and thirteen srutis is considered to be a perfect fourth and perfect

fifth. Bharata's samvadi was therefore any interval of a perfect fourth or fifth, and not only a fourth or a fifth from a specific or fixed vadi.¹²³

In the present day, vadi and samvadi no longer conform to specific consonant intervals in practice. In fact, we find many cases in which the relationship of vadi and samvadi is "extremely dissonant" (Jairazbhoy 1972b:65-66).¹²⁴ However, the notion that the vadi and samvadi share the relation of a perfect fourth or fifth still persists in theory, perhaps as a way of claiming greater connection to the past. Greig observed that the modern, functional understanding of vadi and samvadi as specific notes as opposed to an interval was not formalized until the *Sangita Darpana* of 1625 (1987:38). Widdess also suggested that this note-specific understanding might have emerged in relation to the development of the system tonic (1995:263).

In addition to the failure of vadi and samvadi to conform to a specific interval, let alone a consonant one, there is considerable disagreement as to which notes in a given raga are accorded these functions (Jairazbhoy 1995:42). Jairazbhoy did recognize there was "increasing uniformity of opinion" on this issue, though he saw this as resulting more from the institutionalization of music education and the

¹²³ Bharata also described another interval type, the *vivādī* or "dissonant," which included those notes at an interval of twenty srutis, understood as either a minor second or its inversion, the major seventh. All other intervals were described as *anuvādī* or "assonant."

¹²⁴ "The samvadi is now the second most important note of the rag and is no longer necessarily the perfect fourth or fifth of the vadi. Bhatkhande, describing the relationship of samvadi to vadi, says, 'Ideally it should be a perfect fifth away (from the vadi) or, if that note is not present in the rag, it should be one of the adjacent notes, the fourth or the sixth, preferably the former' (*HSP I*, 22). There are, however, several rags of North Indian music where the relationship between vadi and samvadi is extremely dissonant, for instance, in the rags Pilu, Marva and Khamaj, where it is an augmented fifth (or diminished fourth), and in rags such as Sri and Gauri, where, according to Bhatkhande's system, it is an augmented fourth" (Jairazbhoy 1972b:65-66).

concurrent standardizing of textbooks than from the preferences of performers (1972b:66). On the practical level, however, he also claimed to have uncovered significant coincidences between the notes often designated as vadi and samvadi and the notes that end symmetrical phrases in a given raga, thus giving some theoretical basis to the designation of these terms. These coincidences were admittedly “not recognized by musicians on a verbal plane” (ibid.:73). The only outspoken provision regarding vadi and samvadi that is commonly followed and that Jairazbhoy mentioned is that they should be located in different tetrachords, either the *pūrvang* (lower tetrachord) or the *uttarang* (upper tetrachord).

In addition, Jairazbhoy noted that vadi and samvadi fail to live up to their assumed meanings as the most and second most predominant notes. Raga melodies notated by Bhatkhande, for example, whom Jairazbhoy identified as one of the strongest proponents of vadi and samvadi in contemporary theory, regularly fail to represent the vadi as the most prominent (i.e., most frequent) note and the samvadi as the second most prominent (Jairazbhoy 1972b:66).

Thus, it could be argued that neither is there continuity in the original meaning of the terms vadi and samvadi, which referred to intervals and not specific notes, nor in the concepts for which these terms now stand (most and second most predominant notes), if only theoretically. As the function of individual notes is less important to defining a raga than melodic motion in modern performance (ibid.:70 n.3), any remaining validity to the continuity of these terms and concepts is rendered less

significant. It is towards claims to continuity that point to melodic movement that we now turn.

Antaramārga

The ancient concept of *antara-mārg* (internal pathway) was first described by Bharata in connection with the lakshanas and has been described by modern scholars as “the correct phraseology” of the jati that results from the proper treatment of its lakshanas (Widdess 1995:266). The modern concept of *calan* (movement) is similarly understood as the proper way of moving through a raga, which results from the correct rendering of a number of lakshana-like factors. Based on this similarity in definition, both Widdess and Rowell have argued that the modern concept of *chalan* has clear antecedents in the concept of *antaramarga*. However, their apparent similarity is due partly to the fact that *antaramarga* has been defined by later scholars in ways that suggest affinity with *chalan* despite significant problems with the evidence.

Problems related to this or any understanding of *antaramarga* begin with Bharata’s failure to actually define the term. Only two parenthetical references to *antaramarga* are found in Bharata’s text. These occur within a discussion of the two lakshanas *alpatva* and *bahutva*, which Ghosh translated as “reduction” and “amplification,” and which Widdess translated as “scarcity” and “profusion” (1995:264). Under *alpatva*, Bharata described how a note could be reduced either by skipping over it (*lamghana*) or by not repeating it. Skipping over a note (or notes) would result in a pentatonic or hexatonic jati. This action, Bharata claimed, leads “the

Amsas [Predominants] of the songs” to “reach the Antaramarga” (Ghosh 1961:22).¹²⁵

No further explanation is provided.

Bharata’s second reference to antaramarga, which occurred during his discussion of bahutva, is no less ambiguous. He began by defining bahutva as the opposite of alpatva, and then drew a parallel with another undefined term, *sañcāra*, which Ghosh translated as “movement.”¹²⁶ What this parallel between bahutva and sanchara was, however, is not clear. It appears that both bahutva and sanchara pertain to the “strong Amsa notes” whereas alpatva pertains to the weak notes. Bharata then concluded, again enigmatically, “[These are] the two treatments of the Antaramarga which gives character to the Jatis” (ibid.:22-23).

It goes without saying that there may be several ways of interpreting Bharata’s meager remarks on antaramarga. The only interpretation outside of Widdess and Rowell’s that I have found was provided by Ruby K. Mangahas in her dissertation titled, *The Development of Ragalaksana with Reference to Other Modal Systems* (1967).¹²⁷ Here, Mangahas defined antaramarga as “the state of imbalance created in

¹²⁵ “Reduction (*alpatva*) is of two kinds: that due to skipping over among these two (lit. there) the Reduction [of notes] due to skipping over (*lamghana*) a note, and that due to non repetition of the same. Among these two (lit. there) the Reduction [of notes] due to skipping over, [leads to] the hexatonic and the pentatonic treatment of the Amsas of songs, when they reach the Antaramarga” (Ghosh 1961:22, all brackets and parenthesis in original).

¹²⁶ Te Nijenhuis noted the fact that samcara was “not clearly defined anywhere” in the treatises (1970:220). This is significant, as this term is often referenced along with antaramarga to show that the jatis also focused on the movement between notes and therefore precipitated raga. Outside of music, McGregor defined samcara as “transmission.”

¹²⁷ Mangahas’s thesis, which was submitted to the University of London’s School of Oriental and African Studies, is not electronically available from Proquest. My reference comes from Jairazbhoy (1972b.:79 n.1).

a jati when there is substantial opposition of stress (bahutva) and unstress (alpatva) among its amsa and non-amsa svaras. It follows from this that it is antaramarga that causes a jati's structure to become transilient." Drawing on this definition, Jairazbhoy described antaramarga as, "the tendency towards transilience when a note is frequently omitted" (ibid.:63). This view of antaramarga as transilience, which Jairazbhoy elsewhere defined as "scales or melodic passages in which one or more notes are omitted" (1995:14), and Maganhas's description of it as a "state of imbalance," relates to the understanding of antaramarga as a movement or "passage" between notes only indirectly and therefore appears to distance antaramarga from the concept of chalan. Perhaps the only thing that can be said with certainty is that antaramarga was not among the ten lakshanas as defined by Bharata, but was instead an additional characteristic arising from within them. Ghosh specifically suggested that Bharata's antaramarga was an additional characteristic "of the Amsa" (ibid.:22 n.3). However, although Bharata did allocate additional characteristics to the amsa, antaramarga was not among them.¹²⁸

Stemming from this first problem of a lack of clear definition, a second has arisen: faced with a paucity of information from which to understand Bharata's antaramarga, scholars have come to define the term by drawing on texts far removed from Bharata's own historical period. There is, of course, nothing wrong in

¹²⁸ Bharata claimed to allocate ten characteristics to the amsa, but I find only six. These are: (1) it governed the emotional resonance of the jati; (2) it dictated the range in which variations will proceed (mandra or tara); (3) it was perceived as the predominant note among other notes; (4) other strong notes were related to it as consonances or assonances; (5) it is related to the graha, apanyasa, vinyasa, samnyasa and nyasa notes; (6) "it lies scattered throughout the song" (ibid.:20).

comparing terms like *antaramarga* across treatises separated in time, especially when the act of appropriating or commenting on outmoded terminology was a proclivity of the treatise writers themselves. What is problematic, however, is the assumption that whatever composite understanding one derives from this cross-historical comparison of texts is, in fact, the meaning that was intended in each instance.

This historically hybrid approach to understanding *antaramarga* informs the following passage in which Widdess collapses statements made by Bharata at the turn of the first millennium, Matanga during the late-first millennium, and Sarngadeva during the early medieval period into a unified voice. Beginning with Sarngadeva's definition, Widdess claimed:

The concept of *antaramarga* thus implies (a) movement from one strong note of the raga to another, and (b) optional inclusion of an intermediate weak note between (*antara*) the two strong notes. Whereas the strong notes can be reiterated, and are of course not omitted, the intermediate weak note is not [267] reiterated, and can be 'skipped over' (by which Sarngadeva means touched lightly in passing).

BhNS regards *this antaramarga* [the one described by Sarngadev? My emphasis] as the 'source of the individuality of a jati'.... This idea is reminiscent of the 'particularity of notes and melodic movements' that is said to be the source of a raga's 'delightfulness' in MBD [Matanga's *Brhaddesi*]... A modern parallel is the concept of *calan* (movement), the distinctive way of

combining notes in a sequence that identifies a raga and epitomizes its musical character. (Widdess 1995:266–67)

Here Widdess first identified two ways of understanding antaramarga, which he acknowledged were derived from Sarngdev’s text. He then claimed that, “Bharata regards *this* antaramarga,” the one described by Sarngdeva more than a millennium later, “as ‘the source of the individuality of the jati’.” In a final historical leap to the present, Widdess concluded that, “a modern parallel” of antaramarga—apparently the same antaramarga as defined by Bharata, Matanga *and* Sarngadeva—“is the concept of chalan.”

Widdess is conscious of the fact that his understanding of antaramarga draws from texts that focus on two different systems of music (jati and gramaraga), systems that he elsewhere acknowledged had “originated independently” (ibid.:82). Nevertheless, he treats all discussion of antaramarga in all texts from the *Natyashastra* onwards, whether addressing jati or raga, as roughly synonymous:

For a number of jatis and gramaragas, characteristic sequences of notes are specifically mentioned by *the texts* [my emphasis, indicating texts beyond Bharata’s].... Thus the correct observation of the position and treatment of strong and weak notes leads to the correct phraseology, the distinctive melodic formulae of the mode, referred to by BhNS [Bharata’s *Natyashastra*] and later

texts as the *antaramarga*, ‘path between [the notes].’ (Widdess 1995:266, last bracket in original)

From Widdess’s evocative description of *antaramarga* as a “characteristic sequence of notes,” the “correct phraseology” of the *jati*, the *jati*’s “distinctive melodic formulae,” and the “path between the notes,” a clear *chalan*-like image of *antaramarga* emerges. However, this image has been derived, I argue, from a problematic process of superimposing later definitions upon earlier ones while simultaneously overlooking the areas where they fail to overlap. However, that there *are* areas in which historical definitions of *antaramarga* fail to overlap is readily apparent from their comparison. Before turning to those definitions, it is important to note that the problem pointed to here may be a larger methodological problem of scholarship on early Indian music in general, as additional cases in which later sources are assumed to speak for earlier ones can be found. Rowell even positively advocated for this methodology (1992b.:112). We will return to this issue in the conclusion, drawing on additional cases that will be encountered in the interim.

In her commentary on the *Dattilam*, a text roughly contemporary to Bharata’s, te Nijenhuis offered a non-interpretive comparison of *antaramarga* across the major treatises, thus making it possible to view several stages in the history of the term. First is the already mentioned oblique reference to *antaramarga* by Bharata and his failure to define the term, a fact that te Nijenhuis found “strange” (1970:196). A second stage may be marked by the first definition of the term given by Matanga,

which te Nijenhuis cited in both transliterated Sanskrit and English translation as follows:

The characterization of antaramarga is [as follows]: As [it occurs] somewhere in the jatis, not being dominant, while being absent or occurring rarely, therefore, in the *karmaravi* [jati], it will be called the practice of antaramarga, in consequence of the prevalence of gandhara, which comes together with all notes” (ibid.:197, brackets in original).

We may first note that Matanga’s definition is still rather elusive (“it occurs *somewhere* in the jatis”). More important, however, is Matanga’s characterization of antaramarga as “absent or occurring rarely,” or perhaps occurring only in a particular jati (*karmaravi*), making antaramarga’s connection to *chalan* appear even more remote.

A third and final stage in the defining of antaramarga may be seen in Sarngadeva’s elevation of the term to the level of a *lakshana* and not, as Bharata had considered it, an additional characteristic.¹²⁹ The implication of this move is significant, for instead of antaramarga being seen as a “movement” or “pathway between the notes,” the way that Widdess defined it, it is here considered, like the other primary *lakshanas*, as a *specific note* with a particular functionality and title. In

¹²⁹ In addition to antaramarga, Sarngadeva also elevated two other terms to the level of a *lakshana*: *samyāsa* (the “final note of the first part of the song”) and *vinyāsa* (the “final note of the *padas* in a division of a song”) (ibid.:195-196).

an interesting twist on the meaning of the composite term antara-marg, Sarngadeva defined it as the note “whose way is intermediate”:

Leaving the fixation of the final notes, etc., that [note], which, [occurring] in the midst of notes practiced rarely, causing variety and coming together with the dominant, etc. (52), is practiced without repetitions, here and there, with isolated omissions, is antaramarga (“whose way is intermediate”); as a rule it occurs in modified (*vikṛta*) jatis (53). (ibid.:196, brackets and parenthesis in original).

Sarngadeva considered antaramarga as the intermediate note, furthermore, because it occurred “in the midst of notes practiced rarely,” thus retaining an aspect of the definition given by Matanga (“being absent or occurring rarely”)—again, not a characteristic associated with today’s chalan or with Widdess’s definition of antaramarga.

From this brief historical comparison it becomes clear that antaramarga, if it resembled chalan at all, most closely resembled it in its earliest (and most vaguely articulated) iteration by Bharata. Successive treatments of antaramarga by Matanga and Sarngadev increasingly distance it from Bharata’s, and thus also from the concept of chalan.

It is unclear, therefore, how an understanding of antaramarga as chalan can be positively supported. Such a comparison may be limited to the apparent fact that both

terms refer to second-order characteristics of the mode, meaning that they arise from the proper treatment of first-order characteristics or lakshana. This somewhat superficial relationship is not without significance, however. It may be, for instance, that antaramarga signals an early stage in the development of the raga concept which, in comparison to jati, gave more importance to melodic motion between the notes than to the function of particular notes (see previous reference to Jairazbhoy). What is left wanting the comparison of antaramarga and chalan, however, is greater caution in drawing direct lines between them.

Strangely, such caution is found in the following statement from Rowell, which preceded Widdess's argument:

Later authors added an intriguing concept, antaramarga ("internal path"). Many hints are dropped in the various texts, but nowhere do we find very specific information on this most important subject. It obviously involved the correct application of the laksanas prescribed for an individual jati; it is also said by various authors to involve certain tonal pairings, which were emphasized in a back-and-forth motion, sancara. The result must have been similar to what today is called the calan of a raga, a deeply-etched individual path and a set of idiomatic melodic patterns that distinguished one jati from all others. (Rowell 1981:235, see also 2000:28)

Rowell thus admitted his interpretation to be speculative and based on incomplete evidence: “nowhere do we find very specific information on this most important subject.” He also acknowledged that post-*Natyashastra* authors did more to develop the concept than Bharata: “Later authors [meaning those after Bharata] added [this] intriguing concept.” His suggestion that antaramarga was similar to today’s chalan is thus more expressedly a suggestion, though one I hope to have shown still deserves greater scrutiny.

Grāmarāgas and their Source Jātis

Another way that the lakshanas have been implicated in demonstrating continuity between jati and raga is through the allocation of particular “source jatis” to the gramaragas. With the exception of the *Nāradīya-śikṣā*, every text that discussed the ragas up until the *Sangitaratnakara* claimed that they derived from either a particular jati or a combination of jatis, though it was never made clear just how this was so (Widdess 1995:64-65, 303). Widdess claimed to have found a basis for this connection in the similarity of interval patterns (i.e., scales) between the gramaragas and the jatis from which they were said to have derived. These similarities were not readily apparent, but had been “disguised by transposition” (ibid.:307–08). By accounting for the omitted notes indicated by the lakshanas, and by transposing notated melodies of the gramaragas found in Sarngadev’s text, Widdess demonstrated that the gramaraga indeed combined, in sequential fashion, the underlying scales of the source jatis that were attributed to them (ibid.:309-10). The tradition of identifying gramaragas by their source jatis was not, therefore, merely “a heuristic

device” meant to appeal to the authority of Bharata, Widdess concluded (ibid.:303). Instead, it was “founded on the interval-patterns and melodic characteristics of a living repertory of ragas (ibid.:304).

I will not endeavor to evaluate Widdess’s substantial and far reaching conclusions on the continuity of interval patterns between the gramaragas and their source jatis at this time. Instead, we will merely bring attention to a constitutive problem that Widdess acknowledged and to which we will again return in our consideration of scalar density, that is the problem of determining what the scale of a jati actually was, let alone the scale of the gramaraga for which the jati was a source.

A jati’s scale, as I will show in the sections that follow, is commonly believed to have been governed by its Final. On this basis, it has been understood that those jatis that shared the same Final also shared the same scale. However, factors such as the required or permissible omission of particular notes, the variability of the jati (i.e., the possibility of using alternative notes), the combination of more than one jati (each with their own, and in some cases, unique Final) to form a “modified” or *vikṛta* jati, and the existence of jatis with more than one Final have not been obviously accounted for in coming to this conclusion.

This problem of determining the scale is further compounded when we consider the situation of the gramaragas. In all but two cases (*śāḍava* and *sādhārīta*), the gramaragas combined multiple source jatis, many of which were already *vikṛta* or derived from combinations of jatis, most of which had different Finals from each other and were among the most variable in the system. Only seven out of a total of

eighteen jatis were used as source jatis for the gramaragas. These included, shadji, gandhari, madhyama, panchami, shadjamadhyama, karmaravi and kaishiki (Widdess 1995:65). These factors seem to limit the possibility of tracing similarities between the interval patterns of the gramaragas and their source jatis with any certainty. This problem will become clearer with the more detailed consideration of the structure of the jatis to which we now turn.

Division of Jātīs by Grāma and Type

Bharata first described the jatis by indicating the grama to which they belonged. Seven jatis were given to the shadjagrama and eleven to the madhyamagrama. The total number of jatis was therefore eighteen. Within each grama, the jatis were then further divided into two groups of “pure” (*śuddha-jātī-s*) and “modified” (*vikṛta-jātī-s*), the distinguishing features of which will be discussed shortly. The shadjagrama had four shuddha jatis and three vikrita jatis, and the madhyamagrama had three shuddha jatis and eight vikrita jatis. Thus, the total number of shuddha jatis across both gramas was seven, and the total number of vikritas, eleven.

Table 1 summarizes the division of shuddha and vikrita jatis by grama. Roman numerals indicate the order by which Bharata presented the jatis within the grama. No reason is provided for this particular mix of shuddha and vikrita, or for their order of appearance. In the brief description of the shuddha and vikrita jatis that follows, I consider one partial explanation for their division by grama provided by

Widess, and provide one partial explanation of my own. It is interesting to note that the total number of shuddha and vikṛta jātis paralleled the total number of jātis in each grāma (seven and eleven, respectively). Though this correlation appears to be significant, I have found no discussion of it in the literature.

Table 1 Division of śuddha and vikṛta jātīs by grāma

	Śuddha Jātīs (7)	Vikṛta Jātīs (11)
Ṣaḍja-gāma (7)	I. Ṣaḍjī II. Ārṣabhī III. Dhaivatī VII. Naiṣāḍī	IV. Ṣaḍja-kaiśikī V. Ṣaḍjodīcyavā VI. Ṣaḍja-madhyamā
Madhyamā-grāma (11)	I. Gāndhārī IV. Madhyamā VI. Pañcamī	II. Rakta-gāndhārī III. Gāndhārodīcyavā V. Madhyamodīcyavā VII. Gāndhāra-pañcamī VIII. Āndhrī IX. Nandayantī X. Karmāravī XI. Kaiśikī

The shuddha jātis were named after the seven notes and have therefore also been referred to as the “note-jātis” (*svāra-jātī-s*). The note after which each shuddha jāti was named also determined the jāti’s ambitus, so that *ṣaḍjī* jāti, which was named after *ṣaḍja* or Sa, included the notes Sa through Ni; *ārṣabhī*, which was named after *rṣabh* or Ri, included the notes Ri through Sa; *gāndhārī*, which was named after *gāndhār* or Ga, included the notes Ga through Re; and so on. Arranged in this fashion, the shuddha jātis resemble rotations of the octave. We know them to have been more than this, of course, as each jāti contained a set of prescribed note-functions or

lakshana, as we discussed above. However, the fact that the shuddha jatis were not presented in this sequential fashion, but were instead divided between the two gramas, points to some other underlying relationship to grama that was not indicated by Bharata.

Richard Widdess revealed that the shuddha jatis associated with the two gramas, once omitted notes were accounted for, represent two different pentatonic types in addition to one hexatonic type represented by shadji (1993:193–94; 1995:51–54). All of the shuddha jatis of the shadjagrama except for shadji (arshabi, dhaivati, and naishadi) designated Sa and Pa as infrequent notes and further omitted them in their modified forms. Although each of these jatis represented a different range of pitches, Widdess revealed that they all contained a common intervallic structure, which constituted a hemitonic pentatonic scale (i.e. a pentatonic scale with one or more semitones). Interestingly, Widdess also showed that the three jatis attributed to the Madhyamagrama shared another pentatonic scale, this one anhemitonic (without semitones).

In revealing this common underlying structure between the shuddha jatis of each grama, Widdess provided us with one way of understanding why Bharata chose to divide the shuddha jatis between the gramas instead of by their starting note or Final note (the Final being the only invariable modal characteristic attributed to all the jatis).¹³⁰ However, this theory did not explain why the vikrita jatis were similarly

¹³⁰ Interestingly, Widdess further speculated that these two pentatonic types might be linked historically to the modern Indonesian *slendro* and *pelog* scales (ibid.).

divided between the gramas, or what relationship the vikritas had to the shuddha jatis along with which they had been grouped. Indeed, Widdess went so far as to say that there was no explanation for the attribution of vikrita jati to grama, that such a relationship “ceases to have any clear significance in this system” (1995:56).

A closer look at the vikrita jatis, however, indicates that there may have been some reason for their division. The vikrita jatis were said to derive from combinations of two or more shuddha jatis. The maximum number combined in a vikrita was five. The names of a few vikritas reflected this mixing: *ṣadja-madhyamā* was formed from a combination of shadji and madhyama; *gāndhāra-pañcamī* from gandhari and panchami; and *āndhrī* (loosely) from gandhari and arshabhi. However, the rest of their names were largely dissimilar to the names of the shuddhas: *kaiśikī* combined shadja, gandhari, madhyama, panchami and naishadi;¹³¹ *ṣadja-kaiśikī* combined shadji and gandhari; *nandayantī* combined gandhari, panchami and arshabhi; *karmāravī* combined naishadi, arshabhi and panchami; and *rakta-gāndhārī*, combined gandhari, panchami, naishadi and madhyama. The remaining shared the ending, –*dīcyavā*, meaning “northern”: *ṣadjodīcyavā* was formed from shadji, gandhari and dhaivati; *gāndhārodīcyavā* from shadji, gandhari, dhaivati and madhyama; and *madhyamodīcyavā* from gandhari, panchami, dhaivati and madhyama (Ghosh 1961:16–17).

¹³¹ Clements suggested that kaishiki, which means “a hair’s breadth,” was named so because it was only a hair’s breadth different from shadji (1912:xiv and 71).

Table 2 summarizes the component shuddha jatis that were combined to form the vikritas.¹³² Here we see that, with the exception of gandhara-panchami, each vikrita jati was composed of shuddha jatis from both gramas. Bharata made this simultaneous mixture of jatis and gramas explicit when, in the conclusion of his description of the vikrita jatis and their component shuddha-jatis, he said, “These are the distinct Jātis growing out of mutual combination of notes in the two Grāmas” (Ghosh 1961:17). Yet despite the fact that the vikritas combined both gramas and jatis, each of the jatis was assigned to one grama only. As mentioned above, Bharata provided no rationale for this particular ascription of vikrita jati to grama (nor shuddha jati), and Widdess concluded that, “the attribution of [vikrita] jati to grama ceases to have any clear significance in this system” (1995:56)

¹³² This table is similar to Widdess’s Table 2.1 (1995:54), an important difference being my inclusion of the Final for each vikrita jati.

Table 2 The vikṛta jātis and their component śuddha jātis

	Śuddha Jātis									
	Śaḍjagrāma			Madhyamagrāma			Śaḍjagrāma			
	Śaḍjī	Āṛṣabhī	Gāndhārī	Madhyamā	Pañcamī	Dhaivatī	Naiṣāḍī			
Vikṛta Jātis	Śaḍjagrāma	Śaḍja-madhyamā	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
	Śaḍjagrāma	Śaḍja-kaiśikī	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
		Śaḍjodīcyavā	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
	Madhyamagrāma	Gāndhārodīcyavā	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
		Madhyamodīcyavā	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
		Rakta-gāndhārī	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
		Āndhrī	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
	Madhyamagrāma	Nandayanī	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
		Gāndhāra-pañcamī	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
		Karmāravī	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
		Kaiśikī	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
		No. of vikṛtas sharing the jāṭī	5	3	9	5	6	3	3	
		No. of vikṛtas sharing the Final	1	0	6	4	1	0	1	

• indicates a component śuddha jāti.

◊ indicates the Final of the vikṛta jāti.

◉ indicates both a component śuddha jāti and a Final.

However, one rather obvious observation that can be made out from Table 2 is that all of the vikrita jatis, with the exception of karmaravi, are given over to that grama from which the majority of their component shuddha jatis originated. Thus, shadjodichyava, which combines only one jati from the madhyamagrama and two jatis from the shadjagrama, is ascribed to the shadjagrama. Madhyamodichyava, which combines only one jati from the shadjagrama and three jatis from the madhyamagrama, is ascribed to the madhyamagrama. Similarly, raktagandhari and nandayanti, both of which contain a majority of madhyamagrama jatis, are ascribed to the madhyamagrama. This does not help us to explain why those vikritas with an equal number of shuddhas from each grama are nevertheless assigned only to one. Shadjamadhyama, shadjakaishiki, shadjodichyava, gandharodichyava and andhri all have an equal mix of shadjagrama and madhyamagrama jatis, yet they are all ascribed to one grama over the other. This is a problem for which scholars of early Indian music might further research.

Scalar Density

Another important aspect of the vikritas highlighted in Table 2 is the frequency with which they drew on particular shuddha jatis over others. Gandhari, for instance, was by far the most utilized, occurring in nine out of eleven vikritas. This was followed by panchami, which occurred in six, and madhyama and shadji, which occurred in five each. The least used shuddha jatis were arshabhi, dhaivati and naishadi, which occurred in three vikritas each.

Leaving aside possible explanations for these variations in frequency,¹³³ the very fact that the vikritas shared shuddha jatis between them (more accurately, that they shared Finals, which I explain below) led Richard Widdess to assume that the jatis also shared scales. This premise, in turn, led to the conclusion that the jatis were therefore not primarily distinguishable by scale, but by other melodic characteristics, most notably the ten lakshanas and other associated concepts. Since the same conclusion can be applied to ragas (that many of them shared scales and were therefore distinguishable by extra-scalar features), Widdess argued that jati, in this respect, “anticipates” the concept of raga (relevant quotations are given below). The issue of shared scales (or scalar “density” among the jatis) is therefore squarely implicated in claims to the continuity of Indian music. In this section, I will explain the evidence that is used to support this claim, demonstrating how some of it requires further scrutiny.

We have already noted that each of the shuddha jatis is assumed to have had its own unique scale, which was based on a species of the octave beginning on the

¹³³ The reason for the relative frequency of some shuddha jatis over others remains uncertain. However, Widdess made the important observation that three of the four most prominent shuddha jatis (gandhari, madhyama and shadji) were also the most “variable” of the shuddha jatis, meaning that they contained the greatest number of alternative Predominants. (In the following section we explore the issue of variability in depth, introducing a comparative table that may be of use to the reader here as well). This quality of greater variability, Widdess concluded, enabled these shuddha jatis to “generate more [vikrita] jatis than others” (1995:58). This also explains why arshabhi, dhaivati and naishadi were the least utilized among the vikritas, as they were also among the least variable of the shuddha jatis. However, this does not explain why panchami, the second most utilized shuddha jati, was also the least variable. Widdess recognized this problem, but offered no explanation. Perhaps we could say that such discrepancy were in keeping with Widdess’s general conclusion about the jati system: that it was not closed and symmetrical, but open-ended and based on existing practice. Alternatively, we might question whether variability, while a significant factor in determining the frequency of shuddha jatis among the vikritas, was the only factor.

note after which the jati was named. What we have yet to point out is that this scale (and the note after which the jati was named) was primarily determined by the location of the jati's Final. This is because unlike all the other note-functions, the Final was invariable; it was always a single pitch with no alternatives, at least in the shuddhas. Added to this the fact that it also corresponded, at least theoretically, with a note in each of the other note-functions (therefore making the jati fully aligned), the Final appears as the governing note of the jati. Indeed, the Final is commonly described by scholars as the jati's "tonic" or "ground note" (Jairazbhoy 1972a:294; Widdess 1995:48). Importantly, as each shuddha jati had a different Final, it is therefore believed that they also had different scales.

The situation was different in the vikritas, however. Though they, too, had Finals, which were assumed to have determined their scales, these Finals were not unique to each vikrita. Instead, vikritas shared Finals both with other vikritas and with those shuddhas that were included among their component jatis (see Table 2). Thus, andhri, which included arshabi and gandhari as its component shuddha jatis, had Ga as its Final, which was also the Final of gandhari. In only one case did a vikrita share a Final with a shuddha that was not also one of its component jatis, shadjodichyava. Why the Final of one component jati was chosen to represent the vikrita over another is not certain, and I have found no mention of this in the literature.

The fact that the vikritas shared Finals between themselves in addition to sharing them with their component shuddha jatis should come as no surprise as the number of vikritas (eighteen) was greater than the number of available Finals (seven).

There were, of course, exceptions to this generalization: karmaravi did not share its Final, Pa, with any other vikrita, and both shadjamadhyam and kaishiki contained one Final that was not found in any other vikrita (Sa and Ni, respectively), though they also (uniquely) contained a second Final that was, in fact, shared (Ma and Ga, respectively).

An interesting fact that we noted at the outset of this subsection is that the vikritas drew on some component jatis more frequently than others. The same was the case for Finals: the vikritas did not draw on Finals in equal measure and thus some were used more heavily than others. Two of them were not used at all. Table 2 shows us that there was a rough correspondance between the frequency with which the vikritas drew on particular shuddha jatis and the frequency with which they drew on the Finals associated with those shuddha jatis. Gandhari, for example, was the most frequent shuddha jati, and its Final, Ga, was also the most frequent Final, occurring in six vikritas. Madhyama was the third-most frequent shuddha jati, and its Final, Ma, was the second-most frequent Final, occurring in four vikritas. Arshabi, dhaivati and naishadi were the least used of the shuddha jatis, and their Finals, Ri, Dha and Ni were also among the least used Finals. The main exception to this correspondance was panchami; though it was the second-most used shuddha jati, occurring in six vikritas, its Final, Pa, was among the least used Finals, occurring only once. I have encountered no discussion of this correspondance between the frequency of component jatis and Finals in the literature.

More important for our purposes, however, is the fact that the vikritas shared Finals and therefore also scales, presumably. This led Richard Widdess to conclude that the jatis were not principally distinguishable by their Finals or scales, but instead by “melodic characteristics other than octave-species” (1995:58), most notably the ten lakshanas and the other characteristics associated with them. From this, Widdess further argued that the primacy of extra-scalar characteristics in distinguishing one jati from another “anticipates” (ibid.:47) and “makes possible the later concept and systems of raga” (ibid.:58).¹³⁴

At its base, Widdess’s argument relies on the assumption that the Final determined the scale of the jati. This appears to be uncontroversial, as I have found no alternative explanation in the literature. It also appears rather reasonable in the case of the shuddhas, as we find a separate Final for each jati, and an alignment across all four note-functions in most jatis. In the vikritas, however, several characteristics call this assumption into question. Foremost among them is the fact that two vikritas, shadjamadhyama and kaishiki, contained more than one Final. How could *the* Final determine *the* scale of the jati when there was more than one of them? Second is the fact that, with the exception of shadjikaishiki, karmaravi and perhaps gandharapanchami, all jatis either required particular notes to be simply “dropped” (e.g., panchami), or more commonly, omitted for hexatonic and pentatonic variants.

¹³⁴ “At all events, the [vikrita] jati system recognizes that two melodies or melodic types may share the same Final and pitch-set, but belong to different classes, distinguished by melodic characteristics other than octave-species: a recognition that underlies and makes possible the later concept and systems of raga” (ibid.:58). “It [jati] is not a scalar classification, for it distinguishes melodic types belonging to the same octave-species, and thus anticipates the concept of rāga” (ibid.:47).

Accounting for these omitted notes, which Widdess had done for his analysis of shared interval patterns between the *gramaragas* and their source *jatis* (i.e., a claim to continuity), would presumably result in a scale that was unique to each *jati*, despite the fact that they shared Finals. In addition to the potential omission of particular notes, Bharata also indicated the possible inclusion of one or two extra “altered” notes in several *jatis*, which he called *antara-gāndhāra* and *kākalī-nisāda*. Lastly, it might be suggested that since the *vikritas* not only combined multiple *shuddha jatis*, each with their own Final, but also combined them in unique ways (no two *vikritas* had the same combination of component *jatis*), then the notes available to each *vikrita* may not have been limited to a single scale implied by the Final. This is pure conjecture, but there is nothing in Bharata’s text to suggest it was impossible.

It is curious that none of these factors, all of which appear to challenge the assumption of a *jati*’s scale was simply based on its Final, have been discussed in coming to the conclusion that *jatis* anticipated *raga* because they shared scales. However, even if we accept the premise that scales were shared, the conclusion that this anticipated “the concept of *raga*” is less than precise, even according to Widdess’s own terms. It is true that *ragas* are distinguished from one another by melodic characteristics other than scale, a feature that further distinguishes them from other modal systems throughout the world. However, *ragas* and *jatis* are functionally incongruous entities; as discussed above, one categorizes classes of existing melody, while the other provides a highly defined melodic structure in which to create new melodies through improvisation and composition. Therefore, the extra-scalar

characteristics used to distinguish classes of melody, which are what jatis are, more accurately anticipates the extra-scalar characteristics used to distinguish classes of ragas known as *rāg-kūl* or “rag family.”

Indeed, this, too, was Widdess’ argument, which he made in a different context and without a sense that it challenged his former argument:

The nearest equivalent to the concept of jati in the modern traditions is neither *thāt* (or *melā*), nor raga, but raga-family (*rag-kul*). In the North Indian tradition, a raga-family is a group of ragas which have certain melodic characteristics in common and are recognized as related; they do not necessarily all share the same basic scale, and some members of the group may lack one or more of the group’s distinctive features. . . . The ancient *concept* of jati is thus not foreign to the thinking of musicians today, although the *term* jati is no longer used in this sense. (Widdess 1995:59)

Here, Widdess spoke directly against his former argument that jati anticipates “raga” because of the importance it gave to extra-scalar features. Instead, “the nearest equivalent to the concept of jati in the modern traditions is neither *thāt* (or *melā*), nor raga, but raga-family (*rāg-kūl*),” and later, “the closest analogy to jati in modern Indian music is the raga family” (ibid.:311).¹³⁵ Importantly, the argument in both of

¹³⁵ “As a classification it brings together structurally similar and historically related ragas in much the same way as the *rag-kul* system of today, whereas such ragas would often be separated into different categories if classified according to style or according to Predominant and Final. This confirms the suggestion made earlier in this book, that the closest analogy to jati in modern Indian music is the raga

these statements is premised on the idea that melodic characteristics other than scale are used to distinguish among the members of the systems.

However, even if similarity between jati and rag-kul can be demonstrated, this does not mean that there was necessarily continuity between them. Widdess did not specifically argue that the similarity he revealed here represented a form of continuity. However, he did not always insist on distinguishing between these two kinds of claims. In fact, it appears that Widdess has, on occasion, directly conflated them, such that, “genuine continuities of musical tradition” could be demonstrated by “similarities in organization between jati and raga systems, showing that the former was to some extent the basis of the latter” (ibid.:80). Of course, whether this claim to continuity via similarity was more strictly limited to the theoretical tradition, as Widdess qualified in other cases (representative quotes given above), it is not clear. Nevertheless, the fact that the authors of the theoretical tradition were themselves invested in demonstrating continuity through similarity, which Widdess had otherwise identified, still poses a challenge to any claim to continuity based on similarity.

Finally, even if it is true, as Widdess claimed, that, “the primary gramaragas, like the [vikrita] jatis, were thus distinguished by melodic features rather than by scale” (ibid.:63), was this not the case for any other modal systems from other times and places? In other words, is the comparison so general that its significance is

family” (Widdess 1995:311).

limited? Are broad generalizations the most we can hope for when comparing the largely incongruous systems of ancient jati and modern raga?

Variability of Note-Functions

The notion that multiple jatis shared the same scale—more specifically, that they shared scales in unequal measure—led Widdess to yet another conclusion with implications for the continuity of tradition: those jatis with the most densely populated or frequently shared scales were also the least variable or most highly defined jatis, the reason being that they had a greater need to distinguish themselves from their scale-sharing peers. From this, Widdess pointed to another similarity between jati and raga, that, “less variable jatis may represent more clearly defined, specific modal entities, similar to ragas” (1995:54). Though he stopped short of interpreting this similarity as an actual or potential continuity between the two systems, Jairazbhoy did not. In an aside to his point that jati and raga were broadly distinguished by their variability—jati representing “multiple possibilities” and raga being “a specific form”—Jairazbhoy speculated that raga “could well have existed earlier as a particular species of a jati” (1972b:64).

Widdess did notice this similarity between jatis and early ragas. If in the former quotation Widdess had been more general in his comparison of jati and raga, claiming that early ragas were like the “less variable jatis,” later he was more specific: “Each raga is thus a more specific mode, resembling *an individual jati-variant* rather than a jati class” (1995:60, my emphasis). Even more suggestive of the

idea that this similarity represented a genuine continuity was Widdess's observation that the less variable of the vikrita jatis, "suggests a *tendency* towards greater definition of categories," thus indicating a progression to the highly defined raga (ibid.:81, my emphasis).

That the early ragas may have been derived from specific jati variants or species is a claim about which we can never be certain. However, the premise used here to support it—that some jatis were less variable than others and that this made them more like ragas—more accurately (and narrowly) supports a claim to similarity, not continuity. With the risk of being repetitive, we have sufficient cause to be weary of claims to continuity based on claims to similarity, as the early theoreticians of ragas constructed their theories to minimize discrepancies with the past. This observation is not new; indeed, it constitutes an important thread in Widdess's book. My feeling here, however, is that it could be applied with even greater perspicacity.

I admit, then, to Widdess's claim that highly defined jatis are similar to early ragas on the grounds of variability; undoubtedly some jatis were highly invariable, and in that way they are closer to ragas, particularly the early ragas (gramaragas), which contained the same four note-functions. However, the explanation for why some jatis were more variable than others—that it had a direct relation to the density of a jati's scale (the scale being implied, apparently, by its Final, as discussed in the previous section)—is more problematical. So, too, is a conclusion that followed from this: that the vikritas were categorically less variable than the shuddhas. Though the vikritas did, in fact, hail from densely populated scales, and though some of these

vikritas were, in fact, highly invariable, this is not the only thing that the vikritas were. In the pages that follow, I demonstrate that the vikritas were both more *and* less variable than the shuddhas. I also show that the most densely populated scales were utilized by both the least *and* most variable jatis. The results do not throw up any direct challenge to the possibility of continuity, which Widdess, again, does not directly claim. However, they do challenge the reasons given for the existence of similarity.

A jati's variability is generally determined by the number of "alternative" notes granted to each of its four note-functions; the more alternatives there were, the more variable the jati is presumed to have been.¹³⁶ In real terms, however, the number of alternatives accorded to the Predominant fluctuated the most widely, and so it is this note-function that is used as the primary measure of a jati's variability. On the opposite end, the Final is perhaps the least likely to affect the jati's variability, as it is without any alternatives in the shuddhas, and with only very limited variability in the vikritas. Similarly innocuous was the Initial; in all cases, it included the same number of alternatives as the Predominant. The Sub-final occupied a medial position, being more variable than the Final, but also less variable than the Predominant. It is therefore used here as a secondary measure of the jati's variability.

¹³⁶ As I indicated in an earlier footnote, the notion that the multiple notes accorded to a single note-function represented choices or "alternatives" that, once chosen, remained fixed, is an interpretation, albeit one that is commonly accepted.

Table 3.1 Variability of note-functions in the jāṭīs

		Śuddha Jāṭīs		Vikṛta Jāṭīs	
I				Śajḍā-madhyaṃā	
P				S R R G M P P D D N	
S				S R G M M P D D N	7
S				S R G M M P D D N	
F				M	
I				Kaiśikī	
P				S G M P P D D N	6
S				S G M P P D D N	
S				S G M P P D D N	
F				G	
I		Madhyaṃā			
P		S R M P D D	5		
S		S R M P D D	5		
S		S R M P D D	5		
F		M			
I		Śajḍī			
P		G M P D D	N		
S		G M P D D	5		
S		G M P D D	5		
F		S	2		
I		G			
P		Gandhārī			
S		S G M P N			
S		S G M P N			
F		G			
I				Rakta-gāndhārī	
P				S G M P N	5
S				S G M P N	5
S				G M M	1
F				G	
I				Āndhrī	
P				R G G P N	
P				R G G P N	
S				R G G P N	
S				R G G P N	
F				G	
I				Karmāravī	
P				R R P D N	
P				R R P D N	4
S				R R P D N	4
S				R R P D N	4
F				P	

Śuddha Jāṭis				Vikṛta Jāṭis			
I				S	Śaḍjodicyavā	D N	2
P				S	M	D N	4
S				S	M	D	2
F				M			
Āṛṣabhī				Śaḍja-kaiṣikī			
				S	G	P	3
I	R	D N	R G	G	P	3	
P	R	D N	R G	G	P	3	
S	R	D N	R G	S	P	3	
F	R			G			
Dhaivātī				Pañcamī			
				D	R	P	2
I	R	D	R	R	P	3	
P	R	D	R	R	P	2	
S	R	D	R	R	P	3	
F	M	D	R	P			
		D		P			
Gāndhāroḍicyavā							
I				S	M	2	
P				S	M	2	
S				S	D	2	
F				M			
Gāndhāra-pañcamī				Madhyamoḍicyavā			
I				P	P	G	1
P				P	P	P	1
S	R			G	S	D	2
F	G			P	M		
				M		G	
Nandayanī							
				G			
				P			
				M			
				P			

I = Initial. P = Predominant. S = Sub-final. F = Final.

Table 3.2 Variability of note-functions in the jāṭīs

No. of Predominants (P) & Sub-finals (S):		P	S
Śuddha	Vikṛta		
	Ṣaḍja-madhyamā	7	7
	Kaiśikī	6	6
Madhyamā		5	5
Ṣaḍjī		5	2
Gāndhārī		5	2
	Rakta-gāndhārī	5	1
	Āndhrī	4	4
	Karmāravī	4	4
	Ṣaḍjodīcyavā	4	2
Ārṣabhī	Ṣaḍja-kaiśikī	3	3
Naiṣādī		3	3
Dhaivatī		2	3
Pañcamī		2	3
	Gāndhārodīcyavā	2	2
	Gāndhāra-pañcamī	1	2
	Madhyamodīcyavā	1	2
	Nandayantī	1	2

Table 3.1 arranges the jāṭīs from most to least variable while retaining their division into shuddha and vikṛta for easy comparison. The number of Predominants in each jāṭī is indicated in bold type following the account of their actual alternatives. Where the number of Predominants in two or more jāṭīs is found to be equal, the number of Sub-finals, also given in bold type following an accounting of its alternatives, is used to further grade them. Where both Predominant and Sub-final are found to be equal, the jāṭīs are presented on the same horizontal line. An alternative rendering is found in Table 3.2, which leaves out the specific alternatives available to

each note-function for a wider view across all the jatis. The reader may wish to consult both tables during the foregoing discussion.

In Table 3.2, the vikritas clearly span across the entire length of the table, thereby demonstrating that they were both the most and least variable jatis in the system. At the top, the jatis with the greatest number of Predominants, and therefore the greatest variability, were the vikritas shadjamadhyama and kaishiki, which contained seven and six Predominants respectively. At the bottom, the jatis with the least number of Predominants, and therefore the least variability, were the vikritas gandhara-panchami, madhyamodichyava and nandayanti, each with one Predominant.

As a secondary measure of variability, the Sub-final showed a similarly wide spread in the number of its alternatives, though with an interesting variation in the placement of the jatis exhibiting them. At the top, the jatis with the greatest number of Sub-finals were again the vikritas shadjamadhyama and kaishiki with seven and six alternatives respectively. At the bottom were several vikritas jatis with only two Sub-finals (gandharodichyava, gandhara-panchami, madhyamodichyava and nandayanti), which is less than any shuddha jati. However, the jati with only one Sub-final and therefore the least, the vikrita raktagandhari, occurred toward the upper-center of the table. This was due to the fact that it had five Predominants. Finally, the Final, that paragon of invariability in the shuddhas, was given two alternatives in two vikritas, shadjamadhyama and kaishiki. It is significant that by measure of the Final alone, the vikritas were actually more variable than the shuddhas, not less.

Compared to these extremes of variability in the vikritas, the shuddha jatis appear rather sober and tidy: they lie clustered in two groups towards the center of the table, and though they are fewer in number than the vikritas, they nevertheless have a greater number of equivalent jatis (i.e., those arranged on the same horizontal level, see Table 3.1). The maximum number of Predominants among them is five (in madhyama, shadji and gandhari) and the minimum, two (in dhaivati and panchami). The number of Sub-finals is similarly restricted to being no more than five (in madhyama) and no less than two (in shadji and gandhari). Their Finals, as mentioned, are all fixed on a single, invariable pitch.

Widdess recognized that the vikrita jatis were both more and less variable than the shuddhas. However, he ultimately diminished the significance of their more variable members, describing them as “exceptions to the principle”:

They [the vikritas jatis] derive principally from the most variable [shuddha jatis (thus, diminishing the importance of panchami, mentioned above)], but are themselves, with few exceptions, less variable and less transilient than their progenitors.... They are thus characteristically more specific, closer to the ‘tune’ end of the scale-tune continuum, than the [shuddha] jatis. The two main exceptions to this principle, VIII/Ṣadja-madhyamā and XVIII/Kaiśikī, are very variable, and perhaps function as catch-all categories.” (ibid.:58).

The two “very variable” vikritas that Widdess described as “exceptions” and “catch all categories” were, significantly, the *most* variable jatis in the system. They were furthermore no more exceptional than the least variable of the vikritas, which Widdess alternatively described as “characteristic.” As we have seen, the vikritas extended in both directions with relatively equal measure, and were therefore no more invariable than they were variable. If the most variable among them can be called “exceptions,” then the number of exceptions roughly equals the number of examples used to establish the rule!

Why, then, despite acknowledging that the vikritas were also highly variable, did Widdess describe them as being “characteristically more specific, closer to the ‘tune’ end of the scale-tune continuum than the shuddha jatis”? One possibility is that Widdess determined the variability of a jati using alternative measures, such as characteristics beyond the four primary note-functions, and that according to these measures, the vikritas showed themselves to be less variable over all. This is suggested in the following passage:

Three [vikrita] jatis have only one Predominant apiece; four have only one omissible note, while three have none. This means that the [vikrita] jatis concerned are less variable, and also less transilient, than the [shuddha] jatis from which they are derived. On the other hand, two [vikrita] jatis are *more* variable than their primary progenitors. (ibid.:56)

Here, Widdess measured variability firstly by the number of alternative Predominants, and secondly by the number of omissible notes. Though he acknowledged that two vikritas were “more variable than their primary progenitors,” the shuddha jatis, the number of these more variable vikritas appear to have been fewer than the less variable ones. However, it is not clear how much over-lap there was between the three with one Predominant each, the four with one omissible note, and the three with no omissible note, as he has not named them.

Omissible notes do not fall within the purview of variability as I have measured it, and it is not certain whether their inclusion would confirm Widdess’s claim to the overall invariability of the vikritas or not. However, it should be noted that Widdess neither included omissible notes, nor any other characteristics beyond the single note-function of the Final, in determining the jati’s scale. If omissible notes are to be used to determine a jati’s variability, which according to Widdess is intimately related to scalar density, then they should, presumably, also be used to when determining the jati’s scale.

Whether or not the claim to the greater invariability of the vikritas can be confirmed through these expanded measures, Widdess nevertheless had other reasons for making this claim. One relates to the fact that the vikritas by definition combined multiple shuddha jatis. From this, it was assumed that the vikritas also combined different sets of melodic prescriptions applicable to those shuddha jatis, and that the common ground between these prescriptions, which was presumably more limited,

was then applied to the vikrita.¹³⁷ In this way, we can see how “the combination of two or more variable primary jatis can result in a mode-class that is *less* variable than its progenitors” (ibid.:56).

A potentially more persuasive explanation for why the vikritas were characteristically less variable than the shuddhas had to do with the inverse relationship that Widdess believed existed between variability and scalar density. According to this theory, the jatis that utilized the most densely populated scales were necessarily the least variable. This is because the crowding of jatis in a single scale required a greater number of extra-scalar prescriptions to distinguish between them. In the following passage, Widdess described this relationship between variability and scalar density in detail, further pointing to the similarity the jatis share even with present-day ragas in this respect:

While two or more modes may, in India past and present, share a common scale, some scales are more densely populated with modes than others. This unequal distribution leads to differences in the degree of definition: where many similar modes exist, each must be defined sufficiently precisely to

¹³⁷ Though stated in relation to the mixture of more than one jati in a gramaraga, the following statement underscores that Widdess understood mixing or combining of jatis to include the mixing or combining of their characteristics:

In many cases a raga is affiliated with not one but two or more different jatis, and this is also difficult to understand given that the jatis themselves are modal classes of somewhat variable structure. The attribution of a raga to a particular combination of jatis may indicate a ‘mixed’ raga, in which different sets of melodic characteristics are combined in a way that is not apparent from the analysis in Table 9.5. (ibid.:309).

distinguish it from the others; whereas this is not the case where only one or two modes share the same scale. We shall see that this variation in degree of definition is a feature of mode in India from the earliest times. (ibid.:31)

A half measure of support for this explanation comes from the fact that all of the vikrita jatis less one (karmaravi) contained a Final on either Ga or Ma (see Table 2). Leaving aside the problems of assuming that a jati's scale is determined by its Final, this high concentration of vikritas on a meager two scales suggests that the vikritas were less variable than the shuddhas (at least the shuddhas other than gandhari and madhyama).

Though it is true that the least variable of all the jatis (the vikritas nandayanti, madhyamodichyaca, gandhar-panchami and gandharodichyava) use only the most densely populated scales (those based on Ga and Ma Finals), it is also true that the most variable jatis (the vikritas shadjamadyama, kaishiki, and madhyama) use these scales as well. This simple fact appears to pose a strong challenge to the supposed correspondence between variability and scalar density. However, other facts work against this claim as well.

One is that the least used scales of the entire system (and those that would presumably make up the most variable jatis), Ri and Dha, are actually found in jatis that fall on the invariable side of the table, arshabhi and dhaivati. (Neither Ri nor Dha appear as Finals in the vikritas, see Table 2). Among the least populated scales actually used in the vikritas, the one indicated by the Final Pa, which is used only by

karmaravi, is neither highly variable nor highly defined, but sits comfortably in the center of Table 3.2. The other two least populated scales among the vikritas, Sa and Ni, do, in fact, occur only in the most variable jatis (shadjamadhyama and kaishiki, respectively). However, there they compete with a second Final that represents the very most populated scales (those indicated by Ma and Ga Finals, respectively).

To summarize, the vikritas *were* among the most defined and least variable of the jatis, but they were also among the least defined and most variable as well. The reason for the greater variability of *some* vikritas, furthermore, seems to have had less to do with the fact that they utilized densely populated scales than previously assumed. In the end, we find that the only credible basis for comparing jati and raga is again very general: both shared scales unequally, and both had members with different degrees of definition or variability, but these two characteristics did not necessarily share a direct relationship. As to whether this represented a historical continuity (i.e., that the most defined of the vikritas served as the basis for the earliest ragas), I believe we require more and different types of evidence. However, in either case, both the claim to similarity and continuity require us to elide the functional differences between jati and raga as set out earlier in the chapter.

Alignment of Note-Functions

Another important distinction made between the shuddhas and vikritas is in the alignment of their note-functions. In most of the shuddha jatis, for instance, we find at least one note that is shared across all four functions. Just as the alleged

difference in the variability of the shuddhas and vikritas bolstered claims to continuity between jati and raga, here, too, differences in alignment are said to portend elements of raga. In particular, it is implied that the proclivity for alignment in the shuddha jatis anticipates the development of monotonal ragas, or ragas that contain a single tonal center represented by the alignment of Predominant and Final, which became a feature of all ragas by the thirteenth century. Incidentally, the development of monotonality is considered to have been an important step in the shift of all ragas to a common or system tonic based on Sa, and even the inclusion of a continuous drone (Markham 1997:298–99). This, too, has been interpreted as an evolutionary, not revolutionary, change, as we have seen in the section on the additive approach.

My examination of alignment, however, suggests important exceptions to the premises of this argument. Not only are the shuddha jatis shown to be less aligned than commonly thought, but also the most aligned among them are less aligned than the most aligned vikritas. Thus, if any jatis anticipated monotonality, it was perhaps more likely a subset of the vikritas than the shuddhas.

More significant, however, is the fact that the vikritas, in addition to having the most aligned members of the system, also had the least aligned members as well. This reveals a characteristic of the jati system that most distinguishes it from modern raga: its linear polytonality, as opposed to cyclical monotonality of the later ragas (i.e., the continual return and reference to sa). This idea is not new. Nor is it contested. However, it is in the interpretation of linear polytonality as representing an evolution rather than a revolution, or a form continuity instead of a rupture, that this

section, which best represents the aims of the chapter more broadly, seeks to stimulate debate. The issue of alignment, then, best distinguishes the ancient from the modern, and provides us with the best opportunity to investigate claims to both continuity and disparity.

The Śuddhas

The most significant exception to alignment in the shuddha jatis is found in shadji and gandhari (see Table 4.1). In these two jatis, each of which heads their respective grama, neither of the two notes designated as Sub-final match the Final. This effectively prohibits their alignment across all four-note functions, making these jatis the least aligned of all the shuddhas (see Table 4.2). This observation is important because it challenges the assumption that in the shuddha jatis, “a single specified scale degree serves as tonic, performing the combined functions of Initial, Predominant, Sub-final and Final” (Widdess 1995:48). This does not appear to have been the case in shadji and gandhari, however. The only Sub-finals that Bharata listed for shadji were Ga and Pa—not Sa, which was Final. The only Sub-finals that Bharata listed for gandhari were Sa and Pa—not Ga, which was Final.¹³⁸

My reading of Bharata’s description of the Sub-finals of shadji and gandhari differs from Widdess’s. In his Example 2.1b (1995:50), Widdess shows both shadji and gandhari to have had a third Sub-final that was based on the note after which the jati was named (Sa for shadji and Ga for gandhari). In other words, all of the shuddha

¹³⁸ “In the Śādji Jāti... Apanyāsa [Sub-final] is Gāndhāra and Pañcama” (Ghosh 1961:24). “In the Gāndhārī Jāti... its Apanyāsa, Śādja and Pañcama” (ibid.:26).

jatis in Widdess's presentation, including shadji and gandhari, have the potential to be fully aligned.

I assume that Widdess's understanding of the full alignment of all the shuddha jatis does not stem from a mere misreading of Bharata's text. Still, I am at a loss for how to account for it. Perhaps it reflects the view of the other authors upon which he drew, for in addition to the texts of Bharata and Dattila, whose *Dattilam* is considered to present the same information on the jatis as the *Natyashastra*, Widdess regularly refers to Matanga and Sarangdev in describing Bharata's jatis. The method of referring to this later commentary on the jatis is, of course, not problematic in itself. In doing so, however, I believe it is important to distinguish between the commentary and the original and not assume that the former can always speak for the latter. I have already identified this problem with respect to antaramarga and the method of drawing on disparate definitions to arrive at a composite definition then attributed to Bharata. It is not demonstratable that the problem at hand (the full alignment of all the shuddha jatis) can be attributed to this cause. However, if so, it may also help to explain additional discrepancies found between Bharata and Widdess's presentation of the jatis, such as the number of Finals accorded to kaishiki, which Widdess claimed to have been "as many as three," Ga, Pa and Ni (1995:56–57, Example 2.2), while Bharata described only two, Ga and Ni.

Whatever the source of this discrepancy, it should be pointed out that my reading only strengthens Widdess's existing conclusion about the jati system overall: that instead of being "a simple, closed, cyclic set of modal inversions of a heptatonic

octave, like the ancient Greek or Mesopotamian systems,” the jatis were “in fact a very heterogeneous collection of variable melodic types, in which certain specific and apparently arbitrary structural characteristics are prescribed even for the śuddha forms” (51). The only difference my reading suggests, perhaps, is that the jatis may have been even more heterogeneous than Widdess envisioned.

Keeping with this diagnosis of heterogeneity in the shuddha jatis (via exceptions to the shuddha jatis’ proclaimed alignment), we observe yet another pair of shuddhas with a unique form of non-alignment: dhaivati and panchami. Both of these jatis contain what I call a “deviant” Sub-final, meaning that they have one Sub-final that fails to correspond with any other note-function (see Table 4.1). In the previous case of shadji and gandhari, we noted that both Sub-finals failed to correspond with the Final. Nevertheless, the Sub-finals of shadji and gandhari still corresponded with alternatives from both the Predominant and the Initial. However, in dhaivati and panchami, even this was not the case; one Sub-final in each (in dhaivati, Ma, and in panchami, Ni) stood out like a sore thumb.¹³⁹

¹³⁹ Widdess rightly pointed out that panchami’s Ni was omitted in its pentatonic version (see Example 2.Ib, 1995:50). We may further note that even outside of its pentatonic treatment, Bharata said that panchami’s Ni “should also be made weak (i.e., reduced)” (Ghosh 1961:27). This may diminish the significance of its Ni’s deviance as a Sub-final.

Table 4.1 Alignment of Note-Functions in the Jātis

	Śuddha Jātis					Vikṛta Jātis					
	I. Śaḍjī					IV. Śaḍja-kaiśikī					Śaḍja-grāma
Initial	S	G	M	P	D	S	G		P		
Predominant	S	G	M	P	D	S	G		P		
Sub-final		G		P		S			P	N	
Final	S						G				
	II. Ārṣabhī					V. Śaḍjodīcyavā					
Initial	R				D N	S		M		D N	
Predominant	R				D N	S		M		D N	
Sub-final	R				D N	S				D	
Final	R							M			
	III. Dhaivatī					VI. Śaḍja-madhyamā					
Initial	R				D	S	R	G	M	P D N	
Predominant	R				D	S	R	G	M	P D N	
Sub-final	R		M		D	S	R	G	M	P D N	
Final					D	S			M		
	VII. Naiśāḍī										
Initial	R	G			N						
Predominant	R	G			N						
Sub-final	R	G			N						
Final					N						
	I. Gāndhārī					II. Rakta-gāndhārī					Madhyamā-grāma
Initial	S	G	M	P	N	S	G	M	P	N	
Predominant	S	G	M	P	N	S	G	M	P	N	
Sub-final	S			P				M			
Final		G					G				
	IV. Madhyamā					III. Gāndhārodīcyavā					
Initial	S	R		M	P D	S		M			
Predominant	S	R		M	P D	S		M			
Sub-final	S	R		M	P D	S				D	
Final				M				M			

	Śuddha Jātis			Vikṛta Jātis			
	VI. Pañcamī			V. Madhyamodīcyavā			
Initial	R	P				P	
Predominant	R	P				P	
Sub-final	R	P	N	S			D
Final		P				M	
				VII. Gāndhāra-pañcamī			
Initial						P	
Predominant						P	
Sub-final				R		P	
Final						G	
				VIII. Āndhrī			
Initial				R	G	P	N
Predominant				R	G	P	N
Sub-final				R	G	P	N
Final						G	
				IX. Nandayantī			
Initial						G	
Predominant						P	
Sub-final						M	P
Final						G	
				X. Karmāravī			
Initial				R		P	D N
Predominant				R		P	D N
Sub-final				R		P	D N
Final						P	
				XI. Kaiśikī			
Initial				S	G	M P	D N
Predominant				S	G	M P	D N
Sub-final				S	G	M P	D N
Final					G		N

Madhyamā-grāma, continued

Table 4.2 Alignment of note-functions in the jāṭīs

No. of note-functions aligned:		4	3	2	1
Śuddha	Vikṛta				
Madhyamā	Ṣaḍja-madhyamā	2	5	0	0
	Kaiśikī	2	4	0	0
	Āndhrī	1	5	0	0
	Karmāravī	1	3	0	0
	Ārṣabhī	1	2	0	0
Naiṣāḍī		1	2	0	0
Dhaivatī		1	1	0	1
Pañcamī		1	1	0	1
Ṣaḍjī		0	3	2	0
Gāndhārī	Ṣaḍjodīcyavā	0	3	2	0
	Ṣaḍja-kaiśikī	0	3	0	0
	Rakta-gāndhārī	0	2	3	0
	Gāndhārodīcyavā	0	2	1	0
	Gāndhāra-pañcamī	0	1	2	0
	Nandayantī	0	0	2	1
	Madhyamodīcyavā	0	0	1	3

Table 4.1 provides an in-depth look at the internal alignment of each jāṭi.

Drawing on our previous discussion, we can clearly see that five of the seven shuddha jāṭīs—arshabi, dhavati, naishadi, madhyama and panchami—are aligned across all four note-functions on a single note, the note after which the jāṭi is named. Of these, arshabi, naishadi and madhyama are the most well aligned, as they contain no deviant Sub-finals (again, a Sub-final that fails to correspond with any other note-function). The deviant Sub-finals of dhaivati and panchami, by contrast, clearly stands apart

from the other aligned notes. Finally, shadji and gandhari are the least aligned of the shuddha jatis, as neither of their two Sub-finals corresponds with their Final, making any alignment across all four note-functions impossible.

Thus, we see that although the shuddha jatis had a high potential for alignment, they did not always require to be aligned. Indeed, in some cases (shadji and gandhari), they precluded it. We have demonstrated this by comparing the alignment of all the existing alternatives provided for each note-function, finding that the Sub-final did not always need to correspond to the Predominant, the Final, or both.

However, an even more significant fact that we have yet to consider is that even in the best aligned of the shuddhas, the alternative note chosen to represent the Predominant need not have matched the Final, the Sub-final, or even the Initial. Arshabi, for example, could have a Predominant on Dha, a Final on Ri, and a Sub-final on Ni. Madhyama could have a Predominant on Sa, a Final on Ma, a Sub-final on Ri, and an Initial on Pa. In other words, just because most of the shuddhas had high potential for alignment does not mean all of the melodies or variants classed under that jati had to express it. Alignment was clearly available in some cases, but not in all.

Polytonality

Before moving on to take a look at the vikritas, it is important that we pause here to consider the significance of the fact that some jatis (or jati variants in the case

of the shuddhas) lacked alignment between their two most important note-functions, the Final and the Predominant.

As we discussed in prior sections, the Final is considered to have been the most important note of the jati. Not only did it serve as the jati's ground note or tonic, it was also the basis upon which the shuddha jatis were presented separately from the gramas, and it accorded each shuddha jati its name. The Predominant, by comparison, may be regarded as the second most important pitch of the jati for the reason that it governed many of the jati's other lakshanas and was itself also assigned ten characteristics, as described in the subsection on antaramarga.¹⁴⁰

Thus, for jatis or jati variants in which the Predominant did not align with the Final, the sense of tonic was compromised (Widdess says, "ambivalent"). Assuming that the Final, by definition, did not occur until the very end, the tonic was deferred while a temporary tonal center, indicated by the Predominant, took precedence. Widdess described these jatis as "bitonal" (1995:49, 251), and furthermore recognized that they made up "a majority of jatis" (with reference to the vikritas, which we have yet to discuss). However, when we add to this the fact that the Sub-final, and even the Initial, could also be a note other than the Final *and* the Predominant, then a definite sense of a progression across multiple temporary tonal

¹⁴⁰ Though it is not germane to our discussion, it may be noted that the role of the Final and the Predominant in the jatis becomes reversed in the gramaragas, so that the Predominant not only becomes fixed, but it also absorbs the other note-functions, meaning that the other note-function become equated with it (Jairazbhoy 1972a:294). Widdess regarded this new importance of the Predominant as constituting "a fundamental difference between the jati and gramaraga systems" (1995:248).

centers emerges. More than being bitonal, then, the jatis appear to have been potentially polytonal.¹⁴¹

My ascription of polytonality to the jatis is indirectly supported by Widdess's claim that the gramaraga melodies found in the seventh-century *Kudumiyamalai* Inscription "are not merely bitonal, they are polytonal," the reason being that their Sub-finals "assume an almost equal structural importance with the Predominant and Final" (1995:262). Though Widdess did not specifically describe the jatis as polytonal (nor has anyone else that I am aware of), he nevertheless suggested this when he placed the melodies of the inscription in...

...a transitional stage between Stage I ["that of the jati system"] and Stage 2 ["represented by the bitonal gramaragas"], in which there are fewer levels in the hierarchy of cadential pitches than in Stage I, but the role of the Sub-final has not yet become absorbed by the Predominant, as in Stage II. (262-63, brackets mine)

In other words, the polytonal melodies in the inscription represented a hold over from the earlier jati period, which later gave way to bitonal gramaragas and even later, monotonal ones.

¹⁴¹ This is different from the note-by-note progression through a raga in the present day, which actually continues to return to the tonic and thus demonstrates cyclicity.

It is important to clarify here that polytonality (and bitonality) in Western music refers to the *simultaneous* occurrence of multiple tonal centers or keys whereas Widdess's use of these terms assumes the *succession* of multiple tonal centers. This distinction may be attributed to the different "textures" of these musics, texture being the measure of relationship between simultaneously occurring sounds. Polytonal Western music may be described either as "polyphonic" when having more than one melody at a time, or "homophonic" when having only one melody with accompaniment (each in a different key, of course).¹⁴² The polytonal music of the jatis, on the other hand, can only be described as "monophonic," as it contained only a single melodic line with no accompaniment.¹⁴³

The distinction between these two types of polytonality (one simultaneous and the other successive) actually parallels a broader distinction often made between Western music as "harmonic" and Indian music as "melodic." The textures of Western polytonality noted above are harmonic in that they deal with the relation of simultaneous parts. The texture of the polytonal jatis, monophony, though included as a texture (i.e., a measure of simultaneity), is more accurately the absence of simultaneity, as it includes only a single melodic line. Perhaps, then, the broader

¹⁴² Examples of both can be found in Bela Bartok's six-volume study for solo piano titled *Mikrokosmos* (1926-1939). For homophonic polytonality, see the opening measures of "boating" (Book V, piece 125). For polyphonic polytonality (actually bitonal), see "Two-part study" (Book IV No. 121).

¹⁴³ Some have described the inclusion of a continuous drone in modern Indian music as "diaphonic." The jatis, however, did not include a drone, and so their texture is better described as monophonic.

adjectives of “harmonic” and “melodic” could be used to distinguish Western and Indian polytonality (via the *jatis*).¹⁴⁴

Linearity

For our purposes, however, it is more important to recognize that both Western and Indian polytonality were horizontally linear. That is, just as Western music progresses from chord to chord (even if only implied by the melody) and from key to key (similar to the polytonal movement of a *jati*), a *jati* progressed from one temporary tonal center to another, ultimately arriving at its final destination. Of course, Western polytonality is also vertically linear (i.e., harmonic). Nevertheless, on a horizontal plane, both of them “trace a finite path from starting-point ‘A’ to finishing point ‘B’,” as Widdess has said of the *jatis* and early *gramaragas* (1995:252–253).

The identification of the *jatis* as linear is significant not only because it brings them closer to Western music (ironic, as they have been approached with such

¹⁴⁴ Te Nijenhuis alternatively described “ancient Indian music” as “a kind of linear harmony.” This was not in reference to the temporary tonal centers indicated by unaligned note-functions, which would have further supported her case, but to the prescriptions for particular combinations of notes or *sangati* and particular intervals such as the *vadi*, *samvadi* and *vivadi*:

The *sangati* or *samcara*, which is not clearly defined anywhere, may mean that the note to which it refers precedes or follows some other note, with which it is said to come together. The subsequent notes of the ancient Indian *sangati* may be compared to the simultaneously sounding notes of the European chord. We should notice that harmony is not restricted to the European polyphonic, homophonic and monodic styles of music, that is to say, to music consisting of simultaneously sounding notes, which form certain harmonic intervals or chords. The ancient Indian music, which is monophonic, that is to say, a music merely consisting of subsequent notes, shows a predilection for special combinations (*sangati*) of notes, which follow each other in the melodic line, and an accurate system of melodic intervals called consonant (*samvadin*), sonant (*vadin*), assonant (*anuvadin*) and dissonant (*vivadin*). So we may observe in the ancient Indian music a kind of linear harmony. (1970:219–20).

patriotic zeal), but also because it distances them from later monotonal—and cyclic—ragas, which regularly return the same tonic. The *bhaśas* and *desi* ragas of the thirteenth century were aligned between their Predominant (which earlier replaced the Final as the most important note) and their Final. The Predominant, furthermore, had absorbed the role of the Sub-final, just as it had early absorbed the Initial in Bharata's time. Therefore, the tonic, unambiguously represented by the Initial, Predominant, Subfinal and Final, was both the point of departure and the point of return. It was fixed and continually returned to. For this reason, monotonal ragas are considered cyclic, just as the ragas are today (Widdess 1995:371, 252). Monotonicity did not preclude the tonic being different in different ragas, of course. Described earlier as a system tonic, this would not happen until the fifteenth or sixteenth century.

The linearity and polytonality of the jati system is further revealed through the existence of even more temporary stopping points beyond the primary note-functions already discussed. Widdess described these points as “cadences,” and claimed that “early Indian modal theory” had an “elaborate hierarchy of cadential pitches” (ibid.:257). In addition to the major note-functions we have already covered, there also existed a “subordinate medial cadence” called the *sannyāsa*, and an even subtler cadence called the *vinyāsa*, described as a “point of articulation between cadences” (ibid.).

Widdess did not specifically claim that these cadences contributed to the linearity of the jati or early gramaraga systems. Indeed, he gives little importance to them, claiming that these terms were “seldom used,” found only in “measured

melodies,” and “seem not to have been applied to raga theory,” using Sarangdeva as evidence (ibid.).¹⁴⁵ Ghosh also bemoaned the fact that Bharata failed to follow up on his brief mention of vinyasa and sannyasa. However, instead of taking this to suggest their insignificance, he speculated that the pertinent portions of Bharata’s text might have been lost (1961:24 n.1).

Although it is not central to our discussion, it is important to note that just as the melodic structure of the jatis progressed linearly, so too did its rhythmic structure. Widdess described it as comprising “non-recurrent blocks rather than repeating cycles” (1995:126-27). Repeating cycles is, of course, what we have today, and this shift from linear to cyclical rhythm is thought to have roughly corresponded to the same shift in melody (ibid.:253 n.6).

The former linearity of Indian music’s rhythm is not only significant for further demonstrating the disparity between jati and raga; it also shows how despite such disparities, claims to continuity have persisted. Lewis Rowell, for example, took an teleological view of cyclical rhythm’s eventual triumph when he argued that the turn towards a cyclic tala was inevitable due to “the relentless pressure of cultural preferences for circularity” (1977:85). Take together with some of his other claims, such as the notion that a “cyclical view of time that persists in *Indian thought*” (ibid., my emphasis), or his interpretation of the cyclicity of modern tala and raga as “small versions of this larger principle of cyclical time” (ibid.), Rowell’s thoughts on

¹⁴⁵ That said, Widdess did find some evidence among the noted melodies in Sarngdeva’s text to suggest that, “the concept of *vinyāsa*... was a practical concept even if not clearly defined in theoretical terms” (261).

cyclicality appear to suggest that musical structure isomorphically reflects a unified cultural schema.

In this way, Rowell's views on cyclicality represent an interesting twist in the continuist argument because they are not based on the identification of similarity between ancient and modern music. Indeed, Rowell acknowledged that, "cyclical rhythm was not a feature of the early tala system" (ibid.). Neither did Rowell view cyclical rhythm as an "accretion," as he did the system tonic and the drone. Instead, Rowell argued that cyclicality was what the tradition had been driving at all along. We might say, then, that Rowell's approach was "subtractive" rather than "additive"; by losing its linearity, Indian music became what it was always meant to be. As we will see, this view is not all that different from the claim that the system tonic had been "foreshadowed" by an early preference for Sa as Predominant among a number of early ragas (Widdess 1995:370–371).

The Vikṛtas

Our final consideration of the vikritas confirms even more strongly the linear polytonality of the jati system. Among them, we find three jatis with a single Predominant that did not match the Final: madhyamodicyava, gandharapancami, and nandayanti. These jatis, and the melodies associated with them, have no hope of being anything but bitonal. In all likelihood, however, they were probably polytonal, as they all lacked alignment in additional ways as well.

In nandayanti, for example, we find the only incidence in the entire system in which the Initial, singly identified as Ga, failed to match the Predominant, Pa.¹⁴⁶ In madhyamodichyava, we find the only incidence in which all of a jatis' Sub-finals (here Sa and Dha) failed to correspond either with the Predominant (Pa) or with the Final (Ma), thus making the entire note-function deviant. On a lesser note, we find four vikritas (shadjakaishiki, gandharodichyava, gandharapanchami, and nandayanti) that have one Sub-final that failed to correspond with either the Predominant or Sub-final. These Sub-finals were deviant in the same way that the Sub-finals of dhaivati and panchami were deviant in that they all have other Sub-finals that correspond with the Predominant.

The vikritas, therefore, were clearly less aligned than the shuddhas. However, this is not the only thing that they were. Similar to what we have seen with respect to variability, the vikritas were, in fact, both more *and* less aligned than the shuddhas. Table 4.2 shows us that with the exception of madhyama, the shuddha jatis clearly occupy a medial position, flanked on both sides by the vikritas. This is not unlike the spread we found in Table 3.2, which compared variability. In Table 4.2, however, the shuddhas occupy an even more middling position.

¹⁴⁶ This has further significance because only in two cases did Bharata actually describe the Initial of the jati, the reason being that the Initial was assumed to be the same as the Predominant. Bharata made several statements to this effect, such as, the “graha is an alternative term for amsa” (Ghosh 19), and, “amsas are always grahas in all these jatis” (ibid.:21). It is curious, then, why Bharata would have made it a point to describe the Initials of karmaravi, the second case, when it was in any case the same as the Predominant (Ri, Pa, Dha and Ni). If equivalence between Initial and Predominant was to be assumed, what was the need for this description?

This observation is significant for it presents yet another challenge to the characterization of the shuddhas as being the most aligned of the jatis (in addition to the exceptions of alignment in the shuddhas discussed above). It also complicates the related claim that the unusual alignment of the shuddha jatis served as a precedent for a future shift towards monotonal ragas. For if we accept the notion that the measure of alignment can support such a conclusion, then clearly it was the vikritas that best anticipated monotonicity, not the shuddhas.

However, the problem with imputing a tendency toward monotonicity to the vikritas, is that their two most aligned members—and therefore presumably the most likely to anticipate monotonicity, shadjamadyama and kaishiki—were also the most variable jatis (i.e., the least defined) (see Table 3.2). Recalling Widdess's earlier claim that it was the *least* variable (and most defined) jatis that served as a basis for early ragas, we are then presented with a problem: how could the most aligned *and* least variable jatis, which do not overlap, each anticipate raga for different reasons? Were the changes that occurred in terms of variability in the shift from jati to raga independent from the changes that occurred in alignment?¹⁴⁷ It may also be important

¹⁴⁷ It may be that the decrease in variability from jati to raga was not dependent on the increase in alignment and the growth of monotonicity. This seems to be implied in the following statement by Widdess in which he claimed that the number of Finals reduced over time from seven in the shuddha jatis to two in the shuddha gramaragas (a decrease in variability) while the incidence of monotonal ragas increased:

The gradual reduction in the number of Finals, from seven in the [shuddha] jatis to two in the primary gramaragas, is thus reversed in the Vesara and Sadharani gitis; but here a further change also occurs. Apart from the [fully aligned] forms of the [shuddha] jatis, the majority of jatis and gramaragas of other gitis are bitonal—that is, the Predominant and Final are different pitches. However, seven out of eight Vesara ragas are monotonal—the same pitch functions as Predominant and Final. Five more such ragas are included in the Sadharani giti. As we shall see, this type comes to dominate the repertoires of bhasas and desi-ragas. (71).

to note that these two fully aligned and most variable vikritas, shadjamadhyama and kaishiki, were, unlike the shuddhas, fully aligned across two different notes (see Table 4.1). Does their double alignment reduce their association with or possibility of anticipating monotonicity? If it does, then the conclusions drawn here might be different.

To summarize this section on alignment: as with the previous section on variability and scalar density, we have found that generalized claims regarding the shuddhas or vikritas as a whole and the implications for continuity/similarity drawn from them do not fully hold up to scrutiny. Widdess's claim to the existence of monotonal jatis is in part based on the assumption that there existed a closed sub-set of shuddha jatis that were fully aligned across all four note-functions. This, I have suggested, was not necessarily the case. Furthermore, even for those jatis that were fully aligned, there still needs to be recognition of the fact that these jatis did not have to be aligned. Unlike the other issues considered thus far, the issue of alignment points to a system of linear polytonality that is wholly incongruous with modern norms. More than any other facet, then, it clinches the issue of Indian music's ancient and modern disparity.

In this section as in the others, we have given critical importance to Widdess's descriptions of the jati and raga systems as well as the interpretations he has drawn from them. Though I have claimed that Widdess interpreted the proclivity for alignment in the shuddha jatis as anticipating the development of monotonal ragas, this is more accurately my interpretation of Widdess's interpretation. It is important,

therefore, that I clarify from where I have derived it, as well as the elements of Widdess's claims that appear to contradict it.

It seems clear that Widdess considered the modern system tonic as the ultimate and inevitable destination of evolution from a system that, although more hierarchical, more linear, and more polytonal, was still driving at a system that was more “flat” in terms of the hierarchy of pitches, more cyclical in its progression, and more monotonal. Again, the system tonic is taken, as Rowell had also taken it, as the culmination of “a process of evolution that has shaped the modern traditions of theory and practice,” not as a revolution (1995:263). At the same time, however, Widdess stopped short of directly charting this process of evolution from the jatis in most cases. He did, in those contexts, point out that the jatis included monotonal members. He did describe the gramaragas as “a midway stage” that began with the jatis and ended with later monotonal ragas (ibid.:252-253). And he did point out that jatis having Sa and/or Ma as Final “were indeed important and numerous,” which made them similar to “the large number of ragas having Sa as Predominant,” suggesting that “the process by which Sa later became tonic for all ragas was *already under way* during our period” (ibid.:301, my emphasis). However, beyond these types of indirect inferences, his statements otherwise restrict “the beginnings of musical processes and preferences that were to have a formative influence on later medieval and modern practice”—in particular monotonality and the consequent transposition of all ragas to a common Sa—to “the early raga system,” not to the jatis (ibid.:253; see also 263, 63–64, 81). This does not mean that Widdess did not claim continuity between the jati

and modern raga systems in other respects, which potentially includes the previously discussed issues of scalar density and variability of note functions, but also the broad identification of structural levels, such as pure and mixed categories. And, as pointed out earlier, Widdess did not appear to hold any reservations when it came to recognizing continuity between jati and raga on the level of theory: “It can hardly be doubted, however, that jati provides the foundation on which the later theory and systems of raga were erected” (1995:45). However, having acknowledged the scriptural authority that caused later theorists of raga to conform their ideas to the *Natyashastra*, such claims to continuity appear less certain. How much of the similarity between the two systems, summarized by Widdess in Fig. 2.1 (1995:79), was a result of this conscious aping? How can we use these similarities as “evidence for continuities of musical substance between jatis and gramaragas” (ibid.:80), as “genuine continuities of musical tradition” (ibid.), when the appearance of continuity was the goal of the architects of the gramaraga system?

CONCLUSION: THE RETURN OF CONTINUITY

Throughout the previous sections of this chapter I have problematized the alleged similarities between the jati and raga systems. In the process we have identified a broader methodological problem in claiming continuity based on the identification of similarity, even in cases where the similarities identified are shown to be valid, such as the variability of some highly defined jatis and the early ragas. The fact that most compelled me to question this confusion of similarity with

continuity is the purposeful retention of anachronistic concepts and terms by post-Natyashastra theorists in a bid to mask yawning historical gaps and create the illusion of continuity. It follows from this that the very claim to continuity appears to be one of the most enduring and convincing continuities of all.

Here we revisit this argument and the implications it holds for the larger field of Indian music history, and for the particular history of music in the Ashtewale family. The realization that authors of Sanskrit music treatises confabulated a continuous history is nothing new, nor is it controversial. However, its significance to the debate over Indian music's continuity has yet to be realized. As already discussed, it has the potential to at least significantly alter our understanding of the depth of the continuity narrative. However, more than this, knowledge of the history-bending practices of Sanskritic authors also illuminates and brings coherence to a number of observations made in the course of this chapter on the working methods of contemporary scholars of early Indian music.

Current scholarship places the origin of the continuity narrative in the work of Orientalist scholars, most often beginning with William Jones' essay, "On the Musical Modes of the Hindus," first published in 1784 and considered to be the first English-language essay on Indian music (Qureshi 1991:160; Farrell 1997:23–27; Miner 1993:18; Allen 1997:68–74, though not in relation to Jones; Bakhle 2005:9–11 and 55–62; Lubach 2006:20; Subramanian [2006] 2011:59, 14, 60; Clayton 2007:84, 90–91; Peterson and Soneji 2008:5–7; Bor 2010:12). Informed broadly by post-colonial criticism, this scholarship exposed how knowledge created about Indian

music's past (and India's civilization's "golden age" more generally) was intimately tied to the imperial ambitions of its creators. Specifically, the idea that contemporary classical music had a continuous heritage going back thousands of years, which was lost due to the 'ineffectual' patronage of its Muslim rulers, is said to have: (1) taken music's authenticity out of the mouths (orality) of living ustads and placed it in ancient texts, which could then be easily manipulated; (2) vilified the Mughal empire, which the Company was in the process of overthrowing; (3) justified the need for a paternal intervention to remedy what was comparatively a dismal state of affairs; (4) connected the ancient history of India with the ancient history of the West, thereby granting the West authority over historical representation.¹⁴⁸

This apparent colonial-origin narrative, however, also soon proved (mis)useful for early Indian nationalists. Through it, they could disguise their own anti-colonial ambitions, as well as their prejudice towards their imagined former Muslim oppressors, as the pride of ancient Hindu traditions. Authors on "Hindu" music from S.M. Tagore to Ananda Coomaraswamy seized upon Jones's notion of Indian music's Hindu golden age to rally support for reform and establish a place of pride for Indian music among the world's great classical traditions.¹⁴⁹ Significantly, this was the

¹⁴⁸ For a parallel claim to the colonial origin of the narrative of India's pre-Muslim "golden age" and its subsequent decline, see Ali 2012:7-8 and many of the essays in Breckenridge and van der Veer (1993). The four points described above are my distillations of a number of arguments made by authors in Breckenridge and Van der Veer and similar arguments made by the above-mentioned scholars in relation to music.

¹⁴⁹ The legacy of orientalist ideas in the formation of national identities has been studied in other contexts as well. Regarding the interdependence of Filipino national identity and Spanish colonialism, see Thomas (2012), and in the same context, but with regard to music, Irving (2010).

context in which upper-caste, non-hereditary Hindu Brahmans such as the Ashtewales are thought to have entered music, as suggested in the introduction to this dissertation, and explored in more depth in Chapter Four, where we take up the formation of a narrative of Muslim Dominance.

The limitations of this colonial-origin theory have only recently begun to be explored in the context of music, most notably by Katerine Buttler Schofield, who argued that Mughal authors in the seventeenth century also considered “Hindustani music’s ur-tradition” to lie “in the past, in Sanskrit, and in the South” (2010a:499). Drawing on the *Akbar-nama*, a text which chronicled the life of that Mughal emperor and written by Abu’l Fazl in 1579, Schofield suggested that the Mughal veneration of texts such as the thirteenth century *Sangitaratnakara* and the late-fifteenth century *Manakutuhala* (“the curiosities of Man”), which was attributed to the Hindu ruler of Gwalior, Raja Man Singh Tomar (1486-1516), contributed to the canonization of these texts, and to the idealization of music in the pre-Muslim period, among later Persian authors and even the British (ibid.:299). Indian music’s classicization narrative, which includes the idea of a pre-Muslim Hindu continuity, therefore preceded its life in colonial discourse.

Schofield’s argument on the Mughal roots of Indian music’s classicization narratives is not restricted to the continuity narrative per se, nor is it expressed particularly in those terms. Rather she is concerned with the broader process of Hindustani music’s classicization, of which notions of continuity and antiquity form a part. In fact, Schofield identifies a total of seven different “discursive markers” of

Hindustani music's classicization, all of which are commonly accepted as being unique to colonial modernity, but which Schofield argues are "not without precedent" (ibid.:494; see also 489–90).

The longer view that Schofield brought to narratives associated with Indian music's classicization follows a long-standing trend in South Asian history of exposing the pre-modern origins of discourses supposedly invented by Orientalists. In fact, it might be said that this trend began in tandem with or reaction to the growth of post-colonial historical criticism. Richard Eaton's provocative essay, "(Re)imag(in)ing Other²ness: A Postmortem for the Postmodern in India" (2000a), which exemplified this trend, is significant for having drawn on the same evidence that Schofield drew on—Abu'l Fazl's *Akbar-nama*—to support a similar conclusion regarding the Mughal roots of Orientalist discourse. Based on extracts from the *Nama*, Eaton argued that the Mughals rationalized their conquest of the territories of Bengal using a theory of political devolution tied to climate, which the British later "appropriated" and applied both to Bengal and to India more broadly (2000a:152). "If, then, we are talking about any sort of colonial discourse," Eaton concluded, "it is a Mughal and not a European discourse that we have here" (ibid.:152).

There is no doubt that Schofield's argument for Mughal precedence considerably reframes our understanding of Hindustani music's modernity. However, it is left unbalanced without consideration of just how Mughal claims to the past (or other aspects of classicization under the Mughals) were in any way different from the claims made by later-day Orientalists and nationalists. The only thing Schofield

pointed out as being “peculiar” to the colonial-nationalist classicization process, for example, was “the development of (and resistance to) more prescriptive written notation systems for Indian music” (ibid.:489). In this regard, it is important to recognize that Mughal power was at its height during the period in which Schofield claimed Hindustani music was classicized (between 1630 and 1700). Furthermore, the veneration and appropriation of indigenous sources of musical knowledge by the Mughals came only *after* a period of general aloofness, superiority and isolation.¹⁵⁰ One could argue, as Catherine Asher does for architecture ([1992] 2008), that this shift in Mughal attitude toward indigenous music was “directly related to political and cultural ideology.” In her view, Akbar’s inclusive approach to architecture reflected his state policy of “universal toleration” or *sulh-i kul*, which he felt gave political strength to the empire (ibid.:66). Bonnie Wade (1998) forwarded a similar argument: that music was one way in which Akbar forwarded his agenda of “cultural synthesis.” It may have been that the Mughal embrace of indigenous cultural forms and the more particular veneration of India’s Sanskritic musical past became less threatening and more enticing only in the context of political security. Alternatively, it may have

¹⁵⁰ This progression is also born out in the realm of architecture. As Catherine Asher noted, “during the earliest days of Mughal patronage, little attention was paid to India’s non-Islamic architectural traditions; however, during the reign of the third Mughal ruler, Akbar (1556-1605), indigenous Indian elements, both Hindu and Muslim, were incorporated consciously into Mughal structures” ([1992] 2008:1). Asher also pointed to the earlier Khilji period, in which a blended “Indo-Islamic culture had come into its own” (ibid.:6). She exemplified this not through architecture, but through the poetry of Amir Khusrau, who “used motifs such as the parrot, mangoes and flowers only found in India to supplement Persianate imagery, such as cedars and tulips, alien to the subcontinent” (ibid.). Madhur Trivedi similarly claimed that the “active contact” of Persian and Indian musics during the Khilji period produced a “synthesized tradition of musical arts” (ibid.:65).

reflected a deliberate attempt to incorporate the local and thereby further secure their existing power.

In either case, the concurrence of the Mughal embrace of indigenous traditions of music (and the concomitant idealization of music from the pre-Muslim era) with the height of Mughal power was directly contrasted by the case of British, whose use of the continuity narrative *preceded*, or was at least concurrent with, their claim to paramouncy in the subcontinent. We might venture to speculate that instead of solidifying a power already established, such narratives helped the British build their power to begin with. The trajectories of historical representation and political power having been parallel suggests an equation of knowledge = power as forwarded by the theoretical traditions of Foucault and Said. The nationalists were perhaps the more subordinate of the three in their strategic use of the continuity narrative, though their ranks were by no means made up of subaltern, but instead the elite (see Chapter 4).

Thus, though typically attributed to colonial authors, the narrative of music's Hindu continuity may have been appropriated from Mughal-period authors, as Schofield has revealed. However, the claims of these Mughal authors also had their antecedents. I am referring, of course, to the authors of Sanskrit treatises and their oft-noted attempts to create the illusion of continuity across both historical periods and spheres of inquiry (theory and practice). Schofield made a point to acknowledge that there were "classicization processes in South Asian cultural domains *predating* and contemporaneous with the Mughal systematization of music," pointing specifically to those of Sanskrit (2010:491, my emphasis; see also 510 n.18). However, "for reasons

of space,” she considered it only briefly, and not in connection with the narrative of continuity.

Here, too, we find that the fields of South Asian history and religion have pointed the way forward for music by connecting the threads of Orientalist discourse to proclivities already present in both the pre-colonial and pre-Mughal periods. In a more recent iteration of this idea, Rosalind O’Hanlon and David Washbrook argued that Orientalist constructions of India as a place without history “may have owed something to particular Indian religious traditions that set out to present themselves as ahistorical and timeless” (2011:133). Describing how this may have been so, they noted—with great relevance to our present discussion—that, “the tradition of Brahmanic scriptural exegesis...was deliberately designed to obliterate distinctions of time, forging exercises in commentary directly linking together authors located in different centuries and millennia as if they were standing in the same scriptorium” (ibid.).

Though scholars of early Indian music have also recognized this practice—Widdess described it, for example, as an “archaizing diadactic” (1985:184; see also 2010:118)—they have not always done so with the same critical intentions. Lewis Rowell, in fact, defended this practice, describing it as as “a laminate of many successful historical layers” and terming it “reflexive expansion”:

Amplifying the percepts of earlier treatises by means of material from later authors has been, and is, a commonplace in Indian musical scholarship, as it is

in other fields of learning. This tendency toward what I like to think of as ‘reflexive expansion’ is not to be condemned, merely to be undertaken with a skeptical attitude and an awareness of its limitations.... There are many valid reasons (far too many to argue here) why the musical *sastras* can, and ought to be, read as a laminate of many successful historical layers, and within which the testimony of later authors can rightly supply the missing pieces and illuminate the meanings of the enigmatic remains of earlier texts. (1992b.:112)

Rowell’s statement suggests that the brief, but vivid, image O’Hanlon and Washbrook painted of the working practices of Sanskrit authors and their ghostly invocations of other authors from the distant past may well apply not only to Sanskrit treatise writers, but also to their present-day commentators such as Rowell. Earlier we found that Widdess’s understanding of antaramarga was itself forged “in commentary directly linking together authors located in different centuries and millennia as if they were standing in the same scriptorium,” to utilize O’Hanlon and Washbrook’s sentence out of context. We further speculated that similar practices informed Widdess’s understanding of alignment in the shuddha jatis. And Rowell’s teleological view of rhythmic cyclicity may also derive from similar methods of “Brahmanic scriptural exegesis,” since according to him, “the testimony of later authors can rightly supply the missing pieces and illuminate the meanings of the enigmatic remains of earlier texts.” Indeed, then, we may have uncovered yet another form of continuity behind the claim to continuity.

All of this informs the broadest, yet the least directly discussed question of this chapter: whether the Ashtewales could have been motivated to take up a music largely populated by Muslim musicians in part because they imagined it connected them with an ancient Hindu past. Those who believe that the narrative of continuity began with British Orientalists might claim that such an imagination would have been anachronistic during the time the Ashtewales took up music in the early nineteenth century. Without denying the significance and particularity of this narrative in Orientalist discourse, it is clear from our foregoing discussion that there were indigenous precedents. For this reason, this chapter argues that such an imagination was, indeed, possible. Without access to evidence that may have been used to approach this question on a more particular, individual level, this chapter has necessarily had to work broadly, drawing deductions from existing debates over the claim to Indian music's continuity as well as its actual continuity

II. MUSLIMS BEYOND DOMINANCE

INTRODUCTION

The conquest of Hindoostan by the Mahomadan princes forms a most important epoch in the history of music. From this time we may date the decline of all arts and sciences purely Hindoo, for the Mahomadans were not great patrons of learning, and the more bigoted of them were not only great iconoclasts, but discouragers of the learning of the country.

N. Augustus Willard ([1834] 1882:120).

What is a matter of even greater sorrow is that the Muslims are not easily inclined to teach music to Hindus.

Sourindro Mohun Tagore (1872:2–3)

Firstly, Hindus have virtually lost this art—it is entirely in Muslim hands. Although at one time it was a purely Hindu inheritance, no Hindu can aspire to acquire it unless he is prepared to demean himself before his Muslim masters and do everything he is asked to do.

V.N. Bhatkhande circa 1920s (Deodhar 1993:48)

Music had become the monopoly of a small coterie of illiterate professionals who jealously guarded their art. These narrow-minded custodians of music took care not to create rivals out of their own pupils!

Susheela Mishra (1985:11)

Historically, the profession of music had been hereditary, dominated by Muslim families whose knowledge of the art was a jealously guarded secret.

Daniel Neuman ([1980] 1990:20)

Gharana maestros (*ustads*) had erratic, self-protective, and sometimes capricious pedagogical habits. They also tended to be secretive about their art, tradition, and history. As a result, music's modernizers held them responsible for impeding music's progress.

Janaki Bakhle (2005:6)

One of the most enduring stereotypes of Muslim musicians, evident in the quotations given above, which span the greater part of two centuries and extend over colonial, reformist, ethnomusicological, and postcolonial perspectives, is that they have “dominated” knowledge of music from roughly the late seventeenth to the early twentieth century. This characterization of Muslims as dominating does not simply refer to the historical fact that they constituted a majority of musicians during this period, a claim for which there exists considerable evidence. Rather, it refers to the character or quality of that dominance as being “secretive,” “jealously guarded,” “self-protective,” and “narrow-minded.” Muslims, in other words, are widely assumed to have imposed and purposely maintained a monopoly over the field of music by refusing to teach to those outside their families. This presumed guarded monopoly, in fact, is what is said to have justified the intervention of musical reformers to “win music back for the Hindu elite” (Qureshi 1991:161), a task in which they largely succeeded by the mid-twentieth century.

If Muslim hereditary professional musicians jealously guarded their art, if they monopolized the tradition by refusing to teach to outsiders, or at least made it morally hazardous for their Hindu students to learn from them (which is suggested by the quotation attributed to Bhatkhande above, and which I explore further below), then how did non-hereditary Hindus ever come to make up the majority of professionals in the twentieth century? As we shall see, some reformers, like Bhatkhande, claimed that Hindus themselves liberated music from their tight-fisted ustadhs through their dutiful persistence and their capacity to endure the humiliation

that such an apprenticeship entailed. Others reformers, like Babu Nanak Prasad suggested that non-hereditary musicians gained entry by manipulating their ustads' weakness for one-upmanship, pitting one against the other until knowledge was unintentionally let out. Still others, like the early-twentieth century vocalist Ramkrishnabua Vajhe (commonly, Vaze), are said to have employed the power of patrons to command ustads to teach. All of these explanations credit learning to the Hindu student, who, through their devotion, resilience, or wit, beguiled their intractable Muslim teachers. Though emanating from the reform and influenced to a limited degree by earlier colonial writing, ideas about Muslim intransigence have continued to inform the characterization of Muslim musicians in contemporary scholarship in a variety of subtle and indirect ways.

The second part of this dissertation aims to reveal the fallacy of this narrative, which serves to compliment another common assumption, also revealed as flawed in the first part of the dissertation, that Brahmins came to classical music only through the means of nationalism. It is complementary because it explains why Brahmins had not allegedly come to classical music before reformist agitation: music was in Muslim hands. Chapter Four, the first chapter of Part Two, provides a fine-grained look at the development of what I am calling the Muslim dominance narrative beginning with the earliest English-language sources. It reveals a surprising conclusion that mirrors the one Gyanendra Pandey ([1990] 2006) came to in his discursive history of communalism: that the narrative of Muslim dominance as we know it today, though partly seeded by colonial authors, came to fruition only in the writings of anti-

colonial nationalists. However, unlike Pandey's consideration of the history of communalism, I show how even the colonial preface to the narrative of Muslim dominance drew heavily on a variety of preexisting criticisms, both European and Indian, thus giving these pre-existing narratives their contemporary salience. Furthermore, as the last of the opening epigraphs by Daniel Neuman and Janaki Bakhle suggest, there has been a continued reliance on this narrative in present-day writing on Indian music—even in the work, ironically, of scholars critical of the reform movement and its consequences for Muslim musicians.

If Chapter Four reveals the construction of and continued investment in the idea of an intransigent Muslim past, Chapter Five unearths a deeper, more epistemological problem that plagues our understanding of Indian music's "Muslim" period, as well as its pre-Muslim, "Hindu" past: a reliance on homogeneous, static and non-contingent forms of Hindu and Muslim identities. This problem is registered in the literature in a number of subtle ways. We find it in the very claim to a shift in the twentieth century from an undifferentiated class of Muslim hereditary professionals to a fully conscious Hindu bourgeoisie. It informs a counter-response to this claim to a shift: that Indian music was "Hindu" before it was "Muslim," and so the twentieth-century shift should more accurately be characterized as a "re-Hinduization." It crops up in a related argument that those Muslims who did dominate the past were not "truly" Muslim, but Hindus who were forced to convert to Islam. It lies behind an important explanation for why Muslims came to dominate Indian music in the first place: that the practice of endogamy in the Muslim community

naturally encouraged their secretiveness. Finally, this dichotomous understanding of Hindu and Muslim identity is embedded in the very terms we use to refer to Muslim and Hindu musicians respectively: “ustad” and “guru,” “hereditary” and “non-hereditary.” I explore all of these problems in Chapter Five. I suggest here that rather than understand what happened in the twentieth century as a shift from one type of dominance (Muslim) to another (Hindu)—from one already defined religious community to another—the primary shift was in defining those very categories, a shift towards the communalization of social and musical identity.

Overall, I believe that (with some exception) there has been a collective failure among writers on Indian music to define what it meant to be “Muslim” or “Hindu” and to differentiate this from what it might mean today or in any particular historical context. The idea that music was once dominated by “Muslims” (be they kalāvānt-s, dhārī-s, Sufis, Hanāfī-s, Sunnī-s, mirāsī-s, the Ashrāf, etc.), like the idea that India was once under “Muslim rule” (be it Turk, Afghan, Persian, Arab, Mughal, Mongol, etc.), and before that “Hindu” rule (be it Brahman, kṣatriya, vaiśnāv, śaivite, Ashokan Buddhism, Jain, Maharashtrian, etc.), attributes greater valiancy to a category of religious identity than may have been warranted. That is not to say that these ostensibly more narrow categories are not just as heterogeneous, but that any one of them or others might have been more intelligible and meaningful than the categories of Muslim or Hindu during a particular time and place. Nationalist reformers, for example, did not always identify the target of their criticism as “Muslim,” though that category may have been applicable. Instead, they often

criticized “illiterate” professionals (as in the opening quote by Nayar), a category that was not at all applicable to literate and elite Muslim musicians, some of whom took up the cause of the reform themselves by writing books, establishing institutions, and, in fact, commenting on music’s deplorable state on account of its association with illiterate professionals! (A few examples will be considered in Chapter Four). That is also not to say that this more narrow criticism, even if wielded by elite Muslims, did not end up having pernicious consequences for *all* Muslims, regardless of their class or educational background. And this is where the broader category of “Muslim” thus becomes more relevant, when discussing the reform’s fallout.

However, scholars of Indian music, particularly those of a critical persuasion, who are rightly focused on the broad consequences of music’s nationalization for all Muslim musicians, have tended to assume that colonialist and nationalist writers from prior centuries were undoubtedly and in all instances criticizing “Muslims” when they attacked “ustads” or “hereditary” musicians for their intransigence, illiteracy, degeneracy or debauchery. The problem, as I have pointed out, is that outside of some choice examples, a few of which are given in the opening of this chapter, rarely did these writers make clear-cut pronouncements (or denouncements) of religious identity. (A closer look at even the opening quotations, which I discuss further below, obscures their apparent focus on Muslims). Even if the musicians they targeted were, in fact, Muslim, in what situations and in what historical contexts did their Muslimness form an essential part of the critique? If a Maharashtrian Brahman musicologist like Bhatkhande, writing in the 1920s, complains about the illiteracy of professional

musicians, most of whom happen to be Muslim, should we not understand his comments as anti-Muslim? Indeed, does the Muslim musician need to be named, or can “he” (always assumed to be male) be understood through implication?

In light of these difficulties, I believe it is important that we insist on a certain amount of contingency and unreliability in interpreting the anti-Muslim sentiment of reformist or colonialist authors. The community-specific use of terms like “ustad,” though more commonplace now, was less common prior to the early twentieth century (explored in Chapter Five).¹⁵¹ This does not mean, however, that our only other alternative is to romanticize the past as “fuzzy,” “fissiparous,” or as a “tabula rasa.”¹⁵² As we shall see, even in the late nineteenth century, criticism of “ustads” or “hereditary professionals” was sometimes wed to a specific Muslim identity. It also does not mean that a community-specific usage is the only kind available to us today, as Dard Neuman (2004) has suggested with reference to the use of the term “ustad” by and for some twentieth-century Hindus (discussed in Chapter Five). In short, we need to be more attentive to the historical contingencies of the terms that our sources use, and more careful about how we use these terms to refer to present-day and historical contexts.

As mentioned, many of the authors whom I critique for retaining the dominating nature of the Muslim past are themselves involved in a critical project of

¹⁵¹ Perhaps we might also be able to point to a less exclusive use of the (now) Muslim honorific title of “Khan.” One Bir Mandal Khan, for example, a svarmandal player from Akbar’s court, is thought to have been a Hindu (McNeil 1992:42 cited in Napier 2005:125).

¹⁵² For a critique of Sudipta Kaviraj’s theory of the “fuzziness” of pre-modern communities see Sumit Guha (2003:150).

revealing the consequences of Hindu nationalism for hereditary families of Muslim musicians. It may be worth asking, then, whether an insistence on complexity in interpretation and representation necessarily challenges our ability to identify systemic social inequalities. In other words, does this approach risk making relative what is clearly contentious about the nationalist historiography of Indian music? Similar questions have been posed about the consequences of postmodern criticism's intervention in other fields.¹⁵³ I do not pretend to resolve this issue here. I do, however, attempt to hold together both of these opposing tendencies throughout these chapters. In bringing attention to the risks of essentialism inherent in our critical agendas, it is my hope to come to an even more nuanced critique of the social inequalities that underlie the history of this artform.

Chapter Six, the last of this part and thus the last of the dissertation, dives deeper into the history of Hindu-Muslim discipleship in the Ashtewale family, thus providing a specific case for the long history of non-hereditary Hindus who learned directly (and successfully) from Muslim masters. The Ashtewales were not exceptional in successfully receiving tuitions. Not only did their own teachers take on other Hindu disciples, but many other Muslim teachers were also known to take on, and sometimes prefer, Hindu students. These stories of Muslim-Hindu discipleship challenge the notion that the chief obstacle to Hindu participation in music prior to

¹⁵³ Dipesh Chakrabharty, for example, has asked whether applying universalist categories of analysis (particularly regarding capitalism) for the purpose of social justice risks reducing the agency of those such a theory is meant to champion (as discussed in Katz 2010:107). Steven Winter, in his "Human Values in a Postmodern World," discusses this issue in relation to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's insistence on the awareness of contingency. Reactions, Winter observes, range from the ability of contingency to open up space for transformative politics. For others, it leads to nihilism through moral relativism.

the reform of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the miserly Muslim ustad from whom the tradition needed to be rescued. Instead they suggest that it was due to the pluralism with which Muslim musicians approached their art and their willingness to teach Hindus that a Hinduization of music was even made possible.

It bears repeating that my criticism of the narrative of Muslim dominance does not amount to an argument *against* the idea that Muslims made up a majority of musicians in the centuries prior to the twentieth. “Muslims,” understood here as a category of identity that was not necessarily self-referential, nor exclusive of other “non-Muslim” practices, did indeed predominate. Though this “fact” is more often proclaimed than proven, evidence can be found in treatises on music written mainly in Persian and Urdu such as *Rāg Darpan* (1666) and *Rāg Sāgar* (late sixteenth century), but also in a range of works that focus on other subjects, but which contain specific chapters or passages on music, such as the *Ā’in-i-Akbarī* (1593), *Tūzuk-i-Jahāngīrī* (late sixteenth-early seventeenth century), *Shāhjahān Nāma* (mid-seventeenth century), *Tohfāt al-Hind* (c.1675), *Risāla-i-Zikr-i-Mughanniyān-i-Hindūstān* (1734-35 or 1753), *Muraqqa‘-i-Dehlī* (1738), *Uṣūl al-Nagḥmāt-i-Āṣafī* (1790s) and others.

Scholars such as Abdul Halim (1962), K.C.D. Brahaspati (1974, 1976), Shahab Sarmadee (1978), Najma Parveen Ahmad (1984), Regula Qureshi (1991:156), Françoise ‘Nalini’ Delvoye (1994), John Greig (1987:312), Richard Widdess (2010:118), Katherine Butler Schofield (formerly Brown 2003:45–81, cited in Schofield 2010:507), and others have revealed how these texts, in addition to

compiling and commenting upon previous works in Sanskrit on music, also contain a wealth of contemporary information, including lists of musicians.¹⁵⁴ To my knowledge, however, no author has explicitly drawn on this material in order to consider the social makeup of musicians during the Mughal period.¹⁵⁵ However, a cursory look at the names listed in these texts provided by Najma Ahmad (1984) indicates that “Muslims”—openly defined—indeed predominated.

What I think needs to be reframed about our understanding of the Muslim past, then, is not that Muslims made up a majority, but the way this majority has been characterized as “dominating,” “jealously guarded,” “virtually complete,” and “monopolistic.” I believe we can acknowledge that Muslims constituted a majority without assuming they were “tightfisted” or “holding music hostage.” Certainly there were some Muslims, as well as some Hindus, who proved difficult to learn from. Stories of learning “on the sly,” or going through the equivalent of “hazing” rituals for new disciples, are the stuff that musical legends in many traditions around the

¹⁵⁴ Ever since William Jones likened Muslim writing on India music to “muddy rivulets” flowing from a pure Hindu spring (discussed below), Persian texts on Indian music have often been seen as little more than derivative works until the aforementioned scholars revealed otherwise (see Bor 2006:7; Widdess 1985:183). S.M. Tagore, for example, wrote, “the Mahomedan musicians did not write any original works on music; what they composed were merely *rechauffe* of Sanskrit treatises on the subject” ([1896] 1990:58–59).

¹⁵⁵ Jairazbhoy, citing *A'in-i-Akbari*, noted that many of the instrumentalists of Akbar’s court “were foreigners who came from as far as Mashhad and Tabriz in Iran and from Herat in modern Afghanistan” (1971:19). Daniel Neuman, also citing the *A'in-i-Akbari*, claimed that of the thirty-six musicians listed in Akbar’s court, “at least nine were from outside of India” (1990:86). Joep Bor has suggested that Persian treaties generally offer evidence regarding the contribution of performers of the Mughal court to the formation of Hindustani music, but not specifically of the identity of these musicians (2006:12). A forthcoming article by Katherine Butler Schofield titled, “Chief Musicians to the Mughal Emperors: The Delhi Kalawant Biraderi, 17th to 19th Centuries,” mines a wide range of Persian-language sources, including some of the ones mentioned above, as well as newly unearthed sources, in tracing the genealogy of the Delhi Kalawant musical lineage.

world are made of. However, when applied to the context of Muslim-Hindu apprenticeship, the qualities of orthodoxy, intractability, and ultimately communalism, become, I believe, wedded to Muslim identity in unique, essentialist ways.

Similar narratives that pit dutiful student against intransigent teacher certainly exist in which the primary antagonist is a non-Muslim. Outside the context of music is a famous episode from the epic the *Mahābhārata* in which the Brahman guru of archery, Droṇācārya, refused to teach his aspiring pupil, Eklavya, because the latter was of low-caste. In music, the early-fourteenth century Deccan court musician, Gopāl Nāyak, a Hindu, is said to have refused to teach Amir Khusrao, a Persian Sufi musician and poet, thus reversing the trend discussed here. The Brahman South Indian dance masters of Tanjore known as the Tanjore Quartet were said to have routinely refused to impart their secrets even to their own pupils (Rothfeld 1928:158–73, cited in Sundar 1995:248). And C.R. Day (1891:7) reckoned that “native musicians” the country over had a “great dislike...to imparting instruction to any but a favoured few.” Kobayashi provides many examples of rivalries and antagonisms between all manners of musicians (Hindu-Hindu, Muslim-Muslim, Hereditary-Hereditary, non-hereditary-non-hereditary), with the intent of de-linking the necessity of interpreting reformist discourse against Muslims as anti-Muslim (2003:206–212), thus preceding the argument I make here.

Considering that the antagonist-teachers in these stories are mostly Hindu, it might be argued that stories of Muslim intransigence are not really “anti-Muslim” at

all. Instead, they might be seen as simply substituting the Muslim for the Hindu in an already familiar narrative framework. In this interpretation, the quality of intransigence becomes “pluralized” and applicable to all musicians. Jeffrey Grimes, for instance, like Kobayashi above, claimed that the kind of problems that tend to be associated with Muslim teachers were instead common to both Muslim and Hindu teachers. Hindu musicians, he claimed, were “every bit as difficult and temperamental as ‘old-school’ Muslim musicians are thought to have been.” Thus, instead of questioning the notion of intransigence, Grimes (and Kobayashi) pluralize it (2008:132–33).

Though the intention of this idea is a noble one—challenging the essentialism behind the claim to Muslim intransigence—it does not acknowledge the special meaning that these stories have for Muslims. For the fact that Hindu teachers happen to also be portrayed negatively does not erase the larger context of anti-Muslim prejudice. As Chapter Five will make clear, the identification of Muslim musicians as intransigent, at least from the early twentieth century on, resonates with the ways that Muslims in general have been portrayed in the larger public sphere as *the Other* against which “India” and “Indians” are defined. The prevalence of stories of stubborn teachers among different communities of musicians, such as Brahmans in the South, may reveal existing social fractions or divisions that have a different salience in those contexts.

The claim that Muslim musicians “dominated” music is often paired with the claim that the Hindus (particularly Brahmans) who came to dominate music were

fueled by nationalist zeal to take music out of Muslim hands. As I have noted in the introduction, these two claims have contributed to the creation of a binary historical paradigm in which one dominance (Muslim) is followed by another (Hindu) instead of seeing the primary movement as the increasing coherence of and disagreement between Muslim and Hindu identities. Previous chapters have tackled the Hindu half of this historiographical binary. Having established that Brahman musicians (whether patron-performers, such as the Asthewales, or lower-status professionals, such as the earliest Brahman singers of the Gwalior gharana) did exist prior to the nationalist era, and that nationalism was not the only sign under which Brahmans entered music, these chapters focus on the Muslim half.

The simple fact that almost all of the early Brahmans who learned music did so from Muslim masters—a fact that is demonstrated in the introduction and further born out in the case of the Ashtewale family in Chapter Six—is enough, I believe, to undermine the notion that Muslims were secretive, monopolistic and intransigent, even if the details of these apprenticeships are often represented, particularly in reformist writing, as examples of this very notion. (Interestingly, the predominance of Muslims, contingently understood, among the teachers of the earliest Brahman musicians also lends credibility to the idea that they made up a majority of professionals in the period prior to the reform—additionally significant for pointing to their later marginalization within a Hindu nationalist imaginary).

However, Part Two of this dissertation aspires to do much more than just prove the narrative of Muslim dominance wrong; its main contribution is to reveal the

construction of and continued investment in this narrative, which has only been hinted at in the existing literature. Without attending to the history of colonial and reformist abuse of the various points that have come to cohere in this narrative, I believe we let those pasts speak through our use of the terms “dominance,” “monopoly” and “jealously guarded” to apply to Muslims, even if that is not what is intended.

4. MUSLIM DOMINANCE

INTRODUCTION

Though their differences are many, the wide variety of writers on Indian music, be they colonialists, reformists, ethnomusicologists or academic scholars of others disciples, have tended to agree on one thing: that Muslims “dominated” music (particularly *khyāl*) from the late seventeenth century to the mid-twentieth century. By this it is not simply meant that Muslims constituted a statistical majority, a fact we have no reason to doubt, even while acknowledging a good number of exceptions. Instead, the claim that Muslims dominated music more specifically suggests (and oftentimes explicitly states) that Muslims were secretive, jealously guarded, monopolistic, tight-fisted, intransigent and parsimonious in preserving their majority. Muslims, in other words, did not simply dominate the field of music numerically; they dominated it qualitatively. My identification of a narrative of Muslim dominance is therefore meant to reflect the commonplace characterization of Muslim musicians as *dominating*.

The significance, as well as the specifics, of the claim to Muslim dominance across each of these broadly defined groups and across very different periods of time have, of course, differed. For early colonialists (distinctions will be made below), who depicted Muslim rule as the primary cause of India’s cultural decline, the broader idea of Muslim dominance (not specific to music) supported the need for a patriarchal, colonial intervention. For music’s nationalist reformers of both the late-

nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the idea that illiterate Muslims had abducted and adulterated a once great Hindu music fueled a movement to reclaim and reform music along Hindu lines. And for modern-day scholars critical of colonialists and reformists, the existence of a Muslim-dominated past served as a basis for critiquing the displacement of Muslim musicians by the Hindu-led reform movement.

Though overly generalized, this outline of authors and their commitments offers one way of explaining why the claim to Muslim dominance (again, not in quantity, but in quality) has remained so tenacious and itself so “dominating” over different periods and across different subject positions. That is not to say, of course, that this narrative was ready-made. To the contrary, it has developed incrementally over a period of more than one hundred years. This chapter follows the development of this narrative by looking closely at specific claims to music’s Muslim past made by authors in each of these categories beginning. One of my most significant findings is that while colonial authors may have initiated a specifically Muslim-focused narrative of the degeneracy of Indian culture generally and music specifically, the Muslims who were targeted by colonial authors for causing music’s degeneration were *not*, contrary to what is commonly believed, musicians. Instead, they were rulers and patrons who, in the mind of the colonial author, bore the brunt of responsibility for music’s decay due to their improper patronage of theory. Secondly, these colonial criticisms were themselves drawn from preexisting narrative frameworks of both European and Indian origin, thus further questioning the assumed origin of this narrative in colonial discourse. Instead, what becomes clear is that native reformist

authors took up the strands, starts, and sidelines of the narrative earlier provided by colonial discourse and transformed it into the one that we know today. It is with them, in other words, that we find the culmination of the idea that *Muslim musicians* were specifically reticent to teach.

While finer distinctions between colonialist and reformist discourse with respect to the Muslim dominance narrative is still, therefore, forthcoming, it is nevertheless the case that both of these authorial groups have received a great deal of attention in the literature. Authors such as Regula Qureshi, Joep Bor, Gerry Farrell, Janaki Bakhle, Lakshmi Subramanian, Bennett Zon, Enrico Kobayashi, Sharmadip Basu and others have identified the investments that colonial and reformist authors had in claiming a Muslim past for music. Far less critical attention, however, has been paid to these critical scholars themselves. By critiquing the critics, I am in no way suggesting they are wrong in pointing to the limitations of colonialist and reformist discourse. Instead, I argue that they have, in general, retained and nurtured a problematic element of this discourse—the “dominating” nature of the “Muslim” past. The reason in some cases, I suggest, is related to the critical project itself, in that the existence of a previous and impervious Muslim monopoly is often the measure by which the reform’s marginalization of Muslims is criticized.

My objective, then, is not to question the prevalence of Muslim musicians in the past, but to show how the characterization of that prevalence as dominating has grown to fit the ambitions of the various groups of authors who have come to wield and shape it. In the case of colonialist and reformist authors, that ambition has tended

to exclude Muslims from a rightful place in the history of the tradition. In the case of ethnomusicologists, whose have generally taken the opposite approach of reasserting Muslim musicians' rightful place, problematic elements of the narrative as developed by colonialists and reformists have nevertheless been retained. It is my hope that in bringing attention to the legacy behind current expressions of the Muslim dominance narrative we will come to create more accurate portrayals of past Muslim musicians that do rely on or unwittingly make reference to stereotyped notions of their pedagogical secretiveness, intransigence or parsimony.

COLONIALISTS

I begin this chapter with colonial authors for one simple reason: it is often claimed that the goals, ideas, and language of the musical reform movement—and, indeed, that of the larger social reform and nationalist movements—were framed in direct response to colonial thought.¹⁵⁶ Whether this process was more mimetic or

¹⁵⁶ Many have argued the point that Indian nationalists appropriated orientalist and colonial knowledge. Jenny Sharpe (1993:44), for example, wrote that, “nineteenth-century Indian nationalists discovered the plotting for a national myth of origins in the pages of Orientalist writings.” David Ludden (1993:271) noted that, “nationalism...has appropriated orientalism in the name of national self-representation.” Ashish Nandy (1983:71–74, cited in Richard King 1999:184) earlier described the adoption of Orientalist categories by Indians as “the second colonization” of India.” In fact, Nandy’s notion that colonialism created the framework within which the colonized are led to fight back was applied to the activities of musical reformer S.M. Tagore by Charles Capwell (1991:237). Capwell (2010:286) also utilized the idea, forwarded by Bernard Cohn (1984:208–209), that the British public political idiom “set the terms of discourse of the nationalism movement in its beginning phases.”

Others scholars, however, have pointed to nationalism’s pre-colonial precedents as a way of redressing both the lack of self-determination acceded to colonial subjects, and the rupture with the past ascribed to colonialism. While this approach was also advanced by early nationalist historiographers (Prakash 1990:388-91), I refer here to scholars who were responding to the post-colonial critique. Christopher Bayly (1998:vii) in particular has, in response to “the drastic foreshortening of history which is implied in many recent critiques of nationalist modernity,” highlighted various types of loyalties that “bound some Indians, even in the immediate pre-colonial period, to their regional homelands.” Sheldon

dialogic is a point that has long been debated. However, few oppose the idea that colonial writers instigated and inspired the reform by providing it, in Janaki Bakhle's (2005:10, 52) words, with the three elements it needed to establish a classical music tradition: nation, notation and religion.¹⁵⁷

For those few writers who have attempted to historicize the narrative of Muslim dominance and not simply rely on its truth, colonial discourse is similarly seen as having set its terms. Lakshmi Subramanian ([2006]: 2011:64) made this point most directly when she said, "The Orientalist critique [of India's musical traditions] circulated the idea that in the north Muslims had dominated the profession of music, while in the south, it had remained almost exclusively in the hands of the Hindus."

More generally, Sharmadip Basu (2011:333) argued that the largely upper-caste

Pollock (2006) has posited the existence of a Sanskrit "cosmopolis," a geography plotted through Sanskrit literature, which covered the Indian subcontinent as far back as the first millennium. More recently, Diana Eck (2012:6) argued that extensive all-India networks of Hindu pilgrimage have, over "many hundreds of years," built imaginary and emotional attachments to place that prefigure the nation. In making this argument, Eck drew on the work of Rajat Kanta Ray (2008), Vice Chancellor of Viswa Bharati University Santiniketan, who attempted to delink nationalism from colonial modernity.

¹⁵⁷ In support of the colonial roots of the musical reform movement, Harold Powers (1965:4) tentatively suggested that the imposition of English as the language of the elite in India since 1835 made possible "the inter-cultural nature of Indian music scholarship" beginning with William Jones. Gerry Farrell (1997:67) was more certain in claiming that, "Western values...were at the forefront of the musical agenda in nineteenth-century India." Martin Clayton (2007:92) even more provocatively asserted, "Like it or not, all of these figures [key figures of Indian music's renaissance] had to work within the context established by colonialism and Orientalist scholarship." Charles Capwell (2010) similarly proposed to examine "how British idioms set the terms of a nationalist discourse in music during the late nineteenth century in Calcutta" (ibid.:286), but also more generously, "how Hindus themselves evolved that concept [of Hindu music] by adopting methods of colonial culture" (ibid.:285). Finally, Katherine Butler Schofield (2010), though taking issue with claims to a "radical discursive break in the North Indian musical field between the pre-colonial and colonial systems knowledge" (ibid.:489), nevertheless appears to have accepted the "well-established historical trajectory" of music's modernization that she earlier summarized, wherein the judgements of colonial writers on Indian music "were accepted *in toto* by Indian nationalist reformers...who felt that to prove their national equality on musical grounds they had to classicize previously unmarked musical traditions [which, as argued by Schofield, were not actually unmarked] according to the British rules of play" (ibid.:488).

bourgeoisie or *bhadra-lok* of late-nineteenth century Bengal derived their depictions of the Muslim professional musician as their “absolute Other” from a larger “discursive fabrication of colonial forms of knowledge.” Indeed, summarizing recent writing on North Indian music’s modernization, Schofield (2010:488) explained that, “British colonial writers on music, most notably exemplified by Sir William Jones (1784) and Augustus Willard (1834), established a (by now wearingly familiar) narrative whereby Indian music had fallen from the heights of a classical Hindu and Sanskrit ‘golden age into degeneracy through the ignorance and illiteracy of its Muslim feudal patrons and hereditary practitioners, the latter of whom fiercely guarded a monopoly over elite musical materials.”

While I do not disagree with the claim that the colonial writers provided the terms on which Muslims were vilified, there is much to be distinguished in this gloss on colonial discourse. Even if we limit our consideration of “colonial” writers on Indian music to those who published prior to the twentieth century, which I do here, important differences emerge over the nearly hundred-year period between the publication William Jones’s *On the Music Modes of the Hindus* in 1792 (though begun in 1784) and C.R. Day’s *The Music and Musical Instruments of Southern India and the Deccan* in 1891 (though completed in 1887). In contrast to what is commonly claimed, my reading suggests that colonial authors did not aim their derisive statements at Muslim musicians at all, at least initially. Instead, they focused on Muslim rulers, who in the larger scheme of imperialism were their true rivals. It was only later that musicians, branded as illiterate and immoral, became the focus of

colonial criticism, and even then, we are hard pressed to find evidence that these musicians were understood to have been Muslim.

Furthermore, in their eventual targeting of musicians as a cause for music's degeneration, colonial authors drew heavily on already established narrative conventions derived from both European and pre-colonial Indian contexts. Katherine Butler Schofield (2010) put forth the significant argument that many of the "discursive markers" of Hindustani music's classicization and nationalization in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the most important for us being "complaints of performers' illiteracy and musical degeneracy," though commonly thought to be derived from colonial authors, are also found in earlier Mughal-period texts.¹⁵⁸ These complaints, the earliest (in Schofield's account) being attributed to the *A'in-i Akbari* of 1593, constitute an important indigenous precedent for the specific criticisms made of *Muslim* musicians later on. I address the professional musician's pre-communal contempt more fully in the Chapter Five.

Beyond even these indigenous precedents, evidence suggests that colonial writers may have brought their own parallel or independently developed narratives to bear on their critique of Indian musicians. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, European men of letters such as James Macpherson (1736–1796) and Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832), the internationally acclaimed Scottish poet, novelist, and ballad-collector credited with popularizing the genre of the historical novel (Lauber

¹⁵⁸ Lakshmi Subramanian (2011) makes a similar argument with regard to South Indian classical music and the roots of many of its modernisms in the pre-colonial Maratha and Nayaka periods. See the introduction to her book, *From the Tanjore Court to the Madras Music Academy* ([2006] 2011).

1989:23), criticized the oral poets of Europe in ways strikingly similar to the way that N. Augustus Willard (discussed below) criticized Indian professional musicians just a few decades later: as “ignorant” and unlettered (Gelbert 2009:369). Influenced by the textual bias of religious hermeneutics, these writers assumed that the unlettered songsman could not have created the poems he recited (ibid.:367). Instead, he was seen, like the unlettered Muslim musician in India, as an oral custodian of a tradition originally composed by someone else. In the European case, these original authors were thought to have been “high-born troubadours and bards” (ibid.). In the Indian case, they were learned high-caste Hindus or *kalāwant*-s. The goal of European writers on oral poetry, like the goal of colonial writers on Indian music, was to “rediscover, reassemble, or even replace the original in its true representative state as a historical or literary document” (ibid.). In both cases, the oral tradition was considered to be a degraded form of a written original.

In Europe, the notion that oral traditions reflected a corrupted version of a written original was eventually overturned in the late nineteenth century by the idea that oral traditions actually expressed the authentic sentiments of the people bound by ethnicity or nation (ibid.).¹⁵⁹ In *The Literature of National Music*, for example, German musicologist and organologist Carl Engel (1818–1882) claimed that, “the peculiar characteristics of the music of the nation are...more strongly exhibited in the

¹⁵⁹ John Szwed, in his biography of Alan Lomax (2012), made the interesting claim that this shift in seeing the oral as authentic was conditioned in part by the development of recording technology. For a brief review of a related topic—the connection between marginalized musical communities and national essence or authenticity—see Anna Stirr’s article on Nepali Dohri singers (2010:265–266).

popular songs and dance-tunes traditionally preserved by the country-people and the lower classes of society, which form the great majority of the nation” (1879:1, cited in Clayton 2007:75). The oral custodians of Hindustani music during the nineteenth century, however, were largely Muslim and thus not considered to be of the same ethnic stock as the original Hindu authors. India’s national music, being tied to Hindu religion (and classical in conception, not popular), was thus seen as illegitimate in Muslim hands.¹⁶⁰

Thus, instead of privileging any single origin for the Muslim dominance narrative, I believe we can see at least two different strands cohering in colonial writing on Indian music, one derived from Mughal sources and the other from European ones.¹⁶¹ Each of these strands criticized traditional performers for their

¹⁶⁰ Some late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century British authors on Indian music did propagate the notion of folk music’s authenticity. Native authors, however, did not generally accept this. Martin Clayton, for example, described the anomalous character of British musicologist Fox Strangways’s work on Indian music, which forwarded the idea, prevalent in Europe at the time, that in India, “the folk retain the most ancient cultural forms of a race” (Clayton 2007:81). In contrast, Clayton continued, “...there is no parallel in the work of Indian reformers of the period, who never accepted the notion that their most ancient music might have been preserved by the lower classes” (ibid.). Gerry Farrell made similar observations about the work of other British collectors of Indian folk song in the late-nineteenth century such as Charles Grover, whose “approach to Indian music is a long way from the concerns of Western and Hindu musicologists” (1997:61). The distinction between native and British authors over the location of nationalist authenticity is further demonstrated in Farrell’s review of the debate over notation that occurred between Charles Baron Clarke and S.M. Tagore in 1874. Clarke’s attack of Tagore’s Bengali notation, which he saw as a kind of false or constructed nationalism, revealed a preference for the folk when he said, “I may add that the boatmen often sing very nicely in tune although their voices may be rough and their style uncultured, so that, whatever the value of their melodies may be they gain much in the performance as compared with the performance of Bengali professional singers” (cited in Farrell 1997:68). The editor of the journal in which Clarke’s essay and Tagore’s rejoinder appeared claimed that Clarke’s opinion was flawed due to this folk bias: “giving his preference to the native boatman’s music he has done a harm to his reputation as a musical critic which reams of mathematical disputations will not repair” (ibid.:70).

¹⁶¹ In addition, it may be argued that some of the narratives that Schofield traces to Mughal-period texts can indeed be further traced to pre-Mughal Sanskrit texts. I discuss this possibility in Chapter Three and somewhat further below. This notion is supported by Rosane Rocher’s observation that orientalism’s promotion of the distant past as normative “was born of the coincidence of two distinct

illiteracy, illegitimacy and degeneracy, and in this way they lent greater saliency to the colonial critique of Indian music. What made the narratives forged by colonial authors on Indian music unique, however, was their identification of Muslim rulers as the root cause of music's decay. I attempt to chart this progression in the review of authors that follows.¹⁶²

In placing the blame for the destruction of India music's golden age on Muslims rulers (as patrons) it could be argued that colonial authors were supporting their own imperialist intentions. In the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when the British East India Company began to proclaim its paramountcy over the majority of the subcontinent, the depiction of India's former Muslim rulers as degenerate and despotic served to justify British rule as providential. Alexander Dow, the mid-eighteenth century Scottish Orientalist, lieutenant colonel in the East India Company army, and author of *On the Origin and Nature of Oriental Despotism in Hindostan* (1770), forwarded a theory that specifically linked despotism in India to Islam. In Dow's view, which was evidently held by many, the social customs of

strands, the European Enlightenment and the Indian Puranic tradition, both of which conceived of the world to have undergone a progressive deterioration" (1993:242). Related are the attempts of some authors to account for a "pre-history" of Orientalism (Sweetman 2004).

¹⁶² I believe the connection I am making here between the European critiques of oral poets and the orientalist critiques of Indian musicians is unique. Martin Clayton is one of the few scholars to have considered the relationship between movements of musical reform and revival in both England and in India (2007). What is more, he understands that the marginalization of certain populations of musicians was an "inherent" part of both of these revival projects (ibid.:74). In the case of Indian music, he further identifies the Muslim decay narrative, which contributed to the marginalization of Muslims, as colonial in origin, specifically pointing to the writing of Jones and Willard. However, he fails to connect the ideas of these early orientalists to the broader intellectual currents going on in Europe at the time, particularly the early collection of ballads and epics noted above. This is perhaps due to Clayton's focus on the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, during which the English revival looked to the folk as the repository of national culture.

Muslims, such as polygamy and the immurement of women, contributed to a “private species of despotism” that was reproduced at the level of the state (Dow 1770:13–20, cited in T. Metcalf 1995:8). Also abetting an imperialist agenda, some have argued, was the attempt to locate India’s authenticity (cultural, religious, legal, musical and otherwise) in the ancient past. This gave just cause for a strict focus on texts in decoding India, and thereby allowed colonial officials to fix and manipulate knowledge of the orient in accordance with their own interests.

Such criticisms of the production of colonial/orientalist knowledge are largely Saidian in origin.¹⁶³ Using William Jones (1746–1794), who I discuss below, as a quintessential example, Said claimed that the purpose of the orientalist’s study of the east was to impose order and thereby control:

¹⁶³ Literature linking colonial knowledge (particularly orientalism) to imperialism in India alone is vast. It serves as the central theme to several major studies and collections, including Ronald Inden’s *Imagining India* (1990), *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament* (1993) edited by Carol Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer, Bernard Cohn’s *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge* (1996), and Richard King’s *Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India and ‘The Mystic East’* (1999), among many others. The most balanced of ideas taken from this corpus acknowledge, as Rosane Rocher does, that, “[k]nowledge and governmental objectives were often, but not always, related, and their relationship was not unidirectional” (1993:240–41). Christopher A. Bayly is another scholar who has taken this stance. In his, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870* (1996), Bayly criticized one of Said’s “radical disciples” for reducing European knowledge of the other to “a mere web of rhetorical devices designed to give legitimacy to conquest” (ibid.:7). A recent example of a work that connects the production of knowledge to colonialism outside of India, and particularly in the context of music, is Richard Irving’s *Colonial Counterpoint: Music in Early Modern Manila* (2010). Similar to Rocher, Irving describes how attempts “to wield colonial authority” were made “possible only through a reciprocal process,” which he describes, metaphorically, as an “enharmonic engagement” between the colonizer and colonized (ibid.:73–74). This recalls Thomas Metcalf’s insistence that, “much in the elaboration of these systems of knowledge was a collaborative enterprise, above all in the British reliance on Brahmin pandits for information about the nature of Indian society and religion,” despite the lack of focus this receives in his text (1995:xi).

To rule and to learn, then to compare Orient with Occident: these were Jones's goals, which, with an irresistible impulse always to codify, to subdue the infinite variety of the Orient to a 'complete digest' of laws, figures, customs, and works, he is believed to have achieved. (Said [1979] 1994:78)

The Digest of Hindu Law on Contracts and Successions to which Said refers, published in 1798, represents a major effort on the part of the colonial government via Jones to construct an Ur text of Hindu law derived from ancient texts in order to free English judges from reliance on native informers and pandits whom they distrusted (Rocher 1993:224; Cohen 1996:70). In this way, Jones was directly implicated in "a scholarly and pragmatic project aimed at creating a body of knowledge that could be utilized in the effective control of Indian society" (Cohn 1996:61).

Though the work of orientalists such as Jones undoubtedly produced a limited, ridged and ultimately controlling form of knowledge over many aspects of Indian life and history, perhaps most notably the sense of a singular Hinduism based on religious doctrine and Brahmanical ideals, this was not necessarily their intention. Many scholars have argued that Jones represented an early wave of "secular" and "sympathetic" orientalists who, in distinction from missionaries, evangelicals, Anglicists and utilitarians epitomized by James Mill and Alexander Duff (Pennington 101), aimed to enlighten Europeans on the significance of both Hinduism and India's syncretic Indo-Persian traditions (Kopf 1969, 1980, 1995; Oddie 2006:106–07;

Trautmann 1997; Fynes 1998:60–63; Johnson 2010:22; Franklin 2011).¹⁶⁴ Articles in *Asiatick Researches*, the official organ of the Asiatick Society which Jones co-founded with Governor-General Warren Hastings, is said to have “stunned European readership by their utterly secular and objective outlook on Asia and thus propogated a new kind of orientalism that was no more the handmaiden of theology” (App 2009:vii). Simialrly, Jones and his successors in the field of Indian music, such as Willard, countered prevailing prejudices of Western writers on non-Western music such as Charles Burney by arguing that there was actually something worthy of study in Indian music and that India music might even prove Western music to be deficient in some ways (Willard [1834] 1882:5; Bor 1988:55, 58-59; Zon 2006:197). Moreover, the oft-noted “textualization” of Indian traditions propogated by Jones and other orientalists, which many post-colonial scholars, following Said, point to as an example of the epistemic violence of which orientalism was guilty, could alternatively be viewed, particularly in the context of the emerging colonial legal system, as a way of “rejecting the prevelant European theory that the Indian state was despotic” (Cohen 1996:62–65). In this view, Hastings and Jones’s focus on Hindu texts was an attempt to prove that India was not, in fact, lawless; it had its own indigenous and ancient system of law, which would better suit the Indian context than an imposed British law.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ Jones’s failure to acknowledge the contribution of Persian culture to North Indian classical music (Farrell 1997:25) conflicts with Franklin’s claim to Jones’s “intellectual investment in pluralism, and his fervent belief in the syncretic co-existence of Hinduism and Islam” (2011:359).

¹⁶⁵ Interestingly, this debate over law would find similarity in the debate over what language to use for Indian education, English, Sanskrit, or Persian, in the 1830s, and the debate over which notation to

My aim in raising these counter points to a postcolonial critique of orientalism is not to excuse orientalism's effects, but simply to render the contemporary discursive landscape of orientalist scholars, if not their intentions (Saidians care little for intentions), more understandable and complete. All of these counter points can, and should, be further countered. For example, underlying Jones's alleged sympathies for ancient Hindu civilization was his Eurocentric desire to validate and defend Christian biblical history (J. Sharpe 1993:46; Fynes 1998; Trautmann 1997:107, 109; App 2009; Pennington 2005:102), addressed in more detail later. Jones's Christian-oriented view of Hinduism was "profoundly anti-historical," noted Richard King, for it posited an essentialized Hinduism from which all forms were derived (1999:172). And, importantly, while Jones may have been sympathetic to this imagined, classical Hindu past, he repudiated its corrupt, popular present, dubbing it a "silver age" (Marshal 1970:196, 251, cited in Oddie 2006:98; see also Oddie 2006:106; Rocher 1993:226; Pennington 2005:120).

Additional counter critiques could certainly be mentioned. The larger point, however, is that Jones and his Enlightenment brethren, though they espoused noble ideals and positioned themselves against despotism, tyranny, superstition, etc., nevertheless created new demons in the process. This was nothing new; Thomas Metcalf pointed out that in challenging "the growth of royal absolutism," early Enlightenment writers such as Voltaire drew on the stereotype of oriental despotism inherited from the Greeks. "Part of the cost of European liberty," he observed, "was

employ for Indian music, western staff or Bengali letters, in the 1870s.

to be a distorted imagining of the nature of non-European societies” (1995:7). This dynamic continues in our own day and age as well. As George Lipsitz has suggested in the context of cross-cultural experimentation in twentieth-century Euro-American culture, the consequences of the orientalist projects “are no less poisonous when well-intentioned” (1994:53). Like Paul Simon’s sympathetic yet irresponsible escapade into South African music at the height of Apartheid’s injustice, Jones’s journey into an imagined Hindu antiquity was so self-centric that he neglected to consider the consequences and meanings his project might have had for others (ibid.:59). Indeed, it was not the *intentions* of Orientalist scholars that Said criticized, but the material consequences of their forms of representation. It is towards Jones’s unintended contribution to the narrative of Muslim dominance that we now turn.

William Jones

Jones arrived in India in 1783 at the age of thirty-seven to take up a position as a Supreme Court judge for the British Government in Bengal. Jones was thus part of a broader effort led by India’s first Governor-General, Warren Hastings, to establish new “instrumentalities of rule” (Cohn 1996) over the territories that the East India Company acquired at this time. For this project Jones’s prior knowledge was invaluable. He had already established himself as a consummate orientalist before his arrival in India. He studied Persian and Arabic at Oxford, became a practicing lawyer, and had published English translations of several Greek and Persian works, including a grammar. He began learning Sanskrit, however, only after he came to India and

largely as an attempt bridge the distance he felt translations, and the Brahman pandits, placed between him and Hindu law. Soon after arriving, he co-founded the Asiatick Society, which he used as a platform for airing his research on Hindu texts. Within the journal of that society, *Asiatick Researches*, Jones developed ideas that would lead to the development of the discipline of comparative philology, the notion of an Indo-European language family, and incidentally, the Hindu-focused historiography of Indian music. Indeed, the work of Jones and his colleagues is generally recognized as having initiated a “renaissance” of interest in many aspects of ancient India, a trend that Thomas Trautmann (1997) has described as “Indomania.”

Music constituted a small portion of Jones’s overall work. His only publication on the subject, *On the Musical Modes of the Hindoos* (OMMH), was drafted a year after his arrival in India, and was “since much enlarged” for publication eight years later in 1792. OMMH was, however, the first major English-language work on Indian music (Powers 1965:3; Farrell 1997:23; see Basu 2011:29–32 for a critical appraisal of this distinction). As such, it proved foundational for writers throughout the nineteenth century, both Europeans and Indians.

In particular, the authority Jones granted to ancient texts over contemporary practice; his assumption that Indian music was primarily “Hindu”; the notion that Indian music’s golden age lay before the coming of Muslim rule; and the corollary to this notion, that Indian music had experienced a steady decline since the Muslim period, are all ideas forwarded in OMMH that continue to hold sway over the popular and scholarly imagination of Indian music to this day.

Despite OMMH's indelible legacy in shaping some of our most basic assumptions about Indian music, it has been routinely trivialized for its lack of application to contemporary performance. Harold Powers, for example, described OMMH as a "scholarly curiosity" in which "there is nothing" that "is not either wrong or superceded" (1965:1). Joep Bor, while acknowledging OMMH's role in introducing European scholars to Indian music, similarly noted that it was "of little relevance today" (2010:11;1988:55). And though Gerry Farrell conceded that OMMH constituted "an obvious landmark to begin a detailed discussion of Indian music and the West" (1997:23), he nevertheless concluded that, "In light of later studies, much of what Jones writes is redundant" (ibid.:25). Similar criticisms were raised by some of Jones's immediate successors, such as Willard, Day and Strangways (see Zon 2006).

Such evaluations not only miss out on the salience of Jones's work to the shape of Western knowledge about Indian music, but also the objectives that motivated his work. Indeed, anyone who looks to OMMH for insight on current practice will be sorely disappointed. This is because Jones never intended OMMH to enlighten music's current practice—other than to show, by way of indirect comparison, how debased music had become since its golden age. Instead, Jones looked to Indian music for the same reason he looked to ancient Indian languages, and religion—as evidence of a single common origin for all of mankind. Jones's starting point for this common origin was the creation myths of the Christian bible, particularly the account of universal floods given in Genesis. By correlating

information on the myths, languages, and musics of both ancient Greece and ancient India, Jones sought to validate a shared, yet ultimately Christian-centric, history, and to trace humanity's common roots, including that of India, to the descendants of Noah. For this reason, Thomas Trautmann (1997: 9, 40–41) famously described Jones's project as a study in "Mosaic [relating to Moses] ethnology."¹⁶⁶ Janaki Bakhle, also drawing on the Trautmann, made this point with respect to music when she said, "Jones's primary interest was not music but rather the ethnological Mosaic account that begins the book of Genesis in the Old Testament" (2005:9). Just as the oldest forms of Hinduism were thought to illuminate biblical history, "The history of 'Hindu' music could be put to instrumental use in helping Orientalists recover their own true history of music, in particular the history of the seven Grecian modes" (ibid.:10). Put both more broadly and more cynically, "Jones's *gift to the West*," wrote Jenny Sharpe (1993:46), "was to transform India into a preoriginary space for Western history."

While the intended universal application of Jones's work may have since been abandoned, his assumptions that Indian music was Hindu and that it degenerated under Muslim rule has not.¹⁶⁷ Nevertheless, situating Jones's ideas on Indian music within a genealogy of Muslim dominance is no easy task. Though Jones often points

¹⁶⁶ Trautmann was not the first to give critical importance to the religious underpinnings of Jones's pursuit of knowledge (e.g., J. Sharpe 1993).

¹⁶⁷ The Indian musicologist, Ashoke Ranade, made a similar point, here summarized by Pushpa Sundar: "British Orientalists and ethno-musicologists equated one nation with one culture, and one culture with one music. In the case of India, the identification was with Hindu music alone" (1992:35–36, cited in Sundar 1995).

to the advent of Muslim rule in India as a way of marking the beginning of music's decline (an important aspect of the Muslim dominance narrative), he fails to insist, as did later scholars, that Muslims, whether patrons or performers, were specifically responsible for that decline.

An early expression of this ambiguity is found in a letter Jones wrote to his friend and one-time pupil, Viscount Althorp,¹⁶⁸ shortly after arriving in India:

I have many discoveries to make in the music of India. In the reign of Veramaditya [Vikramāditya?] near 2000 years ago, the art flourished in this country, but, since Mohammedan conquest it has declined, and is now almost lost in Bengal. (Cannon 1970:75960 cited in Farrell 1997:26).

Here, Jones appears to have placed Indian music's golden age in the reign of Vikramāditya, the legendary ruler of first-century B.C. Ujjain, after whom the *Vikramarka Śāka* or epoch is attributed. It is not clear what Jones's evidence was for this claim, or for the claim that Indian music had begun to decline "since Mohammedan conquest." More importantly, it is not even clear what connection Muslim rule had to music's decline, other than marking its beginning. In this way, Jones makes it difficult for us to say whether he thought there was any necessary connection between the two.

¹⁶⁸ Jones tutored George John Spencer (1758–1834), also known by his hereditary titles, the Viscount Althorp and the Second Earl Spencer, from 1765 to 1770 (Fynes 1998:49).

Later in OMMH, Jones made a similar statement again loosely connecting music's decline to the Muslim period. This time, however, he pointed to the important role that Hindu religion might have played in sustaining what was surely a divine musical tradition had Muslim governments not come to power. Here we get a slightly more developed sense of relationship between Muslim rule and musical degeneration via the reference to the decline of Hindu religion. Still, the ambiguity of causation here is simply displaced onto religion. What relationship Muslim rule had to the decline of Hindu religion, like music, remains unstated:

Had the *Indian* empire continued in full energy for the last two thousand years, religion would, no doubt, have given permanence to systems of music invented, as the Hindoos believe, by their gods and adapted to mystical poetry: but such have been the revolutions of their government since the time of *Alexander*, that, although the *Sanscrit* books have preserved the theory of their musical compositions, the practice of it seems wholly lost (as all the *Pandits and Rajahs* confess). (1994:440, emphasis in original)

In sum, the precise connection between Muslim rule and the decay of Hindu music and religion remains unclear in Jones's writing. What *is* made clear, however, is that the practice of Indian music had been "lost," though he does leave room for the possibility of its continued, albeit marginal, existence by emphasizing it was "*almost* lost," or "*seems* wholly lost."

What comes across as ironic about this claim to music's degeneration, however, is that Jones's presence in India coincided with one of Indian music's most flourishing, innovative, and lavishly patronized periods of history: the period of indirect rule (see Chapter One). Of course, this reality, as argued in Chapter One, is often unacknowledged for ideological reasons. Nevertheless, taking this claim as uncontroversial, we might ask what this musical tradition was that Jones deemed to have been lost by his time.

A clue for answering this question is found in what Jones's claimed to have been his original inspiration for researching Indian music: the *Gīta-govinda* (the song of Govinda, i.e., Krishna), a collection of lyrical poems (*prabandha*) set to specific *rāga*-s written by the late-twelfth century saint from eastern India, Jayadeva. Here, Jones described his unsuccessful quest to find "the notes of the *Gitagovinda*":

When I first read the songs of Jayadeva, who has prefixed to each of them the name of the mode, in which it was anciently sung, I had hopes of procuring the original music; but the *Pandits* of the south referred me to those of the west, and the *Brahmens* of the west would have sent me to the north; while they, I mean those of *Nepal* and *Cashmir*, declared that they had no ancient musick, but imagined, that the notes of the *Gitagovind* must exist, if anywhere, in one of the southern provinces, where the Poet was born: from all this I collect, that the art, which flourished in *India* many centuries ago, has faded for want of due culture, though some scanty remnants of it may,

perhaps, be preserved in the pastoral roundelays of *Mat'hura* on the loves and sports of the *Indian Apollo*. (1799, 4:205)

From this passage we learn that Jones holds the unknown music said to have accompanied the reading-singing of the *Gitagovinda* as a model for the ancient, Hindu and devotional music that existed during India's golden age. Whatever remnant of this music was likely to still exist would be found, Jones suspected, in the region of Mathura where Krishna, the god to whom the ode was composed, is said to have been born.

However, Jones did not search for India's ancient music in the mouths of the oral poets of Mathurā, who were not, according to Enlightenment biases discussed above, the music's original composers. Instead, he looked to the works of Sanskrit pandits, such as the thirteenth-century *Saṅgīta-Ratnākara* (jewel of music) written by Śaranaga-deva, that being the oldest text that was available to him.¹⁶⁹ In addition, Jones is known to have consulted Somanātha's *Rāga-Vibodha* (1609),¹⁷⁰ Dāmodara's *Saṅgīt-Darpan* (c.1625), Ahobal Paṇḍit's *Saṅgīt-Pārijāt* (written during the reign of Shāh Jahān, 1627-1658), Nārāyaṇa-deva's *Saṅgīta-nārāyaṇa* (c.1660), and the Persian work by Mirzā Khān, *Tohfāt al-Hind* (c.1675).

¹⁶⁹ I have not been able to confirm whether Jones, in fact, had direct access to the *Saṅgītratnakara* or whether he was limited to references made to it by other works. Basu claims that he did consult the *Saṅgītratnakara* (2011:58), but the source of this information is left unmentioned.

¹⁷⁰ Bhatkhande cites the date provided by Somnatha as the third of Ashvin Shuddha, Shaka year 1531 or 1610 A.D. (Bhatkhande 1974:14)

In reviewing the texts that Jones was known to have consulted on his quest for ancient Indian music, we are again confronted with a strange irony: almost all of them were written well after the advent of Muslim rule in India (c. twelfth century), the point Jones uses to mark music's decline.¹⁷¹ Assuming that Jones was aware of the relative dates of these texts, how, then, could these texts be used as evidence for the existence of a musical golden age and its decline under Muslim governments?

The answer, of course, lies in the fact that these texts were themselves backward looking. As I have already discussed in Chapter Three, Sanskrit texts on music (and otherwise) are known to engage in what Rowell has termed "reflexive expansion" (1992b.:112) and what Richard Widdess has called an "archaizing diadactic" (1985:184) in which material from earlier sources is preserved "long after it had ceased to relate directly to current performance practice" (Widdess 2010:118).¹⁷² One of Jones's primary sources, for example, the seventeenth-century *Ragvibodh*, draws heavily on the thirteenth-century *Sangitratnakara*, which itself included material on the "jatis" that was already outdated.¹⁷³ Thus the privilege that Jones accorded to older Sanskrit texts over more recent Persian ones is

¹⁷¹ I discuss the reasons for and discrepancies with this dating of "Muslim rule" in the section on Bhatkhande, below.

¹⁷² This was not too unlike the "Mughal epistemology of treatise writing" that Schofield (formerly Brown 2003:45–81, cited in Schofield 2010:507) described as "palimpsestic," referring to the practice of repeating verbatim the contents of an established treatise, "but then augmenting it with both large and small digressions on current performance practice in the places first authorized by the earliest treatises: notably vocal genres, instruments, and musicians' biographies" (ibid.).

¹⁷³ Jairazbhoy stated this less assertively: "It is difficult to assess positively, however, whether the ancient music based on the *jatis* and the two parent scales was also in existence at this time, for the *Sangitranakara*, like many other Indian musical treatises, does not always distinguish clearly between current practice and antiquated theory" ([1971] 1995:16–17).

understandable given the rear-facing gaze of the textual tradition he consulted, including even the Persian sources, which tended to yield authority to older Sanskrit ones (discussed further below).¹⁷⁴ Indeed, as Rosana Rocher argued, the “promotion of the distant past as normative,” which is typically taken as a distinctive feature of orientalist scholarship, was apparently justified by the fact that, “the indigenous scholastic tradition presented itself as derivative and commentarial” (1993:242). “It would have taken a much greater knowledge of that tradition than early orientalists had,” she suggested, “to appreciate its unadvertised, even disclaimed creativity” (ibid.:229).

The indigenous influences on orientalist scholarship were not limited, however, to the promotion of a textual bias. They extended, importantly, to the very notion of a prior Hindu golden age and its subsequent decline. Similar to my observation above regarding the coherence of European and Mughal criticism of oral tradition bearers, Rocher points out that notions of India’s golden age / decline were “born of the coincidence of two distinct strands, the European Enlightenment and the Indian Puranic tradition, both of which conceived of the world to have undergone a progressive deterioration” (ibid.:242). Metcalf also similarly observed that, “The glories of the golden age had of necessity to be located in the most distant past. Such ideas were not wholly a European invention, for Indian cosmology itself was built upon a conception of decline, albeit cyclical in character, to a contemporary kaliyuga”

¹⁷⁴ Ashoke Ranade hinted at this conclusion when he wrote, “despite Persian and Sanskrit learning (or perhaps because of it) Jones assumes that Hindoo music had died because of Muslim and other invasions!” (1992:58).

(Metcalf 1995:15). Thus, we might say that many of the predilections of the Sanskrit theoretical tradition were further enhanced by—and not wholly invented by—English-language writing on Indian music and vice-versa.

We may never know what the musical tradition was that Jones assumed to have been lost given the long history of disguising contemporary developments in indigenous literature. Indeed, such a tradition may have never even existed as a *practice* at all, but merely as a *theory*. A more pertinent question, then, but one that Jones does not clearly address, is why (and to whom) this tradition, theoretical as it may have been, was thought to have been lost?

Again, that Muslims were to blame is not clearly articulated. In fact, the following statement, which Jones makes in passing and does not further elaborate, speaks *against* the idea that music was lost to either Muslims or illiterates:

The unexampled felicity of our nation, whose diffuse the blessings of a mild government over the finest part of *India*, would enable us to attain a perfect knowledge of Oriental music, which is known and practiced in these *British* dominions, not by mercenary performers only, but even by *Mussalmans* and *Hindoos* of eminent rank and learning. (Jones [1882] 1994:133)

It is significant here that Jones does not assume all musicians to have been “mercenary,” or motivated solely by a desire for money (i.e. professional). Music was still an art that was practiced by men of “eminent rank and learning” *as well as*

professionals.¹⁷⁵ Contrast this with statements made by Willard some forty years later (discussed below) in which music had become a “distinct trade” populated by unlearned men of abominable character. It is not clear whether Jones considers most “mercenary” performers to have been Muslim. However, it is significant that he does not consider all Muslim musicians to have been mercenary. Indeed, “Mussalmans *and* Hindoos” are among the eminent men who practice the art.

Any discussion of OMMH’s contribution to the Muslim dominance narrative would be incomplete without reference to the following passage, which is most often cited to suggest Jones’s “prejudice” against Muslims. It occurs during Jones’s discussion of Mirza Khan’s Persian-language treatise, *Tohfah al-Hind*, which purports to include a translation of the Sanskrit musical treatise, the *Sangitadarpana*. Here, in relation to a critique of *Tohfah*, Jones famously likens all knowledge of “Muselman writers on India” to “muddy rivulets” flowing from a “pure fountain of Hindu learning”:

...my experience justifies me in pronouncing, that the *Moghols* have no idea of accurate translation, and give that name to a mixture of gloss and text with a flimsy paraphrase of them both; that they are wholly unable, yet always pretend, to write *Sanscrit* words in *Arabic* letters; that a man, who knows the

¹⁷⁵ Jones may have been imputing a split that was more common in his own homeland between the Gentleman (i.e., those who received a landed inheritance, which left them free to follow their intellectual pursuits) and wealthy professions, such as Jones himself, who required to work for a living. Jones makes a statement somewhere in OMMH regarding his restrictions on pursuing his scholarship on music, which was a hobby, due to his professional obligations. I am thankful to Matt Rahaim for alerting me to this connection.

Hindus only from *Persian* books, does not know the *Hindus*; and that an *European*, who follows the muddy rivulets of *Muselman* writers on *India*, instead of drinking from the pure fountain of *Hindu* learning, will be in perpetual danger of misleading himself and others. (Jones [1882] 1994:136, italics in original)

Drawing on this quote, Joep Bor claimed that, “Jones was prejudiced and had little sympathy for Muslim scholarship on Indian music” (2010:7). Schofield wrote that, “Jones’s uncompromising criticism of ‘Muselman writers on India’ is undeniable” (2010:504). Lakshmi Subramanian referenced this passage to say that for Jones, “Islamic rule” was responsible for “the obfuscation of the textual tradition” (2011 [2006]:59).

Significantly, none of these commentators go so far as to say that Jones blamed Muslims (here specified as writers) for destroying or dominating Hindu music. Indeed, that would have been reading beyond Jones’s words. At most, Jones charged Muslims with having adulterated or “muddied” knowledge of music. But even this interpretation may require some tempering, for as Michael Franklin (2011) recently reminded us, Jones was no enemy of “Muslim writers.” On the contrary, Jones and his fellow members of the Asiatick Society such as Richard Johnson “shared an immense respect for Persian literature.” Jones’s criticism was reserved, Franklin pointed out, for those Muslim writers who took as their subject ancient, Hindu India, a topic in which Jones was particularly invested. Franklin claimed that

Jones's criticism of "Muselman writers *on India*," rather than reflecting "hostile condescension towards Persian and Indo-Persian scholarship," showed Jones's "desire to study the original" (2011:346). "Jones would have found a Sanskrit translation of _____ Hafiz equally irritating," Franklin claimed (*ibid.*).

While Franklin's emphasis on Jones's desire for translational fidelity may have some merit,¹⁷⁶ it fails to consider how Jones's wholesale condemnation of Persian, and particularly "Moghol" writers *on India* was ideologically invested in claiming a Western connection with an ancient Hindu past, and in justifying what Jones described (earlier citation) as the "felicity of our [British] nation, whose diffuse the blessings of a mild government over the finest part of *India*."

Correcting this view, Sharmadip Basu provided a more nuanced interpretation of Jones's "studied decision to keep Persian music scholarship out of the 'Musical Modes'" (2011:61). Like Franklin, Basu admitted that Jones held a deep and long-lasting affection for Persian and Arabic literature. However, unlike Franklin, he maintained that Jones's affection for Persian does not simply nullify his condescension of all Persian writing on India. Instead, Basu saw this as indicative of Jones's broader agenda, namely his "desire to map...the results of his...researches... on the Mosaic narrative" as described by Trautmann (*ibid.*:62). For Jones, Persian language was "ethnogenetically" derived from Sanskrit, which was considered more

¹⁷⁶ Schofield, for example, conceded that Jones "was, in fact, correct in his observation" that "Mughal translations of Sanskrit texts...are not literal translations, but rather a mixture of translation, paraphrase, and interpolations" (2010:511 n.420). In an earlier piece, she divided Indo-Persian treatises of the seventeenth century into two groups: "those that are openly translations and commentaries on Sanskrit *sangitasastras*, and those that do not make this claim" (2003-4:4).

pure. Furthermore, Persian scholarship on India, too, positioned itself as derivative discourse.

Jones's attempt to reconstruct an ancient Indian past therefore required the dismissal of all that was considered inauthentic, and this included Persian writing on ancient India. His occlusion of Persian texts, Basu argued, was indeed "deeply prejudicial," but instead of being prejudiced *against* Muslims or Islam, it was prejudiced *towards* an essentialized and Sanskritized Hinduism (ibid.:65). Furthermore, Jones's continued disavowal of, yet return to, Mirza's work in OMMH, "must be read," Basu insisted, "as a fundamentally political gesture... through which colonial power strives to determine musical knowledge in and of the colony" (ibid.:83–84).

In the end, Jones's contribution to the narrative of Muslim dominance may be limited to his ideologically laden claim that Muslim writers obfuscated Indian music's textual tradition through their poor translations of Sanskrit texts. Also, as earlier suggested, though Jones marked the beginning of music's decline to the advent of Muslim rule, the precise nature of the relationship between Muslim rule and music's degradation was left to be specified. Of course, the idea that contemporary Indian music, despite centuries of 'distortions' during the Muslim period, was in essence "Hindu," and that "Hindu" meant religious, and that religious meant Brahmanical, proved to be a much more insidious notion that contributed to Muslims being criticized later on as adulterators of Hindu music. But what Jones cannot be credited with is introducing the notion that Muslim musicians either dominated and

jealously guarded the profession of music, or that they professionalized and sacralized the tradition. These ideas were promulgated by Jones's successors, N. Augustus Willard and C.R. Day.

N. Augustus Willard

Following Jones's OMMH in 1792, the next major English-language work on Indian music was N. Augustus Willard's *Treatise on the Music of India: Comprising a Detail of the Ancient Theory and Modern Practice*, published in 1834.¹⁷⁷ A Captain in the service of the Nawab of Banda and an Anglo-Indian of mixed Eurasian descent (Bor 1988:58-59), Willard is most often distinguished from Jones as having advocated for the need to seek out living "professors" (i.e. practitioners) of music—however "laborious, and even precarious" he insisted this a method might be (Willard 1882:3). For this reason, Willard is sometimes claimed to have been a proto-ethnomusicologist (Bor 1988:58; Ranade 1992:59–61; Farrell 1997:50; Bakhle 2005:54–55; Zon 2007:252, 299, 301).¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ Bakhle claims that Willard's text was first written in 1793, a year following Jones's, though her source for this claim is unmention (2005:120).

¹⁷⁸ For a critique of the attempt to view Willard, but more so Jones, as heralding the field of ethnomusicology, particularly as argued by Farrell and Zon, see Basu (2011:37–55). Schofield took an entirely different stance on Willard by positioning him as "the last great Indo-Persian theorist of Indian music history" (2010:509). This argument was somewhat portended by Joep Bor, who early on described Willard's treatise as a "classic... easily compared with the important musical treatises by native writers" (1988:59). He later more directly situated Willard within the Indo-Persian treatise tradition by claiming that, "Though written in English, Willard's work belongs to the large corpus of Persian texts on Hindustani music in that it borrows material from such texts and explores both early theory and current practice" (2006:9, 2010:13). Of course, this methodology (or epistemology) of borrowing from and adding to existing Indo-Persian treatises is what Schofield earlier referred to as "palimpsestic" (Schofield 2010:507, citing Brown 2003:45–81).

Another way of saying this is that, although Jones and Willard may have had similar intentions of finding what they what they considered to be authentic and unadulterated Indian music (Willard, for example, wanted “to restore the original music of this country to its primitive state”), both differed in their chosen method. Unlike Jones, Willard insisted that “books alone” would not suffice in resurrecting ancient theory (Willard 1882:3). If the Hindu science of music was to ever be understood, then living practitioners were to be sought out. However, Willard insisted on this not because he thought these practitioners actually understood theory themselves. On the contrary, he assumed they were “grossly illiterate,” and declared that any attempt to find a performer well versed in theory would prove just as likely as finding “the philosopher’s stone” (ibid.). Instead, Willard viewed practitioners as resources from which “solutions” could be “procured” for music’s revival (ibid.).

Thus, despite his pretensions toward a culturally sympathetic or relativistic approach—the values that underscore why many deem him to be an “ethnomusicologist”—Willard was nevertheless highly critical of music’s practitioners. I will further demonstrate Willard’s enmity towards musicians in a moment. However, before I do so, what I wish to make clear from the outset is that Willard never identified the practioners he was so critical of as Muslim. The significance of this point is felt in relation to the commonly held assumption that the discursive division between illiterate *Muslim* practitioners and cultured *Hindu* theorists was a colonial construction, and one that has particularly been attributed to Willard. Though Willard certainly helped to enshrine a division between theorists and

practitioners, he did not, I maintain, explicitly do so along Hindu-Muslim lines. Instead, Willard's criticism of illiterate performers better resembles the criticism made by the authors of Indo-Persian treatises than the criticism made by reformers such as S.M. Tagore against *Muslim* practitioners specifically. This may be further evidence, then, for considering Willard's work as belonging to the Indo-Persian textual tradition (see discussion of Bor and Schofield in previous note).

A word of clarification is in order: Willard did criticize *Muslims*, and in this way he can also be distinguished from Jones. However, in all cases the Muslims that Willard referred to were *rulers* and *princes*, not musicians. For Willard, Muslim rulers were primarily to blame for Indian music's decay. Having failed to properly patronize music's theoretical tradition, they brought about a "defection" of its theory from its practice (Willard 1882:2). This defection certainly had an impact on performers in Willard's estimation: it caused music to fall into the hands of illiterates. However, Willard does *not* go so far as to identify these illiterate musicians, whom he severely criticized, as Muslim. This decisive step was later taken up by reformists such as S.M. Tagore.

However, this fact has not stopped many scholars in the field from attributing the negative portrayal of *Muslim musicians* by reformers such as Tagore to colonial discourse in general, and to Willard in particular. Citing the following passage of Willard's,¹⁷⁹ Lakshmi Subramanian, for example, argued that the late-nineteenth

¹⁷⁹ Subramanian appears to have attributed this quote to Tagore, not Willard (also see Subramanian 2000). Willard's statement is taken from the preface to his book, which was in turn reprinted in a collection of essays edited by Tagore, which may explain the reason for this misattribution. However, it is nevertheless tempting to see this simple and understandable mistake in assigning authorship as a

century musical reformer, S.M. Tagore, “implicitly accepted the European construction of the Hindu theorist and the unlettered Muslim practitioner” (2011:64). I quote from Willard’s original, in slightly expanded form, to provide greater context for discussion:

During the earlier ages of Hindoostan, music was cultivated by philosophers and men eminent for polite literature, for whom such general directions and rules for composition sufficed, after a course of musical education acquired from living tutors; indeed the abhorrence of innovation, and veneration of the established national music, which was firmly believed to be of divine origin, precluded the necessity of any other; but when, from the theory of music, a defection took place of its practice, and men of learning confined themselves exclusively to the former, while the latter branch was [2] abandoned entirely to the illiterate, all attempts to elucidate music from rules laid down in books, a science capable of explanation by mere words, became idle. This is why even so able and eminent an Orientalist as Sir William Jones has failed. Books alone are insufficient for this purpose—we must endeavor to procure solutions from living professors, of whom there are several, although grossly illiterate. This method, although very laborious, and even precarious, seems to be the only one by which any advance can be made in so abstruse an understanding.

metaphor for the larger misattribution of negative portrayals of *Muslim* musicians to colonialism in general.

Should the public consider this work as at all conducive to the end to which it achieves to aspire, it is the intention of the author to lay before them specimens of original Rags and Raginees, set to music, accompanied with short notices, which will serve to elucidate the facts advanced in this volume. (Willard 1882:2–3)

The fact, however, is that nowhere in this passage—nor, indeed, in any passage in Willard’s text—does Willard make explicit reference to the religious identity of the musical practitioners he criticizes. Not only have I found no evidence for the assumption that Willard’s “illiterate professors” were Muslim, but Willard also appears to have provided evidence to the contrary when he said, “I have not confined myself to the details in books, but have also consulted the most famous performers, both Hindoos and Mussalmans, the first Vecukars in India, the more expert musicians of Lucknow, and Hukeem Sulamat Ulee Khan of Benares, who has written a treatise on music (Willard 1882:12). Here Willard appears to have reversed the Hindu theorist/ Muslim practioner equation by describing the Hindu Vecukars as “the more expert musicians of Lucknow,” and the “Muslim Hukeem Sulamat Ulee Khan” as a treatise writer.¹⁸⁰

Despite these complications, Subramanian was not the only scholar to have assumed that Willard propogated a divide between theorists and practitioners along

¹⁸⁰ It may be that Willard was referring to three and not two different groups: the Vecukars; the expert musicians of Lucknow; and the Muslim musician of Banaras. However, in either case, it was the Muslim musician whom he described as “a treatise writer.”

Hindu-Muslim lines. Sharmadip Basu, citing the very same passage above, claimed to have traced “the obvious intertextuality between Willard’s representation of the Ustad and that of the Bengali Bhadrakok [or bourgeoisie],” of which Tagore was a primary example (2011:339). That Basu understood Willard’s “Ustad”—a term Willard did not even use—to be Muslim is evident from several other passages from Basu’s text.¹⁸¹ I will return to Basu’s consideration of the critique of the ustad in the section on Tagore below. For now, however, what is important to note is that such attributions of the critique of *Muslim* musicians to colonialism via Willard are both unfounded and not unusual. In yet another instance, Nazir Jairazbhoy made the following passing statement, which not only credited Willard for blaming *Muslim musicians* for Indian music’s depraved state, but also lumped him together with Jones, who allegedly did the same thing:

Both the view they [Jones and Willard] endorsed—that the octave was composed of twenty-two microtones, and that Muslim musicians had taken Indian music to the depths of depravity—resonated through much of early twentieth century Indian musicology. (2008:351)

In their eagerness to call out colonialists out for their anti-Muslim prejudice, critics of colonialism sometimes read anti-Muslimness where no clear evidence of it exists.

¹⁸¹ For example, “Willard then moves to make a moral critique of the ‘illiterate’ Ustad—the Muslim professional musician...” (ibid.:338); and “Willard elaborates his critique of the Muslim music performer/ pedagogue/ ‘professional’...” (ibid.:338).

And in their desire to link reformist criticism of the specifically Muslim musician to colonial discourse, they sometimes end up overlooking an important distinction between these two authorial positions.

As I have already indicated, the caveat here is that Willard does, in fact, cast aspersions against “Mahomadans” throughout his book, but this epithet is reserved specifically for music’s patrons and not its practitioners. For example, Willard dated “the decline of all arts and sciences purely Hindoo” to “the conquest of Hindoostan by the *Mahomedan princes*,” who were “discouragers of the learning of the country” (1882:121, my emphasis). He described how India “suffered the persecutions of illiberal *Mahomedan princes*, who...were no encouragers to the improvement of sciences” (ibid.:10, my emphasis). He complained that the music of Hindoostan had “her constitution ruined and thrown into decay by the overwhelming and supercilious power of the *Mahomedan government*” (ibid.:18, my emphasis). Muslim *rulers*, therefore, were the primary cause of “a defection of the theory from the practice of music in Hindoostan” (ibid.:3). For Willard, it was primarily Muslim patronage, or the lack there of, that was responsible for decline.

Performers, as noted, were not at all left off Willard’s hook. As the following passage demonstrates, his criticism of them was exceedingly harsh. He described them as “the most immoral set of men on earth,” and those who stand for “all that is adominable.” And even more pertinent to the previous discussion, he claimed that their licentiousness discouraged men of higher moral character from taking up the art, thus contributing—along with Muslim rulers—to the “defection” of music’s theory

from its practice. However, as I have continued to argue, Willard fails to identify these performers as Muslim, as we see in the full quote below from which the above references were taken. Indeed, that Willard goes on to compare the licentiousness, immorality, and profligacy of then modern-day performers of Indian music with “the later musicians of Greece and Rome” further injects some distance between Willard’s criticism and Muslimness:

Music had always been highly appreciated, especially when its charms have not been prostituted to add to the allurements of licentious poetry. Hence it is that after it had been methodized, the greatest men in the country in ancient days admired it, and patronized its professors; till in course of time, these becoming licentious, cast such a stigma on the science that men of honor disdained to be numbered among its professors. At present most native performers of this noble science are the most immoral set of men on earth, and the term is another word for all that is abominable, synonymous with that of the most abandoned and profligate exercises under the sun. The later musicians of Greece and Rome were no better; indeed the parallel will admit of being drawn through the whole latitude” (ibid.:29).¹⁸²

¹⁸² I do not have the background to evaluate the comparison that Willard is making here, but it is enticing to think that his evaluation of native Indian performers had somehow been prefigured in the writing on ancient Greek music.

In addition to the preceding points about Willard—his failure to identify practitioners as Muslim, and his claim that Muslim rulers primarily and non-identified performers secondarily were responsible for Indian music’s decline—another point is crucial to situating him within the development of the Muslim dominance narrative: he suggested that these new, ignoble (but not necessary Muslim) performers were responsible for *professionalizing* music in addition to demoralizing it. Indeed, for Willard, professionalism (meaning commercialism) was equated with profanity. Willard described, for example, how performers “of avaricious disposition” apprenticed themselves to musicians of high rank, and after learning something, “prostituted their abilities for a mere trifle” (ibid.:31). He unfavorably compares these new “hired professors” with “[t]he musicians of this country of old,” who “would not be bribed to display their talents in public” (ibid.:30). And even more directly, he claimed that music, “especially under the Mahomedan princes [but not necessarily by Muslim *musicians*]...became a distinct trade” (ibid.:27).

The notion that *Muslims* professionalized the practice of music—which is *not* attributable to Willard, at not least the Muslim bit—is a central element of the narrative of Muslim dominance. It finds its fullest expression in the writings of ethnomusicologists such as Daniel Neuman, discussed below. Willard certainly contributed to this notion; he saw professionalization largely as a consequence of Muslim *rule* and carried out by disreputable performers, whose religious identity nevertheless remained unstated. In this way (his identification of *Muslim* rule and therefore patronage as the primary culprit), Willard may have gone somewhat beyond

the “complaints of performers’ illiteracy and musical degeneracy” that Schofield (2010) demonstrated was a reoccurring motif in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Persian treatises on Hindustani music (discussed above). However, Willard’s claim that music became a distinct trade “in the progress of time, *and especially* under the Mahomedan princes...” leaves some room even for the possibility of the pre-Muslim origins of music’s professionalization.

Sharmadip Basu argued otherwise. He claimed that Willard’s critique of “the emergence of music as trade and the rise of the professional musician during Muslim rule” was a thoroughly romantic notion of the late-eighteenth and nineteenth century, grounded in the “suspicion of music’s marketization” (2011:338). Though Willard may have been influenced by these romantic ideas, his criticisms undoubtedly had multiple points of influence and origin. Indeed, as we have seen throughout this chapter, many of the ideas assumed to have originated in colonial discourse have, upon further investigation, revealed some connection with preexisting discourses of multiple-origin.

That said, I think it would be fair to say that Willard imbued his criticism of music’s professionalization with a possibility for anti-Muslimness that it would not have had earlier. He did not go as far as his successors in identifying performers as Muslim, as I have continued to point out. But the causative association between Muslim rule, professionalism, and some of “the most immoral set of men on earth” might have suggested it.¹⁸³

¹⁸³ Willard’s criticism of the professionalization of Indian music may also be distinguished from any

In sum, the ease with which scholars have cast Willard's criticisms of performers as being anti-Muslim needs to be tempered. The development of the narrative of Muslim dominance and Hindu decline did not happen overnight, and was not a straightforward process. I hope to have made evident Willard's contribution to this process—clearly identifying Muslim rule as the cause of decline, and attributing music's professionalization to non-religiously identified performers. Despite Willard's resistance to identifying practitioners as Muslim, I do tend to agree with Subramanian about the religious assumptions that undergird Willard's division of theorists and practitioners. I point out these persnickety discrepancies, however—and I continue to do so in the examples that follow—to stress the difficulty in actually backing up such claims, and the need to keep open the possibilities of alternative interpretations. As we will see, even in the writing on Indian music that follows Willard, “professionals,” “hereditary musicians,” and “gharanedar” musicians, criticized as they may have been, were not necessarily identified as Muslim, nor was their occasional identification as Muslim a necessary element of their critique.

Charles Russell Day

Charles Russell Day was born in 1860, son of a Reverend and Rector from Horstead in Norwich, England. At the age of twenty, Day joined the third Royal

indigenous, preexisting criticism on account of the nineteenth-century European romantic notion of “art for art's sake,” which may have influenced his views. As Sharmadip Basu notes, “Willard here is projecting his contemporary Orientalist romanticism on a fictional notion of an ancient Hindu past where art was cultivated for art's sake—an ideology grounding the aesthetic practice of European Romantics in the late-eighteenth and nineteenth century” (2011:338).

Lancashire Militia, an outfit dedicated to domestic service. However, in 1882, he was deputed to the first Battalion of the Oxfordshire Light Infantry, which at this time had shifted its base from Burma to Bangalore, India (Hipkins 1900:245–46).¹⁸⁴ Day stayed in India for five years, returning to England along with his battalion in 1887. During those five years, Day wrote and gathered material for his book, *The Music and Musical Instruments of Southern India and the Deccan*, which was finally published after several years of strenuous effort in 1891. Janaki Bakhle chronicled the “fracas” over publishing Day’s book through the examination of several newly disclosed documents. In her discussion, Bakhle aimed to show how the colonial government’s attempt to validate Day’s work and credibility drew together a host of different factions that all became implicated in the creation of a public sphere for music, including the army, music appreciation societies, and maharajas (ibid.:58).¹⁸⁵

Day’s book appeared nearly sixty years after Willard’s. This large gap in the publication of any major studies on Indian music by colonial authors is mitigated by the fact that colonialists were not the only ones writing on Indian music in English by this time.¹⁸⁶ In the period between the publication of Willard and Day’s texts,

¹⁸⁴ Bakhle claims that Day’s infantry was stationed in Pune, though she does not mention her source (2005:57).

¹⁸⁵ Day, Bakhle argued, represented a type of colonial writer on music that she described as “Army ethnographers.” In addition to Day, this group included Willard and the Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Kyd, whom Bakhle only briefly mentions (ibid.:54–55). Bakhle saw this group as representing “the first de facto ethnomusicologists of India” (ibid.:55). That she also considered them in contradistinction to “learned scholars of language and philology,” such as Jones (ibid.:54), and claimed that, “[t]hey also wrote in a language that was recognizably Christian in tone, judgement and sentiment” (ibid.:55), says something, perhaps, about her opinion of ethnomusicologists.

¹⁸⁶ Of the publications by colonial officials on Indian music, broadly conceived, during this interim period, Farrell (1997) mentions C. Grover’s *Folk Songs of Southern India* (1871), an unreferenced text

scholarship on Indian music in English had effectively become indigenized.¹⁸⁷ This was largely conditioned, as Harold Powers (1965:2) noted, by the decision of the British Government in India to make English the official language of the state in 1835, a decision that roughly paralleled the publication of Willard's text in 1834. Briefly stated, the decision represented a victory for the Anglicists, whose desideratum, famously expressed by one of their Whig opponents, Thomas Macaulay, was "to form a class whom may be interpreters between us and the millions who we govern, a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect" (H. Sharpe 1965:141–142). On the losing side were the Orientalists, who argued that the character of the British state in India should reflect the laws, traditions and languages of the host community, imagined and manipulated by colonial will though they may have been. As a consequence of this change, the English-speaking native elite was given a great fillip. In music, this group was most visibly represented by S.M. Tagore, whom I discuss below.¹⁸⁸

by Paterson (1882), and an unreferenced text by S.W. Fallon.

¹⁸⁷ Indians also published works on music in vernacular languages during this interim period as well, not only in English. In Bengali, S.M. Tagore's teacher, Kṣetra Mohun Goswāmī, published *Sagitasara* in 1869, and another of Goswami's students, Krishna Dhan Banerjee, published *Gitasutrasara* in 1885–86. Anna Gharpure's Marathi music magazine titled *Sangitamimansak* was first published in 1886 (Rosse 1995:121). In Gujarati, Adityaramji Vyas's *Sanditaditya* was published in 1889, eight years after his death. All of these texts are mentioned in Rosse 1995.

¹⁸⁸ In addition to the works of S.M. Tagore, a number of additional works by native authors on Indian music in English preceded Day's text. Some of these included: an article by B.T. Sahasrabuddhe, secretary of the Gayan Samaj, which appeared in the *Theosophist* in 1879 (see Rosse 1995:101–02); Chinnaswamy Mudaliar's *Indian Music Along the Lines of European Notation* (1881); a music journal titled *Studies in Indian Music* by Purushottam Ganesh (Anna) Gharpure, sitar teacher for the Samaj, which was favorably reviewed by the Indologist, R.G. Bhandarkar in 1888 (Rosse 1995:110, 121); several publications by Trimbak Atmaram Limye between 1881 and 1887 (Rosse 1995:118).

It is within this space of “inter-cultural” scholarship on Indian music (Powers 1965) that Day’s work needs to be understood, though it has yet to be situated as such within the extent scholarship. I do not pretend to do so here. I merely wish to point out that some of the features of Day’s text, namely the clarity with which he identified practitioners as Muslim and the division he posited between the northern (Hindustani) and southern (Karnatak) music, had already been propagated by reformist writers. In fact, as will become apparent during our discussion of reformist authors, Day’s work, though it came after Tagore’s chronologically, not only failed to push the development of the Muslim dominance narrative forward, but also took a decisive step backwards. Thus, considering Day’s work here, within the context of other colonial authors, but out of chronological order, makes sense in that it builds upon the narrative of Muslim dominance incrementally. It also highlights the fact that the development of this narrative was not teleological, but had its ups and downs.

Building on Jones and Willard before him, Day wrote nostalgically about the pre-Muslim past, a time when Indian music was still “regarded as sacred” and “confined to either Brahmins (Bhagavatas) or to men of high caste” (1891:5). However, more importantly for this chapter, he argued that, “music became a distinct trade, especially under Mussalman rulers, and passaged into the hands of the lower orders and the unlearned” (ibid.). Willard had also suggested this, but unlike him, Day was clear about the fact that these unlearned practitioners were Muslim: “Hindustani [music] is.... practiced mostly by Mussalman musicians (ibid.:12). Further going beyond the arguments of both Jones and Willard, Day argued that it

was due to the Muslim influence in the north that, “the differences between the Hindustani and Karnatik systems must be in a great measure attributed” (Day 1891:5). Being more “pure,” Karnatak music was more worthy of Day’s praise (ibid.:60).

Similar to her argument regarding Willard’s alleged division between Hindu theorists and Muslim practitioners, Lakshmi Subramanian claimed that the discursive division between the pure South and the hybrid North was an “Orientalist construction” for which “Day was also responsible” (1999:134, 144; 2000:9).¹⁸⁹ Work by Katherine Schofield following Subramanian’s assertion, however, has shown that Mughal authors had long imagined the music of the South to be of greater purity and antiquity than the North. Day himself acknowledged this Mughal precedent when he referenced the work of Colonel Meadows Taylor, who revealed that “Mahomedan historians” at the turn of the fourteenth century observed that, “the profession of music [in the south] was found to be in a condition so far in advance of the North that singers, male and female, and their Brahman instructors, were taken with the royal armies and settled in the North” (1891:5, citing Taylor’s undated article from the *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 9/1). Though Subramanian also

¹⁸⁹ The two passages from which this opinion is derived are as follows: “Southern musicologists shared this opinion and argued that it was in the post-*Ratnakara* period, sometime after the intermingling of the Hindu and Islamic cultures in the north, that there developed a split in Indian music and the two schools of the north and the south came to be distinguished. This explanation was largely informed by the Orientalist construction of the chaste classical style of peninsular India in opposition to the hybrid style of northern India that emerged under Islamic rule which, among other things, degraded the profession of music” (1999:134). And, “...Day was also responsible for projecting the relative ‘purity’ of the southern musical tradition, arguing that the isolation of the peninsula from the ‘excesses’ of Muslim rule was responsible for its preservation against alien influences and for the high social status of its practitioners” (ibid.:144).

made reference to Day's reference of these Mughal sources through Taylor, the lack of any specific discussion of it leaves the reader to assume, in the face of her previous declaration of colonial origins, that this too was a colonial manipulation of sorts (1999:134 n.5). In the end, I do not think we can credit Day for creating a distinction between North and South, be it in terms of relative "purity" or in terms of religion. Not only did Mughal writers precede him, but so too did reformists, who I discuss below.

Day may have taken a step back with respect to how far the narrative of Muslim dominance had come in the overall scope of English literature, but he also took a step beyond his colonial predecessors Jones and Willard by providing an answer for why, "with the advent of the Mahomedans," music's "decline commenced" (1891:3). The reason, Day argued, was not only that men of social standing were reticent to take up the music because it had become populated by men of questionable morality (Willard's explanation), but also because music occupied an ambiguous space in the Islamic moral universe. Among learned Muslims, music possessed "the property," claimed Day, "of producing both good and evil" (ibid.:4). "Such opinions," he concluded, "have tended to lower the standing of a musician, and the art itself has suffered consequently" (ibid.). Thus the notion that music was "a degraded employment, fit only for the stroller or the dancing girl," is for Day a legacy of Islam.¹⁹⁰ The fact that it still "lingers on" is evidence of how "strong is the

¹⁹⁰ This phrase seems to have had a life beyond and before Day's text. In an 1887 article the *Madras Mail* on February 17th, Rama Rao said, "Wherever Mohamedans went in India music became a degraded employment, an accomplishment fit for only the stroller and the dancing girl" (cited in Farrell 1997:53).

influence caused by the long ordeal of Mahomedan conquest” (ibid.:4–5). We will revisit the issue of the influence of Islam on music when we consider the work of ethnomusicologists Regula Qureshi and Daniel Neuman.

Thus, with Day we have for the first time *among colonial authors* (again, reformists precede him) a clear declaration of a primarily Muslim population of practitioners in Hindustani music, and a clear connection between music’s decline due to Islam, thus going beyond the simple claim to improper patronage. In addition, Day does make a passing statement regarding the “great dislike all native musicians have to imparting instruction to any but a favoured few” (ibid.:7). Importantly, however, this statement is not given any special connection to Muslim musicians or even to Hindustani ones. The claim that Muslim musicians in particular were reluctant to teach is the final component of the Muslim dominance narrative, which was bequeathed by Hindu reformists who actually preceded Day’s work.

REFORMISTS

By “reformists” I refer to a broad section of largely native Hindu authors and cultural workers who, over the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, sought to rescue Indian music’s glorious past from the degeneracy into which colonialists insisted it fell.¹⁹¹ Though colonialists also sought to revive ancient Hindu music, their

¹⁹¹ There were some English who advocated for reform along with natives. The American Unitarian missionary, Charles Dall (d.1885), was a member of the reformist organization, the Brahma Samaj. Michale Rosse reproduced a passage from the Lahore *Tribue*, which summarized the reformist comments made by the America artist/ actor, Edmund Russel, upon the inauguration of V.D. Paluskar’s first school in 1901 (1995:154). And though outside of music, it is important to mention that one of the founders of the Indian National Congress in 1885 was an Englishman, Allan Octavian Hume

interests ultimately layed in tracing its connections with Western history. For reformists, however, ancient Hindu music served the purpose of constructing a connected national history.¹⁹² In this sense, musical reformers, like the social and religious reformers with whom they were connected and in relation to whom they should be understood, were involved in a conscious project to modernize Indian music.¹⁹³ The impetus for this project was a general encounter with the West. Responses to Western perceptions of Indian music, like the responses to Western perceptions of Indian religions, were multifaceted and varied over the nineteenth and twentieth century from unequivocal acceptance, outright rejection, selective and concealed adoption, and the assertion of alternative, superior or prior modernities.¹⁹⁴

(1829-1912). Parsi organizations such as the Gāyan Uttejak Maṅḍalī (GUM) were certainly part of the larger thrust to “reform” music, religion and social practices in the context of an encounter with the West, but their focus was not generally on the Hindu golden age/ Muslim decline narrative. Finally, a distinction is often made between “reform” and “revival” movements, the latter growing to prominence in the later nineteenth century and being characterized as more aggressively nativist and less westernized. The transition from reform to revivalism in the Hindu milieu is illustrated, Christophe Jaffrelot claimed, in the contrast between the Brahma Samaj and the Arya Samaj (2007:7). But for the purposes of this chapter, I follow Sumit Sarkar, who has suggested that, “the difference here with the ‘reform’ movements was of degree rather than kind... they too had operated with a conception of ‘Muslim tyranny’ or a ‘medieval’ dark age...from which British rule with its accompanying alleged ‘renaissance’ or ‘awakening’ had been a deliverance” (1983:75–76).

¹⁹² Many have noted this distinction outside the realm of music. Gyan Prakash, for instance, drawing on Romila Thapar’s essay “Interpretations of Ancient Indian History” (*History and Theory* 7/3, 1968), stated: “If some of the early Orientalists had seen Europe’s origin in the India of the texts, the nationalists saw the origin of the modern nation in the same ancient India” (1990:388). In reference to the work of a particular orientalist, William Jones, Richard Fynes similarly claimed that, “The work of Jones, and those that followed him... led Indians to view Sanskrit literature as their national classical literature, a view which was to be an important formative element in the development of a national consciousness in India” (1998:60).

¹⁹³ Though Janaki Bakhle is often cited for making this connection between the musical and social reform movements (see in particular 2005:82), Michael Rosse (1995) preceded her observations by almost a decade.

¹⁹⁴ Kenneth Ballhatchet’s essay, “Indian Perceptions of the West,” categorizes the responses of the socio-religious reform movements within the following models: acceptance (e.g., Keshub Chunder

Thus, just as there is much that distinguished the colonial writers considered above, there is also much that distinguished reformist authors considered here.

Despite the great variety of reformist responses, the movement has generally been divided into two broad periods. The first, beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century, was driven by socially progressive, western-educated elites, whose fortunes—and loyalties—were often tied the British.¹⁹⁵ The successors of these early reformers in the early twentieth century (those belonging to the second group), were also drawn from the western-educated elite, but their activities and writings tended to target the general population and were more openly critical of the acceptance of western values.¹⁹⁶ Following this brief introduction of these general positions, I will take up a discussion of a specific reformer from each.

The shift between these periods was occasioned by what David Kopf has described as a change in British attitudes towards the modernization of native traditions from one of cosmopolitanism to parochialism. As he explains it, “so long as the European masters viewed modernization as cosmopolitan rather than parochial in nature, the Bengalis offered little resistance to cultural change. When modernization

Sen’s “young Bengal” agitation), rejection (e.g., Gandhi’s *Hind Swaraj*), selective acceptance (e.g. the Dharma Sabha), and concealed acceptance (e.g. the Brahmo Samaj) (1985-86:175).

¹⁹⁵ Social and religious reform movements seem to predate musical ones, with the Brahmo Samaj (or its immediate antecedents) beginning in the second decade of the nineteenth century.

¹⁹⁶ Early reformists were also, as Janaki Bakhle pointed out, more regionally focused in their activities. “Only when key modernizers, and here Bhatkhande and Paluskar are the two primary actors, took up the charge of nationalizing music across northern and western India did music come to be inextricably aligned with the language of modern nationalism” (2005:95).

took on the guise of Macaulayism [reference to Thomas Macaulay, discussed above in the context of the introduction of English education in India], the older response pattern collapsed and the cultural barricades of nationalism were rapidly erected” (Kopf 1969:280, cited in Capwell 2010:292). However, perceptible as a generalized shift in the Indian response to British attitudes might have been, it is important to remember that divergent responses were seen during every period. Contemporary to both the acceptance typical of the early and mid-nineteenth century reformers and the rejection of the early twentieth were simultaneous efforts towards compromise.¹⁹⁷

Several scholars have noted the neglect that earlier authors such as S.M. Tagore have suffered in the historical role call of nationalist musical reformers. The reason, Charles Capwell suggested, had to do with their ambiguous loyalties, which made it more difficult for later-day nationalists to support them (2007:297). Similar observations were also made by Rosse (1995:12–13) and Clayton (2007:87, 92–93). Rosse additionally suggested that later reformers had their own interests in mind when distancing themselves from their predecessors, as they could assert greater significance in and credit for music’s reform (1995:4, 23).

¹⁹⁷ This is inspired by the following statements of Kenneth Ballhatchet: “It is true that the early nineteenth century presents us with the archetype of acceptance in Young Bengal and the early twentieth with the archetype of rejection in Gandhi’s *Hind Swaraj*. But contemporary with Young Bengal were the two models of compromise—that of selective acceptance in the Dharma Sabha and that of concealed acceptance in the Brahma Samaj—and these models continued to characterise many Indian perceptions of the West” (1985-86:175). Though not a primary focus of his text, Thomas Metcalf similarly claimed in *Ideologies of the Raj* that, “[t]he Indian response to, and, as the years went on, their interaction with, the various British descriptions of their land was complex and multi-faceted. It involved simultaneous processes of acceptance, accommodation, adaptation, and rejection” (1995:xi).

Though later-day reformers may have taken more overtly nationalist positions, it is important to recognize that they too, along with their predecessors, adopted and adapted Orientalist notions, the primary one under consideration here being the degeneration of Hindu music under Muslim rule. Of course, the narrative of degeneration, as argued above, was not simply a unique invention of colonialists, but had roots in both European and pre-colonial Indian sources. However, colonialists can be credited with instilling in these pre-existing narratives a particular anti-Muslim significance.

If colonial authors introduced the notion that Muslims were responsible for the present state of India's presumed cultural decline (including music, but also beyond), then reformists not only embraced this narrative, they also significantly enhanced it. As we have seen, the claim that Muslim musicians were pedagogical intransigent had no precedent in colonial writing on Indian music. Day briefly alluded to the disinterest that *all* native musicians had in teaching, but neither was his statement specifically aimed at Muslims, nor did it precede the specific targeting of Muslims by reformist authors (discussed below).

The significance of this observation lies in the fact that present-day scholars have assumed that reformist criticism against *Muslim* musicians was simply inherited from colonial authors. Sharmadip Basu, for instance, claimed to have traced the “intertextuality between Willard's representation of the Ustad and that by the Bengali Bhadrakok [i.e., bourgeoisie]” (2011:339). Though musical reformers no doubt received colonial notions of *Muslim degeneracy* in toto, the idea that Muslim

musicians were parsimonious and pedagogically secretive was not among this inheritance. Instead, this defining aspect of the Muslim dominance narrative as it has come down to us today is attributable, I argue, to reformist authors.

Part of the reason for the escalation of anti-Muslim discourse among reformists was its unique utility. That is, the construction of a Muslim degeneracy, though a colonial construction, was useful to reformers for unique reasons.¹⁹⁸ First, it provided an external (i.e. non-Hindu) cause for India's colonization, thus diminishing the socio-psychological trauma of imperialism. And second, by vilifying Muslims for destroying a once great Hindu culture, Hindu reformists could, in a round about way, express pride in an ancient imagined past, and a desire to effect its revival. In other words, Hindu musical reformers could enact what Bipan Chandra has described as "vicarious nationalism" (S. Sarkar 1983:84). Sumit Sarkar, picking up on Chandra's formulation, described Muslims as "convenient whipping boys" for satisfying an anti-colonial agenda (ibid.). Ashish Nandy similarly argued that Muslims received a "displaced hostility against the colonial power which could not be expressed directly" (Nandy 1983:267 n.35, cited in Capwell 1991:238).

In music, this same vicarious utility has been ascribed to the narrative of Muslim dominance. As Lakshmi Subramanian noted, "[t]he earlier European critique [of the Muslim past] provided the [urban middle] class with a convenient whipping

¹⁹⁸ Charles Capwell made a similar observation: "I think it is easy to see in the appropriation of British idiom by Bengalis an attempt at suborning the representational resources of the colonizer for their own nationalist ends. The marginalizing of Muslims in the East India Company's service and a general British condescension towards them reinforced similar attitudes among the Bengali Hindu elite, who saw themselves as the inheritors of a glorious Hindu past now validated by the Orientalists' discovery of it and their attribution of its decline to Muslim influence" (2010:298).

boy—the illiterate Muslim practitioner of music who had corrupted what was inherently and intrinsically a pure, sacral, and scientific tradition... ([2006] 2011:67). Sharmadip Basu similarly brings our attention to the fact that during this proto-nationalist period of the 1870s, “the target is evidently not the European colonizer but the Indian Muslim” (2011:336). Anti-Muslim-ness “cathected” onto the Ustad. Basu writes that the idea of Muslim decay (or in his words, the “ideologized sense of musico-historical wrong harbored by the Bhadrakok”) became cathected “on the single figure of the Muslim music exponent / teacher, or the *Ustad*—the absolute other of the Bhadrakok musical subject, in total contradistinction to whom the latter’s selfhood was substantiated” (337).

Understanding the unique utility that anti-Muslim narratives had for reformers in the late nineteenth century helps to explain why the Muslim dominance narrative reached its peak in the writings of Hindu reformists during this time.¹⁹⁹ It is towards a specific consideration of this narrative in the writings of one of its first proponents that we now turn.

Sourindro Mohun Tāgore

Sourindro Mohun Tagore (1840-1914) remains to this day one of the most prolific authors on Indian music of all time. From 1870 to 1912, Tagore published

¹⁹⁹ Basu questioned why this anti-Muslim narrative, the development of which was brought about by colonial subjugation, did not disappear after colonial rule (2011:337). To this I might suggest that this narrative is a stereotype, and like other stereotypes, such as those developed about Asian immigrants to America in the mid-nineteenth century, generally outlive the contexts from which they arise, though they do change to reflect cultural politics of particular historical moments (Lee 1999).

approximately forty works on North Indian music, and another twenty-eight on various other topics, and all at his own expense (Flora 2004:289).²⁰⁰ The impact of these publications was felt worldwide, as Tagore took the effort and expense to distribute them, along with musical instruments, to museums, archives and concerned parties throughout Europe, Australia, the Americas and the East Asia (Capwell 1986:152). His *Tantra Kosha*, or a treasury of musical instruments of ancient and modern India (1875), influenced the curator of instrument collection of the Belgian Royal Academy of Music in Brussels, Victor Charles Mahillon, in the design of his four-part classification of musical instruments (1880), which was later taken up by Hornbostel and Sachs (1914) to form the standard system for the discipline of organology (Capwell 1986:152; Bor 1988:64; Jairazbhoy 1990). His *Musical Scales of the Hindus* (1884) constituted the primary source of Alexander Ellis's observations on Indian tuning (Bor 1988:64), a publication that was foundational to the field of ethnomusicology. And his *Universal History of Music* (1896), Joep Bor claimed, "may be regarded as one of the first genuine efforts by a non-Westerner to write a history of world music" (ibid.:62).

Beyond his publications, Tagore was also involved in practical matters of musical instruction. Not only was he schooled in playing the bin, sitar, surbahar and piano,²⁰¹ he also founded schools for music, the first being the Bengali Music School in 1871—one of the first in India—and later the Bengal Music Academy in 1882. His

²⁰⁰ Flores's article contains a comprehensive, chronological bibliography of Tagore's work.

²⁰¹ He had learned bin from Lakshmi Prasad Misra, vocal music from Kshetra Mohan Goswami, sitar and surbahar from Sajjad Mohammad Khan, and piano from a German (Rosse 1995:32).

facility in both Indian and European music has led one ethnomusicologist to argue that Tagore was “an apostle and practitioner of the method of training for ethnomusicological scholarship espoused approximately a century later by Mantle Hood—the value of comparative music studies of attaining bi-musicality” (Flores 2004:297).

Exceptional as Tagore was in his generous promotion of music, he was also exemplary of Calcutta’s native elite who, during the mid and late-nineteenth century, sought to balance the benefits of western modernity with its simultaneous critique of contemporary native culture, the orientalist romanticization of its past, and the desire to retain or revitalize native traditions.²⁰² At first glance, the Tagore family’s stance towards western modernity seems to be have one of complete embrace. Indeed, James Furrell (1892:8) opened his biography of the family with the claim that, “No more convincing refutation of the truth of this opinion [on the incompatibility between “the genius of Western...and Oriental culture”] could, perhaps, be found than has been furnished to the world by the illustrious family of Brahmans whose history forms the subject of the following pages.” The Tagores had long been emeshed in a colonial milieu since at least the late eighteenth century, when Tagore’s great-great-grandfather, Jayrām, established the family in the environs of Calcutta through his business dealings with the East India Company. Their connection to the growing British presence there is provocatively summed up by the fact that they literally

²⁰² In Joep Bor’s words, Tagore “was a typical product of the 19th-century English educated Bengali intelligensia, loyal, on the one hand, to the British crown, but attempting, on the other hand, to reassert and glorify traditional Hindu values and ideas” (1988:63 citing Rosse 1980).

owned the land on which Fort William, the seat of the colonial government, was constructed (Capwell 1991:231). Tagore's grandfather, Gopi Mohun Tagore (1760-1819), was a noted intellectual and polyglot who helped found and govern the first institution in India to impart European—and particularly Orientalist—education among the native elite, the Hindu College of Calcutta, which was founded in 1816 and modeled after the first college for English officers in India, Fort William College (Capwell 1991:232, 1986:151). Sourindro Mohun's father, Haro Kumar Rao, attended the Hindu College, as did Sourindro Mohun, who was born just five years after the resolution of 1835 to make English the official language of the state. His loyalty to the British is often demonstrated through his book, appropriately titled *Hindu Loyalty* (1883), in which he argued that Hindus were inherently loyal subjects to whomever ruled over them (Capwell 2010:293). Also cited in this regard is his Bengal rendition of the British patriotic song, “God Save the Queen” (1882).

Westernized as the Tagore family was, they did not reject native traditions for English ones. Instead, whether it be in the realm of music, theater, religion, or social practice, the Tagore's largely sought to recover, reform and revitalize aspects of Hindu traditions that best accommodated Western values and ideas. Sourindro Mohun, for example, acknowledged the claim of colonialists that Indian music required notation to be modern. However, he sought to fulfill this need with a native solution—a Bengali notation based on syllables instead of western staff notation. At variance to both many English and some Bengali writers, Tagore maintained that staff notation was simply unsuited to the “murchannas” of Indian music, by which he

meant the graces given to melody.²⁰³ In a manner that harkened back to the appeal of Orientalists to govern India according to “native” laws (however newly abstracted from ancient texts they may have been), Tagore argued that each country had a notation system that was uniquely suited to its own music. In addition to notation, Tagore also adopted western theatrical forms, such as the proscenium stage, which was distanced and/or raised from the audience and lit with electrical lighting. However, these modern features were used to present stories from Hindu epics in vernacular languages.²⁰⁴

Sourindro Mohun’s brand of reformism is best understood in comparison to the reformist organization in which his family played a major part—the Brahmo Samaj or the Society of the Divine, which, according to one of its most noted chroniclers, “played a crucial role in the genesis and development of every major religious, social, and political movement in India from 1820 to 1930” (Kopf 1979:xiii). Its founder, Ram Mohun Roy (1772-1833), a Bengali Brahman who had

²⁰³ See Capwell’s discussion of the debate that erupted in the press particularly between Tagore and Charles Baron Clarke, who criticized Tagore’s notation as “national” (1989:148-50). Capwell more recently summed up the debate over European and native notation systems as thus: “[u]sing the tools and methods of foreign culture, they [S.M Tagore and his circle] were positioning themselves to become the arbiters of the new performing arts, rescued, revived, and rehabilitated from Muslim degradations and demonstrably capable of contending with those of the West” (2010:311). Tagore’s approach to notation was markedly different from that of the Gayan Samaj, which rejected the western requirement of notation instead of trying to accommodate it. In Janaki Bakhle’s words, the Gayan Samaj insisted that “Hindu music was not modern” and “Hindu music’s lack of modernity was its strength” (ibid.:66). Those who did support notation, on the other hand, “saw it in instrumental terms,” Bakhle insists, meaning that they adopted notation “as the means by which to render Indian music more comprehensible and accessible to Western listeners” (ibid.:68).

²⁰⁴ See Capwell’s discussion of Tagore’s tableaux vivants (2010:305–06). Comparisons can be made with discussions of the adoption of other western technologies. For lithographic printing among Indian artists see Guha-Thkurta (1992). Janaki Bakhle (2005:279 n.29) pointed to Gyan Prakash’s *Another Reason* (1999) “for a very useful and enlightening treatment of the relationship between the development of native science tied to antiquity and colonial forms of knowledge.”

served the East India Company as both a political secretary (*munśi*) and revenue officer (*diwān*) under John Digby, was deeply influenced by European and American Universalist Unitarian philosophy, as well as by Orientalist understandings of ancient Hinduism and Christian criticisms of modern Hindu practice. In fact, Roy, along with the Baptist missionary William Adam and Dwarkanath Tagore, founder of the Jorasanko branch of the Tagore family, had earlier, in 1829, founded the Calcutta Unitarian Society, which Kopf described as a Universalist theistic society. Drawing on an intersection of these influences, Roy sought to purify Hinduism of what he saw as inauthentic and outmoded accretions such as polytheism, idol worship, sati, castism, child marriage, irrational rituals, and superstitions. At the same time, he defended Hinduism against the attacks of Christian missionaries.

Though the Brahmos took on the guise of a western voluntary religious association with its congregational meetings, creed, society officers, missionaries, and printed literature, it did not merely ape the West. Instead, the Brahmos adopted western symbols, philosophies and organizational structures into a reinterpreted Hinduism understood to be *more* authentically Hindu. For this reason, Ballhatchet described the Brahma Samaj as expressing a “concealed acceptance” of western knowledge (162). Kenneth Jones similarly described them as an “acculturative” type of socio-religious reform movement, which sought equivalence for Hinduism with Christianity, not the superiority of the latter (1989:3 and 38). Roy, like Sourindro Mohun later on, felt that British rule was providential for Indian nationalism, that India would become a nation *with* the help of the British, not despite them.

Differences certainly emerged in the Samaj over time. Following Roy, the charismatic leader of the society was Debendranath Tagore (1817-1905), a relative of Sourindro Mohun's through another branch of the family, went beyond the equivalence sought by Roy to emphasize the superiority of Hinduism over Christianity (Jones 1989:33).²⁰⁵ A new generation of young and ardent Bengalis led by Keshab Chandra Sen (1838-1884) then formed a splinter group that more openly embraced Christianity (Unitarianism).²⁰⁶ Still, all brands of Brahmos looked upon British influence as beneficial, and this distinguished their "reformism" from the "revivalism" and rejection of British influence of late-nineteenth century groups such as the Arya Samaj (Jaffrelot 2007:9). It also largely distinguished the early musical

²⁰⁵ Between Roy's death in 1833 and Debendranath's charge in 1843, Ram Chandra Vidyabagish led the Brahma movement, during which time it languished. Debendranath changed the name of the society to the "Brahmo Samaj," prior to which (from 1828) it was the "Brahmo Sabha." Debendranath was from the Jorasanko branch of the Tagore family, while Sourindro Mohun was from the Pathuriaghata branch. Debendranath was the father of Rabindranath, the Nobel-Prize winner. Prior to his leadership of the Brahmos, he founded the Tattvabodhini Sabha or Truth-Propogating Society in 1839 to challenge Christian conversions. Though he is claimed to have realigned or revived the society according to the principles set down by Roy (for example, see Pennington 2008), Kopf notes that, "there is no evidence that he was motivated in doing so by Unitarian considerations" (15).

²⁰⁶ Keshab Chandra Sen was employee at the Bank of Bengal, and the son of Rama Kamal Sen, Treasurer of the Calcutta Mint in 1832, a leading member of the Dharma Sabha, and a prominent supporter of English education (Ballechet 165). Keshab joined the Samaj in 1857, initially as a disciple of Debendranath, but later formed a splinter group in 1866, which was named the Brahma Samaj of India. Thereafter, Debendranath's followers went by the name of the Adi Brahma Samaj. Keshub insisted on reforms that even the progressive Brahmos were unable to accept, such as abandoning the sacred thread for Brahmans who conducted services. He was highly influenced by the American Unitarian missionary, C.H.A. Dall, who arrived in Calcutta in 1855. Kopf notes that, "[i]n 1873, it appeared to Trinitarian missionaries that Dall's influence on Keshub Sen was so profound that the Brahma Samaj of India had become Unitarian in all but name" (1979:23). Debendranath was also contrasted with Keshav as "seeing the Samaj as strictly a religious organization defined by ritual and theology. He had little or no interest in social reform and devoted much of his attention to the defense of Hinduism from missionary criticism" (Jones 1989:35).

reformers like Sourindro Mohun from the later reformers like V.N. Bhatkhande, explored below.

The connection between Brahmoism and the early musical reform, however, may be even more direct than this. Though focused on religion, the Brahmo Samaj gave a prominent role to music in their services and activities. Indeed, Michale Rosse went so far as to argue that the Brahmo Samaj “helped pave the way for the spread of the music revival” (1995:12). One way they incorporated music was through collective singing during all of their services. Their hymns, known as “brahma sangit,” were composed by Ram Mohun Roy and drew upon the Vaishnava musical tradition, dhrupad, and Hindustani classical music (Rosse 1995:14). Under the stewardship of Debendranath Tagore, the Samaj also began hosting performances of professional classical singers as a regular part of their services, thus presaging the concerts held by music societies such as the Gayan Uttejak Mandali of Bombay.²⁰⁷ Debendranath’s eldest son, Jyotirindranath Tagore (1849-1925), helped to establish a Brahmo music school in 1897, the Adi Brahmo Samaj Sangit Vidyalay, which was one of the very first institutions for music education in India. Finally, Debenranath’s

²⁰⁷ For its first concert in 1871, the Gayan Uttejak Mandali invited the bin player Imdad Khan to perform for its members (see relevant section of Deodhar 1993). This is the same Imdad Khan who featured prominently in the Ashtewale family history and who I discuss more specifically in Chapter Six. By comparison, Rosse cites several accounts of musical recitals being hosted by the Brahmo Samaj in the 1830s (1995:14–16). One account from an American Reverend, Howard Malcolm, described a service of the Brahmo Sabha as being composed of half lecture and half music, the music itself being divided between communal singing and a kind of concert by a professional singer (ibid.). Sourindo Mohun himself noted that, “[m]usic plays an important part in the services of the Brahmo Samajees or Theistic Churches of the country. Rajah Ram Mohan Roy (1776–1833), who established what is called the Adi (or first) Brahmo Samaj in Calcutta in 1830, composed a number of hymns which were sung here as well as elsewhere. At the present time hymns set to high class music are sung here under the supervision of the talented members of the family of *Maharshi* Debendro Nath Tagore, the present head of the Samaj” (Tagore 1990:65).

younger son, Dwijendranath Tagore, along with his cousin Ganendranath Tagore and Nabagopal Mitra, inaugurated an annual conference and festival in 1867 called the Hindu Mela, which served as a platform for both speeches and performances aimed at fostering a feeling of unity, pride and self-reliance among Hindus (Rosse 1995:21–22). Finally, it was on the occasion of the Hindu Mela of 1870 that Sourindro Mohun made his first foray as an outspoken reformer, giving a speech on the topic of music (ibid.:8).

What is important for us to take away from this review of Sourindro Mohun’s activities and their relation to the social and religious reform activities of his extended family is that, like the larger reform movement of which he was a part, Sourindro Mohun adopted many aspects of colonial modernity, but did so in order to reinterpret and modernize native traditions, not reject them. In the process, moreover, the western ideas that inspired these changes were themselves transformed. A demand for western music notation thus became articulated in a historically revised approach to notation found in ancient Sanskrit texts. Theatrical form became more westernized, but its context became nationalized. Likewise, reformers took up the developing narrative of Muslim dominance from colonial writers with its criticism of both Muslim rulers and unmarked professionals, but forwarded it in their own ways.

When it comes to the concept of “Hindu” music and its degeneration under Muslim rulers, Sourindro Mohun was deeply indebted to Orientalist scholarship.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁸ Indeed, he himself acknowledged the generality of this debt in preface to *The Ten Principal Avatars of the Hindus, with a Short History of East Incarnation and Directions for the Representation of the Murtis as Tableaux Vivants* (1880): “generally, I am indebted to the works of Sir William Jones, H.H. Wilson, Max Muller, Garrett, Maurice, Goldstucker, Dowson, Griffiths, and others, who

He followed Willard, for example, in claiming that, “the *Sastras* of the Hindus, including that of music, sank into oblivion” with “the transfer of Hindusthan from the hands of the Hindus to the hands of the Mohamedans” (Tagore 1886:34 cited in Basu 2011:334). However, as noted earlier, Tagore went much further, considerably expanding the Muslim critique of colonial authors. He did so first by explicitly declaring that *Muslims* made up a majority of music’s practitioners, something that was not even articulated by Day, whose book appeared after much of Tagore’s work had already been published. Secondly—and most importantly—Sourindro Mohun criticized the mass of Muslim musicians as being pedagogically intransigent.

Nowhere is Tagore’s claim to the Muslim musician’s unwillingness to teach more striking than in the following passage taken from his editorial in the 1872 volume of *Sangit Samalochani* (the music review). In it, Tagore, in fact, does much more than make this claim. He first blames Muslim rulers for initiating Hindu music’s decay by “burning down,” “looting,” and “obliterating” Sanskrit musical treatises with iconoclastic zeal. He then offers a hitherto undocumented explanation for how Muslims came to dominate music, one that resurfaces in the writings of later reformists and ethnomusicologists: that Muslim rulers forced or tricked Hindu musicians to convert to Islam (I discuss the conversion narratives of musicians in Chapter Five). Finally, in the first documented instance that I have been able to find,

have rendered India and the world valuable service by their labours in the field of Indian literature and archaeology” (ii, cited in Capwell 2010:307-08).

Tagore claims that Muslims musicians “are not easily inclined to teach music to Hindus”:

Within this royal lineage of invaders [earlier described as the “Muslim (*yavana*) conquest of India (*bharatbhumi*)”] there have been born one or two knowledge-loving emperors who, understanding the exquisiteness of Hindu music, contributed their enthusiasm towards its advancement. But be it through chicanery or might, they started converting exponents of Hindu music to their own religion. We think this is the outstanding reason why cultivation of music is so rare among Hindus, and it is due to this that one sees more music-exponents among the Muslims....What is a matter of even greater sorrow is that the Muslims are not easily inclined to teach music to Hindus. Even if they are favorably inclined, they are ignorant regarding how to teach in a simple way. Therefore, learning music from Muslims is not easily forthcoming. (Tagore 1872:2–3, cited and translated by Basu 2011:336)

Basu, who brought this passage to light through his own translation, has justifiably ascribed much to it; he suggested that there might be no other statement in contemporary Bengali writing that “articulates the anti-Muslim ideology at the heart of the Hindu Bhadrakalok musical program in such sharp stridency” (ibid.336). For our purposes, Tagore’s statement is additionally significant for being the first complete articulation of the Muslim dominance narrative as it has come down to us today.

Tagore's focus on the intransigent character of the Muslim musician, and his specific unwillingness to teach, marks this statement as unique in the progression of ideas followed in this chapter. In making this statement, Tagore seized on what in the colonial discourse was a latent criticism of Muslim musicians, and brought it to a level that can only be described as explicitly communal. The irony, of course, is that Tagore himself had several Muslim teachers.

It is possible that Tagore was not the first to acknowledge that contemporary musicians were largely Muslim or that they were pedagogically intransigent. One of Sourindro Mohun's very own music teachers, for example, the scholar-musician Kshetro Mohun Goswami, is claimed to have argued that, "the great intellectual tradition of Sanksrit learning in music died out with the usurpation of musical practice by Muslim ustads" (Capwell 2010:297). And as early as 1849, one of India's early social reformers, Gopal Hari Deshmukh (1823-1893), writing under the name of Lokhivadi, apparently "chided his fellow Brahmans for saying 'the knowledge of music belongs to the Muslims, because they do not realize that the Muslims got this knowledge from Hindu people'" (Rosse 1995:313).

Whether Tagore was, in 1870, the first to articulate it or not, the notion that Muslim musicians usurped, dominated, and jealously guarded whatever was left of the practice of ancient Hindu music became enshrined in the writings of reformers who followed him. Even Krishnadhan Bondopadhyay, a former protégé of Sourindro Mohun who Basu claims was known for "consciously refraining from the strident anti-Muslim polemics that characterized the writings of those in Sourendramohan's

circle,” criticized “ustads” for being reticent businessmen who refused to partake in teaching:

There is no way that one can learn music besides from the businessmen Ustads. For most accomplished Ustads, their business is invariably ancestral; they are reticent to partake of their ancestral knowledge. Though at times they do give lessons for the sake of survival, but since this is not done with an open mind, the teaching is not of a good standard. That expanding scope of music cultivation should lead to gradual development of musical practice—if one is not favorably disposed to this idea with compassion, then music pedagogy can never be good, and teaching methods can never be refined. But none of our Ustads possess an iota of such compassion. (*Gitasutrasar*, Calcutta: A. Mukherjee and Co., 1975 [1885]:6, cited in Basu 340)

It should be noted that Bondopadhyay does not specifically use the term Muslim in this passage. Instead, we are to understand Bondopadhyay’s criticism as anti-Muslim due to his use of the term “ustad.” (I discuss the communalization of the term ustad in Chapter Five). However, Basu does quote from other Bengali authors who reiterates the “pedagogical secrecy” of the ustad in specifically Muslim terms. One such author was Baishnabcharan Basak, co-author with Narendra Datta (later known as Swami Vivekananda) of an encyclopedia of Bengali music and musicians called *Sangitkalpataru* (1887). In a followup to this work (1899), Basak noted that, “Muslim

ustads were mostly illiterate and were especially parsimonious in imparting their musical knowledge to the Hindus” (cited in Basu 2011:339).

The Muslim dominance narrative does not accrue any major additional features as we move from the early to the later reformist period. Many of the statements on the dominance of Muslims largely reiterate the claims made above: improper patronage by Muslim rulers caused music’s theory to become separated from its practice; the practice of music then became dominated by Muslims, many of whom were previously Hindus either forced, tricked or encouraged to convert to Islam; Hindu musicians declined in number either because they feared associating with Muslims, deplorable as they were, or because Muslim musicians were unwilling to share with them their hereditary knowledge.

What can be said about later articulations of this narrative, however, is that they become more and more enmeshed within stories of Muslim-Hindu discipleship. In these stories, Hindu students are depicted as martyrs in their efforts to learn music from their wily Muslim teachers. The humiliation they endured is seen as a kind of selfless sacrifice for the nation, the ultimate goal of which was to win music back from the control of illiterate Muslim professionals. Regula Qureshi summarized this reformist agenda in no uncertain terms when she said, “[i]nitiating and articulating very clearly by Bhatkhande, it became the agenda for middle-class Hindu music lovers for a generation: to take music out of the hands of the Muslim hereditary professionals and win it for the Hindu elite through discipleship and devotion (1991:161). The rest of this section on reformers therefore focuses on this theme, first in the work of

Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande and statements attributed to him, and then in an assortment of other reformers' work. Through these statements we learn of the techniques thought to compel Muslims to teach against their wishes: Hindu devotionalism, enlisting the authority of patrons, and playing to the base competitiveness of their teachers. A focus on this theme is meant to give greater perspective to the final chapter on Hindu-Muslim discipleship.

Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande

Following S.M. Tagore, Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande (1860-1936) has remained the most prolific and foremost musicologist of North Indian music of all time. His publications, beginning with *Srimal-lakshyasangitam* in 1910 and ending with the last of his six-volume *Kramak Pustak Malika* in 1937, are rigorous considerations of a variety of musical historical topics, and they span the languages of Sanskrit, Marathi and English.²⁰⁹ Primary among Bhatkhande's contributions to Indian music theory is his invention of a system of raga classification known as *thāt*,²¹⁰ his rudimentary criteria for the performance of contemporary ragas, his

²⁰⁹ I know of no complete listing of Bhatkhande's works. In addition to the aforementioned works, highlights include the five-volume *Hindustani Sangit Paddhati*, and the six-volume *Kramak Pustak Malika*.

²¹⁰ Bhatkhande's *thāt* system is variously claimed to have been influenced by the Karnatak *melākartā* system of raga classification and the idiomatic system used the moveable-fretted sitar (Brown 2006). Briefly stated, Bhatkhande envisioned a *thāt* as a parent scale from which a group of ragas could be derived. All ten *thāt*-s derive their name from a particular raga associated with that *thāt*. In Bhatkhande's system, the bilaval *thāt* forms the foundational *thāt*, which is based on the Western natural scale. The most significant developments stemming from Bhatkhande's work has been made by ethnomusicologist Nazir Ali Jairazbhoy ([1971] 1995). Jairazbhoy noted discrepancies in the *thāt* system (48-49), for which he made suggestions for improvement (e.g., a thirty-two *thāt* system).

system of letter notation, and his theory of time for raga performance, all of which are ubiquitous within institutionalized pedagogies today. Bhatkhande was himself a creator of institutions. He started several schools for music, including the Madhav Music College in Gwalior and in 1926, the Marris College of Music (now the Bhatkhande Music Institute University), named after then Governor of the United Provinces, William Sinclair Marris. The all-India scope of his work—a characteristic that is said to distinguish him and other early-twentieth century reformers from those of the nineteenth century (Bakhle 2005:95)—is demonstrated through the five All-India Music Conferences that he organized between 1916 and 1925.²¹¹

In addition to his supra-regional focus, there is much more that distinguishes Bhatkhande from his predecessors, contemporaries, and even those who followed him. Upon his own admission, he was more systematic in his scholarship than earlier reformers such as S.M. Tagore, whose work he nevertheless admired (Bakhle 2005:109). In fact, it was Bhatkhande's scholarly fastidiousness that led to him to take the radical stance—again distinguishing him from those who came before—that Indian music was, in Janaki Bakhle's phrase, “inescapably modern” (2005:115-16).

²¹¹ Both Bakhle (2005:180 ff) and Subramanian (1999:132) claim that Bhatkhande's All-India Music Conferences (AIMC) were modeled after the meetings of the Indian National Congress. Michael Rosse takes a longer view, positioning the AIMC in relation to a pre- and early-colonial history of indigenous music conferences and festivals going as far back as the grand meeting (mahasammelan) organized by Raja Man Singh Tomar for the construction of the work that bears his name, the *Mankutuhala* (literally, “the curiosities of Man”) in the early sixteenth century, to the more contemporary Vidya Mahajana Sangam held in Tanjore beginning in 1912. Rosse claimed that, “[t]he similarity between the Tanjore and Baroda conferences [Baroda being the first AIMC] is striking: They both sponsored lectures of *srutis* and other musicological subjects and discussions between practical musicians and musicologists” (Rosse 1995:177). Greig reminded us that the method of producing a treatise by gathering a congress of musicians actually preceded the *Mankutuhala*; it was used to create the *Sangita Siromani* in the early fifteenth century (1987:307). Also see Nijenhuis's introduction to a translation of this work (1992).

He did this by insisting that contemporary music had no known *evidential* link to the music described in Sanskrit texts such as the Vedas and the Natyashastra. He even expressed skepticism regarding the applicability of the thirteenth-century *Sangitratnakara*, which he claimed was not yet readily understandable (Bhatkhande 1974:12-16). And in an unambiguous attribution to Muslim practitioners for the character of contemporary classical music, Bhatkhande said, “[w]e find today that the standard high class music of North India is no other than that which the Mahomedan professional artists have introduced during the last five centuries or so” (ibid.:34).

This does not negate the fact that Bhatkhande desired to find evidence for a link with this Sanskritic past. And despite failing to do so, he nevertheless continued to hold the belief that Indian music was Hindu in origin, though admitting Muslim “contributions.” (I discuss this in greater depth in Chapter Three. See the section titled, “the additive approach”). However, it is important to note that for Bhatkhande, Indian music’s “ordeal” with Muslim rule was not unquestionably disastrous. He was not, in his words, “one of those who will unhesitatingly assert that the foreign contact was an unmitigated misfortune” (ibid.:17). “It is not my view,” he reiterated elsewhere, “that Muslim singers have ruined music” (cited Bakhle 2005:122, original citation not provided). In fact, he even made his aesthetic preference for the Muslim-influenced tradition of the north known over the more “pure” south. What he lamented, rather, was the fact that Muslim musicians “did not write down all the changes they made to the music” (ibid.).²¹² This became Bhatkhande’s steadfast goal:

²¹² Interestingly, Bhatkhande praises the work of one Muslim author, Mahomed Rezza, who wrote

to find evidence by which music's evolution could be traced, to establish a "connected history" between medieval and modern musical practice.

By providing the first real challenge to the assumption of music's Vedic origins, and by expressing his appreciation for the Muslim contribution to Indian (i.e. Hindu) music, Bhatkhande can therefore be seen as having softened what had become by his time a clearly defined narrative of Muslim dominance. However, when it came to portraying the character of Muslim musicians as unwilling teachers or obstinate collaborators, Bhatkhande did much to sharpen this narrative. He complained, for example, that his work was made more difficult because "*our* music is in Muslim hands." "Those people are for the most part ignorant and obstinate," he continued, "and will not like new rules imposed on them, this is my experience" (Bakhle 2005:109 citing from Bhatkhande's unpublished diaries 2:226, my emphasis).

That Bhatkhande, like Willard before him, saw the task of seeking out living professional musicians as both necessary and precarious, is evident from his reported response to an unnamed interlocutor, who asked why Bhatkhande chose to write primarily in his mother tongue of Marathi and not in English, Hindi or Urdu.

Bhatkhande is claimed to have said,

Firstly, Hindus have virtually lost this art—it is entirely in Muslim hands.

Although at one time it was a purely Hindu inheritance, no Hindu can aspire

Nagmat-e-Asaphi in 1813, a work that expressed a dissatisfaction, which Bhatkhande also had, "with the absurd and meaningless *Raga-Ragini-Putra* classifications of his time" (1974 [1941]:30). "Rezza was no doubt a talented musician," Bhatkhande wrote. "I wish we had men of his type now" (ibid.).

to acquire it unless he is prepared to demean himself before his Muslim masters and do everything he is asked to do. All that remains with us today is the science. I have written my books in Marathi in the hope that the science at least remains with us, if not the art. Hindus, at any rate, should be able to quote what is written to the Muslim performers—the one thing that will hold them in check. Hindus will be honoured at least as Pandits, if not as great performing artistes! (Deodhar 1993:48).

The division between illiterate Muslims, who dominated the performance of music, and educated Hindu theorists, who were previously displaced by Muslims, could not have been stated more clearly. Additionally, and more importantly, we see an intractable character attributed to Muslim musicians, which Hindu students had to endure if they wished to learn. And finally, it is important to note how Bhatkhande conflates Marathi language—and by extension Maharashtrian identity—with Hindu identity as opposed to Muslim. In other words, he assumed that writing in Marathi would not only make the science of music available to Hindus; it would also keep it away from the Muslims, who are assumed to be non-Maharashtrian. In this sense, Bhatkhande's project comes across as being expressly sectarian and socially exclusive.

Despite the apparent transparency of the above statement, I suggest we exercise some caution in imputing Bhatkhande's anti-Muslim prejudice. First, these are not Bhatkhande's actual words, but those of B.R. Deodhar, one of Bhatkhande's

students, who claimed to have overheard Bhatkhande's conversation. One could respond to such caution with the Saidian notion that Deodhar's story still represents a kind of knowledge "constituted as truthful by the authority of a system of representations called 'orientalism,' which arose from and bolstered European supremacy" (Ludden 1993:251). Deodhar's story, in other words, still draws on a pre-existing orientalist stereotype of Muslim dominance, and by virtue of its repetition and circulation, contributes to the constitution of its own "truth." Indeed, this very story (without reference to Deodhar) can be found reiterated in V.H. Deshpande's *Between Two Tanpuras* (1989:156).²¹³ However, if we were to continue to seek the particular truthfulness of this statement, and thereby resist the historical detachment for which Ludden critiques both Said and Foucault, we might ask how well it resonates with Bhatkhande's own writings.

Janaki Bakhle claimed to have done just that through her mining of Bhatkhande's writing for evidence of his anti-Muslim bigotry. In this endeavor, she proclaimed that she would emerge victorious, delivering "undeniable evidence of Bhatkhande's own anti-Muslim sentiment" (2005:135). In addition to the passages quoted above in which Bhatkhande describes Muslim musicians as ignorant, obstinate, and holding "our music in their hands," the "most egregious" passage Bakhle provided was one in which Bhatkhande compares Muslim servants in a Hindu household to the restricted functionality of "vivadi swars" or prohibited notes in a

²¹³ Both Deodhar and Deshpande's books are translations of books written in Marathi and compiled from articles originally written for various Marathi magazines and journals.

raga: “it is necessary to affix limits on where they may enter and how much freedom they should have,” he said (ibid.:122 citing Bhatkhande’s *Hindustani Sangit Paddhati*, vol. I, p.58). Another example, closer in character to Deodhar’s passage, is found in a lengthy parable of Bhatkhande’s in which a promising young music student who grows weary of the academic rigor required of him by his Hindu guruji, falls prey to the false promises of a “Muslim khansaheb.” In the end, the khansaheb “disparages him publicly, teaches him very little, and tricks him out of his money” (ibid.:125 citing Bhatkhande’s *Hindustani Sangit Paddhati*, vol. III, pp.60-65).

Beyond the passages quoted in Bakhle, we find a strong resonance to Deodhar’s story in the following statement of Bhatkhande’s, which is an attempt to justify the great pains that he had gone through to “record accurately, exhaustively and definitively the *Raga*, as sung in the present day, while at the same time making its study and singing a matter of easy self-application”:

Thus I have tried to redeem our music from the hands of the illiterate artists whose method of teaching is unscientific inasmuch as unsystematic, and consequently unappealing and unacceptable to the educated student and also unnecessarily long and tedious and incapable of permanent results.

(1971:41-42)

Whatever understandings Bhatkhande’s criticisms of Muslim musicians might have been based upon, it is important to ask whether these criticisms were specifically

linked to religious identity, and if so how. Did Bhatkhande feel, in other words, that the cause of the problem with Muslim musicians was directly related to their religion? Bakhle is herself conflicted on this point. On the one hand she insists that, “his [Bhatkhande’s] politics included overt and disquieting prejudice towards musicians as a group and Muslims as a community” (ibid.:131). On the other, she repeatedly disavows the notion that Bhatkhande’s criticisms were communal in nature. She claimed, for example, that “[h]is irritation is directed at musicians, singers, and instrumentalists—not because of their religious affiliation, but because as performers they did not pay adequate attention to posterity nor, for that matter, to the future” (ibid.:123). “Muslims might be blamed [by Bhatkhande] for their illiteracy,” she reiterated, “but not for their faith” (ibid.). Expanding on this point, she insisted that “[t]he reason Muslim musicians had to be excluded [from Bhatkhande’s academy] was not simply because they were Muslim, but because they, like Kshetra Mohan Goswamis and Ganeshilal Chaubes, did not possess the knowledge to create and sustain a modern academy of classical music....in spite of their creativity, they did not understand what the ‘classical’ was in their music” (ibid.:124). In other words, she explains, gharanedar musicians, *whether Muslim or Hindu*, “could not fit the bill—not because they were Muslim, but because they were disorderly” (ibid.).²¹⁴

²¹⁴ Bakhle makes several additional lukewarm disavowals of Bhatkhande’s anti-Muslim prejudice: “Perhaps it had been caused by their Muslimness, perhaps not. Bhatkhande alludes to this possibility but leaves overt assertions about Islam unsaid” (131); “he never made any one of these claims with such absoluteness” (132). Nazir Jairazbhoy may have therefore been somewhat inaccurate when he said, “according to Bakhle, Bhatkhande was an elitist Brahman and prejudiced against Muslims....This is a characterization which I find inaccurate and unnecessarily offensive” (2008:374).

Other scholars, particularly the ethnomusicologists Harold Powers and Peter Manuel, have forwarded similar explanations for the marginalization of Muslim musicians during this period, and I explore their ideas below. It is important to note here, however, that for Bhatkhande, the category of the “classical,” or even the larger category of modernity, was not *just* about order and discipline, even on Bakhle’s own admission. It was also about origins—origins that were based in a Hindu religious identity: “[f]or Bhatkhande, classicization meant at least two things: system, order, discipline and theory, on the one hand, and antiquity of national origin, on the other” (ibid.:124). For this reason we simply cannot refuse to consider the fact that religion had something to do with Muslim exclusion. There is a limit, in other words, to how generously we can read Bhatkhande’s prejudices. Religion may not have been the only factor involved, but it certainly cannot be explained away with reference to other social divisions like class, which are anyway intimately bound up together. Bakhle’s alternative explanation for Bhatkhande’s exclusion of Muslims—that they were “disorderly” or lacking a modern, classical sensibility—is therefore only part of the story.

Taking into account the importance of religious identity in defining the classical, I propose another explanation: Bhatkhande excluded Muslim musicians not because they were Muslim, but because they were *not* Hindus. This is similar to the argument for why William Jones rejected Muslim writing on Hindu traditions: not because he was anti-Muslim, but because for him, India was essentially Hindu, and any claim to authenticity on the part of Muslims was therefore seen as illegitimate.

Bakhle herself hinted at this explanation when she said, “[h]is [Bhatkhande’s] many exclusions, not just of Muslims but of women, South Indian music, and musicians, except in the most instrumental terms, can be seen as the inevitable and unintended consequence of a flawed project that could not relinquish the desire for a single origin of music” (ibid.:133). That single origin was, of course, a Hindu one, which was an essential ingredient for Bhatkhande’s project of classicizing Indian music.²¹⁵

In sum, we find two opposing movements in Bhatkhande’s writing related to the Muslim dominance narrative. On the one hand, he softened this narrative by refusing to strictly follow the line, established by colonialist authors, that music degenerated under Muslim rule. On the other hand, he sharpened the idea that Muslim musicians were pedagogically intransigent. His rationale for writing in Marathi, at least as reported by Deodhar, for example—that this would allow Hindus access to at least the theory of music, which they could use to hold Muslim performers “in check”—suggested that the only way an aspiring Hindu student could learn music was to submit himself to the unjust demands of a Muslim teacher. In doing so, Bhatkhande reiterated a common reformist characterization of Hindu-Muslim discipleship: whatever knowledge a Hindu student managed to accrue, it was *not* due to the generosity of his Muslim teacher, but the ability of the Hindu student to endure what his teacher dished out. I end this section on reformists by considering a few similar statements of this type. They are meant to give greater context to the trend

²¹⁵ Relating a conversation that Bhatkhande had with Karmatullah Khan, Janaki Bakhle said, “There is no question that Bhatkhande had in place a conception of ‘our’ music, which is Indian, of Hindu origin, to which Arabic or Persian could have contributed, but for which a Sanskrit text might be decisive” (2005:112).

among reformist writers in portraying Muslim musicians as pedagogically intransigent.

Crediting the Hindu Student

The power of “guru worship” of loosening the Muslim teacher’s grip on music is the subject of the following passage from G.H. Ranade book, *Music in Maharashtra* (1967). Here Ranade goes so far as to claim that the unstinting devotion offered by Maharashtrian Brahmans to their Muslim teachers actually caused the latter to prefer teaching only to Maharashtrian Brahmans.²¹⁶ He further suggested that this preference led to the burgeoning of khyal in Maharashtra in comparison to other regions (see also Grimes 2008:126):

It was in these states [Gwalior, Indore, Dhar, Baroda, etc.] that many of our famous artists of the last century received their training in music under famous ustads. But these ustads, mostly Mohamedans, came to develop very great affection for their Maharashtrian disciples, who never stinted at any hardship, privation or even humiliation and did the meanest household chores to keep them and their families in comfort.... It became an unwritten rule with them to teach music preferably to Hindus and to Maharashtra Brahmins in

²¹⁶ The Maharashtrian Brahman singers mentioned by Ranade include, Vasudevua Joshi, who learned from Hassu Khan in Gwalior; Ramkrishna Deva (or Devijibuwa Paranjpe), a disciple of Hassu Khan and settled at Dhar; Balkrishnabua, a disciple of both Vasudevua Joshi and Devjibua; and Vinupant Chatre, a disciple of Haddu Khan who brought Rahimat Khan to Maharashtra (Ranade 1967:47).

particular. It is these last who brought the khyal style to Maharashtra in all its glory. (1967:34)

Though Ranade acknowledged that Muslim teachers “came to develop great affection for their Maharashtrian Brahman disciples,” he suggests that these disciples were made to perform humiliating tasks. Therefore, it is not just the depth of the Hindu student’s devotion that lead them to learning, but also the student’s capacity, in the words of Bhatkhande-via-Deodhar, “to demean himself before his Muslim masters and do everything he is asked to do.” Muslim teachers are thus portrayed as taking undue advantage of their Brahman disciples’ sincerity. Great “affection” is coupled with a heavy affliction.

The willingness to suffer the depravity of Muslim teachers is claimed to have buoyed the success of the legendary Maharashtrian Brahman vocalist, Bhaskar Buwa Bakhle (1869-1923). The following story, narrated by V.H. Deshapande but told to him by Rajaratna Tambe, a fellow disciple of Bakhle’s, graphically illustrates the extent to which Bakhle would go to please his Muslim teacher:

The incident took place during a music lesson. Faiz Mohammad had a coughing fit. There was no spittoon in sight. Buwa made a cup with his hands and asked Faiz to spit in it and then went out and cleaned his hands. Tambe, disgusted by this incident, gave up music. After a passage of 40 years, the disgust is forgotten. Otherwise he can't utter these words: “my one-time

fellow disciple had to serve his guru in loathsome manner but he became the greatest expert in vocal music” (1989:60).²¹⁷

In this account, a thin line separates the devotion of the student from the humiliation imposed by the teacher. On the one hand, Bakhle’s devotion is shown to be so great that he willingly offered his own cupped hands to catch the tobacco spit of his teacher, Fiaz Mohammad. On the other hand, this deed is interpreted by the narrator as an act of compulsion: he “*had* to serve his guru in a loathsome manner.”

If the Hindu student failed to either endure his ustad or appease his ustad’s demands, he could sometimes appeal to outside agencies for help. B.R. Deodhar, for example, described how Ramakrishna Buwa Vaze (1871-1945), a contemporary of Bakhle, spent two difficult years with the vocalist Nissar Hussain Khan before Khan taught him much of anything. What finally convinced Nissar Hussain to start teaching, however, was the intervention of his patron, Dadasaheb Bhuskute of Bahrapur, with whom Nissar Hussain and Vaze were staying (1993:125). Interestingly, Deodhar goes on to describe how Vaze turned out to be just as tightfisted with his knowledge as his teacher. But according to Deodhar, this outcome was not really Vaze’s fault. Vaze knew better, Deodhar avered, but “his views and behavior in this matter had been (consciously or unconsciously) shaped by the prevailing conduct of *ustads* in his days.... He could not escape what had become second nature to him—his ingrained secretiveness” (ibid.:130). In effect, Deodhar

²¹⁷ Deshpande’s account was first published as a preface to N. M. Kelkar’s *The Life of Pt. Bhaskarbuwa Bakhle*, Mumbai: Popular Publication, 1959.

translates the in strangeness of this Maharashtrian Brahman musician into something understandable: it was the result of his being nurtured in a particular way. But why was such understanding not extended to Vaze's Muslim teacher, Nissar Hussain? The implication, it seems to me, is that Muslim intransigence is less a matter of nurture and more a matter of nature.

In the absence of a helpful patron to whom a Hindu student could petition for help, other provocative strategies could be tried. The early-twentieth century author Babu Nanak Prasad, for example, suggested that in order to gain "anything creditable from the generality of these ustads," the best thing to do was to pit one against another. The "superior duty" of these ustads, claimed Prasad, was to be better than anyone else. When challenged, "all his devices are forgotten, and the simple truth comes out at once." Prasad therefore advised, "if you want to gain or learn anything creditable from these Ustads, you should better hear or employ two of them than a single one" ([1906] 2003:94).

Whether via the carrot of devotion, the stick of patronage, or some other clever device, Hindu students have thus been commended by reformist authors for getting around the obstinacy of their Muslim teachers. It is this stereotype, which is particularly linked to Muslims, that needs to be called out and summarily discarded. Strangely, however, it continues to be proffered by ethnomusicologists, even those with a pro-Muslim agenda.

ETHNOMUSICOLOGISTS

A word is in order regarding my use of the term “ethnomusicologists” to describe the authors in this section. First, I have included in this group one author, Janaki Bakhle, who has spent considerable energy critiquing this field and distancing herself from it. What she has in common with self-identified ethnomusicologists like Daniel Neuman and Regula Qureshi, however, is a focus on music’s cultural and social history.²¹⁸ Admittedly, such a distinction leaves out the musical-structural work of ethnomusicologists like Nazir Ali Jairazbhoy, which I nevertheless consider below. It also glosses over gestures toward the cultural and social in the work of colonialists and reformists, Willard’s statements on music and cultural relativism, Tagore’s attempts at comparative musicology, and Bhatkhande’s account of the effect of the British period on Indian music being cases in point.

Secondly, the categories of colonialists and reformists describe a particular subject position in a relation to power, the former maintaining it and the later contesting it. “Ethnomusicologist” does not immediately imply such an authorial position, though ethnomusicologists have tended to write in favor of the marginalized and oppressed. Ethnomusicology is rather a discipline, not a disposition. Orientalists also engaged in a discipline, but they were not the only type of colonial writer. Utilitarian philosopher James Mill (1773–1836), for example, was one of William Jones’s fiercest critics. Historian Thomas Trauman (1997:117) described Mill’s six-

²¹⁸ Technically speaking, both Daniel Neuman and Regula Qureshi, though prominent scholars of ethnomusicology, completed their doctoral degrees in Anthropology. Though unrelated, it is interesting to note that they were both born in Switzerland, Neuman in Lausanne, Qureshi in Basel.

volume *The History of British India* (1817, though begun in 1806) as, “the single most important source of British Indophobia and hostility to Orientalism.”

The problem I face here is one of existing terminology and categories. There already exists an entrenched body of scholarship that considers authors like Jones and Bhatkhande in relation to the cultural politics of their time. Ethnomusicologists, or those writing on music from within the various disciplines of the modern academy, have not yet been historicized in the same way.²¹⁹

The absence of an existing category to encompass these scholars, however, may not be as restrictive as it seems. For in considering these authors’ positions on Muslim dominance, it becomes clear that much connects them to the previous colonialist and reformist authors. Remove the condescending tone of Day and the moral reprehensibility brandished by Tagore, and the continued legacy of the narrative of Muslim dominance in contemporary ethnomusicological scholarship becomes clear. To be sure, there certainly exists a decidedly post-colonial position from which scholars of Indian music have critiqued both the colonialist and reformist positions. Without negating the importance of these critiques, I aim to show in this section that despite—or perhaps even because of—this critical gaze, “post-colonial” ethnomusicologists (for lack of a better term) have tended to reify the Muslim dominance narrative, even when focused on recovering the voices of Muslim musicians marginalized by the colonialist and reformist projects.

²¹⁹ Other than Bakhle’s critique of ethnomusicological writing on Indian music considered in both the introduction and first chapter of this dissertation, Garret Field (2010) has made a modest attempt at actually historicizing the perspectives of some of these scholars.

Nazir Ali Jairazbhoy

Born in England into a wealthy and religious Khoja Muslim family and raised in Bombay, Nazir Ali Jairazbhoy (1927-2009) has been described as an ethnomusicologist “inside outer” (Jairazbhoy 2009:2). He learned music from an early age, particularly the sitar, received his B.A. in Geography from the University of Washington, and his PhD from the University of London under Arnold Bake in 1971. His first and most famous book, *The Rags of North Indian Music: Their Structure and Evolution*, which was submitted for the Ph.D. after having been published, remains the most significant contribution to the theory of Hindustani music since Bhatkhande’s *Hindustani Sangeet Paddhati*.

In the “Introduction to the Historical Background” of this book, Jairazbhoy presents a concise history of the Muslim encounter with Indian music. Though small and not the central focus of his work, Jairazbhoy’s review is notable for its implicit opposition to the prevailing understandings of Muslim dominance forwarded by colonial and reformist writers considered here. Jairazbhoy does not speak specifically to the issue of Muslim musicians’ pedagogical secrecy, nor to any of their other supposed iniquities. However, he does present a history that is markedly positive, not at all a history of degeneration. Instead of depicting Muslim rulers as “discouragers of the learning of the country,” as did Willard (1882:121), Jairazbhoy provides several examples of musical treaties composed by or under Muslim rulers.²²⁰ He even

²²⁰ In particular, he mentions the Sanskrit *Sangitasiromani* dedicated to Ibrahim Shah Sharqi of Jaunpur in 1428; *Mamak*, which was said to have been composed under Sultan Zain-ul-‘Abidin of Kashmir (1416-1467); the Persian *Lahjat-i Sikander Shahi* written under the “strict follower of

reinvested an Islamic significance in the *Man Kautuhal* attributed to the Hindu Raja Man Singh Tomar of Gwalior (1486-1516) by describing it as a work that “incorporated many of the innovations that had been introduced into Indian music since Amir Khusrau’s time” (1971:18). To these innovations, Jairazbhoy gave due importance, noting that modern Indian musical forms such as qawwali, tarana, khyal, and new instruments such as the sitar and tabla that grew out of the Muslim experience in India. Countering the supposed indifference of religious Muslim rulers towards musical patronage, Jairazbhoy claimed that, “[d]uring the reign of Sultan Muhammad b. Tughluq (1325-1351), music was apparently encouraged on a grand scale, although he was a ruler with strong religious convictions” (ibid.:17). While acknowledging a “puritanical faction” of Islam that “believed that music was unlawful,” Jairazbhoy drew our attention to the centrality of music for Sufis, who “more than compensated for the restrictions imposed by orthodox Islam” (ibid.).²²¹

My decision to open this section on ethnomusicologists with an author whose work fails to accurately support my contention that ethnomusicologists reinscribed notions of Muslim dominance inherited from their reformists and colonialist ancestors

Quranic law,” Sultan Sikander Lodi of Delhi (1489-1517); and the *Kitab-i Nauras* of Ibrahim ‘Adil Shah II of Bijapur (1580-1626) (17-18). Te Nijenhuis, in the preface to her translation of the *Sangitasiromani*, more directed commented on the work’s significance in serving as “proof for the tolerance and liberality of the foreign invaders towards the Indian arts and letters” (1992:vii).

²²¹ John Greig, for whose dissertation Jairazbhoy served as a committee member, also noted the patronage that Muslim rulers gave to music during the fifteenth century and earlier, though he made certain distinctions that retained the idea of Islamic ambiguity towards music. For example, he noted that while “musical patronage was often adopted by Muslim kings and nobles...the patronage of musical scholarship was more commonly done by nobleman, not kings. The reason for this may have been a desire by Muslim political figures to maintain a public distance from music. In addition, musical scholarship was more likely to be patronized away from Delhi” (1987:303).

may seem odd. This choice is informed by the knowledge that Jairazbhoy is one of the first bonafide ethnomusicologists to speak to the issue of Muslims in Indian music, and also by a desire to give credit to his perspective. It is tempting to want to understand his exceptionalism as stemming from Jairazbhoy's sensitivity towards Muslim representation, as he was himself a Muslim. I do not think Jairazbhoy would have been unreceptive to this idea. In his 1995 Seeger lecture to the Society of Ethnomusicology, Jairazbhoy provided "a brief resume" of his "formative years so that you will be aware of the origins of my perspective" (2009:2). But in making any explicit connections between his scholarship and his biography, Jairazbhoy said, "I leave it to you to decide" (ibid.).

Daniel Neuman

In 1974, three years after the publication of Jairazbhoy's book, Daniel Neuman (b.1944) completed his Ph.D. in Anthropology at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign under Bruno Nettl. His thesis, *The Cultural Structure and Social Organization of Musicians in India: The Perspective from Delhi*, provided the substance for several articles as well as his book, *The Life of Music in North India: The Organization of an Artistic Tradition* ([1980] 1990).²²²

In *The Life of Music*, Neuman broke new ground in ethnomusicology on a number of levels. Most broadly, he was one of the first to move beyond a concern

²²² Research for Neuman's dissertation was completed between February 1969 and May 1971, primarily in the environs of Delhi. In addition to interviewing seventy-five musicians, Neuman participated in making music with them by studying the sarangi.

with the musicological problems of Asian music, including notation, intonation and raga. He instead focused on the social and cultural identities of musicians. His explication of the shifting relationship between musicians' caste identities and performance roles, particularly soloists and accompanists, was described by Bonnie Wade as an important "moment" in the history of the discipline, something that "ethnomusicologists dream about" (ibid.:95, 96).²²³ Reviews of Neuman's book by Jairazbhoy, Qureshi, Kippen, and Johnathan Katz all attest to the novelty of Neuman's approach at this time.²²⁴

²²³ Neuman's theory in this regard, briefly stated, is as follows: Bin accompanists of the eighteenth century came from the same kalawant caste as the vocalists whom they accompanied. Thus, when the bin later transformed into a solo instrument, its players did not transgress caste divisions. However, with the rise of khyal and the introduction of new accompanying instruments such as the sarangi and the tabla, accompanists came to be recruited from the lower castes, specifically Muslim mirasis and Hindu kathaks. Thus, the musical identities of soloist and accompanist became conjoined with the social identities of upper and lower caste respectively (see Neuman 1971:161-62; [1980] 1990:235). Neuman further revealed the adaptive strategies of accompanists to become soloists, a process he likened to Sanskritization as described by Srinivas (Neuman 1977:239). Though expressing genuine positivity about Neuman's theory, Wade (1980) pointed to a "missing link" and one problem. The problem was Neuman's assumption that soloists and accompanists in dhrupad and soloists and accompanists in khyal shared equivalent relationships. Wade claims they did not, perhaps in reference to the fact that dhrupad accompanists, such as pakhawaj players, are accorded greater freedom in improvisation than tabla players in khyal, though this remains unstated. The missing link includes the notion that the soloists of khyal were *also* recruited from non-dhrupad lineages. Wade contends that one way these new khyal vocalists gained a semblance of social status was to insert greater distance between themselves and their accompanists.

²²⁴ See, for example, the following statements: "Although Indian classical music has been the subject of innumerable books and articles, until this work by Daniel Neuman (which deals only minimally with musical sound), very little had been written about the world of Indian music—the thoughts, values, organization, and actions of the musicians and their relationships with their patrons" (Jairazbhoy 1982:194). "Since the beginning of ethnomusicology, the high cultures of Asia have invited musicological oriented studies which focus on their highly developed systems of musical sound. Much less often have these same cultures been the target of complementary studies focusing on the social context of their musical idioms" (Qureshi 1984:144). "Neuman was the first scholar to approach the classical music of North India from an anthropological perspective. Thus he turned the microscope on the cultural structure and social organization of the tradition, focusing on musicians and their lives instead of analyzing Indian music." (Kippen 1992:171). "We must remind ourselves that Neuman really was one of the first Western scholars to publish good accounts of what he calls the 'enculturation' of Hindustani musicians—their training, their becoming artists, their remaining at the forefront, their *riaz* (practice) procedures, and so on" (Jonathan Katz 1994:124).

For the purposes of this chapter, however, Neuman's most significant contribution was his explicit theorization of how Muslims came to professionalize—and thereby dominate, certainly statistically and by suggestion, qualitatively—the performance of north Indian classical music. Nazir Jairazbhoy considered Neuman's theory to be “the first attempt to explain the dominance of Muslim musicians in North Indian art music” (1982:195). In summarizing Neuman's theory, I draw not only on his book, but also from his 1985 article, “Indian Music as a Cultural System,” which includes, but also extends upon, the points made in his book.

Brahman origins. At its broadest level, Neuman theory of Muslim dominance tells a story of a shift from Hindu (particularly Brahman) to Muslim dominance. Neuman assumed that prior to Muslim rule, “cultivated music” in India was the preserve of Brahmans, who performed music as an adjunct to other religiously oriented activities and in the context of the temple. In other words, music was a “specialization,” but not an “occupation.”

Conversion. However, beginning in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, “musical activity in North India came increasingly to be virtually monopolized by them [Muslims]” (1985:100). The reason, Neuman contended, was that Hindu musicians began converting to Islam either for “political advantages” or because they had “often lost their caste status as servants of Muslim courts” (ibid.:101, citing Neuman [1980] 1990:104–105, 124–125). The conversion of Hindu musicians to Islam, and the concomitant movement of music from temple to court is illustrated, Neuman suggested, through the story of Swami Haridas and Tansen, the former a

devout Brahman singer who refused to sing before anyone but god, and the latter Haridas's disciple, who converted to Islam after he took up a position as court musician for the emperor Akbar (ibid.:59–60). Again, I discuss the issue of conversion in Chapter Five.

Hereditament. Once in Muslim hands, music became increasingly concentrated within them. Neuman attributed this phenomenon to a number of factors, the most important being the Muslim preference for endogamy, which was achieved through parallel cross-cousin marriage. Through this practice, not only did music become confined socially within hereditary families, it also became restricted stylistically. The resulting “discrete stylistic units” shared within “tightly structured kinship groupings” came to be known as “gharanas,” which ended up “monopolizing the production of professional musicians until well into this [the twentieth] century” (ibid.:105 and 109).²²⁵

Professionalization. Another factor contributing to the insulation of music within Muslim families, Neuman theorized, was the low or ambiguous place of music in Islamic society. It was due to this that musicians' social identities were relegated, as they had been in other Islamic societies, to a service class of skilled artisans or

²²⁵ “The adoption of Islam [by Hindus?] allowed a marriage system, encouraged by a musical system of transmission, in which musical property could be carefully controlled by strategic marriages of cousins and the ability to transmit theory through practice in lineages which in turn defined discrete stylistic units known as gharanas” (1985:109); “The social and concomitant musical stylistic integrity of each gharana was maintained through very extensive cousin marriages, a marital practice that is strictly prohibited to North Indian Hindus. These gharanas as tightly structured kinship groupings monopolized the production of professional musicians until well into this century” (1985:105); “By virtue of the guild-like characteristics of hereditary musician families, the art became lost to the former carriers of the tradition, the priestly class...music had now become a discrete commodity, separated from its former role as an adjunct activity of priests, genealogists and jugglers” (1974:265-66).

craftsmen (1985:104).²²⁶ As artisans and craftsman, musicians viewed their knowledge as a commodity to be controlled and preserved within corporate, guild-like organizations. Thus, in addition to becoming a hereditary tradition, music also became a *profession* in Muslim hands, a “primary vocation” and a “major means of livelihood” as opposed to the adjunct activity of religious specialists.²²⁷

Neuman found support for the idea that Muslims professionalized music in the Muslim use of the terms “ustad” and “shagird” to refer to “teacher” and “student” instead of the presumably older “guru” and “shishya” used by Hindus. Though used synonymously, Neuman insisted that each pair of terms carried a different implication that stemmed from their “different histories of meaning” (1990:44). An “ustad” more specifically refers to a “master” of an occupation and is used to refer to automobile mechanics as well as musicians. A “guru” connotes a “preceptor” or teacher and is used for spiritual guides as well as musicians. A more exact translation of the concept of “guru” would thus be “sheikh,” Neuman contended, not “ustad,” and the equivalent of “shishya,” “murid” (1974:288; 1990:44). He then concluded from this that, “[t]he use of ustad-shagird by musicians (instead of the sheikh-murid, which is

²²⁶ “With the professionalization of music the social definition of the musician shifted to what it had been in other Islamic societies, that of a skilled artisan or craftsman” (1985:104).

²²⁷ “However, with the *professionalization* of music performance, musical knowledge became a *commodity*, albeit not palpable or visible, but no less real than a brass plate. In order to control and preserve this rather special kind of *commodity* there developed a practice of keeping musical knowledge in small circles of stylistic schools, and the guild-like qualities of these institutions put a high premium on *secrecy* concerning musical knowledge” (1985:104, my emphasis). “The *professionalization* of music and its subsequent *insulation* from outsiders is interpreted as an economic necessity to prevent competition” (1974:265-66, my emphasis). Neuman defined “professional” as “someone who recognizes his primary vocation as the performance and/or teaching of music. This usually, with few exceptions, also means that knowledge and performance of music are the major means of livelihood” (1985:100).

never used in this context), illustrates the professionalization of the occupation of musician, which Muslims initiated and developed in India” (1971:51 n.5; 1990:44).

Though of less consequence to the point being made here, it is interesting to note that while Daniel Neuman assumed that the concept of “guru-shishya” was older and “adopted by Muslim musicians,” albeit changed to suit a new focus on performance and craft, Dard Neuman suggested the opposite. Without reference to how it disagreed with his father’s theory, Dard Neuman contended that, “[u]ntil the twentieth century, the guru simply did not figure as a musical guide, at least with respect to the Hindustani music tradition (2004:82). The use of the term guru for a musical guide instead articulated a modern narrative about Hindustani music meant to “soften” or “remake” the musician into something more palatable for the modern nation (ibid.:69–74). What the term “guru” sought to replace then, in Dard’s opinion, was the idea of the musician as craftsman. I discuss the history of these terms and their communalization in the following chapter.

Orality. A final measure for limiting the spread of musical knowledge beyond families of Muslim hereditary professionals was the embedding of musical knowledge within an oral tradition. Because music was taught orally, it only existed in the memory of the performer. “[A]n important motivation for keeping musical knowledge, including musical theory, in an oral medium,” Neuman contended, was to control “occupational competition and tradecraft secrets” (1985:105).²²⁸

²²⁸ “And whatever else the artisan or craftsman might hope to become – even an honored member at court – he was virtually never a scholar” (Neuman 1985:104). “Professional Muslim musicians, in very marked contrast, did not write theoretical treatises. Indeed the significance of the kinship or discipular link to Tansen is related to the fact that for Muslim Hindustani musicians musical theory was coded in

Many of the points that made up Neuman's theory were not new, but had become almost truisms by the time he articulated them. Recall that it was William Jones who first insisted on the Brahmanical and sacred origins of Indian music, and N. Augustus Willard who first argued that, "music became a distinct trade" under "the Mahomedan princes" (1882:27) or that practitioners were illiterate as compared to their treatise-writing Brahman predecessors.²²⁹ Charles Russell Day later identified professionals as Muslim, and also suggested, significantly, that a cause for the professionalization of music by Muslims was music's ambiguity in Islam, which tended to "lower the standing of a musician, and the art itself has suffered consequently" (1891:4). Finally, Sourindro Mohun Tagore further (but earlier) identified Muslims as dominating the profession. Importantly, the reason he cited for

an essentially oral medium, and ultimate authority consequently lay not in quasi-sacred texts, as in the South, but in quasi-sacred pedigrees. Neither prescriptive nor descriptive musical theory for Muslim musicians was essentially ascriptive. One inherited the theory as one inherited one's identity as a musician. The substance of Muslim musical theory was never, save in occasional private writings, inscribed on paper, it was embedded in memory. It was transmitted through the medium of what theory was thought to be, namely performance, which was learned and memorized by each successive generation. Because theory existed in memory, the authority for theoretical assertions rested not on theory itself but in the person who proclaimed it. The source of a person's authority was dependent on the identity of the person, and that identity was socially defined by his musical pedigree" (ibid.:103); and "This was perhaps an important motivation for keeping musical knowledge, including musical theory, in an oral medium. As repositories of such knowledge, gharana can be interpreted as the functional equivalents of theoretical texts in the Karnatak tradition and in this sense were an essentially ascriptive system of music theory" (ibid.:105).

²²⁹ In Neuman's dissertation we do get a clearer sense that he saw his work as stemming from Willard in particular, though for a different reason than the one I suggest here; Neuman more or less claimed he had been inspired by Willard's "pioneering efforts to examine the music on the basis of knowledge acquired directly from practicing musicians" (1971:2). With the exception of Bhatkhande, he noted that few scholars had endeavored to continue this effort. His dissertation, he claimed, "represents an effort in that direction" (ibid.). However, Neuman and Willard did not only share similarity on the level of method (it was for this reason, I noted earlier, that ethnomusicologists have tended to claim Willard as one of their own); Neuman's ideas on the Muslim professionalization of music constituted another point of connection.

this state of affairs—the conversion of Hindu musicians to Islam—is also reflected in Neuman’s theory.

Though not of central importance here, Neuman’s similarity to Day is further extended by the fact that they both saw the professionalization of music by Muslims in North India as having led, in large measure, to the differences operating between the traditions of North and South Indian classical musics. The following passages, for example, the first by Day and the second by Neuman, both articulate the differences between north and south that resulted from the “Islamization” of the north:

The higher branches of the musical profession were formerly confined to either Brahmins (Bhagavatas) or to men of very high caste. Music being of Divine origin was regarded as sacred, and it was considered impious for any but men of the sacred caste to wish to acquire any knowledge of its principles.... In later years music became a distinct trade, especially under Mussalman rulers, and passed into the hands of the lower orders and the unlearned, and to this cause operating through a long succession of years the differences between the Hindustani and Karnatik systems must be in a great measure attributed. (Day 1891:5)

Because "cultivated" music was a Brahman cultural specialty, there were several features which characterized music specialization in India. First, music performance was ideally not to be considered a profession, but rather an

avocation. One practiced music for its qualities of illumination not remuneration....My argument is that the Brahmanical features common to the art music tradition of all India up to the 16th century continued to characterize the Southern system into the 20th century. The consequences of the Islamization of music specialization were manifold. The most immediate were the professionalization of musicians and a change in the definition of music as a cultural phenomenon. (Neuman 1985:100–101)

Here Day's identification of music's "higher branches" compares favorably to Neuman's "cultivated music." Neuman's claim that music was practiced for "its qualities of illumination" is reminiscent of Day's claim that music was "of Divine origins." Day's theory that music "became a distinct trade, especially under Mussalman rulers" is almost identical to Neuman's insistence that the "professionalization of musicians" was a "consequence" of "Islamization." And Day's attribution of "the differences between the Hindustani and Karnatik systems" to "Mussalman rulers" complements Neuman's attribution of the post-sixteenth century split between the North and the South again to "Islamization."

For all the similarities between Neuman's theory and earlier claims made by colonial and reformist authors, there is much that distinguishes them. For one, Neuman went further than them in explaining how and why Muslims professionalized music, principally through his identification of the practice of endogamy and cross-cousin marriage for the recruitment of musical specialists. Second, the manner in

which these changes were evaluated differed considerably. For Day, for example, the consequence of “the long ordeal with Mahomedan conquest” was clearly worrisome: music became a “degraded employment fit only for the stoller or the dancing girl” (1891:4–5; see also Subramanian 2011[2006]:61). Day, in other words, decisively devalued “Mahomedan music” which, “taken as a whole, has little to recommend itself even at the present day.” “The ideas professed by Hindus,” he continued, “offer a curious contrast” (ibid.:4). For Neuman, however, the fact that Muslims monopolized and professionalized music appears neither to have been a cause of concern or celebration, but was simply a historical reality. In comparison to both his colonial and reformist predecessors, in other words, Neuman’s description of all the ways in which music had become “Islamized” lacks a sense of moral judgement and reprehensibility.

The point of this comparative exercise is not to suggest that Neuman somehow failed to attribute these ideas about the Muslim professionalization of music to colonial authors. As suggested, many of these ideas had become virtually axiomatic and, as such, are not attributable to any one author. However, these ideas do have genealogies rooted in particular colonial and reformist ideologies, as I hope to have shown in the earlier sections of this chapter. Without attending to that history, I believe we let those ideologies speak through our use of these related ideas even if this is not what is intended. Without critical distance, our use of terms like “dominance,” “monopoly” and “jealously guarded” to characterize Muslim hereditary musicians calls forth a history of colonial and reformist abuse, as these terms reflect

the ways in which Muslims have been characterized as insular, communalistic and anti-modern.²³⁰ I believe we can write about the fact that Muslims (contingently understood) made up a majority, that music indeed resided largely within their families, and that this indeed may have been due to the practice of endogamy, all points that Neuman argued, while at the same time remaining critically aware of the tenacious history that precedes us.

Admittedly, Neuman's work preceded or came on the cusp of the crisis of representation that followed in the wake of criticism by post-colonial scholars such as Edward Said. Excepting Jairazbhoy then, who was an early exception, I initial group the ethnomusicologists below together with Neuman in largely reproducing the claims to Muslim dominance of colonialists and reformists who came before them, that is until we reach a "critical turn." None of these authors, however, offer as extensive a theory of Muslim dominance as Neuman did. Their statements are largely found in pieces that have as their focus some other object. I therefore depart from my previous practice of providing background information on the author and their work, and instead concentrate on the importance of their ideas.

²³⁰ In India, ethnic or sectarian intolerance has been peculiarized by the term "communalism" (Pandey 2006[1990]:7). Dipesh Chakrabarty, however, has suggested that "racism" may be a more appropriate term, one that does not make India look so unlike the West when it comes to ethnic / religious strife (1994:3374-75). Such a distinction was in fact the goal of colonial officials in naming communalism to begin with, Chakrabarty argues; it allowed them to cast the divisiveness of India's communities as natural and endemic, the closest that India could come to nationalism, and therefore not the result of British governing policies.

Bonnie Wade

Not all reformist narratives of Muslim dominance were framed negatively. Oftentimes, Muslim dominance or intransigence merely served as a backdrop to a heroic tale of Hindu success amidst pedagogical adversity, as we have already seen above in the stories that credit the Hindu student for learning. In another early statement from an ethnomusicologist on Muslim dominance, Bonnie Wade drew on this hagiographic strand of reformist narrative in her description of turn-of-the-century vocalist Bhaskar Buwa Bakhle, whom we have already encountered. Bakhle's success, Wade explained, came at a time when "the hegemony of Muslim musicians in North Indian courts was still firm" ([1984] 1997:256). To support this, she cites several of Bakhle's contemporaries, both Hindu and Muslim, who describe Bakhle as an acclaimed Hindu singer in a world otherwise dominated by Muslim ustads. Ramkrishna Buwa Vaze, a fellow student to Muslim teachers, allegedly said, "He [Bhakle] sang very beautifully. Even the great Muslim musicians said they had not heard a musician of his charm and grace" (ibid.:256, citing Vedi 1969c:31). Rajab Ali Khan (1875–1959), the acclaimed Muslim *bīn* player, stated, "Hindus have produced only one singer whom we all revere and he was Bhaskarbuwa" (ibid., citing Vedi 1969c: 32).²³¹ Finally, in a published souvenir commemorating Bakhle's birth centenary, an anonymous speaker exclaimed, "[t]he great master Rahimat Khan would not believe when he was told that a Hindu Pandit [Bakhle] was singing at the Miraj Palace. He said that this music could only flow from one who sucked a bone for

²³¹ This statement of Rajab Ali Khan's is also cited by V.H. Deshpande (1989:50). Deshpande names Rajab Ali Khan's interlocutor as Ramubhayya Date.

juice. He meant to say that only a Muslim could possess such a tuneful quality of voice” (ibid., citing Anonymous 1969:17).

Wade’s presentation, like the sources from which it is derived, is meant to celebrate Bakhle’s extraordinary achievement: he could do what no other Hindu could allegedly do at the time—be a great musician. This notion, of course, is erroneous; there *were* plenty of renowned Hindu singers of khyal both during and before Bakhle’s time, as I have indicated in the Introduction and whom Wade also describes. What is interesting, however, is that the success of these Hindus tends to be presented as unique with reference to Muslim dominance. A contemporary of Bakhle, for example, Shankar Rao Pandit (1863-1917), was the first in his family to sing khyal, which he learned from both Nathu Khan and Haddu Khan, Muslim singers who taught many other Maharashtrian Brahmans during this time, who in turn spread the Gwalior gharana far and wide and largely among other Maharashtrian Brahmans. Nevertheless, it is still repeatedly claimed that Shankar Rao Pandit, like the many other Hindus, “acquired this art at a time when it was almost impossible for Hindus to learn music” (L.K. Pandit 1996:21). Thus, Wade’s framing of Bakhle’s success in this way demonstrates the continued articulation of a past Muslim monopoly in contemporary scholarship that is derived from reformist sources. Though Bakhle and Pandit are admitted as rare exceptions, and are celebrated in ways that recall the reformist celebration of Hindus who managed to learn something from their Muslim teachers, Muslims are still nevertheless characterized as having imposed a guarded monopoly over music.

Harold Powers

Another early ethnomusicological reiteration of Muslim dominance drawing on this celebratory reformist mode is found in the work of Harold Powers. In an important essay comparing the process of music's modernization in both Indian and Javanese art musics, Powers estimated that by the end of the seventeenth century, presumably beginning with Akbar's successor Jahengir (r.1605-1627), "virtually all Hindustani musicians were Muslim" (1980:23).²³² He then contrasted this Muslim past with the Hindu present, claiming, "[t]he great majority of Hindustani musicians today (though not such a large proportion of the very best musicians) are Hindus..." (ibid.:26). This statement by Powers comprises one of the earliest published acknowledgements in English of a shift in the population of musicians during the twentieth-century from Muslim to Hindu. Powers was also one of the first, again in this essay, to characterize this shift as a process of "Hinduization," linking it to the reform movement as led by Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande and Vishnu Digambar Paluskar.²³³

²³² In a later publication, Powers put this date considerably later: "By the last quarter of the 19th century, almost all of the important Hindustani musical lineages—by now called *gharana*—were Muslim" (1992:11).

²³³ In a later essay, Powers designated the late quarter of the nineteenth century as the period "in which Hindus were acquiring ever more influence in the now Imperial British Raj; it was the beginning of a Hinduization of public life in the subcontinent that continued to accelerate up to 1947 and that has increased still further in present-day India, after the first decade or so after Independence" (1992:11). It was this Hinduization of public life, Powers suggested, which led Indian musicologists such as Bhatkhande, after "two centuries or more or less lip service to *sangita-sastra*...to investigate in depth not only *sastra* but also *sampradaya* [i.e., practice?], and once again to reconcile them" (ibid.)

The story of the Gwalior gharana and its transformation by Vishnu Digambar thus not only embodies and illumines the modernization of Hindustani music, the transfer of support from princely court to urban upper middle class; it also illustrates its ‘hinduization.’ The basis of the art had been non-Muslim, but the top professionals in pre-modern colonial India had been Muslims for many generations, and in pre-Mutiny India many or most of its patrons had also been Muslims. Along with the shift of patronage of Hindustani music to the growing urban and predominantly Hindu middle class came an ever-growing flood of Hindu professional musicians like Vishnu Digambar himself. (ibid.: 26)

Though Powers’ description of music’s Hinduization follows the same basic trajectory taken by later scholars such as Qureshi and Bakhle, most noticeably in identifying the two Vishnus as key players in the reform, he differs from them in a significant way; while these later scholars *criticize* Hinduization for the challenges it posed to Muslim musicians, Powers subtly *celebrates* it. In a manner similar to reformers who were anxious to rescue Hindu music, Powers asserted that Hindustani music’s very survival in the post-Independence era “depended” on “its increasing Hindu associations” and its cultural grounding in “non-Muslim aspects of the old Hindustani culture” (ibid.:27). He credited Vishnu Digambar Paluskar as being “one of a tiny handful of people in British India who were responsible for bringing Hindustani classical music safely from the 19th-century world of princely courts and artistic secrets into the 20th-century urban world of concert-going connoisseurs and

music lessons for middle-class amateurs” (ibid.:24). Further distancing Powers from a more critical perspective on the reform, he claimed that Muslims were not intentionally left out of the project to modernize and Hinduize music, but simply chose not to participate. Effectively placing the blame for Muslim marginalization squarely in the lap of Muslims themselves, Powers declared, “Muslim musicians stood aloof, secure in their gharanas and their patronage” (ibid.:26).

Peter Manuel

Peter Manuel carried forward Powers’s notion of the unintentionality of reformers in displacing Muslim musicians. In his most recent statement of this idea in the context of Sufi popular music, Manuel averred that whether we take the case of Sufi music, thumri, ghazal, or khyal, Muslim musicians were marginalized not because of their religious identity, but their inability to adapt to the class-based desires of their new bourgeois patrons:

[T]he movement [for Sufi pop music] could also be seen as another chapter in the ongoing bourgeois appropriation of performing arts in modern India, in a process that has revitalized genres themselves while marginalizing those traditional performers who were unable to adapt. (2008:395–96)

Though Manuel acknowledged that religion distinguished the Hindu bourgeoisie from the Muslim practitioner, he does not appear to have viewed religion

as having played a significant role in encouraging the marginalization of traditional practitioners. The bourgeois, Manuel conceded, just “happened to be . . . predominately Hindu” (ibid.: 396), and traditional practitioners “overwhelmingly” Muslim (ibid.).²³⁴ In contradistinction to the assertions of Qureshi and Bakhle (discussed below), and in concordance with Powers above, Manuel maintained that, “Muslims were not unwelcome in the modernization project led by V.N. Bhatkhande and V.D. Paluskar” (2008:395–96). Their marginalization, he claimed in an earlier piece, was merely a “secondary effect” (1989:80–81), an unintended consequence of supply and demand and unrelated to their identity as Muslims.

It is perhaps important to note that this argument bears some similarity to the one that Hindu reformers used to justify their intervention: hereditary musicians, who happened to be Muslim, were anti-modern and unwilling to adapt. However, in the context of what I would argue was a strongly Hindu-inflected landscape of modernity, Muslim musicians faced a dire situation that went beyond their willingness to adapt to modernity, for they were still branded as illiterate, intransigent, and anti-modern *despite* their work in scholarship, teaching and institution building, evidence for which I supply below. Their situation was perhaps reminiscent of the bind that minority immigrant populations face the world over in

²³⁴ Over the course of his many publications, Manuel has reiterated the claim that Muslims made up “the majority of professional urban classical musicians” beginning in “the Mughal period” (1989:4). It was during this period that both the performance and patronage of Indian music “came to be dominated by Muslims—specifically hereditary professionals” (1996:122). Like Powers, he has often framed the former dominance of Muslims in relation to their present day marginalization (though, not because they were Muslims): “In the subsequent centuries, Muslim preeminence became absolute, such that by the early twentieth century, there were few prominent Hindu performers (ibid.).”

being assailed for their inability to assimilate, but simultaneously obstructed from doing so, often by the very same people (Lipsitz 1994, chapter six).

A Critical Turn

Following and to some degree overlapping with the previous group of scholars are a growing number of others who have more directly expressed criticism of the reform movement and the consequences it had for Muslim hereditary musicians. This critical scholarship shares with the previous scholarship the understanding that Muslims predominated in the musical past. With a few important exceptions noted below, some even share the characterization of that past as dominating; that is they retain the notion that Muslims were reluctant teachers, guarding their hereditary knowledge from being acquired by outsiders. The crucial difference, however, is that for these critical scholars, the existence of a Muslim past (again, in some cases a past in which Muslims were also dominating) is used as evidence for the ruinous consequences of the reform for Muslim musicians, or a measure against which the effects of the reform is critiqued. This well-intentioned goal of critiquing the disenfranchisement of Muslim hereditary musicians has led some scholars, in other words, to build a greater investment in the imperviousness of the Muslim past than actually existed, or at least led them to fail to question this narrative adequately.

Regula Qureshi

One of the chief examples of this problem is found in the early work of Regula Qureshi. Among ethnomusicologists, Qureshi has argued most vociferously for the need to see Hindustani music as a *Muslim* music, whose “aesthetic and ideology” are “derived primarily from Greco-Arab and Islamic ideation” (1991:163). So insistent was Qureshi about this need that she criticized the work of Daniel Neuman, whose research was largely conducted within a Muslim musical context, for not having done enough to clearly identify the “Muslim roots” of the tradition he described (ibid.:165 n.30). In her earlier review of Neuman’s book, Qureshi similarly pointed out that Neuman’s “supra-communal focus based on geography rather than community... fails to sensitize the reader to the considerable importance of both communal and class identity in the social processes governing music making—and almost everything else—in India” (1984:149). In other words, Qureshi felt that it was vitally important to make explicit the Muslim identity of the musicians with whom Neuman worked, as such information contributed to understanding the social organization of musicians.

Qureshi’s 1991 essay, “Whose Music? Sources and Contexts of Indic Musicology,” stands out as an urgent call to salvage the oral history and theory of living Muslim hereditary musicians before they disappear. The process of cultural destruction had already begun, Qureshi claimed, noting how a few families of hereditary musicians had already ceased to exist. The unequivocal threat to Hindustani music’s Muslimness, Qureshi argued, was Hindu nationalism, expressed

through the reform movement led by Bhatkhande and Paluskar. As mentioned above, Qureshi identified that movement's specific anti-Muslim agenda in no uncertain terms: "to take music out of the hands of the Muslim hereditary professionals and win it for the Hindu elite through discipleship and devotion" (1991:161). Since the publication of this essay, Qureshi has thus been heralded as both an ardent champion of Muslim musicians, and a staunch critic of Hindu nationalism. In this way, her essay best represents, and is perhaps the initial articulation of, the critical perspective examined here.

In attempting to explain how Muslims came to dominate music, however, Qureshi, like Neuman, relied on an insular characterization of Muslim musicians that was made possible by the same reformers she criticized. That is, she attributed Muslim dominance in music not only to the "strictly endogamous" organization of Muslim society, but also on their "ideology of secretiveness towards outsiders":

Indeed, the strictly endogamous social organization of these music professionals enabled them to control access to their art reinforced by an ideology of secretiveness toward outsiders and excessive emphasis on student loyalty. (ibid.:161)

It should be pointed out that Qureshi did not actually attribute the "ideology of secretiveness" or the "strictly endogamous social organization" that she claimed to have conditioned it to "Muslims" in this passage, but to "hereditary professionals,"

though she does make this connection elsewhere.²³⁵ The problem here is the same as the one discussed above regarding how to interpret the alleged anti-Muslim statements of Tagore and Bhatkhande. In the case of Qureshi, this problem becomes even more acute in her later publications, where she rigorously and surprisingly avoids identifying her musician-subjects, all of who happen to be Muslim, as “Muslim,” instead preferring the term “hereditary professionals” or “hereditary service class.”²³⁶

Even if we restrict ourselves to her Muslim-advocating 1991 essay, however, the connection between hereditary professionalism and Islam remains somewhat ambiguous the deeper we look. In fact, one could argue, contrary to what I have outlined above, that Qureshi’s characterization of hereditary professionals actually has less to do with their religious identity, and more to do with the structure of the feudal economy. As she stated, “The fact is that living musical knowledge and performing competence had been in the hands of hereditary professionals as part of the feudal, class-caste management of the division of labor” (1991:161). In addition,

²³⁵ In her review of Daniel Neuman’s book, Qureshi identifies endogamy as a distinct characteristic of Muslims in India: “...the *Muslim* preference for group endogamy to the point of first-cousin marriage which, along with strongly patrilineal descent, make *for very distinct social characteristics* within the Indian social universe” (1984:149, my emphasis).

²³⁶ Take, for example, the following passages from Qureshi’s article, “Confronting the Social” (2000), all of which use the term “hereditary,” but not Muslim: “Until the early twentieth century *hereditary musicians* were the sole guardians and exponents of art music in northern India; it was their exclusive purview to deliver music to patrons in a feudally based economy” (ibid.:81, my emphasis); “Throughout these developments, exclusive *hereditary lineages of musicians* have continued to transmit and perform their art according to their oral tradition, sustained by ideals of feudal patronage and its aesthetic of connoisseurship and improvisation” (ibid.:84, my emphasis); “...*traditional hereditary musicians* have their own, endogamous and closely controlled mode of producing music” (ibid.:29–30).

there are some passages in which Qureshi suggests, in fact, that there is no necessary connection between hereditary professionalism and Islam. If Muslims made up a majority of hereditary professionals during the Muslim period, Qureshi argued, then it was simply a “natural” reflection of political economy.²³⁷ “A change in patron class,” Qureshi explained, “must of necessity lead to a change in the music-making class” (ibid.:162). And so, even the displacement of Muslim musicians by Hindus was a natural result of the growth of Hindu political dominance.²³⁸ Such an interpretation even leaves open the possibility, though unstated, that hereditary professionals existed *before* Muslim rule, something that Neuman (as well as Day and Tagore before him) specifically argued against. As if to lend further support to the notion of a non-Muslim-specific hereditary professionalism, Qureshi referenced two anomalous examples of Hindu hereditary professional families and further included Hindus in her definition of hereditary professionals in her concluding remarks.

In yet another surprising twist to the story, however, we learn that what makes these Hindu musician families “hereditary professionals” is the fact that “they marry rather more closely within their group than is standard for North Indian Brahmin practice” (ibid.:n.26). This, she further admits, makes them “quite akin to their Muslim counterparts” (ibid.:161). In other words, what makes these Hindus out to be

²³⁷ “During the Muslim hegemony, their hereditary servants were naturally Muslim” (ibid.:161).

²³⁸ “A change in patron class—and this really means, a change in political dominance, given the ‘canonical’ character of this art music—must of necessity lead to a change in the music-making class. Such a change is of course gradual, so that music makers can be ‘left over,’ as is the case today with Muslim hereditary professionals in India. The stark reality is that within a generation most of these musicians, along with their oral musical heritage, can be fully expected to fade away, a process which can be solidly documented already” (ibid.:162).

“hereditary professionals” is, ironically, their similarity to Muslims, a point that works *against* a broad, non-religious definition of the term.

I believe that Qureshi’s ambivalence in identifying her subjects—and the practice of hereditary professionalism—as “Muslim” stems from the influence of Marxist theory on her work, particularly that theory’s tendency to privilege class-based forms of discrimination to the exclusion of culture and religion in particular. Qureshi has herself noted a growing focus on class as opposed to religion in her later work, and even referred to religion with some apathy as an “ideational domain,” which Marxists tend to ignore (2000:24). Though she acknowledged that religion, as well as gender, are “deeply implicated in class issues and must themselves also be considered in relation to class-based inequality,” she paid almost no consideration to them in her later work. Instead, she pointed to her focus on religion in the context of Sufi music, a specifically “religious” music, and not, strangely, her 1991 essay on Hindustani music:

My foundational question here clearly concerns the issue of exploitative class relations in relation to South Asian musical practice. This does not mean a lack of concern about other, related kinds of oppression, notably in gender relations, nor about *ideational domains* and their social impact, notably that of religion. Both are, in different ways, deeply implicated in class issues and must themselves be also be considered in relation to class-based inequality, as my earlier work on Sufi music demonstrates for religion. (2000: 21)

Whatever its cause, the uneasy relationship between religion and class in Qureshi's writing has only grown more pronounced. As mentioned, Qureshi has, in her later works, rigorously avoided identifying the hereditary professionals with whom she has worked as Muslim. That those musicians *were*, in fact, almost wholly Muslim is not lost on her readers, however. Margaret Walker, in her review of Qureshi's most recent publication, *Master Musicians of India: Hereditary Musicians Speak* (2007), noted that Qureshi's "expertise is clearly situated in the world of hereditary Muslim rather than Hindu performers...as a slip in [accounting for] the lineage of a Hindu dance family reveals" (2009:348). That Walker had to deduce Qureshi's focus on Muslims confirms the idea that Qureshi has become more veiled in her identification of religion.

Qureshi has herself briefly suggested a way of mediating this tension between religion and class in theorizing hereditary professionalism. Referencing the work of Philip K. Hitti (1886–1978), the Lebanese-born scholar regarded as the founding father of Arabic cultural studies in the United States, Qureshi claimed that feudalism, combined with the Islamic ambivalence toward music, "created the conditions for professionalized 'fine arts'" in North India (2000:31).²³⁹ This passing suggestion, however, remained undeveloped.

²³⁹ "In north India, this musical practice [having music produced "through the labor of service professionals," which Qureshi considers "a corollary of the feudal devaluation of productive labor,"] is further reinforced by the negative valuation of music in Islam, long the religion of the ruling elites. *Indeed, it has been suggested that the combination of this ideology with feudalism have created the conditions for professionalized 'fine arts'* (Philip K. Hitti. 1970. *History of the Arabs*. London: Macmillan)" (Qureshi 2000:31, my emphasis).

The growing Marxist influence on Qureshi's work, which I believe is at the heart of this tension, brings us back to the problem of the failure of critical Indian music scholars to question the monopolistic character of the Muslim past. In defending her adoption of Marxist theory, particularly her admittedly dated use of "mode of production," Qureshi claimed to have upheld "two abiding Marxist priorities," as defined by Nelson and Grossberg. These are, "an agenda to 'transgress the line that has traditionally separated culture from social, economic and political relations,' and 'a commitment to revolutionary identification with the cause of the oppressed'" (2000:21, quoting from Nelson and Grossberg 1998:1, 12 n.15). Over the course of her publications, Qureshi has championed both of these priorities. However, it is this second of these—identifying with the cause of the oppressed (in this case, Muslim musicians)—that has led Qureshi, and other critical scholars as well, I argue, to not question the dominating characterization of Muslims in the past. This is because doing so would work against their argumentative goal, diminishing the extent of the claim that Muslims were marginalized by Hindus.

Janaki Bakhle

Like the early Qureshi, the historian Janaki Bakhle has pointed to the Muslim past as a way of calling attention to the challenges that Muslims faced—and successfully negotiated, she insisted—in the wake of the Hindu-led reform movement. Yet also like Qureshi, Bakhle tends to perpetuate at times the idea that Muslim musicians were unruly and secretive. Instead of considering these criticisms

as ideological constructions of the reform movement itself, Bakhle has portrayed them, much like reformers have, as characteristics that preceded and preconditioned the reform, indeed providing the reason why “music’s modernizers held them [Muslims] responsible for impeding music’s progress”:

Gharana maestros (*ustads*) had erratic, self-protective, and sometimes capricious pedagogical habits. They also tended to be secretive about their art, tradition, and history. As a result, music’s modernizers held them responsible for impeding music’s progress. This interaction produced its share of hostility, and *gharana* musicians had to accommodate themselves to a new notion of pedagogy and performance without rendering themselves obsolete. (2005:6)

In this passage, Bakhle, who is otherwise known to have brought critical attention to the blind spots of Indian music studies, appears to have accepted the notion that Muslim musicians were “erratic,” “self-protected,” capricious” and “secretive” in their teaching. However, in yet another parallel with Qureshi, Bakhle does not actually identify the subject of her statement as “Muslim,” but as “gharana maestros” or “ustads.” True, Bakhle does, in other instances, directly address her gharanedar subjects as Muslim. Take, for example, the following quote, in which Bakhle identifies both the musical past as “overwhelmingly Muslim” and the reform movement’s intentions to “displace” them:

What is most compelling about the activities of these associations is not merely that they were elitist, but that they used projects of respectability and civilization to displace the traditional role of Muslims, for unlike other areas of reform such as education, the key performers of music were overwhelmingly Muslim. (ibid.:94)

This semantic slippage between “gharana musicians” and Muslim musicians (or in the case of Qureshi, “hereditary professionals” and Muslim musicians) still poses a significant problem for careful analysis, as I hope to have made clear.

Despite these gaps in meaning, commentators on Bakhle’s work have consistently taken her gharandedar subjects to be unambiguously Muslim. In his review of Bakhle’s book, for instance, Stephen Slawek claimed that Bakhle “convincingly demonstrated...

...how institutionalized music education in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century India challenged the musical supremacy of Muslim gharana ustadhs and eventually helped to undermine the near monopoly these musicians held on particular genres of Indian music, especially khyal. (2007:507)

Aside from the questionable assertion of religious identity, another interpretive problem arises from this statement. Though Slawek credits Bakhle for demonstrating how institutions “undermine[d] the near monopoly” of Muslims, this is *not*

necessarily what Bakhle intended her readers to take away. Instead, it could be argued that Bakhle attempted to show how music's past, instead of being monopolized by Muslims, was in fact much more heterogeneous prior to its Hinduization by Bhatkhande and Paluskar, and that Muslim musicians such as Maula Baksh, Abdul Karim Khan, Hirabai Barodekar, and Karamatullah Khan, were themselves active "reformers," deeply interested in the theory of music and in teaching in new ways to a modern Indian public.²⁴⁰ Furthermore, Bakhle does appear to have claimed, as Slawek suggested, that Bhatkhande intended to "write Muslim musicians out of music history" (ibid.:510, citing Bakhle 2005:126). She did, however, claim that this was an *effect* of his work, using his *Kramak Pustak Malika* as an example (also see her restatement of this on ibid.:259).

James Kippen

In his critical introduction to the early-twentieth century tabla manual, *Mrdang aur Tabla Vadanpaddhati* (1903), James Kippen relied on Janaki Bakhle when he described the ultimate aim of V.D. Paluskar's school in Lahore "to

²⁴⁰ Rosse has also forwarded a similar argument regarding Maula Baksh (1995:134), which has been reiterated in Kobayashi (2003:199-205) and Lubach (2006:31-32). James Kippen discussed Baksh as "an educational pioneer long before Paluskar or Bhatkhande made their marks" (2006:22, also see chapter five). In a similar fashion, Kippen has also begun to explore the figure of Abid Hussain Khan (1867-1936), the first Professor of tabla at the Marris College of Music Lucknow, within "the reformist tradition of writing theoretical and practical manuals" (see flier for his talk at UCLA in 2008). And Qureshi (1999) has focused on Muhammad Chaudhri Muhammad Abdul Ghani, editor of the 1925 edition of *Ma'adan-ul-Mausiqi* and honorary secretary of the British Rationalist Press Association, as a reformer with Muslim stripes. Like any other music reformers of the time, Qureshi noted, Ghani deplored "the absence of music in schools and university curricula and *the difficulty of accessing the oral knowledge of illiterate master musicians*" (326, my emphasis). He published *Madan* with nationalist intentions. What makes him different from Bhatkhande is that he makes his Muslimness integral to his reformism. He reflected a "Muslim cosmopolitanism," not a narrow Brahmanical exclusivism (325).

commandeer music from its mainly Muslim practitioners and return it to Hindus” (2006:26). The reason Paluskar apparently chose to open his first school in Lahore, Kippen claimed, was because it was “a stronghold of aggressive and proselytizing Hindu revival movement” (ibid.: citing Bakhle 2002:277–78).²⁴¹ However, when Kippen moved to discuss the evidence meant to demonstrate Paluskar’s agenda, the claim to its anti-Muslim-ness appears less certain. The evidence in question is the summarized remarks of Din Dayalu Sharma, representative of the Sanatan Dharm Sabha from the city of Darbanga and the first speaker at the opening ceremony of Paluskar’s school in Lahore on May 5, 1901. Kippen quotes Rosse (1995:153), who quotes from the newspaper article that summarized Sharma’s remarks:

The learned and eloquent Pandit referred to the deplorable decline in the ‘divine art’ in this Province [Punjab], and observed how it was now solely practiced by low caste people to the great detriment to the cause of our music. The Pandit also pointed to the elevating and spiritualizing effect of good music. He hoped that Hindu and Mussulmans would help unitedly in the work taken up by Professor Vishnu Digambar. (Kippen 2006:27 citing Rosse 1995:153 citing *Tribune*, May 7th, 1901)

²⁴¹ Rosse reports that Paluskar’s biographers (Deodhar 1971:32 and Patwardhan 1956:33) said the choice of Lahore was related to Paluskar’s need for printing facilities, which were apparently prevalent there (1995:152).

Notwithstanding the distance inherent in all reportage and translation, it is clear that Sharma's criticisms are directed at "low caste" musicians, not Muslims specifically. Affirming this apparently non-religious reading, Sharma even made a specific appeal to both "Hindu[s] and Mussulmans" to "help unitedly in the work taken up by Professor Vishnu Digambar."

There are, of course, other ways to read this statement. Just because Sharma did not specifically identify Muslims as the target of his criticism does not mean that his audience failed to understand it that way. Sharma's use of the adjective "low-caste" could simply be code for Muslim, particularly mirasis. And Sharma's call for a united effort on the part of Hindus and Muslims to support Paluskar's agenda could have been mere tokenism, meant to gloss over what everyone knew was an anti-Muslim, pro-Hindu agenda. Indeed, if Paluskar's agenda was what Bakhle via Kippen said it was—to take music out of Muslim hands and return it to the Hindus (this, by the way, comes close to the way Regula Qureshi frames the agenda of V. N. Bhatkhande)—then this is exactly how we would have to read Sharma's comments.

Sharma's comments were not at all unique for the time. As we have already seen, "professionals" and "hereditary musicians" were routinely criticized as illiterate and jealously guarded. What I mean to suggest through these reoccurring exercises is that we need to keep a variety of possibilities in mind when seeking to interpret these statements. As the following chapter will make clear, even the term "ustad" was used with much less communal specificity than it is today. Criticism of musicians designated as "ustads," "low-caste," "hereditary," or "professional" did not therefore

necessarily signal Muslim identity. For scholars who aim to reveal the deleterious effects of the reform movement on Muslim musicians, maintaining vigilance regarding the context of these statements will undoubtedly make their job harder. However, I believe it will also lead to more trenchant analysis of the social injustice that has befallen them.

Max Katz

This issue comes to the fore in Max Katz's important article, *Institutional Communalism in North Indian Classical Music* (2012), in which Katz exposes the workings of an unspoken, ideological prejudice that ended up displacing "hereditary professional musicians" from their positions as teachers in the Bhatkhande Music College of Lucknow (formerly the Marris College of Music). That these musicians were Muslim is central to Katz's analysis—it was due their religion, as well as to their social class, that they "suffered such loss of privilege and prestige" (ibid.:280). Indeed, Katz takes a much broader view of the marginalization of Muslims in India than the previous scholars considered here. Instead of claiming, as Manuel had, that the musicians marginalized by the reform "happened to be" Muslim, Katz identified the marginalized as *Muslims* who happened to be musicians (ibid.:280).²⁴² Katz's article casts significant light on the challenges that Muslims faced as music education became institutionalized in the twentieth century. In this way, he can be seen as

²⁴² "...in this essay I...suggest that schools and colleges have participated with many other structures of civil society to gradually marginalize Muslims—in this case, hereditary musicians—from Indian public life" (280).

taking up a cause first articulated by Qureshi in her early scholarship and later expanded on by Janaki Bakhle.

Unlike these scholars, however, Katz does not seek to bolster the idea of a Muslim past by occasionally replicating notions of their intransigence. In fact, Katz takes pains to show how the Muslim musicians who either taught at or were associated with the College, such as Karmatullah Khan, Sakhawat Hussain Khan and Hamid Hussain, were notable intellectuals, eager to share their knowledge through discipleship with non-family members, publications on musical subjects, and institutional forms of music pedagogy (ibid.:286–287).

Though Katz does not employ an undue emphasis on Muslim dominance in the service of his critical agenda, he does tend to unproblematically equate the denigration of “illiterate” and “low-cast” musicians with the denigration of Muslims similar to the other scholars discussed here. This homology is perhaps most problematic when it comes to the central piece of evidence Katz used to support his thesis that, “the marginalization of Muslim hereditary musicians and the ennobling of middle-class Hindus was a nearly inevitable consequence of the ideological basis on which the College was founded” (ibid.:288). Indeed, more than a “consequence,” which can be intended or not, Katz further claimed that, “the liberation of the knowledge of Hindusani music from the grip of the *Muslim* gharanas” was actually an explicit goal of the College’s administration. As evidence, Katz points to a letter written by Rai Umanath Bali, Honorary Secretary of the College for nearly thirty years since its inception, in which he “explicitly reveals *this aspect* [the liberation of

knowledge from Muslims] of his goals for the College” (ibid.:289).²⁴³ Evidence presented for Bali’s goal reads as follows: “to...revive the old and ancient art of music and to introduce it to high society, which from the last 60 years has fallen into the hands of illiterates” (Bali cited in ibid.). Katz additionally points to another letter of Bali’s in which he reports the following: “...this institution is meeting the keenly felt need of turning out properly and scientifically trained music teachers from amongst the respectable classes” (Bali cited in ibid.:290).

Katz took Bali’s criticism of “illiterate” musicians as paradoxical, since the College simultaneously relied on Muslim hereditary professionals to fill out its teaching staff. This, Katz contended, was a compromise the College was willing to make until more respectable teachers became available. When they finally did, due in part to the efforts of the College itself, we end up seeing a reduction in the number of Muslim musicians employed by the College—this despite the fact that the numbers of total teaching staff and students dramatically rose.

Evidence of this displacement is indisputable. However, the evidence that the displacement of *Muslims* was an explicit goal of the administration is not. Bali’s statement, as Katz himself acknowledged, does not refer to religion at all. However, we are nevertheless to understand, without complication, that Bali’s “illiterates” are the very same Muslim hereditary professionals working at the college, and that Bali’s “respectable classes” are non-hereditary Hindus. Is it not possible, alternatively, that

²⁴³ “...Bali additionally insists on the liberation of the knowledge of Hindustani music from the grip of the Muslim gharanas. In a letter dated January 21, 1926—some six months in advance of the College’s grand opening—Bali explicitly reveals *this aspect* of his goals for the College” (ibid.:289, my emphasis).

Sakhawat Hussain Khan and the other, highly *literate* hereditary Muslim musicians employed at the College might have failed to recognize themselves in Bali's dismissive? In the language of Katz's piece, might they have failed to "(mis)recognize" themselves or be "interpellated" as illiterates? Is it not further possible that this appellation was not even intended for them, that Sakhawat Hussain Khan might have been a member of "the respectable" or "higher" class to which Bali referred? Katz seems to have registered this tension when he said,

Significantly, the purging of music's "illiterates"—a reference to hereditary musicians trained only in the oral tradition—both relied on those very musicians, and also undermined traditions such as those of the Lucknow gharana, a lineage of manifestly literate scholars and performing artists.
(*ibid.*:290)

If the Lucknow gharana was composed of "a lineage of manifestly literate scholars," then how could Bali's comments have applied to them?

I problematize Katz's assertion not because I believe he is unfounded in identifying the communal nature of such statements, even at the unhidden level. I simply wish to insist that the difficulty of this task be made apparent, and that we take notice of the risks involved in mobilizing evidence to bolster our arguments, however needed those arguments may be.

Erico Kobayashi

A similar problem in assuming a communal basis for the terms “hereditary” and “non-hereditary” arises in the work of the final critical theorist I consider here, Erico Kobayashi. Like the other scholars mentioned, Kobayashi admits that the Hindu-led reform movement had disastrous consequences for Muslim musicians who previously “dominated” the field of classical music. Here, Kobayashi provides a clear statement identifying hereditary professional musicians as Muslim, and reformist leaders as Hindu:

In the nineteenth century, musical knowledge was largely in the hands of professional musicians who hailed from hereditary communities that were predominantly Muslim.... This condition continued into the early twentieth century, with gradual changes simultaneously taking place mainly through the catalyst of a reform movement. This movement appeared in the late nineteenth century but gained much momentum after the start of the twentieth century.... Unlike the traditional professional musicians, reform leaders tended to have Hindu (often Brahman) middle-class backgrounds. (Kobayashi 1)

The constructedness of this division between hereditary and non-hereditary musicians along specifically religious lines—even the antagonism that is thought to have existed between them—is not lost on Kobayashi. Indeed, her critical intervention is to say that this divide between Muslim and Hindu was more a

discursive division invented by reformers, and that it did not hold up in *practice*.

Kobayashi further suggests that theorists like Bakhle and Qureshi have bought into this discursive construction, evinced by their continued portrayal of each side at odds with the other. However, Kobayashi, again, maintained that the real-life alliances between Muslims and Hindus bridged this division in a number of complex ways (ibid. 198–199).

Notwithstanding the questionable diminution of the power of reformist discourse in Kobayashi's analysis,²⁴⁴ I find her attempt to insert space between discourse and practice significant, for it offers the possibility of a more nuanced reading of cultural history that is attentive to power, yet not reduced to it. The problem from the standpoint of this chapter, however, is that the solidity of the discourse itself has remained unquestioned. Kobayashi assumes, as is common, that reformers indeed discursively split Hindustani musicians along religious lines, that they unambiguously critiqued "Muslims" when they critiqued "hereditary professionals" or "gharanedar ustads," even though she is willing to admit that they belied this division in practice. In other words, her insistence that the *practice* of reformers contradicted their *discourse* nevertheless assumes the solidity of the discourse. As she herself states,

²⁴⁴ For example, she states, "[t]he discourses need to be interpreted with the knowledge that reformers were not so powerful then, despite the discursive claim to the contrary. Discursive assertion of power is not the same as actually having power" (ibid.:277).

The reformist discourses dichotomized Hindu educated classes and Muslim uneducated professionals and asserted the former's authority over the latter. At the level of discourse, I concur with the second type of history. (ibid.:x)

The *discourse* of the reform indeed articulated the two oppositional groups of musicians. In practice, however, specific alliances of musicians did not always conform to the division. (ibid.:198, emphasis in original)

Leaving aside this assumption that Muslim and Hindu musicians were unequivocally divided along hereditary and non-hereditary lines in the discourse, if not the practice, of reformers, a further problem lies in the fact that Kobayashi nevertheless tenaciously sticks to this division in her own description of musicians throughout her dissertation, even in cases where such a designation is questionable. I consider only one of the more prominent examples in what follows.

In support of her argument that music was not as inaccessible as reformers claimed it to be—an important aspect of Kobayashi's work to which I will return shortly—Kobayashi spends more than a page and a half listing various “non-hereditary musicians” who trained under “hereditary musicians” during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (ibid.174-75). What is striking about this list is that every one of the twenty “non-hereditary musicians” is Hindu and every one of the fifteen “hereditary musicians” is Muslim. I reproduce the content of that paragraph in tabular form for ease of reading (see Table 1).

Table 1: Enrico Kobayashi's list of non-hereditary musicians who trained under hereditary musicians (2003:174-75)

Non-hereditary	...learned from...	Hereditary
Vinayak Limaye	“	Biccu Khan
Waman Rao Phaltankar Ramkrishna Buwa Vaze Shankar Rao Pande	“	Nissar Hussain Khan
Baldevji	“	Mehendi Hussain Khan
Balkrishna Buwa Ichalkaranjekar Vasudev Rao Joshi Baba Dixit	“	Hassu Khan
Nanu Gopal	“	Haddu and Hassu Khan
Krishnadhan Bandyopadhyay	“	Ahmed Jan Khan
Balkrishna Narayan Natekar	“	Bade Ali Khan, Faiz Mohammad Khan and Aamir Khan
Vishnupant Chhatre	“	Mohammad Khan
Wadilal Shivram Nayak	“	Nazir Khan
Wadilal Shivram Nayak Bhashkar Buwa Bakhle Govind Buwa Sharigram	“	Alladiya Khan
Rambhau Kundgolkar Anant Rao Gadgil Dasharath Buwa Mule	“	Abdul Karim Khan
Krishnarao (Kolhapur)	“	Murad Khan
Amiya Prakash Ghosh	“	Chand Khan

The rigidity of these categories goes deeper than it first appears, for Kobayashi’s applies the category of “non-hereditary” to Hindus even in cases where such a designation is questionable. For example, she identifies Balkrishnabua Ichalkaranjekar as non-hereditary despite the fact that his father, Balaji Buwa, Kobayashi herself explains, was also “a non-hereditary classical musician active in the latter half of the nineteenth century and was employed at the court of Jat”

(ibid.:177). If Balkrishnabua were indeed a “non-hereditary musician,” then he would have the ironic distinction of being a second-generation one!

Kobayashi is not alone in insisting on this division of hereditary and non-hereditary along religious lines, even in cases where it does not necessarily apply.²⁴⁵ Rather, her example is symptomatic of a larger trend in which the category of “hereditary professional,” though ostensibly used to denote family inheritance, more accurately serves as a euphemism for “Muslim.”²⁴⁶ Part of the reason for this, as I have suggested above, is the lingering theory, advocated both by Daniel Neuman and in part by Qureshi, that Muslims were the ones who made Hindustani music into a “hereditary”—and professional—tradition, encouraged as they were by their endogamous social structure. As I have discussed in the introduction, the very category of “Hindu hereditary professional” is antithetical to the literature.

For the purposes of this chapter, however, what most distinguishes Kobayashi’s perspective from the other theorists considered is her skepticism of the notion that Muslim hereditary musicians were “jealously guarded” and refused to teach outsiders. Instead of reiterating this tired claim, Kobayashi instead insists that access to music during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was “not as

²⁴⁵ One of the only exceptions I have come across in which a Muslim musician is *not* described as hereditary is in Geoffrey Grimes’ dissertation. Grimes says, “...it should be noted that Allaudin Khan is among the very few major figures in 20th century Hindustani music who was both a Muslim and a non-hereditary musician” (Grimes 2008:297). Another is Dard Neuman’s grouping of Allaudin Khan with Ramakrishnabua Vaze (2004:9 n.11; 243 n.263).

²⁴⁶ Kobayashi’s portrayal of Balkrishnabua as a “non-hereditary” musician may have been derived from Bonnie Wade: “Balkrishna, like so many musically inclined Hindu boys who were not born into families of professional musicians, had to seek out his own teachers” (1984:41). This is despite her minimal admission that Balkrishna’s father was “a good singer.”

grim as reformers portrayed it” (ibid.:170; also 173, 178, 180). She further reveals the investment that reformers had in claiming such deplorable conditions: they could then credit themselves for its improvement.²⁴⁷ Kobayashi therefore represents one of the first and most significant expressions of criticism regarding the idea of Muslim dominance that I have been able to find in the literature.

I see my own work in Part Iwo of this dissertation as building on Kobayashi’s intervention in several ways. First, I extend these ideas historically beyond Kobayashi’s focus on the early-twentieth century. Though Kobayashi acknowledges that “[h]ereditary musicians [i.e., Muslims] taught outsiders [i.e., Hindus]...from the mid-nineteenth century,” she deems these cases “outside the scope” of her dissertation (173). In Chapter Six, I focus on Hindu-Muslim discipleship from this early period. Second, and more importantly, I show how “reformist discourse” on Muslim intransigence is not at all restricted to reformers or their supporters, but also extend to scholars critical of the reform movement and the process of music’s Hinduziation.²⁴⁸ As this chapter has shown, even these scholars have tended to rely

²⁴⁷ “With this discussion, I mean to justify my criticism of the standard history’s depiction of the ‘precondition’ of the reform. That is, supporters of the reformist discourses cannot assert that the improved access by the turn of the century was the result of the earlier reform and that without reformist efforts of some kind the condition was indeed dismal. General public’s access to classical music had been improving outside the reform’s influences. The condition was better before and/or without the reform; the ‘precondition’ of the reform was not so grim” (ibid.:181 n.12).

²⁴⁸ Katz credits Kobayashi for suggesting that critical scholars adopted the reformist notion “that Muslims had held a tight monopoly on the tradition prior to the reform” (2010:141–142). Kobayashi does reveal critical scholars’ reliance on another related aspect of reformist discourse—the antagonistic division between Muslim hereditary professionals and non-hereditary Hindu musicians, as I discuss above. Kobayashi’s point here is that Muslims and Hindus belied this discursive opposition in their practical realities. However, I have found no evidence to suggest that Kobayashi applied her own skepticism of a past Muslim “monopoly” to the writings of critical scholars such as Qureshi, Bakhle, etc. This seems to me to be a slightly different point.

on and perpetuate the notion that Muslim musicians were notoriously difficult to learn from (not to mention the notion that they were illiterate and disinterested in theory). Thirdly, and finally, I aim to probe some of the assumptions of communal identity upon which the very claims to a Muslim past and a Hindu present (and a pre-Muslim Hindu past) are based. I do this in the Chapter Five by bringing attention to the terminology used to define the musician-subject.²⁴⁹ Though I have begun to do this here by pointing to the difficulty in aligning the criticism of hereditary musicians with the criticism of Muslims, I take a more historical and epistemological approach in the chapter that follows.

CONCLUSION

The persistent belief in a past Muslim “dominance” unites an unlikely set of positions. I have tried in this chapter to show how this belief arose and persisted due to the particular investments of each of these positions. I highlighted in particular the problem of scholars critical of the reformist agenda and committed to identifying with the marginalized Muslim community actually reinforcing the dominating narrative inherited from those whom they criticize. In addition to sketching a genealogy of this narrative’s construction, I have also tried to reveal the difficulty that scholars face in substantiating the Muslim basis of this narrative. In the chapter that follows, I focus on the assumptions of identity that under girds the claim that music was dominated

²⁴⁹ Kobayashi also makes a brief reference to the literature on the construction of Hindu and Muslim identities: “Among various topics, the ones particularly relevant to my dissertation concern the dichotomization of identities into Hindu and Muslim... and the role of colonialism and orientalist scholarship in formulating conceptions of Indian society” (16–17).

and jealously guarded by Muslims, as well as a set of related claims about the communal identity of Hindustani music.

5. CONTINGENT IDENTITIES

INTRODUCTION

As the previous chapter has demonstrated, a great range of present-day scholars, whether those seemingly aligned with either their colonial or nationalist predecessors; those opposed to the reform; or those skeptical of the postcolonial scholarship that critiqued it, agree that the twentieth century witnessed a general shift in the population of professional Hindustani musicians from Muslim to Hindu. Indeed, the farther we go back into the early modern and medieval periods, the more we encounter Muslim names among musicians of khyal, dhrupad and related vocal and instrumental idioms. However, the notion of an historical shift from Muslim to Hindu—from one clearly and singularly defined demographic to another—or even an earlier shift from Hindu to Muslim—is somewhat ill conceived and anachronistic. This is because the idea of who was a Muslim or a Hindu became increasingly defined during the colonial period itself. The primary change that this chapter identifies, then, is not a shift from an already defined Muslim population of musicians to an already defined Hindu population of musicians. It is, rather, an effort towards defining those very populations, often in antagonistic distinction to each other, a process that is known in India as communalism.

The late nineteenth century in particular saw the sharpening of social divisions between religions, languages, castes, and other forms of social distinction. These aspects of identity were not without precedent, of course, but they became more

salient and meaningful in response to a number of factors, an important one being the colonial practice of enumeration, a form of representational politics through which the British made sense of the population it sought to govern, and which included, but was not limited to, the creation of the Gazetteer series and the censuses of the late nineteenth century.²⁵⁰ This practice in turn provided platforms for identity-based politics recognized by the state (e.g., Cohn 1987; Dirks 1987, 2001; Gold 1991; Appadurai 1993; Bhagat 2001; Mamdani 2012).

This shift from a less defined sense of community identity to a more sharply defined one—a shift, it should be emphasized, that was never as complete as the term “shift” implies—is reflected in music in a number of ways. We find it, of course, in the very claim to a shift from Muslim to Hindu, but also in common addendum to this claim: that music was Hindu before it was Muslim. We find it in the most long-standing explanation for the predominance of Muslims in music: that they were really Hindus who converted to Islam, usually out of compulsion. And finally, we find it embedded in the very terminology commonly used to refer to musical authorities: *ustād* for Muslims and *guru* for Hindus.

This chapter focuses on each of these instances of communalized musical identity with a focus on how they have contributed to the narrative of Muslim dominance. I begin with a discussion of the history of the term *ustād*, tracing its increasingly narrow application first to artists in general, then to musicians in

²⁵⁰ See Sumit Guha’s important critique of the over determination of colonial practices of enumeration without accounting for the pre-colonial past (2003).

particular, and finally to Muslim musicians even more specifically. The thesis considered here is that the term *ustad* had taken on pejorative connotations *before* it took on Muslim connotations—the reverse of what is commonly believed. Though the proof for such a claim remains inconclusive, it nevertheless suggests a need to give greater attention to the historical contingencies of the term.

In the second and more extensive part of this chapter, I consider several approaches to the conversion thesis and their critical responses. The basic argument forwarded here, which is borrowed from scholars outside of music, is that the term “conversion” and all that it implies may be inappropriate for the syncretic religious practices of “Muslim” musicians of the past. Here too, the possibility of a more varied and contingent form of religious identity demands greater attention, though not uncritically so. For as this section and the one that follows on the narrative of secularism attempt to reveal, the claim of many contemporary Muslim musicians to having converted from Hinduism in the past may, in some cases, indicate an attempt to strategically accommodate dominant Hindu norms or play up to an official narrative of nationalist secularism, which in either case ends up diminishing the importance of the faith of the Muslim musician.

I end with a critique of the notion that the Hinduization of music in the twentieth century should more accurately be considered a “re-Hinduization.” The idea that Muslims overtook a tradition that was previously dominated by “Hindus” not only assumes the uncomplicated continuity of musical identity (an issue that I discuss in more depth in Chapter Three); it also assumes a homogeneous, static and non-

contingent form of Hindu identity. Thus, the overall focus running through each section of this chapter is on the contingencies of musicians' identities, the aim of which is to destabilize the critique of Muslim musicians, and not as might alternatively be read, to disavow the fact that musicians who were Muslim indeed suffered dire consequences as a result of the communalization of identity.

MAKING THE USTAD MUSLIM

Despite the ubiquity of the terms “ustad” and “guru” and their common deployment along communal lines, there has been surprisingly little discussion of their histories. Daniel Neuman’s theory on the Muslim professionalization of music discussed in the previous chapter was based in part on the etymological differences between the two term-sets, “ustad-shagird” and “guru-shishya,” which both refer to the teacher-student relationship. The former, Neuman suggested, was used exclusively, it seems, among Muslims. This not only included Muslim musicians, but also, significantly, practitioners of other trades outside of music, such as automobile mechanics. Guru-shishya, by contrast, was used exclusively among Hindus and in both musical and religious contexts, as it presumably had for many years, even prior to Muslim rule. Neuman took the differences between these two etymologies as proof of the fact that music’s professionalization, meaning largely its confinement to guild-like organizations called “gharanas,” was a specific consequence of Indian music’s “Islamization” (1985). Ustad-shagird, in other words, reflected a “craftsman-like”

(i.e. professional) conception of the musician. “This contrasts with Hindus, or perhaps more correctly, Brahmans, who did not professionalize the specialty” (1974:51 n.5).

However, the assumption that “ustad” had always been restricted to Muslims, and that “ustad” came to replace (for Muslims) the older Hindu term “guru” as Muslims began to dominate the field of music, has since been challenged. As I discuss below, Brian Silver, and particularly Dard Neuman, have argued that “ustad” was neither as communally restrictive as it is believed to have been, nor was the use of “ustad” much younger than the use of “guru” in musical contexts. While these two points in themselves warrant a revision to our understanding of colonial and reformist criticism of the ustad, an even more profound correction has been proposed: that the term’s Muslim connotations may have accrued only *after* the figure of the ustad became the focus of so much criticism. With this, any *necessary* connection between defamatory remarks against ustads and anti-Muslim prejudice becomes ruptured.

From Artist, to Musician, to Muslim

Brian Silver remains one of the few scholars to have ever suggested there was a time when “ustad” referred neither to Muslims nor to musicians. In his article, “On Becoming An Ustad: Six Life Sketches in the Evolution of a Gharana” (1976), Silver provided a brief historical sketch of the term drawing on a number of published works from the early-nineteenth to the early-twentieth century. Although his presentation is prefatory to his primary focus, his findings are significant. Silver briefly charted a gradual narrowing of the term from “a master (in any art)” during the early-nineteenth

century, to “professional musician” in the mid-to-late-nineteenth century, to an honorific title for Muslim musicians in the early twentieth century.

In support of the claim that “ustad” originally carried no special musical connotation, Silver draws on two dictionaries, John Shakespear’s *A Dictionary of Hindustani and English* (1834), and Francis Joseph Steingass’ significantly later *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary* (1892),²⁵¹ both of which define “ustad” as a master or teacher of any art (1976:27). He also notes that the term was scarcely used (outside of its non-titular form) in the 1856-8 Urdu-language text on music, the *Ma’adan ul-musiqi* (mine of music), written by Muhammad Karam Imam Khan, a noble of the highly Islamicate court of Wajid Ali Shah of Lucknow (r.1847-56).²⁵² Silver finds a similar surprising absence of the term in the slightly earlier work, *Asar us-sanadid*, by Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1965 [1847]), a book about Delhi and its people, which includes a discussion of the city’s prominent musicians. In that

²⁵¹ Silver says 1882, but this is most likely a misprint.

²⁵² Imam’s work, which is variously transliterated as *Ma’adan ul-musiqi* (Silver 1976 and 1984, Widdess and Sanyal 2004), *Ma’dan-ul-Mausiqi* (Qureshi 1999), and *Madanul Mousiqi*, (Katz 2010: 51), is accessible to scholars largely through a partial English translation by Vidhyarti (1959). Without reference to the original, however, it is important to be wary of the possibility that the English translation could have easily substituted the terms “master” or “teacher” for “ustad,” as Dard Neuman found was the case for the Urdu word “tassiir,” which was replaced by “rasa” (2004:54-55). Silver, however, reports that his comments are based on a complete Urdu edition printed in 1925 by Hindustani Press of Lucknow. This is the same edition cited by Allyn Miner (1993), Regula Qureshi (1999), and Richard Widdess (2004), though other writers, including Silver in a later publication, cite a different publisher for the same date: Bazm-i Sadaran of Lahore (Silver 1984 and Dilorom *JIMS* 36-37). Another inconsistency in the citation of the Lucknow publication is the date, which is variously reported as 1856 by Silver (1976:28), 1857 by Widdess (2004:100), and 1858 by Katz (2010:51). Qureshi is the only one who provides a rationale behind her choice of date. The text, she claims, could not have been written in 1856 because it references British annexation of the kingdom of Awadh in that year, as well as the Great Rebellion of 1857 (1999:333).

discussion, the term “ustad” appears only once and in reference to past ustads (plural), never in the singular.

Demonstrating the term’s increasing application to musicians in the 1880s and 1890s, “though still not in the titular sense now current,” Silver cites John T. Platts’ *Dictionary of Urdu, Classical Hindi and English* (1884), which defines “ustad” as the “tutor of a dancing girl, musician” (1976:27). In addition, he cites Sadiq Ali Khan’s *Sarmaya-e-israt* (1884), Bhavanrav A. Pingle’s *History of Indian Music* (1898), and A.H. Fox Strangways’ *The Music Hindostan* (1914), which defined ustad “explicitly as a professional musician” (1976:28).

Finally, substantiating the claim that “ustad” came to be used as an honorific title specifically for *Muslim* musicians in the early twentieth century, Silver pointed to a single source: the reports of the second and third All-India Music Conference held in 1918 and 1920 respectively (ibid.:28 fn. 2). Silver did not explain how these reports help support his claim. It can be assumed, however, that “ustad” is consistently applied only to the Muslim musicians in attendance, though I have not had access to the reports to confirm this.

For Silver’s purposes, however, it is less significant that the term “ustad” came to stand for a *Muslim* musician than it came to stand for a *musician* at all, regardless of their religion. Once this communally specific definition is stated, it fails to reappear in his article. Instead, Silver focuses on how the term’s new musical connotation “roughly parallels the origin, growth, and development of the gharanas which are recognized today” (ibid.:28). He goes on to suggest a causative relationship

between the two: “a collective incidence of ustadi [the state of being an ustad] may develop into the social tradition of the gharana” (ibid.).

The Ustad’s Pre-Communal Contempt

Despite the lack of consideration it receives in Silver’s text, the claim that “ustad” came to refer to Muslim musicians only by the early twentieth century is significant for two overlooked reasons. First, it places this development within *a* historical context, thereby limiting how far back we can read the ustad communally. Second, and more importantly, it places the development of the ustad’s communalization *after* the term had already accrued its negative connotations.

I have already noted Silver’s reference to Platts’ 1884 definition, “tutor of a dancing girl, musician,” which not only marks the beginning of the ustad’s association as a musician, but also suggests his disrepute. This is because the term “dancing girls” is likely to be a reference to prostitution. Silver does not suggest this himself. However, direct links between ustads, prostitution and music are found in numerous other sources during this period. For example, the Census Report of 1891 for the Marwar region of Rajasthan defined “Ustadjis” as “those who teach ‘randis’ [prostitutes] to sing” (McNeil 2007:48). Even if Platts’s definition failed to make any specific reference to prostitution, the description of “dancing girls” no doubt carried some stigma at this time, coming as it did slightly prior to the official beginning of the Anti-Nautch movement in 1892, when activists associated with the social purity movement in South India, including foreign Christian missionaries as well as upper

caste Hindus, called for the eradication of the practice of dedicating women and girls to temples as dancers and allegedly prostitutes (Srinivasan 1988:177; O’Shea 2007: 4, 30, 110). Evidence suggests that efforts to redefine the courtesan dancer as a “prostitute” had begun even earlier in the 1810s, 20s and 30s, and was led by Christian missionaries and British medical officers (Wald 2009:16-21).

In addition to this possible association with prostitution, Silver noted another, more clearly disapproving definition provided by S.W. Fallon in his *A New Hindustani-English Dictionary* (1879): “a sharper, a clever rogue; tactician; old stager, a sharp blade; consummate knave” (Silver 1976:27). Again, Silver had little to say about this definition. Indeed, he did not even point out its negativity, but simply described it as an “additional dimension” to the growing association with musicians. However, like the ustad’s connection to dancing girls, the shades of dishonesty and deceit given in Fallon’s definition resonate with the way some authors during this period criticized the musical “ustad” in particular. I have already quoted in the previous chapter, for instance, Krishnadhan Bondopadhyay’s insistence on the difficulty of learning music from “the businessmen ustad” (*Gitasutrasar*, Calcutta: A. Mukherjee and Co., 1975 [1885]:6, cited in Basu 340).

What is so interesting about the sequence of associations provided by Silver—first the contemptuous and then the communal—is that it challenges the primacy of the communal in decoding the meaning of “ustad” in historical accounts. Present-day scholarship has tended to assume the opposite: that negative connotations accrued to the ustad as a *Muslim musician*, not to the ustad as a *hereditary* or *professional*

musician. James Kippen (2008), for example, described how the “ustad” took on “pejorative connotations” only after it had become associated with Muslims:

Although the term had nonsectarian connotations at first, over time it came to signify the legions of Muslim occupational specialists that were organized socially into exclusive and largely endogamous family units that served to protect their trade secrets and provide an environment that fostered extraordinary musical and technical ability. As such, the term gradually took on pejorative connotations, especially as widespread resentment grew towards the ustads’ perceived stranglehold over what was beginning to be thought of around 1900 as the cultural property of all Indians. Even more pointedly, as social mores began to change, the professional association of certain lineages of ustads with a seedy underworld of dancing and sex trade branded them with a stigma that still persists today. Indeed, *ustadji*, which grafts onto the word a Hindi suffix of respect, [127] is not only a polite and endearing form of address for a musician but also a commonly used moniker for a pimp or criminal. (2008:126-27)

The reasons Kippen provides for the ustad’s growing derision should be familiar to us by now: an association the “dancing and sex trade,” which Silver has already suggested, and a “perceived stranglehold” over the “cultural property of all Indians” (music), which was the basis for most of the criticism of Muslim musicians

considered in the previous chapter. In addition, Kippen references the “wily games” of ustads (or “ustad-bazi”) in which “they affected sincerity but exploited students’ loyalty to their own social and economic advantage” (Kippen 134). Not only does this connect well with Fallon’s definition (“consummate knave”), quoted by Silver above, but it also mirrors the criticism found in many reformist narratives of Hindu-Muslim apprenticeship discussed in the previous chapter. Recall, for example, Bhatkhande’s parabolic story in which a naïve Hindu student falls prey to the false promises of a “Muslim khansaheb,” who in the end “disparages him publicly, teaches him very little, and tricks him out of his money” (Bakhle 2005:125 citing Bhatkhande’s *Hindustani Sangit Paddhati*, vol. III, pp.60-65). In Kippen’s reading, however, all of these criticisms are made against ustads who are specifically and uncomplicatedly identified as Muslim. Kippen even defines “ustad” in the glossary of his book, *The Tabla of Lucknow*, as “Teacher, master (Muslim); a title and term of address (Ustad) for a mature, knowledgeable and accomplished Muslim musician” (2005 [1988]). More importantly, these criticisms are claimed to have *followed* the ustad’s Muslim associations rather than preceded them, as is briefly suggested by Silver.

An “Anathema to Modernist Spirit”

Dard Neuman’s more recent discussion of the term “ustad” supported the broad outline suggested by Silver (Neuman 2004). Like Silver (and Kippen), Neuman uncovered an older, more universal definition of the term limited neither to musicians nor Muslims. Accordingly, Neuman argued that an ustad could have been an artist of

any kind, a weaver, carpenter, or sculptor, and from any religious background.²⁵³ Like his father, Dard Neuman insisted on the continued applicability of this wider sense of “ustad” to other professions, such as “head car mechanics” in Daryaganj, where he conducted fieldwork (ibid.:3 n.2).²⁵⁴ Like Silver, Neuman claimed that the term, even when it did come to apply more specifically to musicians, was used for both Muslims *and* Hindus. As evidence he draws on the early writings of Rabindranath Tagore, who referred to the Hindu musicians of his household—and even some European musicians—as “ostads,” reflecting the Bengali pronunciation of the term (ibid.:82, also see 34 n.45, 84, 229). Continuing to draw on Tagore, Neuman went beyond Silver’s mere allusion to the ustad’s derogatory dimensions to reveal the extent to which the ustad became a target of reformist criticism in the early twentieth century (explored below). Finally, Neuman makes the brief claim that “ustad” acquired its “communally specific” meaning only by the 1920s (ibid.:3 n.2). Like Silver, Neuman does not reflect on the significance of this communal turn, nor its place in the sequence of meanings (i.e., that it came specifically *after* “ustad” had already accrued its derogatory dimensions). Neuman also did not identify why he saw a “turning point” in the term’s meaning in the 1920s, though we may presume a connection with the rise of Hindutva in that decade (see the following chapter).

²⁵³ See Frances Pritche’s *Nets of Awareness: Urdu Poetry and Its Critics*, particularly chapter four, for a discussion of the term “ustad” in the context of poetic traditions.

²⁵⁴ I, too, have witnessed on more than one occasion tailors in Bombay and Pune being referred to as “ustad ji” or “master ji.”

If Silver made only passing reference to the *ustad*'s pre-communal contempt, Dard Neuman made it a point of focus. His evidence, again, was the early pre-1920s writing of Rabindranath Tagore, who Neuman claimed to have criticized the *ustad* (assumingly neither Muslim nor Hindu) as “modernity’s other,” the “anathema to the modernist spirit,” “an anachronism from a dying [feudal] age,” and “a figure frozen in another time, incapable of change” (ibid.:52, 62, 96). This certainly resonated with the reformist criticism of professional musicians and *ustads* in particular considered in the previous chapter. In fact, I see this modernist critique as constituting a higher order of criticism in which the previously mentioned criticisms—an association with prostitution, pedagogical intransigence, and being a “tactician”—can be subsumed.

Neuman was decided on the colonial origins of the *ustad*'s critique.²⁵⁵

Tagore's “seething condemnation of the *ustad*,” he argued, relied on a imported narrative, a “European voice” (ibid.:68 fn 90). As a member of the “appropriating classes” of Brahmins, Tagore “*inherited and reproduced* a modern narrative that could only understand the musicians as an art-less anachronism from a dying feudal age” (ibid.:4-5, my emphasis). Apparently, he was particularly influenced in this view by the British musicologist Herbert Spencer and his article, “The Origin and Function of Music” (ibid.:63 n.82, cited in Neuman 2004 n.82).

While I agree with Neuman that Tagore's criticism of the *ustad* acquired a decidedly modern veneer, this characterization requires some qualification. First, it

²⁵⁵ As Neuman saw Tagore's criticism of the *ustad* as pre-communal, I do not consider Neuman's claims to the colonial origins of the criticism of the *ustad* as a misattribution. As we have seen, Willard indeed criticized professional musicians with equal or greater condemnation than Tagore, though without identifying them as Muslim and without using the term *ustad*.

does not signal an uncritical adoption of the West. Compared to his own musicologist-relative S.M. Tagore, whose criticism of “ustads” (and particularly Muslim ones) was explored in the previous chapter, Rabindranath’s attitude towards the West was much less amiable. “While Sourindro Mohun... was using music as a means to express pride in the Hindu component of the *British Empire*,” noted Charles Capwell, “Rabindranath... was creating new tunes expressive of the cultural and political independence that India would soon achieve” (1987:428, my emphasis). As part of this expression of this desire for Indian independence, Rabindranath was fiercely critical of the western-derived harmonium on the grounds that it enslaved “Indian curvilinear continuity” within “European right-angular discreteness” (Rahaim 2011:13).

Second, Rabindranath’s criticisms of both the harmonium and the *ustad* may have resembled colonial criticisms, some of which were stated earlier, but those earlier criticisms themselves drew on previously existing narrative structures of foreign and local origin. As discussed in Chapter Four, the “complaints of performers’ illiteracy and degeneracy” found in Mughal-period texts and discussed by Katherine Butler Schofield (2010) served as an important precursor to the Muslim dominance narrative. In that article, Schofield revealed how many of the colonially derived ideas thought to mark the classicization of Hindustani music in the twentieth century, including criticism of performers, were in fact foreshadowed by Mughal-period authors in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.²⁵⁶ In an apparent collapse

²⁵⁶ Najma Parveen Ahmad (1984) had earlier brought attention to the fact that the authors of Persian

of centuries separating different periods of classicization (the Mughal and the twentieth-century modern), Schofield explained how the professed goal of almost all the Mughal authors she considered was to “protect” music “from the current unenlightened depredations of their professional practitioners” (2010:496). In this sense, Schofield’s argument actually reaffirms the sequence suggested by both Silver and Neuman—that contempt for professional musicians, though not specifically for “ustads,” preceded their communalization. Schofield, however, provides a much deeper historical context from which to consider the ustad’s pre-communal contempt, prior even to the use of *ustad*.

Reviving the Old Ustad

Dard Neuman’s issue with Tagore was that he was wrong: ustads *did* transform themselves in the face of modernity; they did not remain figures frozen in time and incapable of change. To the contrary, Neuman’s point is that they were incredibly innovative, but that these innovations were subsumed and ignored by a modernist narrative that portrayed “the *ustad* as an anachronistic, ahistorical, orthodox and intransigent figure” (2004:85).

While I agree with Neuman that the modernist critique of the ustad was unwarranted, I disagree with his refusal to consider the possibility of this critique’s communal dimensions (that is, prior to the 1920s). This refusal undoubtedly stems

works on music derided contemporary performers for their illiteracy in ways similar to reformers in later centuries. She provided evidence for this through a detailed consideration of three Persian texts, *Raag Darpan*, *Tohfah-ul-Hind* and *Usulun-Naghmat-e-Asifi*.

most directly from Neuman's argument that the ustad did not actually have a specific Muslim identity prior to the 1920s, and that the term was an open one, applied to both Hindus and Muslims. We might derive this same understanding from Silver's work as well, though he is less specific as to the timing of the communal turn. However, as our consideration in Chapter Four of reformist authors such as S.M. Tagore and those in his circle has shown, professional musicians, sometimes specifically described as "ustads" and sometimes not, had, at least in some contexts, accrued a Muslim association by the late 1870s. I believe this association also contributed to what Neuman described as the ustad's "erasure" from the elite narratives of history (ibid.:76, 96, 438, 442).

However, Neuman's reluctance to discuss the ustad's communal associations appears to stem more deeply from a deliberate attempt to actually thwart communalism by reviving an older, universal definition. In an almost revisionist, anti-communal manner, for example, Neuman dubs as "ustad" (or as "Brahman ustad," a term of his own invention) Ravi Shankar (1920), Bhimsen Joshi (1922-2011) and Nikhil Banerjee (1930-1986)—all Brahman musicians born during or after the ustad's communal turn, and all commonly referred to as "pandit."²⁵⁷ Neuman justifies his application of "ustad" to Hindu musicians in part on a claim to historical authenticity: prior to the twentieth century, not only was it common to refer to Hindu musicians as "ustad," but the term "guru" (as well as "pandit," Neuman implied) "simply did not

²⁵⁷ It should be noted that Neuman does not use "ustad" in its titular sense; that is, he does not refer to Ravi Shankar as "Ustad Ravi Shankar."

figure as a musical guide, at least with respect to the Hindustani music tradition” (ibid.:82). However, even going by his own historical criteria (the 1920s), Neuman’s revival of the inclusive *ustad* for these musicians is anachronistic. This is ironic given that reformers like Tagore branded the *ustad* as an anti-modern anachronism long ago, though for different reasons.

In addition to this historical argument, Neuman also justifies his inclusive use of “*ustad*” by highlighting a common pedagogy—“craft” and “practice rituals” that bind practitioners across the Muslim-Hindu divide.²⁵⁸ This is indeed a significant argument, and it has the additional merit of not reifying purportedly opposing religious identities. However, it nevertheless introduces its own dichotomy: that of the “practitioner” and the “musicologist,” a division that does not reflect the lived experience of many “*ustads*,” whether Muslim, such as Maula Baksh, or Hindu, such as Shankar Rao Pandit.²⁵⁹

Thus, in Neuman’s case, we have a new take on the critical approach of some scholars to the Muslim past, as explored in the previous chapter. Like the critical scholarship explored there, Neuman is certainly critical of the reform and its effects on traditional practitioners. However, unlike some of that scholarship, which has subtly reaffirmed the dominance of Muslims in Indian music’s past, Neuman takes

²⁵⁸ It is also for this reason that he considers Nikhil Banerjee to be a “*khandani*” musician even though he had no history of music in his family (2004:141-42 fn. 175).

²⁵⁹ Citing Rosse’s discussion of Maula Baksh, Lubach claims that, “[a] few [“well reputed *ustadi* musicians”] entered more fully into what has generally been perceived as the domain of Indian musicologists: participating in the devising of notation systems and ‘modern’ pedagogical methods, and the establishment of early music schools” (32 fn. 18 citing Rosse 1995:114).

what might be described as a “communal-blind” approach, deciding to re-impose the pluralism that was lost only by the 1920s. In a critical sense, then, we might say that while the ustad may have been, in Neuman’s terms, erased from history, Neuman might have erased the Muslim identity that the ustad may have had.

Concluding Remarks

It remains unclear what conclusions we might draw from placing the ustad’s derision before his communalization temporally. As mentioned, neither Neuman nor Silver reflected on this progression. Certainly it implies that we should approach the assumption that ustadhs have been criticized because of their Muslim identity with greater caution. However, I believe we still require more evidence, as well as greater scrutiny of the evidence that we already have. Neuman claims that Rabindranath Tagore used “ostad” to refer to Hindu as well as Muslim musicians, but were the Hindu musicians also referred to as “ustads” in the derogatory sense, or simply in the titular, honorific? Were there not more specific anti-Muslim sentiments being aired in the context of music during the late-nineteenth century?

My discussion in the previous chapter of colonialist and reformist authors confirms this late-nineteenth century onset of the ustad’s musical associations. N. Augustus Willard, for example, did not use “ustad” in his 1834 treatise. Yet his extensive criticism of professional musicians comes much before the examples that Silver and Neuman point to regarding the ustad in particular. However, by the time we come to the work of S.M. Tagore in the 1870s, ustad was not only commonly

applied to professional musicians, it was also sometimes laden with negative connotations, and sometimes against Muslims in particular. S.M. Tagore specifically criticized “Muslim musicians” in the same way that some of his contemporaries and students criticized “ustads,” even though Tagore may not have called them “ustad.” Others in the late-nineteenth century, such as Baishnabcharan Basak, also discussed in the previous chapter, specifically criticized the “Muslim ustad” for their “pedagogical secrecy.”

CONVERTING TO ISLAM OR CONVERTING THE PAST?

The claim that Muslims dominated Indian music is often coupled with an explanation for how that dominance was achieved. As discussed in the previous chapter, some ethnomusicologists attribute the Muslim takeover of music to the practice of endogamy, which risks naturalizing the insularity for which Indian Muslims have been criticized. Others have suggested that greater Muslim participation in Indian classical music may have been conditioned by the important role of music among Hanafi Sunnis and Chishti Sufis, two of the most predominant groups of Muslim in South Asia (Manuel 1996:120).²⁶⁰ Alternatively, Nazir Jairazbhoy has pointed out (though not by way of explaining the dominance of Muslims in music) that many Muslim musicians, particularly instrumentalists, were

²⁶⁰ “While music has often been censured in orthodox Islamic ideology, such proscriptions have generally had little direct impact in north India, due to the more tolerant forms of Hanafi Sunni ideology that prevailed from the Mughal period on. Moreover, in India, as elsewhere in the Islamic world, music has always been embraced by particular Sufi orders, and by a more general Sufi-derived attitude that regards song as a means of expressing devotion and, ideally, attaining mystical ecstasy” (120).

“imported” from Central and West Asia under Akbar and his immediate successors (Jairazbhoy 1995:19, 20).²⁶¹ However, by far one of the most common explanations for why Muslims came to dominate Indian music is, ironically, that they were originally Muslims, but Hindus who converted to Islam.

Stories of the conversion of musicians from Hindu to Muslim often assume external motivations: either Muslim patrons required it, or orthodox Hindus, alleging impurity, imposed it. Rarely is it ever assumed that the converter was internally motivated or attracted to religious practices thought to have been Islamic. Even less common is the “fact” of conversion challenged by the knowledge that religious practice in medieval India was, and still is in many cases, difficult to divide along Hindu and Muslim lines. Finally, claims to past conversions, as with other claims to the past, say something about the moment in which these claims are made. In some cases, it appears that the claim to having once been Hindu reflects a strategic accommodation to the current Hindu norms.

Tansen and the Perquisites of Patronage

The most archetypal example of a Hindu musician who converted to Islam is that of Tansen, one of the “nine jewels” of Akbar’s court, and the primary source

²⁶¹ “The *Dhrupad* style of singing was pre-eminent in Akbar’s time and the majority of vocalists came from Gwalior, presumably following the tradition initiated by Raja Man Singh, and it is in that city that Tansen is buried. Many of the instrumentalists, however, were foreigners who came from as far as Mashhad and Tabriz in Iran and from Herat in modern Afghanistan” (Jairazbhoy 1995:19 citing Abu’l-Fazl ‘Allami, *A’in-i-Akbari*). And, “Although foreign musicians were still imported [during Shahjahan’s reign], their numbers had decreased since Akbar’s time” (ibid.:20, citing Abdul Halim’s edition of Faqirullah’s *Rag Darpan*). Daniel Neuman, also citing the *A’in-i-Akbari*, claims of the thirty-six musicians listed in Akbar’s court, “at least nine were from outside of India” (1974:86).

from which almost all present-day gharanas trace their descent. Wim van der Veer has described Tansen as, “the most famous example” of a Brahman who converted to Islam (1980:57). Lakshmi Subramanian characterized Tansen as the “best instance in point” of the conversion of Dhrupad singing lineages to Islam (2006:4649). And Daniel Neumen argued that Tansen personified the transition from a “Brahmanical avocation” to a “Muslim profession” (1980:104; 1985).

Tansen, whose original name was “Ramtanu Misra” or “Tanna Misra,” is thought to have been born sometime between 1492 and 1532 and died sometime between 1580 and 1590.²⁶² His birth was facilitated spiritually by a Sufi saint named Muhammad Ghaus Shattari (Booth 2005:74; Widdess and Sanyal 2004:112), who provided Tansen’s father, a Gaud Brahman named Makarande Pande or Mukand Mishra, with a talisman to bring about a successful birth (Deva 1973:88, cited in Wade 1998:113; Booth 2005:74). Though Tansen’s primary music teacher was Swami Haridas, a Hindu renunciate from Brindavan, Ghaus is said to have played an important educational role in Tansen’s life, both musically and spiritually. Indeed, Tansen’s mausoleum in Gwalior, which can still be visited today, sits directly beside Ghaus’.

Some claim that Ghaus required Tansen to convert to Islam before he would teach him. His conversion is said to have been effected through a ritual of pollution,

²⁶² Regarding Tansen’s original name, Deva (1973:88, cited in Wade 1998:113) cited both of the examples given above. Bhatkhande (1974:18), on the other hand, claimed it to have been the latter. Regarding the year of Tansen’s birth, Deva (previous citation), referring to “recent studies,” though unnamed, suggested it was likely sometime in the last decade of the fifteenth century as opposed to the first decades of the sixteenth century, as is commonly believed. For more on Tansen, see Delvoye (1993).

whereby Ghaus touched his own tongue and then that of Tansen's, thus causing Tansen to lose membership in the Hindu community (Wade 1998:115). As depicted in the issue of the comic book series *Amar Chitra Katha* devoted to Tansen (Rizvi, Lien and Pai [1975] 1998), Tansen's conversion is attributed to his marriage to a Muslim woman, Husayni. However, the more common, and instrumental, explanation for Tansen's conversion was that he converted to reap the benefits of Muslim patronage, specifically that of the Mughal Emperor Akbar. Supporting this idea, Wade (1998:115) cited the Indian historian Bhanu (1955:23), who claimed that Tansen's conversion won him "a high place at the court" of Akbar. Gregory Booth similarly suggested that Tansen, "like many of his Hindu indigenous peers," found that, "in the mid-sixteenth century, success in the acquisition of royal patronage correlated highly with religious identity" (2005:74-75). Finally, Peter Manuel surmised this position by stating that Tansen's conversion reflected a general Islamicization that was "promoted" by Muslim patronage (1996:122-23).

The most common reason given for Tansen's conversion—gaining the benefit of Muslim patronage—reappears in the conversion stories of numerous other musicians. However, scholars, largely outside of music, have expressed skepticism of this narrative in general on the grounds that it denies the possibility of any kind of religious conviction on the part of the converter. Any attraction to Islam in this narrative is commuted to some other instrumental goal, which is more acceptable to the sentiments of nationalist historians.

Expulsion from the Hindu Fold

Another reason often given for conversion—and this is hinted at in the story of how Ghaus polluted Tansen—is expulsion from the Hindu community for associating with Muslims. Daniel Neuman (1990:104-05) recounted, for example, the conversion story of the founding member of the Dagar family of dhrupad singers, Gopal Das, told to him by Zia Mohiuddin Dagar. Gopal Das, a Saraswat Brahman and professional musician, had gone to sing at the court of the Mughal emperor Muhammad Shah Rangile (r.1719-1748). There he was presented with a *pān* to eat, which he did, as his refusal would have insulted the King. Thereafter, however, his Hindu disciples insisted he had become polluted (the word apparently used was *bhriṣṭ*) and compelled him to convert. Gopal Das then took the name Imam Baksh after a Sufi teacher.

Citing this passage elsewhere, Neuman concluded that, “political advantage” and “loss of caste status” among Brahmans were common reasons for Hindu musicians to convert to Islam (1985:101; also 1990:124-25). Widdess and Sanyal, citing personal communication with Ustad Zahiruddin Dagar, confirmed the Dagar family’s claim “that they did not leave their Hindu community voluntarily, but were expelled from it because of their association with the Mughal court” (2004:101). Music critic and amateur musicologist Rajan Parrikar also claimed that the Hindu ancestors of the Dagar family (he gives their original name as “Pande”) were “forced” to convert to Islam, leaving the agent of force somewhat open to suggestion (<http://www.parrikar.org/hindustani/bihag/>).

There are many other stories of Hindu musicians like Gopal Das, who were forced to convert to Islam not by iconoclastic, sword wielding Muslims, but by the orthodox members of their own community.²⁶³ What is important to note here is that, similar to our consideration of the narrative of conversion by patronage, the narrative of expulsion also carries with it a potential to support opposing political agendas. As already suggested, it takes the commonly held assumption that Hindus were forced to convert via the Muslim sword and reverses it by situating the agent of force within Hinduism itself. However, for the musicians who claim their ancestors to have been converted this way, this narrative also has a strategic importance in the present: it takes the onus of conversion off of the converter, and thereby makes their Muslim identity more palatable to a Hindu public. I discuss this idea further below under the heading of “strategic accommodation.”

Social Mobility

One final non-religious reason claimed to have induced Hindus to convert to Islam deserves brief mention: social mobility.²⁶⁴ A notable example is the conversion narrative of the ancestors of sitarist Vilayat Khan. Though the circumstances

²⁶³ One notable example is the khyal singer who was known as a “Brahmin Muslim,” Alladiya Khan (1855-1946). Alladiya Khan similarly claimed that his original Gaud Brahman family was “forced” to convert to Islam. In this case, however, the agent of force seems to have come from both sides. Initially, members of Alladiya Khan’s family were apparently forced to convert by the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb himself in order to remain court musicians. In the following generations, however, when members of the family “wanted to come back to the Hindu fold,” Alladiya Khan claimed that, “Hindus did not accept us back!” (Widdess and Sanyal 2004:101 citing Wade 1984:160 citing Shukla 1971:21, Garg 1957:97, 274 and V.H. Deshpande 1972:2).

²⁶⁴ In addition, Wim van der Meer briefly mentioned two additional “external” motivations: “marriage” and “curses” (1980:57).

surrounding the conversion remain unclear, it is generally claimed that Imdad Khan's great grandfather, Sarojan Singh, was the first member of the family to convert to Islam, thereafter taking the name Sarojan Khan (Slawek 1992). Unlike all of the musicians discussed above who claim Brahman origins (Tansen, Gopal Das, Alladiya Khan, and Allauddin Khan), Vilayat Khan's ancestors were rural, low-caste Hindus. Peter Manuel suggested that for such musicians marginalized by the caste system, conversion to Islam, which was understood as being more egalitarian, offered a way for them to "improve their status" (1996:122).

Beyond External Motivations

Assuming for the moment, however, that these claims to Hindu origin are simply true and not strategic accommodations to a Hinduized public sphere, the idea that conversion to Islam was either involuntary (e.g. being outcaste by the Hindu community) or a prerequisite to obtaining some other non-religious goal (patronage or social equality) deserves further scrutiny. Internal motives, such as the idea that Hindu musicians were attracted to Islam and converted out of conviction as opposed to social or economic compulsion, for example, are rarely suggested, as mentioned above. Wade (1998:228 n.7) offered a brief exception, suggesting that, "Sufi modes of thought and religion appealed to Hindus who were attracted enough to convert to Islam." Lakshmi Subramanian similarly contended that conversion to Islam was "attractive to and relatively easy" for Hindus due to the similarities between Sufi and Vaishnav practice, imagery, metaphor, etc. (2006:4649). The findings of Richard

Widdess and Ritwick Sanyal bear these ideas out on a specific level. They note that the Dagar family hailed from the district of Sahāranpur in the northern Doāb region, which was “heavily influenced by Sufism,” and that “many other musicians of the area were attracted to Sufism, above all Bande Ali Khan” (2004:110). Even Daniel Neuman, did not consider such motivations for the conversion of Hindu musicians, noted that Bande Ali Khan might have descended from “the seventeenth-century Sufi mystic and musician, Sheikh Bahauddin Barnavi, who Faqirullah (1666) ranked first among the musicians of the time (*Rag-darpana*, chapter ten)” (Widdess 2004:110, citing Neuman 1990:268). Nevertheless, none of the musicians from these lineages have themselves claimed that their families converted out of conviction or belief.

Beyond Conversion

Whether Islam was forcibly imposed (metaphorically by “the sword”), passively accepted (a religion of “patronage”), or eagerly embraced (due to an attraction to doctrine or egalitarianism), the concern thus far has been limited to locating the motivations or agencies of conversion. Scholars of South Asian history, religion and society, however, have not only pointed to the improbability of these imputed motivations,²⁶⁵ they have more importantly revealed the construction of the

²⁶⁵ Richard Eaton has thoroughly disabused the idea that low-caste Hindus could have been attracted to Islam’s supposed social equality. If Islam was sold to Hindus, he contended, than it was done on the basis of its monotheism as opposed to Hinduism’s polytheism (1993). Moreover, the Hindus who converted did not actually experience upward mobility. Instead they took on a similar low-class distinction within the structure of Muslim society. Finally, Eaton makes the convincing point that the highest incidence of “conversion” to Islam (he disagrees with the term, see below) occurred in areas that were only lightly exposed to Brahmanical Hinduism. The oppressive caste structure that was theorized to have propelled Hindus towards Islam, therefore, simply did not play a significant role.

very claim to conversion itself. As discussed above, the categories of Hindu and Muslim prior to the colonial period, though extant, were far more flexible than they became in the early twentieth century. What did it mean, therefore, to convert from Hindu to Muslim if both sides were somewhat amorphous and less exclusive to begin

British administrators such as Sir Henry Elliot first enunciated the “religion of the sword” theory with respect to India, though Eaton (1993) dates it globally to at least the Crusades. Eaton’s critique in part focuses on the scholarly misreadings of historical evidence. Proponents of this theory, Eaton contends, have taken the translations of Persian chronicles too literally. Though they claim to have imposed “Islam” via the sword, this was more of a metaphorical attribution. If there was any submission by force, Eaton suggested, it was done by the army, not religion. Finally, as with his critique of the social mobility theory, Eaton noted how the religion of the sword theory is contradicted by the history and geography of conversion. Conversion largely took place *away* from the centers of Muslim power and in places where rulers actively *discouraged* conversion: East Bengal and East Punjab (1993, 2000).

Though Eaton does not dismiss the theory of Islam as a religion of patronage, which is one of the most popular explanations for the conversion of Hindu musicians, he does point to its limitation in explaining the conversion of the masses. Ernst also claims that the “political patronage” argument, like the immigration from the Middle East argument, probably did not involve large numbers of people. Again Eaton holds up the anomaly of the geography of conversion. Patronage does help us understand “the relatively low incidence of Islamization in India’s political heartland, [but] it cannot explain the massive conversions that took place along the political fringe—as in Punjab and Bengal” (___). Eaton’s insistence that the new Mughal rulers of eastern Bengal not only failed to encourage, but even discouraged conversion, appears slightly overstated, particularly in light of his discussion later in this same article of how the Mughal government actually provided much more support specifically to Muslim cultivators/ forest clearers, who were required to set up temples that were funded by the land revenues.

Each of these theories has its political advantages. The administrators of the 1872 Census favored the social liberation theory, and used it to justify their imperial presence (Viswanathan 1996). This theory, Eaton noted elsewhere, is also the favored by liberal South Asian Muslim scholars, perhaps as a response to the more popular portrayal of Islam as a religion of the sword (1987). He elsewhere notes that this theory “has for long been the most widely accepted explanation of Islamization in the subcontinent” (1993). Ernst points to the important role that the religion of the sword theory plays in modern Hindu nationalism (Ernst 1992). For problems with the theory of similarities between Hindu and Islamic devotionalism, see Francesca Orsini (2010).

Regarding the problem with the theory of the “Sufi as missionary,” or the idea that Hindus were brought to Islam through preaching and indirect means, Ernst maintains that there is no evidence to support an intent among Sufis to convert non-Muslims to Islam (1992:158). Anna Bigelow (2004) noted that, “many eminent scholars of South Asian Sufism, including Richard Eaton, Simon Digby, Annemarie Schimmel, Carl Ernst, Bruce Lawrence, and Irfan Habib effectively dispel the notion that Sufis in the medieval periods of Muslim expansion were actively seeking to effect conversions among the Hindu population or that they were successful when they tried. However, to this day in many areas of Punjab and Bengal, clans and groups do in fact attribute their conversion to the power and appeal of famous Sufi Saints such as Baba Farid Shakarganj” (Anna Bigelow 2004:157-58).

with? Was conversion to Islam really as deliberate, sudden and complete as the term “conversion” implies, or was it as Richard Eaton, Gauri Viswanathan (1996, 1998) and others have argued, more of a gradual and unconscious process of religious accretion and creative adaptation that only later came to be perceived—and labeled by others—as “conversion”?²⁶⁶

²⁶⁶ Over many publications spanning more than thirty years, Richard Eaton has both criticized the inappropriateness of the concept of conversion to Islam in India, and forwarded an alternative theory of religious accretion and adaptation. Accretion, the process of either adding or identifying new deities to an “existing cosmological stock” allows people to unproblematically participate in Islam without being exclusive, without “converting” (1987:111). They understand their beliefs and practices as *local* and regional, associated with a local saint or shrine (ibid.:113), not as part of a world religion. Islam is thus “one technique among many for tapping a ‘power’ which, with the performance of the proper rites known to some local expert, could alleviate one’s problems or promote one’s mundane concerns” (ibid.:112). In a more recent statement of this idea, Eaton wrote, “[w]hat the original evidence rather points to is a slow, almost glacial process of creative adaptation that was so gradual in pace and so subtle in character as to go largely un-noticed by either inside or outside observers” (Eaton 2009:196. Also see 2000:274).

Interestingly, one of Eaton’s earliest claims to religious accretion and the inappropriateness of conversion was made on the basis of folk song and oral poetry. In questioning how Sufism, understood by scholars as highly abstract, esoteric and mystical due to a focus on texts, could have played a role in converting low-caste, illiterate Hindus, Eaton revealed how Sufis adapted simple elements of their doctrines to pre-existing folk songs meant to accompany women’s domestic labor, particularly the *chakki-nama* (songs sung while grinding food grains at the grindstone or *chakki*), the *chakra-nama*, (songs accompanying the spinning of thread on a spinning wheel or *charkha*), and *luri-nama* (lullabies) (1974:191-92). These songs, Eaton suggested, played an important role in propagating Sufi beliefs. This was not, however, the same thing as “conversion,” which implies a conscious peddling or adopting of religion. Instead, these poems and the practices of worshiping or propitiating Sufi holy men and their graves was a way that non-Muslims became easily “acculturated” to Islam. It was a way of being Muslim that could easily fit into the eclecticism with which people approached religious practice during this period. It appealed to “indigenous” practices and themes: the worship of spiritual preceptors (*pirs*), and to “votive” devotionism (worship offered in fulfillment of an oath or vow). In short, it was what Eaton refers to as an “Indian folk Islam” (ibid.:197), or what Spencer Trimingham has called “holy-man Islam.” It was this “aura of holiness” that attracted Indians, not formal Islam (ibid.:198 fn 33, citing Trimingham’s *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, Oxford, 1971, p.22).

In later publications, Eaton forwarded the novel idea that religious accretion was brought about in Eastern Bengal (where India’s highest concentration of converts to Islam was thought to have occurred) through the confluence of certain environmental, geographic changes, political and economic changes. The changing course of the Ganges River, for example, opened up new opportunities for developing land and expanding agricultural production in areas largely untouched by Brahmanical Hinduism. This process was accelerated by the conjunction of the spread of Mughal rule in the area. Because agriculture brought Islamicized changes to local culture, Eaton claims Islam to be more a religion of the plough than a “religion of the sword” (2000).

I do not attempt to answer these questions here, but to use them to complicate the largely uncritical application of the terms “conversion,” “Hindu” and “Muslim” to Indian music’s past. To my knowledge, Wade is the only scholar of Indian music to have questioned the appropriateness of “conversion” for medieval musicians such as Tansen, or for any musician for that matter. “Conversion,” she noted, imposes a

One reason Islam succeeded in the subcontinent was because it integrated local indigenous cultures: it assimilated, “accreted,” and became “as thoroughly Indian as any other religion of South Asia” (Eaton 1987:5). Eaton contended that it was because Muslim rulers chose this accommodating option that, “Islam became a world civilization, and not just one more parochial, ethnic cult” (1993a: 25-26). Instead of “conversion,” Eaton argues it would be more precise to say that Indians were “assimilating Islamic rituals, cosmologies, and literatures into their local religious systems” (ibid.:36).

Andre Wink similarly claimed that mass conversions to Islam, wherever they occurred, happened “only when core aspects of pre-existing belief systems were accommodated” (2010:53, Review of Simpson, Edward; Kresse, Kai, eds., *Struggling with History: Islam and Cosmopolitanism in the Western Indian Ocean*. H-Asia, H-Net Reviews. October. URL: <https://www.hnet.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=30792>).

Gauri Vishwanathan reveals the actual constructedness of the first British census data of India in 1891, which claimed that 70% of Bengal was Muslim. Vishwanathan uncovers the circumspect ways in which British census takers proved the Hindu origins of their Muslim subjects, even if this went against the claims of their subjects to being Muslim. Census workers were instructed to study the habits, behaviors, customs, and even racial features of their Muslim subjects to determine the local or foreign ancestry. Despite their insistence on the indigenosity of Indian Muslims, British census reports still managed to contribute to the future portrayal of Muslims as “outsiders.” They did this by highlighting the reluctance of Muslims to acknowledge their Hindu roots, and concluded that the reference point for Muslim personal identity lay outside of India. Difference/ otherness was therefore both asserted (Muslims do not see themselves as native, but as foreign) and denied (they’re Hindu only). This assertion of difference, however, was attributed to Muslims themselves. It was encoded in the census and later used by Hindu nationalists, not to assert a syncretic vision of the nation, but to criticize Muslims for essentially being traitors and denying their Hindu roots.

The primary cause of conversion, the census argued, was loss of membership in the Hindu community: being outcasted or “social ostracism from Hinduism.” This was usually as a result of some kind of association with Muslims, the primary ones being romantic intrigue, sharing food, and coming under their care during illness. Vishwanathan cites the second appendix to the *Census of India, 1901*, titled, “Extracts from District Reports regarding Causes of Conversion to Muhammadism” (x-xix). Only six of the forty cases discussed therein list “doctrinal inclination” as a cause of conversion. On one level, this reverses the notion of Muslim as intolerant and conversion as a result of coercion on the part of Muslims. Vishwanathan describes how the portrayal of *Hindus* as being intolerant in the British-derived data caused Hindu nationalists, such as the Arya Samaj, to attempt to reverse their ostracisms with a movement for the re-conversion of those it originally cast off.

“paradigm of the master cleavage of Hindu and Muslim” upon the religious syncretism of the medieval period (1998:116). Not even Subramanian or Bakhle, who are most attuned to the politics of representation, questioned conversion in this way. Their critique, which is just as important, focuses instead on the contemporary politics that under-gird the very claim to a prior conversion in the present.²⁶⁷ It is toward this less historical and more anthropological interpretation of the claim to a former conversion that we now turn.

Strategic Accommodation

For Muslim musicians compelled to navigate the cultural requirements of Hindu nationalism, the claim to a former Hindu identity and subsequent conversion due to outside forces may have helped them secure the safety and sympathy needed to remain in their profession. This formulation is inspired by George Lipsitz’s notion of “strategic anti-essentialism,” which he used to describe the taking on of a disguise or fictive identity in the form of dominant values, particularly for aggrieved communities (1994:62). In a statement highly appropriate for Muslim musicians masquerading as former Hindus, Lipsitz said, “[t]hese strategic anti-essentialists have become experts in disguise because their survival has often depended on it” (ibid.:63).

²⁶⁷ William Pinch made a similar claim outside the realm of music: “Thus it is as well to hold in abeyance allegations of difference grounded in Hindu-ness and Muslim-ness, particularly when speaking of the early modern period. Claims of one or the other usually reveal more about the solidification of a conscious religious identity in the mind of the claimant (or the group to which the claimant belongs) in the present than about the nature of the religious beliefs or practices of the person (or group) being described in the past” (Pinch 2006:33).

In the context of Indian classical music, Lakshmi Subramanian has made this point most directly when she argued that in the new post-court, nationalist context of music, the traditional Muslim practitioner was encouraged to “passively embrace an external description of one’s orientation and practice” (2006b:4649). That “external description,” Subramanian argued, highlighted music’s “association with earlier traditions of Hindu devotion,” and “virtually obscured” the important changes that occurred “during the long period of Islamic rule” (ibid.).

Conversion narratives, therefore, also need to be seen alongside a broader range of accommodation strategies that Muslim musicians made as the public sphere for music Hinduized. This idea is not new. Regula Qureshi had earlier noted several of these strategies, which included remembering their family’s former conversion, but also incorporating more Hindu devotional music into their repertoire, changing their names to “sound less Muslim,” and more generally adopting “their Hindu patrons’ ideology and symbols” (1991:163-64, 165 n.31). She later described these changes in starker terms as the successful cooptation of hereditary musicians by a dominant ideology (2000:20). In the context of the Dagar family, Widdess and Sanyal have similarly noted that the family’s claim to a Hindu origin expresses a contemporary need to establish an accepted source of authority common to dhrupad gharanas—in this case, Hindu devotionalism through the temple music tradition.²⁶⁸ Drawing on

²⁶⁸ It is important to note that others have also claimed the reverse: that a Muslim background is what gave gharanas their “authenticity.” Charles Capwell came to this conclusion regarding the “foundations of authority” in the Vishnupur gharana (1991). Though largely Hindu, the Vishnupur gharana traces its roots to a Muslim musician, Bahadur Khan of Delhi, who was also said to have been a direct descendent of Tansen. Pointing to historical discrepancies with this history, Capwell argued that it is unlikely that any descendant of Tansen named Bahadur Khan was even present in Vishupur

Wade's comments on Abdul Karim Khan, particularly Khan's rejection of the *sruti* harmonium, Widdess and Sanyal very hesitantly suggest that the family's emphasis on their Brahman origins—and their de-emphasis of their Islamic religious conviction—is a strategy for surviving in an anti-Muslim, Hinduized public sphere.²⁶⁹ The authors also note that the family's proscription of women from participating in all musical activity can similarly be seen as “part of a broad socio-musical survival strategy that also included the study of Sanskrit, emphasis on Brahman origins and specialization in *dhrupad*” (2004:117).

Whether we read this affectation of Hinduness as a conscious strategy of survival or a passive acquiescence, it is important to note that neither were all Muslim musicians successful at this, nor were they all interested. However, for those who were either “hardpressed” or “unwilling to affect the Westernized, middle-class

during this time. Instead, it is more likely, he continued, that the musical knowledge of the *gharana* stemmed from a Hindu *panditji* named Krishnamohan Goswami, who taught Ram Shankar Bhattacharya, known to have largely established the *gharana*. The reason the shadowy figure of Bahadur was elevated as the ultimate source of the *gharana*'s tradition, Capwell argued, was because Ram Shankar's real teacher, a “*panditji*,” “did not possess the aura associated with the Muslim professional courtly tradition.” “In the eighteenth century,” Capwell continued, “only a Muslim *ustad* carried the requisite authority of upcountry musical culture needed for the proper establishment of a professional lineage” (ibid.:101). Capwell considers a similar case of Allauddin Khan, who traces his lineage “upcountry” to Wazir Khan of Rampur, a direct descendant of Tansen, but not a family member (ibid.:96-97). Of course, in both cases, the genealogical or discipular connection to Tansen would have further affirmed the *gharana*'s authenticity, a fact that questions the primacy of Bahadur Khan's Muslim identity. Was it not more important that he was a *senia*?

²⁶⁹ “According to Wade (1980:190), his [AKK's] objections [to the *sruti* harmonium] were partly musical, on the grounds that the *srutis* could not be separated from the *svaras*, and partly cultural: ‘What Abdul Karim Khan saw was a growing movement of agitation for the *de-Muslimization of Hindustani music*’. Symptoms of this movement included a tendency to revive Sanskrit terminology and concepts, and to depict Muslim *ustads* as ignorant of the shastric basis of Indian music theory.” (2004:116). Bonnie Wade used this term, “*de-Muslimization*,” to explain the “insults and indignities” that were “heaped on Muslim singers,” but which Abdul Karim Khan “tried to remain aloof from” (Wade 1980:190).

manners now deemed appropriate for artists,” Peter Manuel predicted ominous consequences: “Hindu musicians...from bourgeois families” would replace them (1996:126). Though Manuel gave some credence to religion in determining the character or style of Muslim adaptation,²⁷⁰ he has generally taken class to be the primary mover, as discussed in the previous chapter. However, the need for Muslims to “affect” the religious ideologies of their bourgeois *Hindu* patrons is perhaps stronger (and has been more successful) than Manuel has been willing to admit.

All of this suggests that hidden “re-conversions” to Hinduism—changing one’s name to something more Hindu sounding, adopting the title of “Pandit,” or generally taking on a Hindu “disguise” (i.e. strategic anti-essentialism) may be more common than we know. Cases in which Muslim musicians officially and publicly re-converted to Hinduism on the grounds that their family had originally been Hindu are comparatively more rare. Daniel Neuman described them as an “entirely post-partition phenomenon” (1990:105-06). The one example he discussed was that of Husainuddin Dagar (1908-1963), the fourth son of Allabande Khan, who changed his name to Tansen Pande. “Tansen” was a name awarded to Husainuddin by the ruler of Alwar where he lived for some years (Widdess and Sanyal 2004:122). “Pande” was apparently the family name before conversion.

²⁷⁰ “Ideologies surrounding the now-archaic dhrupad are particularly illustrative of the current tendency to identify musical traditions with one religion or another. The leading dhrupad family in India, the Dagers, are remarkably explicit about the Hindu orientation of their art, *perhaps in accordance with their hereditary associations with Rajasthani temples, and with the current Hindu domination of art music patronage in general*. Hence, as Richard Widdess (1994, 70-71, and personal communication) notes, vocalist Aminuddin Dagar, although a Muslim, describes his art as, “an offering to the feet of *bhagwan* [God]” and likens the genre’s reverential, serious opening alap section to the ritual decoration (*sringar*) of a Hindu deity’s image” (ibid.:126, my emphasis).

Another high-profile case in which a Muslim musician changed his name to reflect his family's alleged Hindu roots was that of Ashish Khan (b.1939), son of sarodist Ali Akbar Khan (1922-2009) via his first wife Zubeida Begum, and grandson of Allauddin Khan (c.1862-1972), teacher of Ravi Shankar. In 2006, Ashish Khan officially changed his last name to Debsharma, the purported surname of his Hindu Brahman forefathers (Dasgupta 2006). It is commonly believed that the family converted to Islam several generations ago.²⁷¹ However, Ashish Khan maintained a different story: that his family never actually converted to Islam, which he supported with reference to the family's retention of Hindu practices, such as the worship of Kali and Saraswati. He also said that he had never been asked to follow Islamic rituals, such as offering namaz, and that the names given to him and his siblings (Dhyanesh, Pranesh and Amaresh) reflected the family's primary Hindu identity. Although he acknowledged that his grandfather, Sadananda Debsharma, had taken what is commonly believed to have been a "Muslim" name, "Sadhu Khan," he refused to acknowledge this as evidence for the family's conversion. Instead, he provided an interesting historical argument that "Khan" was not a surname at this time, but a title used by Hindus and even Christians "due to compulsions" (Dasgupta 2006). As "there was no formal conversion to Islam," he was quoted elsewhere as saying, "I don't need to convert again" (UNI).

The author of the previous cited article on Ashish Khan's name change was

²⁷¹ In his first autobiography, *My Music My Life* (1968), Ravi Shankar stated, "[h]is family were Bengali Muslims, converted to Islam only three or four generations before." Deodhar, however, claimed that it was nine generations ago that Allauddin's family was Hindu (1993:102-03).

even more adamant in claiming that notions of the family's conversion were spurious. Apparently drawing on contemporary sources, the author recounted the story of how Sadanand, who was chief guard of the royal Chowdhury family of Shilbpur in present-day Bangladesh, took the name Sadhu Khan "in order to hoodwink the British police" after he killed a member of the Southern Royals (ibid.). "From the diaries of Maharaja Nabakishore Roy Chowdhuri and Baba Allauddin Khan," the author concluded, "it is clear that his family was never converted to Islam. Unfortunately, ignorant gossip-lovers left no stone unturned to spread all sorts of stories regarding their conversion to Islam" (ibid.).

Ashish Khan's father, however, Ali Akbar Khan, was distraught over his son's claim to the Hindu roots of the family. He reportedly told the Times of India, "Unfortunately, many statements made by my son in the newspaper regarding the history of my family are incorrect. My family has been Muslim for many generations, and we will remain Muslims. It's a shame that he is trying to reinvent the history of our family and in turn hurting past generations of our family" (Dasgupta 2006).

Ashish Khan's reference to a period in which the family's adoption of the title of "Khan" did not necessarily reflect a Muslim identity, and his claim that his family never "converted" in the sense of taking a vow or decision, resonates in interesting ways with the critique, discussed above, that scholars of religion and history have forwarded of the very concept of conversion itself. As such, Ashish's decision could have alternatively been used as a platform to challenge the rigid sense of religious identity that the concept of conversion assumes. However, his insistence on the

primacy and authenticity of the family's Hindu identity over their Muslim identity, despite their continued pluralistic practices, marks his divergence from this other, more critical discourse. Rather, Ashish Khan's decision revealed the difficult accommodative position that many Muslim musicians have faced, including other members of his own family.

A crucial omission in all the reportage on Ashish Khan's name change is the fact that he was not the only member of his family to take on a Hindu name. B.R. Deodhar spoke of the fact that Ashish Khan's grandfather Allauddin Khan himself was compelled to take on a Hindu name at least twice during his life in order to avoid "anti-Muslim ostracism" (1993:107). Recounting Allauddin Khan's early days, Deodhar described how he had attempted to learn from his brother's tabla teacher, Ramkanai Seal, but soon "fled the anti-Muslim ostracism that he faced there in Navgram and moved to Calcutta" (ibid.). When he was finally accepted as a student of the dhrupad singer Nanu Gopal (referenced in the introduction), he was advised by Gopal to change his name to the Hindu "Manmohan Dey" (ibid.).²⁷² Years later, when Allauddin began working for the celebrated playwright Girishchandra Ghosh, he was again asked to change his name to the Hindu "Prasanna Kumar Vishwas" (ibid.:109). Finally, one of Allauddin's own daughters, Roshanara (b.1920), not only took on a Hindu name, but also converted to Hinduism in order to marry one of her father's

²⁷² Ravi Shankar recalled this story somewhat differently. Instead of being asked by his teacher to do so, Shankar claimed that, "Baba instinctively thought it might be better if he said he was a Hindu himself when he approached this teacher ["Nulo Gopal"], so he took a Hindu name" (1968:52).

Hindu disciples, Ravi Shankar. Thereafter she went by the name of Annapurna Devi, which was given to her by the ruler of Maihar.

Stories of Allauddin Khan's various changes of name clearly reflect a felt need on the part of Allauddin Khan and others to accommodate dominant religious and cultural norms. Roshanara's conversion further reminds us of the particular compulsions faced by females, and the fact that gender is often a silent factor in the theorization of musicians' conversion narratives, which almost wholly focus on male musicians.

Concluding Remarks

In all of the stories considered here of contemporary Muslim musicians who have allegedly converted from Hinduism in the past, an external cause is usually forwarded. Likewise, in all of the stories considered here of contemporary Muslim musicians (though formerly Hindus) who take on aspects of a Hindu identity in the present, an internal cause is usually forwarded. Conversion to Islam, in other words, is shown to have been externally motivated, while "conversion" to Hinduism is internally motivated. This section has sought to point to the inadequacy of each of these explanations by revealing the possible strategic reasons for making them in the first place. However, whatever the motivation of conversion were, if they can indeed be determined, the notion of conversion itself probably imputes a more rigid sense of religious identity than is likely to have existed. The following section picks up from our discussion of strategic accommodation by introducing an unlikely and unintended

contributor to this idea: anti-communal advocates of religious secularism, or pluralism, as it is understood in the Indian context.

SECULARISM AND ITS DISCONTENTS

Celebrating Secularism

Ali Akbar Khan's stated opposition to Ashish Khan's name change was framed as a defense of his family's Muslim identity: "My family has been Muslim for many generations, and we will remain Muslims. It's a shame that he is trying to reinvent the history of our family and in turn hurting past generations of our family" (Dasgupta 2006). However, such a firm declaration of this family's religious singularity is just as surprising as Ashish Khan's declaration of his family's religious singularity (though of a different religion) given that its founder, Allauddin Khan, is remembered for his participation in Hindu as well as Muslim devotional practices. A tribute to Allauddin Khan on the website of the Sangeet Research Academy, for example, touted him as "a devoted Muslim, and also a great devotee of Maa Sharada (Saraswati) of Maihar temple and Lord Shiva."²⁷³ Ravi Shankar described Allauddin Khan's religiosity as "a beautiful fusion of the best of both Hinduism and Islam" (1968:51). B.R. Deodhar recalled that he mistook the dhoti-clad ustad for a Brahman priest when they first met and that Allauddin was on his way to the River Ganga to

²⁷³ ITCSRA, "Tribute to a Maestro: Allauddin Khan," <http://www.itcsra.org/tribute.asp?id=27>. Accessed January 28, 2013.

bath of the sacred Hindu day of ekadashi! (1993:102).²⁷⁴ Thus, it is surprising that the hurt that Ali Akbar felt about his son's attempt to "reinvent" the family's history had to do with his son's rejection of Islam and not his rejection of the pluralism for which the family has so often been celebrated.

The public approval that Allauddin Khan received for his sect-crossing practices is not at all unusual. Other Muslim musicians who took on Hindu norms have been publicized in similar ways. Nisar Hussain Khan, son of Nathu Khan and teacher of Krishna Shankar Pandit (1893-1989), is often appreciated for being a vegetarian, wearing a sacred thread, and reciting "*slokas* and Marathi poems during the feeding of Brahmins" (Pandit 1996:21). Alladiya Khan, whose family's "forced" conversion to Islam was discussed above, is similarly described as having worn a sacred thread and was even known to refer to himself a "Brahman Muslim" (Deodhar 1993:37). Much attention is given to the fact that he performed twice a week in the Bhavani temple in Kolhapur as a part of his employment there (Kobayashi 2003:122). Stories of the shehnai player Bismillah Khan (1916-2006) delight in the fact that he got his start performing in the Vishwanath temple of Banaras where his uncle was employed as a temple musician. Rajab Ali Khan, the famous vocalist and bin player of the early twentieth century, is described as having been a self-proclaimed Devi devotee. His tomb in the city of Dewas, in fact, stands at the bottom

²⁷⁴ Deodhar further noted that Allauddin's father, Sadhu Khan, was a Shiva devotee, his brother a worshiper of Kali, and that there are vegetarians in his family (1993:102-03).

of Chamunda hill, on top of which lies a temple dedicated to the Goddess of the same name (interview with Kalpana Joklekar, 8 February 2008).²⁷⁵

We have already discussed the strategic reasons why Muslim musicians might have lent support to or propagated these stories. Here we examine a further strategic utility: anti-communal secularism. In response to more narrow and exclusive definitions of cultural citizenship, these stories are interpreted by many to shore up the idea of India as an inclusive society, one that accepts all religious faiths equally. This is, in fact, the way that “secularism” is defined in India. Like the term “communalism,” secularism has a unique Indian meaning similar to pluralism, and does not impute the exclusion of religion from the state or the public sphere. The figure of Tansen, who is said to have embodied a composite Hindu-Muslim culture, is often used in this way (Silver 2002,²⁷⁶ Booth 2005:74-75, Wade 1998:113). Kobayashi similarly employs the mixed religious identity of Alladiya Khan to correct what she sees is an over determined division between Muslims and Hindus in the theorization of the reform movement (2003:122).

Such an approach is also used prevalently outside of the context of music. In his book *Beyond Hindu and Muslim*, Peter Gottschalk suggested that stories of past

²⁷⁵ Chamunda Hill in Dewas was made famous through E.M. Forester’s novel, *The Hill of Devi* (1953).

²⁷⁶ “One of the most interesting aspects of this now legendary figure is the manner in which he embodies the composite Hindu-Muslim culture of the Mughal period. While his name is clearly Hindu, the attachment of the Muslim title Miyan indicates both respect and affection (God himself is often referred to as Allah Miyan), and gives some credence to the possibility of his having converted to Islam at some point in his life. Tansen is said to have had two wives—one Hindu, the other Muslim—and of the three sons cited in historical accounts, two have Muslim names and one a Hindu name” (Silver 2002).

conversions to Islam, whether based on religious conviction or more external concerns like economic compulsion, nevertheless highlight the fact that Indian Muslims are of *local* origin in contrast to their otherwise regular identification as *foreigners* (2000:154).²⁷⁷ In other words, the notion that Indian Muslims were originally Hindu emphasizes a shared kinship.

Critiquing Secularism

Celebrating Muslim musicians who transcend their religion, however, can serve starkly opposite functions than what secular publicists intend. At its most insidious, this “official” brand of secularism forwards a particular image of the “good Muslim,” who is not really Muslim at all; it requires identification with dominant Hindu norms and erases or makes inconsequential the faith of the Muslim musician (Subramanian 2006b:4649, Bakhle 2005:168-75).²⁷⁸ “By extrapolation,” Bakhle

²⁷⁷ Gottschalk considers two different versions of the conversion story of Loka Singh, one of the first settlers in the villages around Arampur. One version, which comes from a Muslim, suggests that Loka Singh converted to Islam because he liked what the local Sufi Sheik had to say. The version commonly told by area Hindus, however, claims that Singh converted to receive a land grant. Gottschalk does not attempt to delve into the issue of contrasting motivations for conversion. Instead, he uses this example to point out that *both* versions of the story assume a liberal attitude that Muslims are of *Indian* origin, not foreigners: “Significantly enough, the views here assume most Indian Muslims as native in lineage, even if not in belief and practice, in stark contrast to the identification of those Muslims-as-foreigners” (2000:154).

²⁷⁸ Citing her personal communication with a student of Alladiya Khan, “Pandit” Shruti Sadolikar (Pandit usually being reserved for a male), Bakhle suggested that the claim to a Hindu past can serve not only to de-emphasize the Muslim contribution to Indian music, but also project Islam as intolerant. She says, “the implication was that Alladiya Khan was not a ‘real’ Muslim but came from a Brahmin family that had been coerced into conversion” (2005:168-74, 298 n.86). Subramanian comments, “The intervention of nationalism and the politics of cultural syncretism espoused by the nation state complicated the issue [of the ambiguity of the faith of Muslim musicians during an earlier period] even further—elaborate rituals that celebrated the idea of the Muslim ustad as the perfect subject embodying an official syncretism that had to be expressed by obligatory celebrations of Hindu divinities [Saraswati] and the deployment of symbolic language, mean that the Muslim ustad’s personal faith was a matter of no consequence. Note the way that obituaries to Bismillah Khan talk about his

claimed, the celebration of these Muslim musicians has become an indirect advertisement for Hindu nationalism “without naming it as such” (ibid.:173). Gauri Viswanathan forwarded an even more damning critique of the secularist narrative that is built into the claim to past conversions. In contrast to Gottschalk’s idea that conversion narratives, whatever their stripes, highlight the shared kinship of *Indian* Muslims and Hindus, Vishwanathan argued that they instead provide Hindu nationalists with the language of difference needed to define the Indian Muslim as a traitor to the nation, and even justify violence against them to right past wrongs (1996).²⁷⁹

Taking the faith-crossing practices of Muslims to be an affirmation of India’s cultural syncretism (a la Gottschalk) may appear to contradict or disallow us from acknowledging the accommodationalist perspective explored above. By admitting to a shared history and composite culture among Indian Muslims and Hindus, are we somehow denying the fact that such practices are also used as strategic accommodations? Both Deodhar and Shankar, for instance, failed to understand Allauddin Khan’s “syncretism” in light of the anti-Muslim prejudice that they both nevertheless claimed that he faced! Likewise, by revealing the strategic utility of

indispensable association with Varanasi and about his steadfast devotion to Saraswati, a qualification carrying with it all the resonances of being a good secular Muslim” (Subramanian 2006b:4649).

²⁷⁹ In other words, the claim that former Hindus were forcibly converted to Islam is used by Hindu nationalist groups to justify retaliation, as well as movements for re-Hinduization: “In the name of redressing the alleged ‘past wrongs and injustices’ perpetrated on the contemporaneous Hindus by their ‘medieval’ Muslim conquerors, the Hindutva-vadi particularly target the minority Muslim community. The litany of those ‘medieval’ Muslim ‘sins’, in the eyes of today’s Hindutva-vadi is long, and ranged from alleged discriminatory attitudes and measures, forced conversions, temple desecrations and destructions, construction of mosques at times on those ruined temples, to outright executions and slaughters” (ibid.:1996).

Hindu affectations, are we overdetermining these practices and denying a broader valence?

I do not believe these perspectives (critical and celebratory) to be exclusive. Even Janaki Bakhle and Lakshmi Subramanian, the two scholars who have been the most trenchant in their critique of secularism in the realm of music, nevertheless recognized that Muslim participation in Hindu religiosity can, and should in some cases, be considered as a “continuation of an earlier performative practice” (Bakhle 2005:174). The institutionalization of Saraswati worship by many Muslim musicians, Subramanian similarly argued, beyond serving as a survival strategy, also indicates “the tenacity of the community in keeping alive a memory and shared cultural inheritance of shared meanings” (2006b:4650). Both authors have further noted that these faith-crossing practices today have a renewed critical function in challenging the limited and singular notion of religious and national identity.²⁸⁰ It was for this reason that Bakhle insisted on maintaining the concept of secularism, though not without attending to its problematic history and possibility of abuse.²⁸¹ This, in fact, is similar to the argument I wished to make regarding the narrative of Muslim

²⁸⁰ “The experience of participating in a practice that was truly mixed—in terms of language, metaphor and melody and deployment—meant that the issue of a singular identity became problematic and even undesirable (Subramanian 2006b:4650). “Such claims basically constituted a personal expression of their ambivalent location within mainstream Islam and within the pre-modern, colonial and modern state *as well as* being an expression of shared sentiment that transcended limited categories of modern religious identity” (ibid.:4649). Using the example of Abdul Karim Khan, Bakhle noted that such acts can be read as a conscious resistance to “the exclusionary dictates of nationalism” (Bakhle 2005:174).

²⁸¹ “The term ‘secularism’ as I defend it in this essay stands for the combination of substantive religious pluralism with critical inquiry.... For all its failures, and without denying the colonial history and origins of secularism as a tool of state ideology, I will suggest that there is much in the concept of the secular that militates against its being altogether jettisoned” (2008:259).

dominance: not to deny the fact that Muslims indeed made up a majority, or that music indeed resided within their families, and that this indeed may have been due to the practice of endogamy, all points that Daniel Neuman argued. The problem is that these are also all points that have a history of colonial and reformist abuse, used as the bases for anti-Muslim prejudice. Without attending to them, we let those pasts speak through our use of the terms “dominance,” “monopoly” and “jealously guarded” to apply to Muslims, even if that is not what is intended.

Defending Secularism

In his review of Bakhle’s book, Stephen Slawek rejected the idea that Muslim musicians could be “appeasing” Hindus by taking on Hindu practices. In defense, he stressed the fact that Bismillah Khan’s connection with the Vishwanath temple of Banaras was part of a long-standing “practice of musicians engaging with sacred ritual regardless of religion” (2007:510). As I have already pointed out, however, Bakhle did not fail to notice the existence and importance of traditions in which Muslims participate in Hindu religious ritual as performers. Bakhle’s point, however, was that those traditions are given new meaning in the vastly reconfigured context of post-Independent India—even while retaining something of their previous context and meaning. Though Bakhle acknowledged the importance that such traditions have in pointing to the possibility of pluralism, she did not believe that this was the only way, or always the most accurate way, in which to view them.

Slawek's criticism of Bakhle was not limited to her alleged failure to acknowledge the pluralistic practices of musicians, however. Accordingly, Slawek saw her goal to have been no less than the elimination of the entire category of religion all together, thus imputing a Western style secularism in which religion is separate, not plural. It is true that Bakhle did view claims to the "inextricability between music and the religion of the nation of 'Hindoos'" as a colonial invention stemming in particular from William Jones (2005:11, 51-52, 95), and this might appear to some that Bakhle was indirectly advocating for a more authentic, pre-colonial, religion-free music. However, such an understanding of Bakhle's argument would, I suggest, be incorrect. As I read it, Bakhle's criticism of the connection between music and religion did not seek to abolish religion. Instead it sought to abolish the notion that Indian music could only be religious, and that too, only one religion, Hindu. It was the "inextricability" between music and this narrow, non-pluralized conception of religion that served as her target. As she stated elsewhere, this conception of religion, as represented by Paluskar's "programmatic agenda for his schools, is far from tolerant and reveals, instead, a deeply recidivist politics" (2008:276).

INVENTING A HINDU PAST

Slawek's criticism of Bakhle's book is partly instructive for revealing the limited notions of Hindu and Muslim identity that sometimes underlies scholarly accounts of music's past. The chief fault that Slawek found with Bakhle's work is the

“rather simplistic picture she paints of Muslim loss and Hindu gain as the raga tradition was classicized throughout the twentieth century” (ibid.).²⁸² While it might be argued that Bakhle does not do much to complicate the singularity of these identities, even while she insists on there being more to the story of Hindustani music’s modernization than the shift from Muslim to Hindu, this is not the simplicity to which Slawek refers. Indeed, Slawek had no problem characterizing the twentieth-century shift as moving from Muslim to Hindu and in response to the twentieth-century classicization of music. He stated, for example, that, “the demographics of Indian music moved from a population of musicians in the late nineteenth century in which a majority was Muslim to a population in the late twentieth century with a Hindu majority” (ibid.:507). Instead, Slawek deemed Bakhle’s narrative simplistic for the fact that she failed to acknowledge that Hindus originally dominated the tradition before Muslims. “If one deepens one’s historical field of vision,” he suggested, “an earlier period (up through the sixteenth century) in which a majority of musicians engaged with raga-based music were Hindu would also come into focus, hence my preference for accepting the twentieth century as a period of musical re-Hinduization” (ibid.:507–508).

Leaving aside the question of the actual or practical continuity between the music performed in the Mughal courts of the sixteenth century and the “raga-based” music performed in the centuries prior (how many is not indicated), the issue of what,

²⁸² In addition, Slawek faults Bakhle for her: “emphasis on communal difference”; “her enthusiasm in emphasizing the character flaws in her two main subjects,” Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande and Vishnu Digambar Paluskar; and her purported desire, noted earlier, to sever Hindustani music from its religious base.

in fact, constituted a “Hindu” identity during these prior centuries is in need of being problematized. Scholars of Indian religion have long contested the notion of a monolithic “Hindu” identity, both presently and especially historically. Of course, this type of contestation has itself been contested by other scholars as originating with Western Orientalists and their Indological successors, those who pointed to Hinduism’s fluidity as a way of distinguishing it (and perhaps devaluing it) from other world religions (Smith 1998). However, the contestation of Hindu identity referred to here is more recent manifestation of this narrative. It posits that colonial policies of enumeration and politicization led to a more distinct, cohesive and modern sense of religious identity than had previously existed.²⁸³ In her presidential address to the Association for Asian Studies in 1995, Barbara Metcalf claimed that it was the “excavation of the contingent nature of such identities [specifically as “nation, caste, language and above all religion”] that distinguishes recent scholarly work from the positions often taken by the older histories...” (1995:954). An example of such work, though not cited in Metcalf’s bibliography, is Daniel Gold’s essay, “Organized Hinduisms (1991), in which Gold summarized the contingent understanding of Hindu identity that we find missing in claim’s to music’s Hindu, pre-Muslim past:

²⁸³ Scholars who have contributed to this notion include Wilfred Cantwell Smith (1963), P.J. Marshal (1970), J.T. O’Connell (1973), James Laine (1983), Romila Thapar (1985, 1989 and 1991), Ronald Inden (1986 and 1990), Robert Frykenberg (1989), Brian K. Smith’s earlier work (1989), Heinrich von Stietencron (1989 and 1995), John Stratton Hawley (1991), Daniel Gold (1991), Christopher Fuller (1992:283 particularly his chapter on “Hinduism and Nationalism”), Carl Ernst (1992), Vasudha Dalmia (1995), David Ludden (1996:6-7), Christophe Jaffrelot, Richard King (1999a and b), Geoffrey A. Oddie (2003), Gauri Viswanathan (2003), Axel Michaels (2003), John Hawley and Vasudha Narayan (2006), among many others.

Hindus—with their many castes and subcastes living in various distinctive regions of the subcontinent—have historically been aware of themselves, not as a single religious group, but as many discrete communities living together in various states of domination, cooperation, and distanced alienation. The advent of Islam, Christianity, and a distinct Sikh identity complicated matters, but the Hindu perspective of separate communities could still contain these large traditions in all their varieties. With the establishment of British colonial rule in the nineteenth century, however, the perspectives of the native Indian communities on both themselves and one another began to change. (1991:535)

In Gold's analysis, it was the colonial state that brought about a shift towards a unified "Hinduism" constructed in relation to its religious others, and it is this idea that has largely held sway in the scholarly literature. In fact, beyond simply unifying Hinduism, "Western colonials" are credited with importing to South Asia the very notion of religion itself, meaning the idea that one could belong to a religion "in the same way one belongs to a club" (Laine 2000:200).

The idea that British colonialists "invented" Hinduism (or even the concept of a monolithic religion) has certainly had its fair share of critics.²⁸⁴ However, even one of the most publicized of these, David Lorenzen, provided some historical limits to the concept, claiming that "Hindus developed a consciousness of a shared religious

²⁸⁴ This includes the work of Lawrence Babb (1986), Brian K. Smith (1989), Wendy Doniger (1991), Sheldon Pollock (1993), Dermont Killingley (1993), Peter van der Veer (1994), John Rogers (1994), Cythia Talbot (1995), David Lorenzen (1999), and Brian K. Pennington (2005) among others.

identity” only between 1200 and 1500 AD (1999:631). As evidence, he pointed to contemporaneous poems of Kabir, Eknath, and Ramanandi Anantadas, which he claimed, “establishes a Hindu identity through the process of mutual self-definition with a contrasting Muslim other” (ibid.:648). In contrast to these vernacular texts, Sanskrit literature, Lorenzen observed, refused to engage in any religious comparison, and thus imposed a kind of “cultural isolation” on itself. It is perhaps for this reason, Lorenzen suggested, that scholars who have focused mostly on the Sanskrit literature have been misled into assuming that Hindus before 1800 lacked a “contrastive awareness of their own religious identity” (ibid.). In response to Lorenzen, we might claim that the existence of a “Hindu conscious” prior to 1800 does not mean that the character of this consciousness has remained the same since its inception. As Sudhir Kakar pointed out, “[t]he self-consciousness of being a Hindu today is not of the same order as at other times in India’s history” (1996:215).

The point in referencing this vast literature on the construction or invention of Hinduism is not to comprehensively review its various arguments and counter-arguments.²⁸⁵ Rather, I wish to suggest simply that greater care be taken in formulating our understanding of music’s “Muslim” past, its “Hindu” present, and particularly its “Hindu” pre-Muslim past. The failure to do so has led to a common understanding that the Hindustani music tradition was simply “Hindu” before it was

²⁸⁵ For excellent overviews of the issue, see Dube (1998), Sharma (2002), Llewellyn (2006), Bloch et al. (2010) and Gottschalk (2012).

“Muslim.” As a consequence of this understanding, the “Muslim” past is sometimes dismissed as a tangent.²⁸⁶

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have attempted to draw out the contingent nature of Muslim and Hindu identities in the context of Hindustani music’s history and hold this up to the more rigid reflections of musicians’ identity that have many a time been assumed by ethnomusicologists. That the Muslim dominance of music was sandwiched in between two equally conscious Hindu dominances, one ancient, the other modern; that the Muslims who did dominate were really just reluctant converts from Hinduism; and that reformist and colonial writers were unquestionably criticizing Muslims when they lambasted ustads and hereditary professionals, all impute a ridged sense of religious identity that contradicts much lived experience. Continuing to challenge the received notions of Muslim musicians, we now turn towards a more specific account of the Ashtewale family’s experience of learning from Muslim musicians.

²⁸⁶ Max Katz made a similar observation: “Slawek dismisses the gravity of the notion of a Hindu takeover of Hindustani music by referring to ‘an earlier period (up through the sixteenth century) in which a majority of musicians engaged with raga-based music were Hindu’” (2010:507).

6. HINDU-MUSLIM DISCIPLESHIP

INTRODUCTION

In the early hours of a dark winter morning, Mugalū Khān woke up his two young sons Murād and Imdād with the whack of a stick. They knew the routine; plunging their tired hands into a freezing pot of cold water, they waited until numbness set in. Then they picked up their instruments and began to play. They continued for four rigorous hours, knowing that if they stopped or slowed down, they would face the firm hand of their father. But when it was over, Mugalū Khan sat them on his lap and asked affectionately, “Now what will you like to eat, *beṭā* [son]?” Imdad cried, “*gulāb jāmun!*” Murad yelled, “*jalebī!*” And fresh kilos of each were brought from the market.²⁸⁷

In training his own children, Mugalū Khan is said to have skillfully blended the discipline of a guru with the love of a father. We know little, however, about how he taught students outside his immediate family. Ragunāth-rāv Āṣṭewāle, better known as Dādā Sāheb, was one of those students. He was also the first member of the Ashtewale family to take up music as a practice. In addition to being Mugalū Khan’s student, he was also his patron and contemporary. It is likely, then, that they shared a much more ambiguous relationship than the one Mugalū Khan shared with his own sons.

²⁸⁷ This story was narrated to me by Ānand Āṣṭewāle, who claimed to have heard it from his father, who claimed to have heard it from Murad Khan (interview, 12 August 2009). Both gulab jamun and jalebi are fried desserts, the former made from milk solids, and the latter from wheat flour.

Whatever Mugalu's Khan's methods were for teaching his patron, the results were clear, at least according to oral history: Dada Saheb was a devoted student, and he served his Muslim guru with great respect. Thus, when Mugalu Khan sent his son Murad to learn *bīn* from Bande Ālī Khān in Indore, Dada Saheb followed suit, inviting Bande Ali to Ujjain to teach his own son, Kṛṣṇa-rāv or Nānā Sāheb. When Nana Saheb later had two sons, Dhunḍirāj and Viśvanāth, he put them under Murad Khan's tutelage. And when Dhunḍiraj's grandson Prakāś decided to follow the sitarist Abdul Halīm Jaffer Khān to Bombay in the late 1960s, he did so knowing that Abdul Halim had discipular connections with the same Muslim teachers of his ancestors. Thus a tradition of Muslim-Hindu discipleship developed over several generations in which Ashtewale family members continued to learn from the descendants and/or students of the same Muslim masters. This history is laid out in Figure 1.

This chapter explores the contours of the relationship that Ashtewale family members shared with the Muslim musicians from whom they learned. On the broadest level, it aims to illustrate the assumption upon which the critique of the Muslim dominance narrative forwarded in the Chapter Four is based: that "Muslim" musicians, despite constituting a majority in Indian music's past, were not, as is so often claimed, "dominating" or jealous in their approach to teaching; that it was in fact due to the openness of these musicians to teaching outside their families that a shift to a Hindu majority was even made possible.

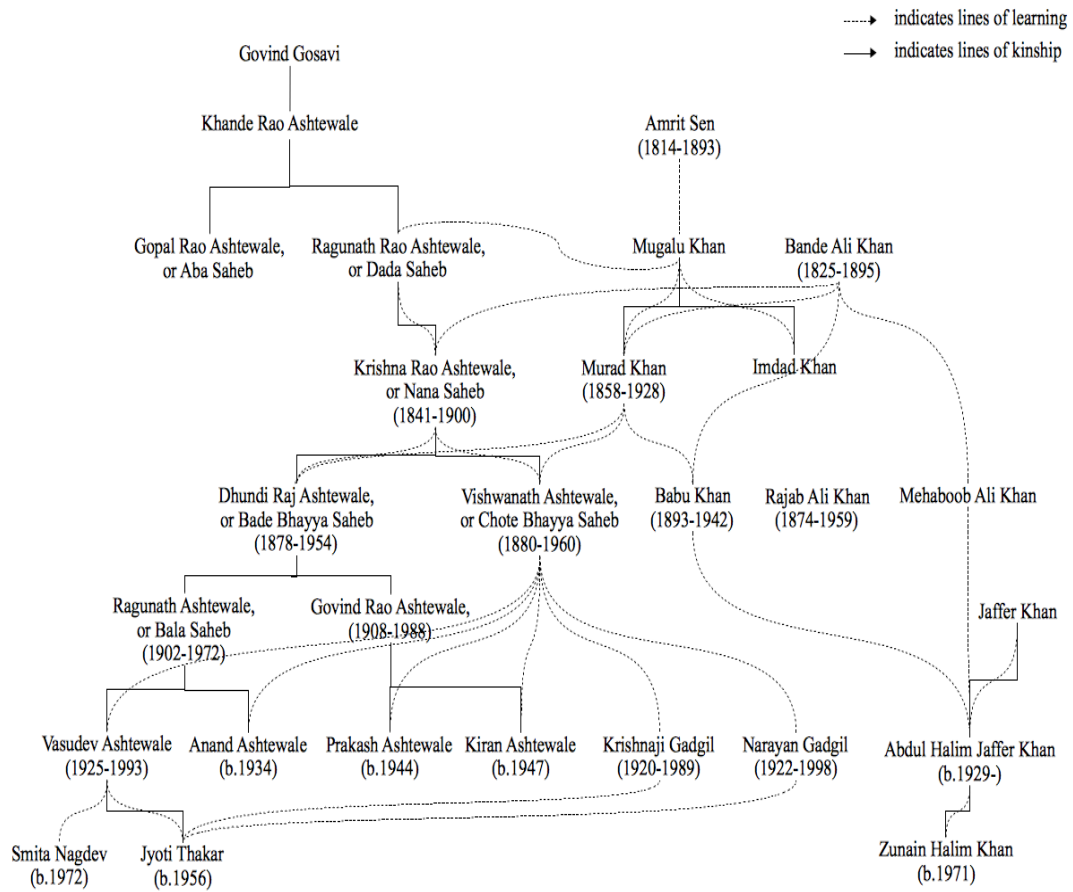


Figure 1 History of discipleship in the Ashtewale family

The Ashtewales' path to music was paved by their lavish patronage, and this fact has undoubtedly conditioned, as well as occasioned, the relationship they shared

with their teachers.²⁸⁸ Though scholars have long acknowledged the importance of aristocratic discipleship in Hindustani music (e.g., Owens 1987:164; Greig 1987:111–128), no detailed historical account of it within a particular family or families exist, at least to my knowledge. Even Kobayashi, who aimed to show that hereditary musicians, despite what reformists claimed about them, were long teaching outside their families, avowedly chose to bypass this category of aristocratic discipleship all together for the reason that it “existed before the reform” (2003:174). Indeed, the reform (and its critique) has generally served to delimit the scope of scholarly investigations of non-hereditary musicianship in general, as I have suggested in the introduction. However, if the Ashtewale story tells us anything, it is that traditions of aristocratic discipleship provided much of the ground for a later-day interest in music among (initially) non-hereditary families. Some scholars have noted the importance of aristocratic discipleship in prefiguring middle-class and nationalist interest in music (e.g., Manuel 1989:59–60; Trasoff 1999:6–7, 111–135). This chapter and, indeed, this dissertation as a whole, builds upon those observations by providing an in depth account of one family whose participation in aristocratic discipleship prefigured nationalist interest in music.

An abiding concern running through this chapter is the way that the Ashtewales’ position as patrons served to both distance them from, and bring them

²⁸⁸ It should be noted that the openness of Muslim musicians to teaching outside their families was not restricted to those Hindus who could afford to pay them. As we have seen in previous chapters, particularly the introduction, many Brahmans from humble backgrounds successfully apprenticed with Muslim hereditary professionals and went on to become professionals themselves.

closer to, their Muslim teachers.²⁸⁹ The fact that Muslim musicians stayed with the family for extended periods of time, ate food prepared by them, and received a high degree of respect and service points to some of the more obvious ways in which social distances between these communities were transcended. However, even within this sphere of cohabitation, discrete boundaries of acceptability were also maintained. Kinship relations did not cross caste lines as music did, for example. Though the Ashtewales apprenticed themselves to Muslim teachers, they never became their sons-in-law or nephews. By contrast, among the musicians who taught the family, lines of musical and biological descent were often brought together, resulting in a broad social cohesiveness that, in turn, reinforced a musical cohesiveness (Silver 1976:48). These socially derived musical benefits were not available to the Ashtewales.

Another potentially divisive sphere that loomed large in the history of the Ashtewale family was politics. While Vishwanath Ashtewale or Choṭe Bhaiyā Sāheb (1880–1960) was bringing acclaim to the family through his performances, his brother Dhundiraj Ashtewale or Baḍe Bhaiyā Sāheb (1878–1954) was earning a name for himself as a member of one of the India’s most infamous Hindu nationalist organizations, the Rāṣṭrīya Svayam-sevak Saṅgh (RSS) or National Volunteer Corps. In the buildup to India’s independence, this professed non-political organization sought to build Hindu solidarity at the grassroots level. Their vision of the nation’s

²⁸⁹ Several scholars, including Qureshi (2000:31, 2002:92-98); Brown (2007:74, 82); Erdman (1978:343), and others have discussed the ambiguous space of aristocratic discipleship for both the patron and the performer.

“body-politic,” however, as represented by the key texts of their leaders, excluded all those who failed to profess allegiance to a Hindu *dharm*, “the complex of religious and social obligations which a devout Hindu is required to fulfil” (McGregor; see also Laine 2000, 2003 for a discussion of this term). In particular, this meant Muslims and Christians. How the family’s participation in music, which necessitated a considerable amount of inter-communal amity, related to their participation in a more narrow politics, is an issue raised herein.

During the nationalist movement to reform music, religion grew to become a potentially polarizing force. In particular, the division between what reformers saw as the primary source of musical authority (ancient and medieval treatises) and those who they saw as custodians, or worse, usurpers, of the tradition (contemporary performers), “create[d] a separation between a Hindu ‘us’ and a Muslim ‘them’” (Bakhle 2005:134). Bhaiya Saheb Ashtewale was a deeply religious person. At the same time, he was also a devoted disciple of his Muslim teacher, Murad Khan. For Bhaiya Saheb, who was not associated with the reform, these two devotions, one to a religious practices described as “Hindu,” and the other to a teacher who was Muslim, proved to be more synergistic than antagonistic. The unique way in which he infused religion into his musical practice, which I explore below, allows us to imagine religion’s connection to music beyond reformist discourses.

Class is perhaps the most obvious axis along which the Ashtewales might be distinguished from their Muslim teachers. As *jāhgīrdār*-s or grantholders,²⁹⁰ the

²⁹⁰ A “jahgir” (literally, “taking or occupying [*gir*] a place or position [*ja*]”) is a tenure granted to

family was known to have wielded a certain amount of upper-class conceit. In music, this conceit was expressed, so it is believed, through their reluctance to perform for public audiences, their repulsion of recording and other commercializing influences, and their rejection of flashy virtuosity in favor of refined delicacy. Refusing to perform, record or play to the crowd may have been one way of maintaining social distance from the professional service class whom they patronized. As jahgirdars, they could afford to appeal to their own whims and fancies, and not be subject to the requirements of a professional career or the whims of their own patrons.

Another way of understanding the family's elitism, however, is to see it as existing symbiotically with the equally proud manner in which their Muslim teachers approached their profession. It is often noted, for example, that traditional ustads of the early twentieth century would sometimes refuse to record their music, not simply because of some irrational fear that talking machines would render their voices mute,²⁹¹ but also because they did not want their esteemed music to be unfavorably de-contextualized by being played in casual public settings such as restaurants, hotels or even in the street. The reluctance of traditional musicians to record or otherwise share their music, however, is generally not understood as an expression of anti-

individuals on behalf of the state to collect (and retain) public revenues of a given district, and administer some aspects of local government (Wilson [1855] 1968). A jahgir-*dar* is literally one who possesses or holds a jahgir. Though the family claims to have been jahgirdars, I have found no evidence to suggest they ever held this type of tenure. They did, of course, hold other claims to public revenue (see chapters one and two). Instead, the family's use of the term jahgirdar is generally taken by them (and, I believe by the culture more generally) to mean, "upper-class."

²⁹¹ I have yet to see convincing evidence of this purported fear of musicians, and suspect that it was instead a way that musicians' more legitimate concerns, such as their recordings being misattributed, were rendered in an anti-modern voice.

popular elitism. Instead, it is taken as evidence for their orthodox, anti-modern resistance to change. This “old school” position was seen to be in conflict with the nationalist position that music was the property of the (Hindu) people, and not individual families. For the traditional ustad, however, whose music was both a matter of sustenance and honor, it is easy to see why a retreat from the public might have been desirable.

What I am suggesting here is that the conceit of both the Ashtewales and their ustad, though occasioned by different factors, was mutually reinforcing. It thus offers us a way of connecting rather than distancing the state of being a jahgirdar (*jāhgīrdārī*) and the state of being an ustad (*ustādī*).²⁹² Both parties, for instance, would have had equal opportunity to use the common pejorative Hindi expression, “should I play my bin before a water buffalo?” (*bhains ke sāmne bīn bajāye?*), the bin being an esoteric and highly sophisticated instrument, and the water buffalo being considered even more dull witted than the common cow).²⁹³ I consider whether certain aspects of the Ashtewales’ jahgirdari were modeled on the ustadi of their teachers or vice versa, but in either case, my point is to note the unexpected resonances between the pride of being a jahgirdar and the righteousness of being an ustad.

What I hope to show, in sum, is that Hindu-Muslim discipleship offered opportunities for building competencies beyond just music. Discipleship was a

²⁹² I derive these terms from Brian Silver’s consideration of “the different musical and social factors which may combine in varying formulae to constitute *ustādī*” (1976:28).

²⁹³ This phrase may be compared to the English, “to cast pearls before swine.”

transformative space, in which attitudes, morals, and ethics—nonetheless embodied in the moment of playing and performance—could be developed in mutual and symbiotic ways.²⁹⁴ As such, traditions of inter-communal discipleship afford us the important opportunity to rethink the assumption that Muslim and Hindu epistemologies are exclusive of each other, homogeneous within themselves, or unchanging and primordial. At a time when social-cultural exchange between Hindus and Muslims has become increasingly rarified, stories of Hindu-Muslim discipleship provide important avenues for shifting our perspectives.

This chapter begins by examining the first generation of Ashtewales who learned from Muslim teachers and precedes chronologically. Though there are currently six generations of sitarists in the family beginning with Rangunath Rao (or Dada Saheb), I consider only the first three generations here, ending with Vishwanath or Bhaiya Saheb, as they were the only ones who learned substantially from Muslim teachers. The three generations that follow Bhaiya Saheb (and even to some extent Bhaiya Saheb himself) are significant for demonstrating the increasing professionalization of music in the family, the connection of different family members to modern forms of musical patronage and dissemination, and the changing role of women performers within the family. However, these issues, important as they are, lay beyond the narrower purview of this dissertation on the circumstances and motivations that brought this Brahman family to music before nationalism, and the

²⁹⁴ In making this formulation I have been inspired by Matthew Rahaim's (2012) study of the gestures of Hindustani vocalists.

contour of the relationship that the family had with the Muslim teachers who facilitated their interest. Nevertheless, much of the information in this chapter has been taken from interviews I conducted with the two most recent generations of family members, particularly Anand Ashtewale (b.1934), Prakash Ashtewale (b.1944), Kirin Ashtewale (b.1947), and Jyoti Thakar (Mangala Ashtewale prior to marriage) (b.1956), my own teacher.

THE FIRST GENERATION: RAGUNĀTH-RĀV

Following the receipt of their hereditary pension in 1818, the Ashtewale family migrated from the rural town of Āṣṭa to the urban *Śaiv* (devotees of Lord Śiva) pilgrimage center of Ujjain (see Chapter One). There, in the area of Dānī Darvāzā and among the city's oldest temples and wealthiest families, they constructed a sprawling mansion that served as the family seat, and also a renowned place where musicians and artists from all over North India received both patronage and respect (Mirikar 1994).

Ragunath Rao or Dada Saheb was the first to be born into the family's riches in Ujjain. He was also the first to take up the practice of music following his fateful meeting with sitar player Mugalu Khan one morning under a bridge (see Chapter Two). Other than these two observations, however, we know nothing about Dada Saheb. Even the fact that he played sitar is disputed by some sources, which portray him more as patron than a musician.²⁹⁵

²⁹⁵ In *Sitar Marg* (1937), Sripada Bandyopadhyaya maintains that it was Dada Saheb's son, Nana Saheb, who first learned music from Mugalu Khan. Supporting this, Mirikar described Dada Saheb

Similarly, we have little information about Dada Saheb’s Muslim teacher, Mugalu Khan.²⁹⁶ We know that he hailed from Jāvṛā, a small princely state about seventy miles northwest of Ujjain, which was carved out of the settlement of Central India by John Malcom in 1818 (see Chapter One). It is said that he learned sitar from the *seniyā* (descended from the famed musician of Akbar’s court, Tān-sen, discussed in Chapter Five) sitarist, Amritsen (1814–1893) (Deodhar 1993:82), who resided at the court of Jhajjar near Delhi during the early nineteenth century (Miner 1993:105). Most of all, however, Mugalu Khan is known as the father of Murad Khan (1858–1928), the bin and sitar player who went on to gain much notoriety in Maharashtra as both a performer and teacher, particularly among the Brahman elite.²⁹⁷

only as a well-known *patron* of music, not as a musician himself (1994:4). However, several other sources have asserted that Dada Saheb was, to the contrary, a sitar player. In his interviews with me, Anand Ashtewale repeatedly stressed that Dada Saheb learned from Mugalu Khan (interview, 12 August 2009). In the book *Sitar Malika*, Bhagwat Saran Sharma ([1966] 1995:213) also claimed that Nana Saheb learned to play sitar from his father. This is further echoed in Laxmi Narayan Garg’s *Hamare Sangeet Ratna* [Our Musical Gems] (1984:494).

²⁹⁶ V.H. Khan (1959:?) briefly mentioned one “Muglu Khan,” who was employed for “the Divan Gaekwad in Kolhapur” and who was also the father of the vocalist Rajjab ĀlĀ Khān (1874–1959). However, this is likely to have been a different Mugalu Khan. Deodhar (1993:163) claimed that Rajjab Ali Khan’s father (no name) was a student of Mubārak Ālī Khān, son of Baḍe Muhammad Khān, and born in the city of Devās. However, the liner notes of Rajjab Ali’s 1981 LP featuring ragas Jaunpur and Bāgeśrī (Gramophone Company of India Ltd.) state that he was born in Narsinhgarh. In either case, we know that Murad Khan’s father was from Javra, not Dewas or Narsinhgarh, and that his teacher was Amrit Sen.

²⁹⁷ Anand Ashtewale maintains that Mugalu Khan also had a second son, Imdad Khan, who features in the story that was used to open this chapter. However, I have been unable to find any mention of a second son for Mugalu Khan or a brother from Murad Khan in the standard biographical surveys. Apart from the story of him told above, Anand Ashtewale told me another story, though less admirable: that Imdad Khan was once found dead in a horse stable belonging to the Ashtewale family after he apparently sought shelter there on a particularly cold night during which he was also heavily intoxicated (interview, 18 December 2000).

THE SECOND GENERATION: KṚṢṆNA-RĀV

Dada Saheb's son Krishna Rao or Nana Saheb (1841-1900), shown in Figure 2, grew up amidst the coming and going of some of the greatest ustads of his time. In addition to learning from his father, Nana Saheb also learned from these very ustads, some of who stayed with the family for months on end. In time, Nana Saheb, too, became counted "among India's most eminent sitar players" (Sharma [1966] 1995:213; see also Srimal 1973:62; Bandyopadhyaya [1937] 1957; Garg 1984:483–484). Nana Saheb was thus the first of the Ashtewales to earn a name as a great musician.

In addition to being known as skilled as a musician, Nana Saheb was also renowned for being a generous patron, someone who would feed "a hundred people in a single sitting" (Anand Ashtewale, interview, 12 August 2009). Indeed, it was under Nana Saheb that the wealth of the family came to a peak. In addition to the income they received from their hereditary pension, the family had also acquired land, some in the immediate vicinity of their home and some in the surrounding villages, from which they received payment. And under Gwalior's ruler, Mādhav-rāv Sindhia II (r.1886–1925), Nana Saheb was also appointed as district tax collector (*tehsildār*), a position that must have paid him handsomely.²⁹⁸ Anand Ashtewale described how Nana Saheb, one of Ujjain's biggest jahgirdars, would often move about on horseback.

²⁹⁸ I have been unable to locate any documentary evidence of Nana Saheb's alleged former designation as tehsildar. This assertion comes from both Anand Ashtewale and Nana Saheb's grand-daughter, Bakula Bāi Paiṭhankar (interview with Smita Nagdev, n.d.).



Figure 2 Ragunāth-rāv Khaṇḍe-rāv Āṣṭewāle or Dādā Sāheb

Not surprisingly, the family’s rising wealth went hand-in-hand with their increasing participation in music. Enabled by his financial success, Nana Saheb engaged the musicians who came to his home in a manner befitting a Mughal prince. In addition to according them great respect, he also granted them shawls, turbans, and treated them to lavish feasts. In return, he acquired many musical teachings (ibid.). B.S. Sharma (1966:213) describes, for example, how Nana Saheb’s “big heart” and

“sweet nature” attracted “knowledgeable musicians” who “were continuously coming to stay in his home.” “Treating these great musicians of the time with a fitting respect,” he continued, “the tactful Nana Sahab was able to incorporate their specialties into his own playing” (ibid).

Bande Ālī Khān

One of the musicians who came to stay with Nana Saheb and to provide musical instruction was the legendary bin player from Indore, Bande Ali Khan (1826-1890).²⁹⁹ Bande Ali had also been teaching Mugalu Khan’s son, Murad Khan, during this time. Nana Saheb and Murad Khan were therefore *guru bhāī-s* (disciple-brothers), and it was through this mutual discipleship with Bande Ali that a connection between the Ashtewale family and Mugalu Khan’s family continued for a second generation.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁹ In addition to Bande Ali, another musician said to have spent time at the Ashtewale home was Rāmākṛṣṇa-buvā Vajhe (d. 1945), commonly spelled Vaze, one of the first Maharashtrian Brahmans of the Gwalior gharana and disciple of Haddu Khan (see Introduction). Deodhar (1993:123) provided a quotation from Vaze wherein Vaze not only claimed to have stayed with Nana Saheb in Ujjain, but also, interestingly, to have traveled with him to Banaras where Nana Saheb apparently joined Vishnupant Chhatre’s circus! (Deodhar 123). Vishnupant Chhatre (d.1905), who Deodhar (ibid.:283–284) also discusses, was another Maharashtrian Brahman who learned with Haddu Khan. He is famous for being one of the first Indian (in the 1870s) to start a circus based on the European model, albeit one that apparently included classical musicians. Other than this quote from Vaze, I have been unable to find any evidence that Nana Saheb was ever a part of Chhatre’s circus.

³⁰⁰ Anand Ashtewale, Shripad Mirikar (1994), B.S. Sharma (213) and Garg (1984:494) all report that Nana Saheb learned from Bande Ali Khan. Z.M. Dagar even apparently identified “Bhaiyasaheb Ashtiwale from Ujjain” (Nana Saheb’s son, discussed below) as a *khandar-bani* bin player, or a bin player from the Khandar School or style (*bānī*) to which Bande Ali Khan also belonged (Weismiller 2011). Although no one I interviewed expressed any doubt that Nana Saheb learned bin from Bande Ali, consensus was lacking on how this actually happened. Prakash Ashtewale, for example, expressed doubt about the idea that Bande Ali Khan ever came to the family’s house in Ujjain (interview, 17 January 2008).

Bande Ali Khan is widely considered to have been the most renowned bin player of the nineteenth century (Miner 1993:135–36; Dard Neuman 2004:326). This assessment often rests on both the large number and particularly wide range of musicians whom he is said to have taught or deeply influenced. In addition to Murad Khan, some of his purported disciples included the bin player Wahīd Khān, sitarist Imdād Khān (grandfather of Vilayat Khan), harmonium player Bhaiyā Ganpat-rāv, *khyāl* vocalist Bāskar-buvā Bakhle (Galy and Bruguière), and the sitarists Majid Khān and Latif Khān (Silver 1976; Miner 1993:136). And if Bande Ali's discipular connections did not cross enough musical boundaries, his kinship relations went even further. His mother was the sister of Behrām Khān Dāgar, the seminal figure of the Dagar dhrupad lineage discussed briefly in Chapter One and further below.³⁰¹ Some even claim that Bande Ali learned from Bahram Khan as well (Miner 1993:136 citing Mattoo 1967 and Gupta 1978:37, and Hamilton 1988:25 citing D.K. Mukherjee 1977:145). Others point to Nirmal Shah, the elder son of Sadarang and the teacher of some of the earliest Muslim teachers to the Gwalior gharana, as the source of Bande Ali's training (Shrimal 183; Roy Choudhury 1965:170 in Hamilton 1988:25, and Roy Choudhury 1975:182 in Miner 1993:136). Further aligning Bande Ali with the Dagers is the claim that his daughters married Zakiruddin Khan (1850-1922) and Alla Bande

³⁰¹ Some disagreement exists about the identity of Bande Ali Khan's father. Dan Neuman, quoting Z.M. Dagar, reported that Bande Ali's father was Ghulam Jaffar Sahab, a descendent of Sufi musicians from Barnawa near Saharanpur (1980:268). This is also reiterated in Sharma ([1966] 1995:134) and Widdess (2004:110). Miner, however, claims that Bande Ali's father was the bin player Sadiq Ali Khan (1993:136). Shrimal, moreover, claims he was Rahim Ali Khan, a singer from Delhi (1973:183).

Khan (1853-1927), both grandchildren of Behram Khan Dagar's brother, Haider Ali (Katz 2010:227 citing Sharma 1993:134).

Birādarī

With such a wide sphere of influence across disparate styles, any attempt to define a Bande Ali Khan *gharānā* has understandably remained contested. He is sometimes associated with the Kirānā gharana, largely due to the fact that he was born in that central Indian city (Silver 1976:46; Miner 1993:136). Alternatively, he is claimed by Gvāliyār (commonly, Gwalior), as he is said to have taught Bābā Dīkṣit, one of the gharana's first exponents, and then married a daughter of Hassu Khān, a primary source of Gwalior's musical authority (Deodhar 1993:11; Dard Neuman 2004:326).³⁰² Finally, he is also said to represent the Indore gharana, as he was a chief musician in the court of Tukoḷī-rāv II (r.1844–1886).

Due to this great diversity, one could easily dismiss any alleged connection between Bande Ali Khan and the musicians associated with any of the above gharanas. Brian Silver (1976:48), however, has revealed how musicians associated with Indore, including the khyal vocalist Amīr Khān, the sitarist Vilāyat Khān, the Dāgar dhrupad singers, and of course Bande Ali Khan himself are actually linked through complex relations of marriage, and that this “social cohesiveness” in turn reinforced a “musical cohesiveness through a freer interchange (due to family

³⁰² Dard Neuman (2004:326) claimed that Bande Ali married Hassu Khan's second daughter. Deodhar (1993:11) more specifically claimed he married Haddu Khan's daughter by a second wife. Though married to Hassu Khan's daughter, Bande Ali eventually eloped with one of his own students, Chunna Bai of Dewas. They settled in the city of Pune in Maharashtra and lived there until his death in 1890.

loyalties) of musical materials.” Upon this social basis, then, Silver claims that these widely divergent musicians can, in fact, be subsumed under what is often claimed to be an Indore gharana. However, rather than identifying this cohesion as a “gharana,” Silver, following Dan Neuman (1974:205-06), distinguishes it as a *birādarī* or brotherhood. The Indore gharana, then, was defined by Silver (1976:49) as, “a social group united by common origin and some degree of endogamy, with strong historical links to the state of Indore.”

It is not clear how the Muslim teachers who taught the Ashtewale family shared in Bande Ali Khan’s larger biradari. However, there is some evidence to suggest that some of them shared kinship relations. The most obvious, of course, is the fact that Murad Khan was the son of Mugalu Khan. Though, as noted above, Mugalu Khan was also the name of the father of vocalist Rajjab Ali Khan (1874–1959), this is likely to have been a different person. Rajab Ali Khan was, however, the maternal cousin of another ustad associated with the family, the bin and sitar player Bābu Khān, who was a student of Murad Khan. I discuss him further below. Furthermore, Babu Khan’s nephew and disciple, Abdul Halim Jaffar Khan, also taught Prakash Ashtewale in Bombay for a brief period. I suspect there are other connections as well, but I have yet to discover them.

Unlike their teachers, the Ashtewale family did not share kinship or biradari relations with any of the Muslim musicians with whom they learned. Theirs was strictly a relationship of discipleship and patronage. This was not unusual, of course. As Silver (1976:34) explained, in the world of musical patronage, “ustads were

employed simply to perform for their patron, and to teach him and the members of his family.” As such, the Ashtewale’s connection to their Muslim teachers did not cross beyond the level of discipleship and patronage.

Ustādī and Jāhgīrdārī

This lack of kinship ties between the Ashtewales and their teachers does not, however, diminish the significance of other forms of connection between them. One easily overlooked connection is the conceit that both the Ashtewales as jahgirdars and their teachers as ustads had towards the intrusion of mass audiences and technologies into elite music. This idea will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter. Here, however, I wish to point out yet another way that ustadi and jahgirdari dispositions intersect: their epicureanness.

Nana Saheb, as we have seen, spared no expense in demonstrating his largesse. He excelled at the practice of bestowing both gifts and respect upon the musicians who visited the Ashtewale family home. It was through this practice, a time-honored tradition in the context of court-based music in India, that he came to forge many lasting relationships with the musicians who taught to the family. These kinds of manners, however, were not restricted to the patron class alone, at least the emulation of them. Silver, for example, describing his own teacher Ghulām Hussain, who also incidentally traces his lineage to Bande Ali, shows how many aspects of Hussain’s ustadi style—his fondness for fine dining, elegant cloths, cars and travel—were performed in imitation of the manners and pursuits of his patrons. As Silver

concludes, “[t]raditionally, Muslim musicians, who, before Independence, were associated with the courts of princely states, have tended in many respects to imitate the manners and pursuits of their patrons, the Hindu maharajas and Muslim navabs” (1976:41).

We do not know if Mugal Khan, Murad Khan, Bande Ali Khan or Babu Khan sought to emulate the behavior of their patrons, such as the Ashtewales. However, Silver’s acknowledgement that the traditional ustadi style was formed in dialog with the style of their patrons is incredibly significant, for it identifies yet another sphere of cultural exchange between these two social locations.

Bīn-aṅg

Playing music was, of course, the central cultural practice that connected the Ashtewale patrons to their Muslim teachers, and this link bears itself out through a consideration of the Ashtewale’s musical style. Since the time of Nana Saheb, the family’s musical identity has largely been defined by their claim to play sitar in the bin fashion, something they call *bīn-aṅg* or bin style. Bin-ang, as Anand Kaka described, came to the family through their connection with Bande Ali Khan:

He [Bande Ali Khan] used to play the bin. This is how bin ang came to us. What we play—meend et cetera—this is bin ang and *nom tom* [to yeh bīn bajāte the. īs liye bīn aṅg hamāre yahā ā gāyā. pan hamārā jo bajānā hai, mīṅḍ vagairā, yeh bīn aṅg aur nom tom hai]. (Interview, 12 April 2009)

Anand Kaka distinguishes bin-ang by the use of *meend*³⁰³ and *nomtom*. Meend, as played on the bin and sitar, is a left-handed technique of deflecting the string to produce a continuous and exacting array of slides between specific tones—all from a single fret position. Miner points out the relationship between the physical execution of meend—pulling the string across the fret with the fingers while pressing into the back on the neck with the thumb—and the likely root of the term in the Hindi verb *mīḍnā*, which she defined “‘to crush thoroughly’ or ‘to rub with the hands’” (1997:162). This possible etymology led Miner to suggest that, “[t]he use of the term in vocal music and with non-fretted instruments may postdate its use with the *bīn*” (ibid.162–163). As it is, Miner recognized the more recent adoption of the term in music during the eighteenth century (ibid.:162).

Meend is the primary technique used in “alap,” an unmetered improvisation on a ragas principle features. While alap serves as the initial section of all raga-based performances, it is the principle section of any performance of bin or the vocal style most aligned with bin, dhrupad. Nomtom is the section that follows alap and is distinguished by the use of a regular tempo (though still unmetered; similar to the sitar’s *joṛ* section).

Accompanied by the popping sound of his wife frying mustard seeds in the adjoining kitchen, Anand Ashtewale broke out into a short vocal alap in rag *yaman* to

³⁰³ There is a wide degree of discrepancy in transliterating the term “meend.” McGregor (1993:814) writes *mīṃr*. Miner (1993:38) writes *mīḍ*. Slawek ([1987] 2000:40), whose pronunciation I most agree with, writes *mīṇḍ*.

illustrate what he meant by bin-ang. Using an open “a” vowel, he took his first few tones, ni-re-ga, in a straightforward and unornamented manner. He then touched upon pa with a relatively quick and doubly articulated glide from below. Continuing with this phrase, he descended to ga and then re before repeating the entire phrase again in an abridged manner. Finally, he ended with a series of relatively straightforward, fretted pitches starting on dha (though coming from ni, above) and moving to ni, re and finally sa, which was approached with a glide from below, probably from dha. “This is bin-ang,” he then exclaimed. “This is the effect of dhrupad” [bīn-aṅg hai yeh. yeh dhrupad dhamār ke lagāv huā hai].³⁰⁴

Related to the claim to bin-ang is the fact that almost all the secondary literature available on the Ashtewale family points to their specialization in what is simply described as *vilambit* (literally, “slow”). B.S. Sharma ([1966] 1995:213), for example, wrote that, “[a]ccording to the reports of those who clearly enjoyed Nana Sahab’s sitar playing, there was no person equal to him in the work of vilambit during that time” (See also Garg 1984:494; Miner 1993:158). Today, vilambit is used to distinguish between two styles of *tāl*-based composition (i.e, metered song played to the accompaniment of the *tablā* drums): slow (*vilambit*) and fast (*dрут*). The comments made about Nana Saheb and later Bhaiya Saheb’s vilambit, however, point to an earlier use of the term to refer to a section within the alap itself. For example, the work *Isrāre-Karāmat urf Naghmate-Niāmat* (1908) by the famous mid-nineteenth

³⁰⁴ In his original phrase, Anand Ashtewale coupled the term dhrupad with another term, *dhamār*, which I excised from my translation for ease of reading. Though technically a meter or *tāla* associated with dhrupad and with songs that concern the childhood life of Lord Krishna, dhamar is often coupled with dhrupad to indicate the dhrupad singing style or *gāyākī* in general as against other gayakis, such as *khyāl*. See, for example, Purohit’s (1988:846) use of these terms.

and early-twentieth century musician and intellectual, Karāmatullah Khān (1848–1933), says that “alap has three large sections, *bilampat*, *madh* and *drut*” (Miner 1993:164). Miner’s description of Khan’s account of the “bilambit” section corresponds to what in modern terms is the alap proper, or the first part of the alap prior to the sitar jor of today. Khan’s “madh” section appears to correspond with dhrupad’s nomtom (or today’s sitar jor), and his drut to today’s sitar *jhālā* (ibid.:164–65). Miner cites several other authors, including B.K. Roy Chaudhury and Mushtaq Ali Khan, who similarly describe the first section of alap as vilambit. This use of vilambit and drut to refer to sections of alap makes clear not only the description of the style of the Ashtewales, but also the descriptions of the style of the Muslim musicians who taught them. For example, Pyarelal (1973:183) similarly praises Bande Ali Khan for both his vilambit and for his drut:

Special about his playing was that meend, ghasit, bahalava and other techniques were incorporated into vilambit, and gamak was folded into drut [āpke vādan kī yah viśeṣṭā thī ki mīnḍ, ghasīṭ, bahalāvā ādi kā kām vilambit men caltā thā tathā gamak kā drut men gotā thā].

Bande Ali Khan was a bin player, and though exceptions existed, bin players only played alap at the time and not gat.³⁰⁵ The Ashtewales, too, were known for playing

³⁰⁵ There was a time, however, when alap was not the center of the bin’s repertoire. Dan Neuman (1980:135–36) was one of the first among scholars of Indian music to reveal that prior to the first half of the eighteenth century, the bin was primarily an accompanying instrument. Dard Neuman (2004:319–20) seems to push the bin’s transformation as a solo instrument into the nineteenth century

alap, not gat, whether fast or slow. References to the Ashtewale's vilambit or Bande Ali Khan's drut are therefore likely referring to parts of the alap, which was an important part of bin-ang playing.

Heirloom Instruments

The family's preference for alap and meend is also reflected in the physical structure of the instruments they played. Some of these instruments, including Nana Saheb's bin and even one of Dada Saheb's sitars, are still in the family's possession. In August of 2009, I catalogued these instruments, noting their typological features, and taking detailed measurements and pictures. Most of them had long not been in playable condition. Many lacked frets, tuning pegs, and other essential hardware, leaving behind only a simple, corroding shell. Some of them showed signs of having been partly repaired at some point, and thus not fully original in their parts. However, what remained still communicated valuable information about the kind of music the Ashtewales might have played. It reflected, I argue, a particular aesthetic adopted from their Muslim teachers, and particularly from Bande Ali Khan and his students. Though a detailed consideration of the collection is beyond the scope of this chapter, I briefly discuss some of my findings here.

The most noticeable feature of these instruments was their size. The largest, a sitar, measured 56 inches or 1.42 meters in length. This is close to ten inches shorter than the larger-sized sitars of today—those including the low-pitched “*kharaj*”

by associating it with the rise of the surbahar, the heterodox “surrogate” of the bin.

(corruption of *ṣaḍaj*) or Sa string—which typically measure 47–48 inches (*Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, “sitar,” accessed 3 September 2014). This is also comes close to the length of the particular *surbahār* (an instrument often described as a cross between a sitar and a bin) that Sourindro Mohan Tāgore donated to the Royal Academy of Music in Brussels in 1875. Victor Mahillon, curator of the academy’s instrument collection, described this instrument as measuring 1.5 meters (59 inches) in length in his 1880 catalog (Miner 1997:55). In addition, the width of the soundboard or *tablī* of largest Ashtewale sitar was 14 1/2 inches, and the circumference of its resonating chamber (gourd and *tabli*) measured forty-six inches around.

Figures 3 and 4 show one of these instruments in the hands of Kirin Ashtewale, great-grandson of Nana Saheb, who is said to have played it. Large-sized sitars like these would have been better equipped to accommodate a bin style of playing. In general, a larger size produces longer sustain, which in turn allows for both more extended and slower meend. The wide neck of the instruments would have additionally allowed for a greater range of tones over which meend could be executed. And a long neck (with long strings) would have produced lower tones similar to those associated with the bin.



Figure 3 Kiran Ashtewale with one of Nana Saheb's sitars, front view



Figure 4 Kiran Ashtewale with one of Nana Saheb's sitars, back view

Another notable bin-like feature of these instruments was their lack of sympathetic or *taraf* strings. This was immediately evident from the conspicuous lack of both tuning pegs and tuning-peg holes laterally along the majority of the neck. The face of the neck too lacked holes from which these strings would have emerged, and its slightly convex shape would have made it difficult to accommodate them. Only the sitar that Bhaiya Saheb was known to have played, an early-to-mid-twentieth century model, showed evidence of once having had sympathetic strings; it had holes for tuning pegs along the side of the neck, and holes for strings along the neck's concave face. However, the curious thing about all of these holes was that they had actually been filled in; the tuning peg holes had been filled with wood, and the string holes filled, astonishingly, with mung beans! Thus, whatever capacity this sitar once had for accommodating sympathetic strings, it had long been rendered mute. Figure 7, which I address in the subsection on Bhaiya Saheb, shows Chote Bhaiya Saheb with a non-*tarafdar* sitar that resembles the one that I saw in Anand Kaka's house.

The lack of sympathetic strings on the more historic models of Ashtewale sitars is not in itself surprising. Sympathetic strings became common on sitars only by the twentieth century,³⁰⁶ and most of the Ashtewale instruments were purportedly older than that. Miner (1997:49) speculated that *taraf* strings could have existed on

³⁰⁶ The earliest references to “*tarafdar*” sitars are from the second half of the nineteenth century, G. Baden-Powel's “Handbook of the Manufactures and Arts of the Punjab” of 1872, and Sadiq Ali Khan's *Sarmaya-i 'ishrat* of 1875 (Miner 1997: 46-47).

large sitars as early as the 1830s.³⁰⁷ However, a 1955 instrument catalog from Professor Haji Abdul Karim Ismail Saheb and Sons, instrument makers from Miraj in Maharashtra, which I found in Anand Kaka's possession, offered both tarafdar (with sympathetic strings) and non-tarafdar sitars, thus demonstrating that sympathetics continued to be optional on sitars throughout at least the first half of the twentieth century.³⁰⁸ Nevertheless, when we consider the fact that even a modern tarafdar sitar like Bhaiya Saheb's was deliberately stripped of its sympathetic strings, the general lack of sympathetics on all of the Ashtewale sitars, even the historic models, seems to point to a particular aesthetic choice. In choosing to keep their sitars free of taraf strings, it is likely that the Ashtewales were emulating the bin, which similarly lacked them.

Further situating these sitars within a bin-ang aesthetic is the ubiquitous presence of *cikārī* strings, also known as “drone” or “punctuating” strings, which run along the side the outside of the neck. Due to their unkept state, none of the Ashtewale instruments were actually strung with chikari strings when I saw them. However they all contained tuning-peg holes for chikaris in the proper places laterally along the upper regions of the neck. Like sympathetics, chikari strings were optional

³⁰⁷ As evidence, Miner pointed to a drawing of a large, tarafdar sitar claimed to have belonged to Ghulam Muhammad Khan, the alleged inventor of the surbahar. The drawing, however, is from the 1894 book *Naghmah-i sitar* by Rahim Beg. The surbahar is often described as a cross between a sitar and a bin. However, unlike either of these instruments, the surbahar contained sympathetic strings since its inception in the 1820s. It is for this reason that the sitar is said to have taken its sympathetic strings from this instrument (ibid.:40). Other Indian instruments, however, most notably the sarangi, featured sympathetic string from at least the seventeenth century (Bor 1986/87:56 in Miner 1997:49).

³⁰⁸ Even the earliest reference to these strings on the sitar (though without actually referring to them by name) occurred quite late in Joseph Fetis general history of music from 1869. There he described a sitar he saw at the Paris International Exhibition of 1855 (Miner 1997:37).

on sitars throughout the nineteenth century (Miner 1993:43), and “[t]here is no evidence for the presence of *cikari* (drone) strings on any 18th-century *sitar*” (ibid.: 38). Also like sympathetics, *chikaris* are thought to have come to the sitar via the *surbahar* (Roy Chaudhury 1975:137 cited in Miner 1997:43). The *bin* itself, however, had long contained the functional equivalent of *chickari* strings, called *parasvatantri* or “side string,” from at least the seventeenth century (ibid.). Thus, again we can see that the choice to have sitars with *chickari* strings before they became a standard feature (at least two, sometimes three strings) could reflect a *bin* aesthetic.

Several other aspects of these instruments’ construction and typology point to *bin* influences, including the shape of the frets, the shape of the tuning pegs, the number of strings, and perhaps most importantly, the existence of a hole at the back of the upper part of the neck, which accommodated an extra resonator. Suffice it to say that these were sitars with a clear preference for playing *alap* in the *bin* style.

Sitār-influenced Bīn

In his dissertation, *The Geography of Hindustani Music: The Influence of Region and Regionalism on the North Indian Classical Tradition* (2008), Jeffery Grimes forwarded an alternative and somewhat disparaging evaluation of the *bin-ang* sitar traditions stemming from *Bande Ali Khan* and particularly from his disciple, *Murad Khan*. Citing a criticism that *Deodhar* (1993:80–82) attributed to *Bhatkhande*, Grimes suggested that *Bande Ali Khan* never really taught his *bin* students properly and as a result, they were forced to “fill in the gaps” by drawing on their former

training as sitarists (Grimes 2008:290–291).³⁰⁹ (As mentioned, Murad Khan learned sitar from his father, Mugalu Khan, before learning bin from Bande Ali). Based on these claims, Grimes declared that, “[t]his, then, is the inheretance of the *biinkaar-s* of Maharashtra—not *biin* influenced sitar [meaning an infusion of orthodox knowledge into sitar lineages], but sitar (and Khyal-) influenced *biin* [meaning an adulteration of orthodox knowledge]” (ibid.:291). Referring to a passage from Miner’s book in which she specifically considers several sitar players active in Maharashtra during the nineteenth century, including Nana Saheb and Bhaiya Saheb Ashtewale (1997:156–58), Grimes goes on to dismiss all Maharashtrian instrumentalists as inconsequential:

Beyond the above [sitar and khyal-influenced bin traditions], there is little more to say regarding instrumental music in Maharashtra. Miner references a few sitar players in late 19th century who were active in Maharashtra, again primarily in Bombay and Pune. However, none of the musicians mentioned are remembered as important or influential (in fact most were amateurs or vocalists who pursued sitar more or less as a hobby). (ibid.:292)

I do not fault Grimes for failing to consider Bhaiya Saheb or the disciples of Murad Khan as important in the grand narrative of Hindustani music’s history.

³⁰⁹ Interestingly, Miner cites a similar claim made by Lakman Dattatrey Josi in his *Sangit sastrakar va kalavant yanca itihās* that, “although many *bīn* players claimed to be disciples of Bande Ali Khan, he did not really teach anyone” (Miner 1993:136 citing Josi 1935:147).

Perhaps they are not “remembered as important or influential” beyond the regions from which they came. My concern for these musicians, however, has less to do with aesthetic appraisals of their music or the authenticity of their pedigree—two of the most highly fraught areas of Hindustani music discourse. Leaving aside their lack of celebrity or all-India prestige, it is significant that all of these musicians are pertinent examples of the fact that nationalism and its attendant discourses were not the only signs under which upper-caste and non-hereditary Hindus entered the field of music. This is, of course, the importance that they hold for this dissertation.³¹⁰

THE THIRD GENERATION: DHUNDIRĀJ

In 1878 at the age of thirty-seven, Nana Saheb became a father to his first child, Dhunḍirāj (literally, “prince of perseverance”?), a fitting name, perhaps, for a boy who would grow up to become a leader in local politics, as well as something of

³¹⁰ This discrepancy between the significance that these musicians hold in Grimes’s text and my own points to a larger and perhaps unavoidable problem in the general methodology of academic research. My own elevation of these musicians is directly related to my call to reconsider the ways in which the social and cultural history of this art form has been written with respect to nationalism. Grimes’s minimization of these same Maharashtrian instrumentalists with respect to their relative lack of prestige is directly related to the aims of his dissertation, which is premised on the separation of Maharashtra and Bengal along vocal and instrumental lines, respectively. The diminution of these musicians in his text thus appears to reflect an attempt to reign in the geographic scope of the instrumental traditions he considers. This is further illustrated by the far greater acclaim he ascribed to Bengali instrumentalists who existed at levels analogous to the Maharashtrian instrumentalists he earlier dismissed (amateur, patron, hobbyist, and those not well-known). A good example is his description of tabla teacher Gyan Prakash Ghosh, someone who came from “a wealthy, semi-aristocratic family,” and who, like the Ashtewale family, “was able to patronize a number of musicians, by among other things, letting them stay in his home whenever they visited Calcutta” (ibid.:236). However, instead of dismissing Ghosh as an “amateur,” Grimes celebrates the fact that he taught many students “who may not have been famous performers, but were good performers and also active teachers” (ibid.:237).

an accomplished poet.³¹¹ Dhundiraj always had a passion for books, which he later surrounded himself with as royal librarian for the Śiṭhole's of Gwalior (Anand Ashtewale, interview, 12 August 2009). His own poetic musings earned him the title of “spontaneous poet” (Kirin Ashtewale, interview, 9 September 2009). And at the age of sixty, after more than forty years of composing, he published a collection of poems titled *Ek Mukhī Mālvikā* (1938), a copy of which I found in the Wākankar Śodh Sansthā in Ujjain.³¹²

Dhundiraj, pictured in Figure 5, played the sitar dutifully. By this time, sitar had become a regular family tradition in which the entire household, women included, was encouraged and sometimes required to participate. He learned primary from his father, but did not continue in his adult life. What he did play, he played very fast, focusing mostly on *tān* and *gāt* and not the alap for which his family had become famous (Prakash Ashtewale, interview, 4 November 2001). I discuss this further below.

More than a poet or musician, however, Dhundiraj was best known as a politician. He once served as Ujjain's *mukhiyā* or chief of the *grām-pancāyat* or city council, during which time he oversaw the registration of rent collection and provided

³¹¹ References are made to Dhundiraj as a poet in the *Maharashtra State Gazetteers: General Series, Vol. 6* (Directorate of Government Printing, Stationary and Publications), 1971:147; and Prabha Srinivasulu's *Malwa Under the Marathas: A Cultural Contribution to Malwa Under the Maratha Rule From 1736 A.D. Onwards* (Classical Pub. Co.), 1996:566, 568, 618. However, I have unfortunately not been able to consult either of these works.

³¹² The author's name appears as Śrī-hariyantra' Dhundirāj Kṛṣṇa Āṣṭewāle. The title is listed in the catalog of the library under the section titled “Marāṭhī kavītā,” No.44 Kod-I 44. No date of publication is given on or following the title page. However, the author notes the date as 22 February 1938 on pages 5 and 7 of the section titled “Sinhāvalokan.”

relief to those affected by natural calamities (Anand Ashtewale, interview, 12 August 2009).³¹³ Among his politically influential friends was Trimbak Dāmodar Pustake, the founder of Ujjain's branch of the Sarvajanic Sabhā, a political organization considered to be a precursor to the Indian National Congress (Kirin Ashtewale, interview, 9 September 2009).³¹⁴ In the mid-1930s, he became a founding and active member of the Ujjain branch of the Rāṣṭrīya Svayam-sevak Saṅgh (RSS) or National Volunteer Corps, a Hindu nationalist organization, which I discuss in more detail below. And later, following India's independence in 1947, he was appointed as a member of the Vidhān Sabhā of the newly formed state of Madhya Bhārat (Anand Ashtewale, interview, 12 August 2009).³¹⁵

Dhundiraj's preoccupation with the political over the musical may have been a reflection of the pressures and responsibilities that come with being the eldest son, such as the need to maintain both the family's legacy and inherited wealth. That Dhundiraj was considered as the head of the family is indicated by the fact that he

³¹³ I have not been able to verify the truthfulness of this claim.

³¹⁴ The only reference to Pustake's involvement with the Sabha that I have found is from a tenth-grade social science textbook published by the Madhya Pradesh Rajya Shiksha Kendra (Bhopal) in 2008, p. 169. Another figure associated with the Ujjain Sabha was Shri Radhelal Vyas, who was on the working committee between 1936–37. Vyas later stood for and won the election for the third Lok Sabha 1956 [?] ("Former Members Bioprofile," Official website of the Lok Sabha, Parliament of India, http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/biodata_1_12/1100.htm, accessed 23 December 2012). It is likely that he and Dhundiraj ran in the same circles.

³¹⁵ Though Anand Ashtewale could not recall the name of the particular post to which Dhundiraj was appointed, it seems likely that it was the Legislative Assembly of Madhya Bharat. Following the creation of the state of Madhya Bharat from the Central India Agency in 1948, a new representative government was formed. The head or Rājpramukh of the state from its beginning to its end in 1956, after which it became Madhya Pradesh, was the last Maharaja of Gwalior, Sir George Jivaji Rao Scindia (b.1916–d.1961). Madhya Bharat had a "Vidhan Sabha" (Legislative Assembly) of 99 members elected from 79 constituencies. It may be possible that Dhundiraj was one of its members, though I have so far been unable to find any confirmation of this.

was the primary inheritor of the family's pension. Following the death of his father Nana Saheb in 1900 from cholera, Dhundiraj submitted a petition to the British Agent at Bundelkhand requesting that the family's pension be transferred into his name (D.K. Ashtewale 1900). While the request was granted, it is remarkable that the British continued to have a hand in administering the pension, supplied as it was from the Nawab of Bhopal's private jaghir.



Figure 5 'Śrīhariyantra' Dhunḍirāj Kṛṣṇa Āṣṭewāle, or Baḍe Bhaiyā Sāheb

God Moves In

On the thirteenth day of August 1913, four days ahead of the annual celebration of Krishna's birth or *Kṛṣṇa janmāṣṭamī*, throngs of onlookers crowded the streets surrounding the Ashtewale's residence.³¹⁶ Mounted elephants, garlanded horses, umbrella bearers, fly whiskers (*chamārā*) and a brass band graced the occasion. Hovering above the mass of revelers on a mobile stage stood the life-sized images of Krishna and his consort Rādhā set in gleaming white stone. This was a day to be remembered, the day when Radhika and Krishna came to live at the Ashtewale home. All those present turned to face the camera, recording their attendance at such an auspicious event (see Figure 6).

The images or *mūrti*-s were installed on the third floor of the house and consecrated according to religious proscriptions. A priest was hired to attend to the gods' daily ritual requirements of waking, bathing, feeding, sleeping, etc. (for a description of this process, see Fuller 2004). Though originally meant for the private worship of the family and their relations, the temple was later opened up to the public, perhaps as a way of recouping some the expenditure associated with its maintenance. With this opening came a shift in the temple's location, first to the second floor, where I had first seen it in the winter of 2001, and then to the first (ground) floor, where it currently stands. However, the primary factor for this movement was structural; the upper floors of the house began to corrode. Taken symbolically, the temple's "descent" also represents the fall of the family's fortunes

³¹⁶ I am thankful to Ravi Mahoni for researching these dates.

as the twentieth century progressed, and the concomitant grounding of the temple in the support of the wider community. Today, in fact, the address of the family house is better known as the residence of Radha-Krishna than it is of the Ashtewales. I was instructed that letters to Anand Ashtewale, who currently lives in what remains of the house, should be addressed to: Shri Radha-Krishna Mandir [temple], Dani Darvaza (Dhabamarg), Near Satyanarayan Mandir, Ujjain.

That the Ashtewales became the keepers of a Radhika-Krishna temple is not unusual in a city defined by its plethora of ancient temples. Ujjain is home to some of the oldest and most renowned temples in India, such as the Mahākāleśvar temple, which is believed to have been built by the divine architect Visvakarma (Samanta 1997:60). In the immediate vicinity of the Ashtewale home, there are many temples that, according to Anand Kākā (uncle), were already old by the time the Ashtewales moved there in 1818. He described some of the older temples in his neighborhood, placing their own Radha-Krishna temple in context:

There is one temple here in [Kotal Nath] that is five hundred years old....

Another temple here is three hundred and fifty years old, _____. And if you go ahead of where we were and take a left towards Asi Wat, there is a four hundred year old house....And if you go straight, you come to _____. And if you go _____, there's a one hundred and forty year old one. In the lane near there, _____, that one is two hundred and forty-three years. Ours is ninety six

years. That means in 2013, it will turn one hundred. Four or five years are left.

(Interview, 12 August, 2009)

The installation of the Radha-Krishna temple thus brought the Ashtewales further into the cultural orbit of their surroundings. Like their patronage of music, their patronage of religion was central to the expectations of their class and caste. This brief focus on the temple, therefore, helps us further locate the Ashtewale family within the specific context of patronage in the city of Ujjain in the early twentieth century.

Beyond its typicality, however, there may have been more personal reasons for the family's turn towards religion. Though Dhundiraj is officially credited with having installed the images, their primary advocate was a spiritual guide or guru to the family, Kṛṣṇānand Bāpaṭ. Bapat Guru, as he was known, was from Indore and seems to have come into the family's life during Dhundiraj's time. Both Kiran Kaka and Prashant Kaka noted that it was Bapat Guru who influenced the decision to bring the Radha-Krishna murtis to the house (Kirin Ashtewale, interview, 8 September 2009; Prakash Ashtewale, interview, 18 November 2010). Anand Kaka portrayed him as somewhat of a charlatan, having duped the family of some money.

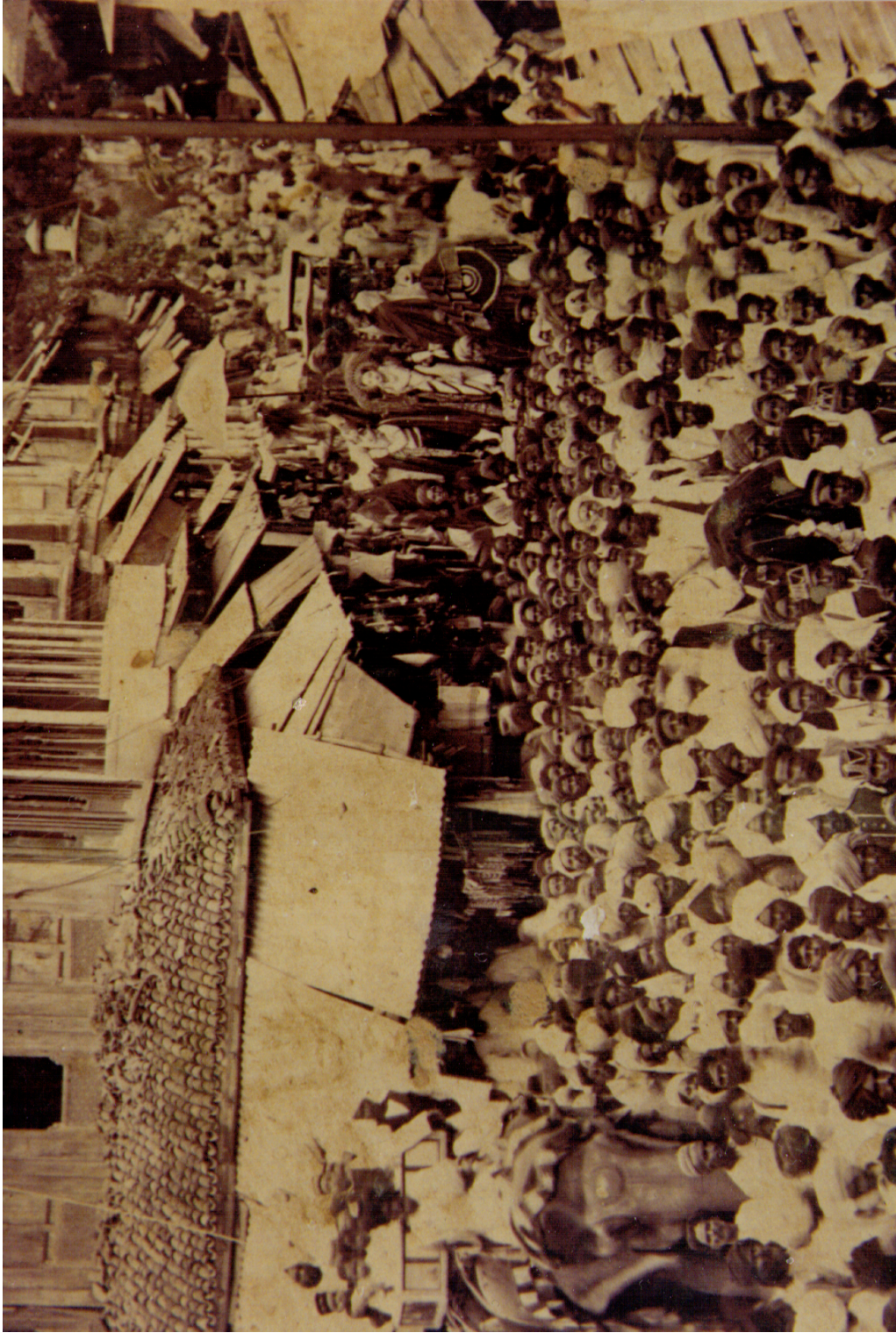


Figure 6 Welcoming the images of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa to the Āśṭewāle Residence, Ujjain, 1913

Why did Bapat Guru apparently push the family to install the temple at this time, and why would Dhundiraj have agreed to what must have been a considerable expense and commitment? In his classic work on popular Hinduism, anthropologist C.J. Fuller observed that worship performed “[a]t private temples belonging to particular families, kin groups, castes or other social units...is mainly intended to benefit those who own the temple” ([1992]2004:62). “[T]he principle purpose of domestic *pūjā*,” he continued, “is to protect the household” (ibid.:63). Based on some of the facts of Dhundiraj’s biography, I believe there may have been some specific “benefit” or “protection” for which the Radha-Krishna temple was constructed. In particular, the death of Dhundiraj’s second child in 1911, and the death of his wife shortly thereafter in 1912, were two traumatic events that immediately preceded the arrival of Radha-Krishna and may have influenced Dhundiraj to turn towards religion.

Saffron Brotherhood

In addition to the personal turbulence that may have influenced Dhundiraj’s turn toward religion, broader social upheavals relating to India’s struggle for national independence also found resonance in Dhundiraj’s life. Most notable is Dhundiraj’s involvement with the Hindu nationalist organization, the RSS. During the early decades of the twentieth century, the Indian Congress Party occupied perhaps the most visible and permissible nationalist position in British India. They attempted to mobilize a broad cross section of Indian society by defining the nation in terms of its geography, not by its religion, ethnicity, or language. The Hindū Mahāsabdhā, which

originally functioned as a subgroup of the larger party, represented the more narrow interests of Hindu traditionalists. They eventually broke away from the Congress to form their own party under the leadership of Vināyak Damodar Sāvarkar (1883–1966), whose writings served to inspire the formation of the RSS.

Savarkar was originally an extremist within the Congress party who advocated violent methods of anti-colonial resistance (Jaffrelot 2007:85). In 1910, for example, he was arrested in London for plotting to assassinate a British official (ibid). During his imprisonment, he wrote his famous ethno-nationalist tract, *Hindutva* [Hindu-ness]: *Who is a Hindu?* (1923), which marked a shift in identifying the impediment to nationhood from the British to the Muslims (Ibid:83).³¹⁷

Keśav Balīrām Hedgewār (1889–1940), a Maharashtrian Brahman and medical doctor from the city of Nāgpur, took inspiration from Savarkar’s book to start the RSS in 1925. The aim of the RSS was to propagate Hindutva at the grassroots level, uniting what it claimed to be a divided Hindu nation in the face of a Christian, and especially Muslim threat. The RSS developed a network of branches or *śākhā*-s run by cadre of dedicated volunteers. Before long they became the largest and most powerful Hindu nationalist group in the country, boasting of around 600,000 members at the time of independence (ibid.:16, citing D.V. Deshpande and S.R. Ramaswamy 1981).

³¹⁷ Jaffrelot argued that the bringing together of religion, language, and culture under *Hindutva*’s triptych “Hindu, Hindi, Hindustani” served as “the perfect recipe for ethnic nationalism” (Jaffrelot 2007:15).

Interestingly, one of the first and largest strongholds of the RSS prior to independence was in the very same region from which the Ashtewales hailed: Mālwā in central India. It was there, in the cities of Indore and Dewas, that the very first shakhas were set up by Hedgewar in 1929 (Jaffrelot 1996:135). One of the reasons for the strength of the RSS in this region was cultural: it was home to many of Hedgewar’s fellow Maharashtrians, who, like the Ashtewale family, had been living there for many generations. Another was political: it was home to several princely states, whose rulers feared their authority would be undermined by Congress rule (ibid.:109, 136–37).

The city of Ujjain, home of the Ashtewale family, was one of the primary locations of the RSS in this region (ibid.:135). As a member of one of the wealthiest families of that city, Dhundiraj Ashtewale had the distinction of playing a crucial role in setting up the first branch there in the mid-1930s. The Ujjain branch developed quickly due to the patronage of “local notables of Maharashtrian origin” (ibid:136). Indeed, one of the notables that Jaffrelot mentioned was none other than “Bhaiya Saheb Astewale, a Brahmin landlord, [who] became the town’s *sanghchalak* and persuaded Maharajah Jivaji Rao Scindia not to obstruct its functioning” (ibid). “Bhaiya Saheb,” as I explain below, was Dhundiraj Ashtewale’s common name. Jaffrelot’s source for this information is a man named Balasaheb Kasture, a Maharashtrian Brahman who had become attracted to the RSS during his highschool days in Ujjain. Ashtewale family members have confirmed Dhundiraj’s involvement

in the RSS, noting his tireless “social service,” which included taking action to improve the city’s maintenance and sanitation.

That Dhundiraj poured himself into his work for the RSS is understandable on at least two fronts. First, like his turn towards religion, Dhundiraj’s involvement in the RSS may have comforted the losses he experienced in his family. In addition to the untimely death of his wife and second son, Dhundiraj must have felt loss for his third son, Govind Ashtewale (1908–1988), who did not die young, but defected to Hitler’s Germany during the early 1930s. Govind traveled to Germany shortly after receiving his passport on 30 May 1933.³¹⁸ He intended on studying engineering, it was claimed, and received financial support for this from his wealthy maternal uncle, who served as Chief Engineer for the state of Gwalior. However, soon after arriving, Hitler’s party came to power and required all foreign nationals to leave. Govind was said to have been reluctant to go. Whether this had to do with his political views, his close relationship with a German woman (noted by both of his sons), or some other reason, it is not certain. However, Govind petitioned to stay on the grounds that he was an “original Aryan.”³¹⁹ Following his acceptance into the Nazi fold, he was trained both as a pilot and sound engineer, a new and burgeoning field at the time. For almost ten

³¹⁸ Govind’s duplicate passport is held in the India Office Library of the British Library, IOR/L/PJ/11/2/1095 1933

³¹⁹ On the notion of the Aryan race in the writings of Hindu nationalists, see Jaffrelot 1995a. Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar (1906-1973), who succeeded Hedgewar as head of the RSS in 1940, claimed to have been inspired by Hitler in his insistence that race, “is by far the important ingredient of a nation” (Golwalkar 1947[1939]:59 cited in Jaffrelot 2007:98). For a broader consideration of the “entanglements” of Indian and German intellectuals during this and preceding periods, see Manjappa 2014.

years he had no contact with his family; that is until the day he mysteriously showed up in India before the end of the war and had his passport confiscated. Govind's story hereafter follows a fascinating trajectory that begins with his marriage to the daughter of a wealthy Bombay hotelier, his work as a sound engineer for the Bombay film industry, his success as a sugar industrialist, and his eventual nervous breakdown, following which he retired to Ujjain where he took up the manufacturing of spinning wheels! (Kirin Ashtewale, interview, 8 September 2009; Prakash Ashtewale, interview, 17 January 2008).³²⁰

Secondly, Dhundiraj's spirited involvement in the RSS followed a model of the ideal *swayamsevak* or volunteer as one who devoted his entire life to the organization by refusing to marry or take up a more lucrative career for which he was educated. As Walter Anderson and Shridhar Damle have suggested, dedicated RSS members became part of the "brotherhood in saffron," saffron representing both the sacred color of Hinduism, and the color of the RSS flag (Jafferlot 2010:5).

Following Dhundiraj, family involvement in the RSS continued in future generations. Dhundiraj's grandson, Vasudev Ashtewale (1925–1993), was a known supporter of the organization. His daughter, Jyoti Thakār, recounted several occasions when members of the organization would clandestinely stay with the family for a night only to leave early the next morning, this during a time known as the

³²⁰ A potential lead on Govind's business in Ujjain was found in the *Directory of Registered Small Scale Industries in Madhya Pradesh, Vol. 4* (Directorate of Industries, MP), 1967. There, the following title was found under the Indore Division (page V-33): "Prakash Kirin and Co., Ashtewale – Ka Bada, Ujjain; J/SSI/D1//MP/ UJN/91/WWP; 20-4-63."

Emergency of 1975 when many separatist groups including the RSS were outlawed (interview, 9 September 2003).

Music and Communalism

The RSS has variously been described as communal, fundamentalist, anti-Muslim, chauvinist, xenophobic, and fascist.³²¹ Though there has been much debate about the accuracy of these epithets (e.g., Jaffrelot 1996:63–64; Juergensmeyer 1996), it is clear that only Hindus (defined not only by religion, but also by race and allegiance to both the sacred language of Sanskrit and a sacred territory of Hindusthan) were welcome in their concept of the Indian nation. In his book, *We: Or Our Nation Defined* (1939), Mādhav Sadāśiv Goḷvalkar (1905–1973), the second headman of the RSS, gave the following ultimatum to non-Hindu Indians: they must “revere” “Hindu religion” and “adopt the Hindu culture and language” or they would cease to have “even citizen’s rights”:

The non-Hindu peoples in Hindusthan must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and hold in reverence Hindu religion, must entertain no ideas but those of glorification of the Hindu race and culture, i.e. they must not only give up their attitude of intolerance and ungratefulness towards this land and its age long traditions but must also cultivate the positive attitude of love and devotion instead – in one word, they must cease

³²¹ See Basu et al (1993); Thomas Hansen (1999); Jaffrelot (1996:108, 2007:5, 2006:xii, 2010:5); Frykenberg (1993:240 n.7); Sundar 2004.

to be foreigners, or may stay in the country, wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment – not even citizen’s rights. (cited in Guha 2007:19–20)

Given at least an ambivalent attitude toward India’s Muslims within the RSS, it is notable that Dhundiraj’s own home was a place where Muslim musicians were hosted and served as respected guests and gurus. Curious, I asked Jyoti whether this was ever a point of tension. “Yes,” she said, widening her eyes a bit. “They [the musicians] were staying separately, in another part of the house, and using separate cooking wares. The wife of the house would come and given them food like this,” making a gesture that indicated careful attention as to not touch whomever she was serving (interview, 9 September, 2003). Others also related to me the cautiousness with which family members served food to their Muslim teachers, though with some variation. Prakash Kaka, another of Dhundhiraj’s grandsons, said that his father and uncle used to serve their ustads themselves, as the ladies were not permitted to come before them. “That was the old custom,” he said (interview, 17 January 2008). When asked whether this custom was due to the fact that they were Muslim, or simply because they were men, Prakash Kaka could not say, as he never witnessed it himself. Prakash Kaka’s younger brother, Kirin, confirmed that his father and uncle indeed served food to their Muslim teachers, adding that they removed their cloths afterwards to maintain purity (interview, 9 September, 2009). Smita Nagdev, a student of Vasudev Ashtewale from a young age and close friend of the family, also

noted that the meat served to Muslim musicians was cooked in a separate kitchen (interview, 10 August, 2009), though it is perhaps significant that they did even prepare meat for them.

What this tells us about how family members understood the growing communal politics of their time, their own identity as Hindus, and the place of music therein cannot be certain. It does at least seem to complicate the idea that Hindustani music provides, in Peter Manuel's (Manuel 2008:381) words, a "resilient island of communal harmony more or less impervious to the antagonisms polarizing society at large" (see also Manuel 1996:138; Lubach 2006:41; for a critique, see Katz 2012). In any case, it is likely that the presence of Muslim musicians in the Ashtewale home had greatly decreased by the time Dhundiraj became active in the RSS in the mid-1930s. Murad Khan, the last Muslim musician to teach and live in the family substantially, died in 1929. Others continued to frequent the house, such as Babu Khan, who died in 1942, and Rajjab Ali Khan, who died in 1959. However, it is telling that Prakash Kaka, who came to live in Ujjain in 1953 along with his ailing father Govind, does not recall ever having seen them.

THE THIRD GENERATION: BHAIYĀ SĀHEB

Nana Saheb's second son, Vishwanath, was born in 1880 (Figure 7). Being the younger of two brothers, he was referred to as "Chote Bhaiya Saheb" or little brother, and Dhundiraj as "Bade Bhaiya Saheb" or big brother. However, in conversation with family members, both were often referred to using the unqualified

“Bhaiya Saheb,” leading to some confusion. Here I refer to Dhundiraj only by his proper name and to Vishwanath only as “Bhaiya Saheb.” This choice also reflects the fact that Vishwanath is very rarely referred to by his proper name and almost always as “Bhaiya Saheb,” while Dhundiraj is commonly referred to either by his proper name or as “Bhaiya Saheb.”

Two Devotions

If Dhundiraj was devoted to religion and politics, Bhaiya Saheb was devoted to religion and music. As Kirin Kaka once told me, Bhaiya Saheb or “Sitarwale Kaka” [sitar uncle], as the grand nephews knew him, did only two things: prayed and played. In fact, he brought these two devotions together in how he taught his students. From the beginning, Kirin Kaka explained, Bhaiya Saheb taught the basic exercises or *alankār-s* in the “language of Rama”:

The first lesson was straight, “sa re ga ma pa dha ni sa” [the Indian solfege syllables]... However, in Bhaiya Saheb’s language, it became “jai shri ra ma jai shri ra ma.”... All alankars were in the language of Rāma. (interview, 9 September 2009)



Figure 7 Viśvanāth Kṛṣṇa Āṣṭewāle or Choṭe Bhaiyā Sāheb

Prashant Kaka, who also learned from Bhaiya Saheb in his childhood, recalled it similarly:

I still remember, he would not say, “sa re ga ma pa dha ni sa.” [Instead,] “jai shri ra ma jai shri ra ma.” So his concept of teaching music was totally different than what we had. *Bhagwān ka nām lete, calo ham bajāte* [he would take the name of God and play], that sort of an [understanding] he must [have had]. But even now I don’t know why he used to say “jai shri rama,” but he used to say that. (interview, 17 January 2008)

By substituting the Indian solfege syllables with the religious chant “jai shri Rama” or “victory to Rama,” Bhaiya Saheb effectively fused his two devotions, enlisting each in support of the other. Instead of building a temple out of stone, as his brother once did, Bhaiya Saheb built one out of this musical mantra every time he sat down to play. In addition to these exercises, the first melody he taught his students was from the song “Ragupati Rāghav Rājā Rām,” a Hindu devotional song or *bhajan* made famous in the early twentieth century by Mahatma Gandhi and rendered in rag *pīlu*.

I asked Jyoti, who had also heard these stories, why Bhaiya Saheb might have approached his music in this way, as I assumed he did not learn this from his Muslim teachers. “They [the Ashtewales] had always been very religious in everyday things,” she said. “However many temples Bhaiya Saheb came across [and in Ujjain there

were many!], he would always stop by the roadside and do *namaskār*” (interview, 9 September 2003).

One Among Others

What I found compelling about this story about Bhaiya Saheb’s teaching is the seeming lack of conflict these two devotions produced in Bhaiya Saheb’s life. A devout Hindu, he apparently had no problem expressing this devotion through a music he learned from Muslim teachers to whom (it is often claimed) he was an equally devoted student. The reason this stands out, of course, is that today, Hindu and Muslim identities are often portrayed as incommensurable, even antagonistic. Though more evidence is certainly required, Bhaiya Saheb’s example may point us to a way of knowing in which Hindu and Muslim identities were not seen as exclusive. It may be that Bhaiya Saheb’s way of teaching music using elements drawn from Hindu religion was less an expression of “religious identity *alone*” and more an expression of “local affiliation *among others*.” Gottschalk (2000:33) used the reverse of this phrase (*italics in original*) to describe the way in which local Hindu and Muslim residents of the town in which he did fieldwork had stopped participating in each other’s public rituals, as these ritual performances, such as the processions of *tāziyā-s* (representations of the shrines of Hussain and Hasan, sons of Ali) during Muharram, had increasingly come to be viewed “as singular in character: more of an expression of religious identity *alone* and less of local affiliation *among others*.” This is not to say that a more exclusive way of understanding religious identity did not

exist (or co-exist) during Bhaiya Saheb's time, as demonstrated perhaps by the contemporary popularity of the RSS, even within his own family, but that this exclusiveness was itself not exclusive, meaning it was not the only way of approaching identity.

Music and Religion

The synergy between music and religion in Bhaiya Saheb's life furthermore suggests that it may be incorrect to credit (or blame) nationalist reformers (or colonial authors) for having invented an association between music and Hindu divinity. Enrico Kobayashi (2003:119) rightly observed that music's reformers took credit for what they they saw was reintroducing divinity into classical music, which had become de-sanctified by the commercial and hedonistic interests of professional musicians. Kobayashi took issue with this self-proclaimed sacralization of the tradition, noting instead that, "classical music's connection with divinity and religion was not limited to reform circles" (ibid.:121). Though she considered some minor distinctions in the way that reformers deployed religion in connection to music (ibid.:130-31), she largely maintained that they introduced nothing new: "Though reformers claimed to have reinstated a spiritual meaning that had been abandoned, they did not introduce any new or renewed concept into the Hindustani music culture" (ibid:126). In Kobayashi's analysis, then, Hindustani music's connection to divinity was "widespread" (ibid.:127) and beyond the preserve of reformists.

While I think it is important to remember that reformists (or colonialists for that matter) did not “invent” a relationship between music and Hindu divinity where none had existed, it is equally important to account for the ways in which the reformist invocation of religion differed from previous practice—something that Kobayashi appears to have denied. And just because the connection between music and religion may have been widespread during the early twentieth century (during the very period of the reform), does not mean that the reform movement had nothing to do with it, either by popularizing this connection beyond reformist circles or even making the expression of it compulsory for musicians and non-musicians alike? (The previous chapter, for example, has already touched upon the fact that Muslim musicians were hailed as exemplars of secularism when they adopted Hindu practices). Kobayashi’s argument may be critical from the point of view of reformers, whom she denies self-asserted agency in connecting music to religion, but she did not, in this case, consider the place of reformist discourse in the broader context of the Hinduization of the public sphere.

Where Bhaiya Saheb fits into to all of this is not wholly clear. As I describe below, he did have a brief association with an institution founded by one of music’s most religious musical reformers, Viṣṇu Digambar Paluskar. However, other than his interest in religion, nothing about Bhaiya Saheb suggests an affinity for reformist ideals. In fact, in ways that I explore below, Bhaiya Saheb was more of an orthodox ustad, albeit one who never had the professional obligation to perform. In this way, I

believe there is something valuable in Kobayashi's assertion that the connection between music and religion exceeded reformist contexts.

The Performer

Old Proscriptions

Though Bhaiya Saheb's father was also a respected musician, he was better known as a respectable patron, someone who did not perform outside the home or for anyone who might be construed as a "public." The reason, explained Shripad or Ānā Sāheb Mīrīkar in a eulogy written for Bhaiya Saheb's great-nephew, Vāsudev Āṣṭewāle, was the family's elite social standing; as jahgirdars and patrons, it was simply not proper for him to perform.

Abstaining from performance, despite knowing how to perform, was typical of other early aristocratic patrons of Nana Saheb's time. A contemporary of Nana Saheb, Sourindro Mohan Tagore (1849–1914), also studied with professional musicians for much of his young-adult life, though rarely, if ever, performed for the public.³²² As I suggested in Chapter Two, such behavior was in keeping with the conventions of the Mughal aesthetes whom preceded them. Katherine Butler Brown argued, for example, that sanctions for overstepping the social boundaries between patron and performer in the seventeenth and eighteenth century were not only applied

³²² I have yet to come across a source that claims Tagore specifically chose not to perform. However, I have also not found any mention of the fact that he did perform. See Trasoff's discussion of Tagore (1999:123-126).

to musicians, her primary focus, but also to patrons (2007). Though the musical product itself accrued significant cultural capital, thereby allowing space for resistance and liminality on the part of musicians (Schoefeld's main point), musicians were nevertheless considered as service professionals and cultural laborers. Patrons, by not performing in public, at least, avoided any confusion in these roles.

New Prospects

At the turn of the twentieth century, however, such strictures began to decline. Nationalism's new musical missionaries such as the aforementioned Paluskar, vowing to bring decency to the profession of music, launched ambitious programs to encourage the participation of "respectable" performers, albeit after first portraying hereditary professionals as undesirables (see Chapter Four). In this new milieu, Bhaiya Saheb became the first member of the Ashtewale family to disregard, to some extent, the taboo of performance. Indeed, Mirikar (1994) reported that Bhaiya Saheb had on numerous occasions travelled to various princely courts as an official "friend" of the state of Gwalior for the purpose of performing. Bhaiya Saheb's daughter, Bakul-bāi Paiṭhankar, recalled how Bhaiya Saheb's sitar would carry him far and wide, sometimes to Lāhore, sometimes to Rājasthān, and often for months on end (interview with Smita Nagdev, n.d.). Prakash Kaka similarly claimed that his grandfather, Bhaiya Saheb, "used to stay with [the] Paṭiyāla [commonly, Patiala] Mahārāj, then for some days with [the] Indore Maharaj and all that. So he used to stay with all these people, in the court, staying for months together" (interview, 4

November 2001). Anand Kaka's daughter, Hemānginī Āṣṭewāle (1994), wrote that among Bhaiya Saheb's princely supporters was Sayājī-rāv Gāykvād III (commonly, Gaekwad or Gaikwad), the Maharaja of Baroda from 1875 to 1939. Anand Kaka described how the Maharaja of Dewās and Kolhāpur, Vikram Singh Pawār, once took Bhaiya Saheb to Śimla where Bhaiya Saheb attended a horse race (interview, 15 August 2009).

In addition to the invitations of Indian princes, Bhaiya Saheb was apparently also invited by well-known musicians to accompany them on their tours and give performances. One such musician, Prakash Kaka claimed, was the famous Marathi stage actor/singer Narāyaṇ Śrīpad Rājans or Bāl-Gandharva (1888–1967), who “took him to Punjāb, [and] Peśāvar” (interview, 4 November 2001). Another was the famous Gwalior vocalist Shankar-rāv Paṇḍit. Grandson of Shankar Rao and current Principle of the Madhav Music College in Gwalior, Madan Shankar Pandit, told me that his grandfather was a great admirer of Bhaiya Saheb and took him every year to Amṛtsar for performances (interview, 12 April 2008). On one trip to Patiala with Shankar Rao, Bhaiya Saheb apparently received five thousand rupees for his performance (Anand Ashtewale, interview, 12 August 2009). A young boy at the time, Anand Kaka affectionately recalled how Bhaiya Saheb would give each child a token amount of rupees from his earnings, and the amount of his earning was not trivial. In 1935, for example, Anand Kaka claimed that Bhaiya Saheb earned two hundred rupees a month performing in V.D. Paluskar's orchestra in Lahore (ibid.).³²³

³²³ For confirmation of Bhaiya Saheb's connection to Paluskar, see Pyarelal (1973:62), who says that

While in Lahore at Paluskar's school, Bhaiya Saheb both taught and performed. One of his students, interestingly, was a sitar player in the orchestra named Viṣṇudās. Anand Kaka claimed that Vishnudas had later become one of Ravi Shankar's very first sitar teachers (ibid.). He further related a story in which Bhaiya Saheb finally met with Shankar years later at a concert in Delhi. In this meeting, Shankar apparently acknowledged Bhaiya Saheb as his "Dada Guru" or grand-guru through his early learning with Vishnudas (ibid.). Coincidentally, I was able to discuss these claims with Ravi Shankar himself following one of his performances in Santa Barbara, California (interview, 1 November 2009). To my surprise, Shankar talked very specifically and enthusiastically about Bhaiya Saheb, noting his focus on alap and meend. He even confirmed the fact that he had once learned rudimentary technique from Bhaiya Saheb's former student, Vishnudas. However, Shankar regretted the fact that he had never had the opportunity to meet Bhaiya Saheb himself.

All of these stories of Bhaiya Saheb's reputation as a performer require additional supporting evidence. I end with one final piece of evidence found among the official communications regarding the establishment of a National Academy for music following India's independence.³²⁴ In the build up to the establishment of the academy, which ultimately never materialized, Deputy Secretary to the Government of Madhya Bharat, Shri P.C. Gupta, invoked the name of "Sardar Ashtewale" (Bhaiya Saheb), along with other musicians, to justify greater representation of his state in the

Bhaiya Saheb "exhibited his art in many places with Pandit V. D. Paluskar."

³²⁴ I thankful to Max Katz for bringing this discovery to my attention.

General Council of the Academy (Gupta 1951). The significance of Bhaiya Saheb's elevation to something of a national musical treasure lies, I submit, in the multi-generational history of Hindu-Muslim discipleship that brought him there. In this history, which began (in his family) during the early nineteenth century and continued into the early twentieth, neither do we see a past dominated by jealous Muslim professionals, nor a present dominated by Hindus who have come to music under the banner of Hindu nationalism. This is not to say that Bhaiya Saheb lived in a world free of Hindu nationalist elements, but that his participation in music and his relationship with his Muslim teachers was significantly informed by the tradition of discipleship that came before him.

Lingering Elitism

Clearly then, Bhaiya Saheb was a performer. Moreover, he was considered to be a performer of high caliber, and often paid handsomely for his work. Nevertheless, Bhaiya Saheb was conflicted about embracing this designation. Smita Nagdev recalled what Bhaiya Saheb's grand-nephew, Vasudev Rao, once told her about Bhaiya Saheb's indifference and occasional hostility towards performing: "Should I play for people? I will not play,' he would say. How many offers to perform came? But he didn't go" ['ham kyā logon ke liye bajayenge? ham nahin bajāenge.' kitane jage se offer āte the program ke liye par jāte nahin] (interview with Smita Nagdev and Arun Palnitkar, 9 August, 2009).

Bhaiya Saheb's resistance to performing seems to have been limited to particular venues. While he had no objection to performing for royalty in the context of the court, he disdained playing for the public. Resistance was highest, however, when it came to recording and radio, two technologies that came into existence in India during Bhaiya Saheb's youth, but which he nevertheless shunned. Arun Palnitkar, Director of the Allauddin Khan Sangeet-Kala Academy in Bhopal and disciple of one of Bhaiya Saheb's students, Vināyak-rāv Phadke, said that Bhaiya Saheb absolutely "hated" radio. What he specifically hated, based on the following quote that Palnitkar attributed to him, was its potential for putting his music in the most undesirable of places:

He would sometimes say something like, "Will the *pānwālā* [tobacco seller] listen to my music? Will my record be played in any random place? Will people listen to my song in all the *pān* shops?" [vo kabhī unhone is tarah, 'pānwālā sunegā merā? merī rekārḍ kahī bhī bajegī aur sārā pān kī dukkān pe log merā gānā sunengā?]. (ibid.)

For Bhaiya Saheb, then, radio and recordings were too unselective. They could broadcast his music "in any random place," worst of all amidst the chewing and spitting of tobacco users hanging out in *pan* shops. Despite such strong words, many

report that Bhaiya Saheb actually made several recordings towards the end of his life.³²⁵ However, I have been unsuccessful in locating any evidence of their existence.

Such conceit towards public performance, as I suggested earlier, is often taken as an expression of lingering class elitism. Prakash Kaka spoke most directly to this issue when he explained why neither Bhaiya Saheb, nor any member of the family before him, could be considered a professional musician:

Professionally no one played. There was no professional sitar player in our family. At that time when my grandfather was there, he was called by these Rajas; āj indor m̄hārāja ne bolā, kal paṭiyālā ne bolā, kal is ne bulāyā, kal barodā m̄hārāja ne bolā [Today the ruler of Indore called. Yesterday it was the ruler of Patiyala, or the ruler of Baroda, or some other ruler]. So he used to go there, perform in front of them, and then go back. So, like that....So he actually used to perform. You can't say professionally. He wasn't earning on this. Because we were jahgirdars so we had *zamīn* [land], *hai, ye, vo* [this and that]. So it was like that. (Interview, 17 January 2008)

³²⁵ Anand Kaka claimed that Bhaiya Saheb made several recordings in Delhi with the help of Ravi Shankar in 1956, and that recordings of Bhaiya Saheb were taken by the Maharaja of Dewas (and Kolhapur), Vikram Singh Pawar (interview, 12 August 2009). Prakash Kaka confirmed that Bhaiya Saheb went to Delhi to record, and that his father, Govind, even accompanied him (interview, 17 January 2008). Mirikar (1994), citing his communication with Vasudev Ashtewale, wrote that Bhaiya Saheb's Akashvani recordings were made under the direction of Sumati Mutatkar. And finally, Garg, also probably relying on oral accounts from family members, wrote that Bhaiya Saheb had recorded at Akashvani's Delhi office (1984:494).

Prakash Kaka's insistence that Bhaiya Saheb, though a performer, was not professional, rests on the fact that his livelihood—and by extension his social identity—derived from his family's inherited wealth. Though “he used to go there” (to the court) and “perform in front of them” (the Maharajas), he would nevertheless “go back” to his palatial home, servants, and aristocratic lifestyle. Though he was paid, he did not seek employment. He was not “earning on this,” in the sense of living off his performances. Based on this understanding, we might further conclude that it was on the level of class more than religion that Bhaiya Saheb could be distinguished from the musicians from whom he had learned.

Professional Elitism

True as the persistence of an upper-class elitism may be, similar stories of anti-populism have also been told about the professionals who taught the Ashtewale family. Anand Kaka told me one such story about the sitar player Babu Khan of Indore (1893–1942), who came to share a close bond with Bhaiya Saheb as they shared the same teacher, Murad Khan.³²⁶ Being the younger of the two, Babu Khan looked up to Bhaiya Saheb as a *baḍe bhāī* or elder brother, Anand Kaka said. And as disciples of the same teacher, it is not surprising that Babu Khan and Bhaiya Saheb would have held certain attitudes towards music in common, primary among them

³²⁶ Though Babu Khan initially trained with his father, Hasan *Khān*, a bin player from Narvar State in present-day northern Madhya Pradesh, he quickly went on to study with Murad Khan as a child in Indore (Pyarelal 13).

being a conservative resistance towards performing for non-elite and uneducated audiences.

In one incident that Anand Kaka described, Babu Khan was called on to perform at a private salon or *jalsā* in Jhānsī for which he was promised three hundred rupees. When he arrived, his hosts, displaying their ignorance, seated him in the very center of the room. Then they proceeded to haphazardly situate themselves in a circle around him, reclining on pillows and bolsters in a most unceremonious manner. Finally, they told him that he should perform for exactly fifteen minutes. Incensed by such impudence, Babu Khan began tuning the sympathetic strings of his sitar. He kept on tuning for the entire fifteen minutes, and when it was over, he put down his instrument and said, “Your fifteen minutes are up. Now bring me my three hundred rupees!” One audience member protested, asking him to play, to which Babu Khan snapped, “What? You want me to play for a room full of monkeys?” Taking his money, Babu Khan left. However, “the next time he was called on” by the same people, Anand Kaka said, “they gave him no fixed time. And what a rush there was to see him! People sat wherever they could, even outside in the garden and up in the trees. They sat up the whole night listening to Babu Khan (interview, 12 August 2009).

Deferring for a moment the question of this story’s “truth” and how it fits in with other descriptions of both Babu Khan’s elitism and that of other professional musicians, it is important to note that this story about Babu Khan references an elitist disposition very similar to the one associated with Bhaiya Saheb above. Of course,

Babu Khan was presumably less wealthy than Bhaiya Saheb. He may not have had the luxury of refusing a three-hundred-rupee gig just because he did not feel like playing to a crowd of monkeys. Even so, that did not stop him from registering his distaste, and from insisting that his audience conform to common standards.

Babu Khan also registered his dislike of recordings for reasons strikingly similar to Bhaiya Saheb. According to Pyarelal (1973:13), Babu Khan “was not in favor of making recordings. His opinion was that record enthusiasts failed to give proper attention to what they were listening to, and because of this classical music was being destroyed [rekārd̥ taiyār karvāne ke pakś men nahīn the. unkā mat thā kī rekārd̥ vāle samay kā dhyān nahīn rakhte hain isse sāstrīyā sangīt kī hatyā hotī hai]. Thus, Babu Khan and Bhaiya Saheb were suspicious of recording because it threatened to place serious music in unfavorable, public contexts ill suited for concentration and respect, such as a pan shop.

In resisting recordings for this reason, Babu Khan and Bhaiya Saheb were certainly not alone. Commenting on the difficulty of getting musicians to record and play for the radio in the early days, Sumati Mutātkar, then Director of Music at All-India Radio, noted that, “...the attitude of the musicians, especially that of the eminent ones, to these invaluable mechanical devices was one of suspicion, vague fear and even contempt at times.” Among the reasons she gives for such resistance is, notably, “the idea of their music being heard in hotels, restaurants and shops” (cited in Dard Neuman 2009:110). It is perhaps for this reason, too, that Murad Khan, teacher of both Babu Khan and Bhaiya Saheb, resisted performing for the Bombay

radio, though he eventually became the first bin player to do so in 1928. B.R. Deodhar, the primary agent in the recording, claimed that, “Khan Saheb was not keen on playing over the radio and I had great difficulty in persuading him to come and play” (Deodhar 1983:75, also cited in Neuman 2009:105).

Dard Neuman associated the “hesitation to play for the radio” (or the hesitation to record, too, for that matter) with “the orthodox Ustad” (ibid.:110). Generally speaking, resistance to modern technology is often seen as an orthodox position held by traditionalists and professionals. Could it have been, then, that Bhaiya Saheb modeled his musical elitism in part on the elitism expressed by the professional musicians with whom he associated? Drawing on Silver’s notion that much of ustadī style was modeled on the style of ustad’s patrons, could we alternatively consider whether the resistance of these ustad’s to public airings of their music also stemmed from the predilections of their patrons? Perhaps there was no origin at all, but a mutual disposition arrived at through contact? Whatever the answer, such anti-populism represents a point of connection between the upper class Brahman Ashtewales and their Muslim professional teachers—significant in light of the many other points, particularly religion, that have been assumed to divide patrons and performers in the context of aristocratic discipleship. I believe this point of connection has yet to be suggested in the literature.

The Performance

A Left-hand Path

What Bhaiya Saheb performed was just as important as the fact that he performed at all. By all accounts, including Shankar's above, what most distinguished his playing was his almost exclusive focus on alap and meend. At a time when sitar playing was defined by blazingly fast right-hand rhythms rendered in compositional forms or *gat-s* set to the accompaniment of the tabla, Bhaiya Saheb took a different path all together. He rarely played with tabla, preferring instead the solo alap. In place of *tān*, he played slow and deliberate meend. In this way, Bhaiya Saheb brought more attention to the left hand, which was used for displacing the string, instead of the right. Yet despite the austerity of Bhaiya Saheb's style, he is said to have kept his audience enthralled for hours. Prakash Kaka recounted a time when he was just nine years old and Bhaiya Saheb performed for the entire family following the arrival of his cousin's new bride into their home:

When Mangala's mother came to our house after marriage, that night we had a *Lakṣmī pūjan*.... Still I remember when we had Lakshmi poojan in our house and he played sitar in the night.... Still I have that *mānd* and *pīlū* and *khamāj* in my mind. How many years now?.... And he never played with tabla. He always played alap, and he played jor, and meend work. He was known for

that. And he used to keep people bound like that for hours together.

(Interview, 17 January 2008).

Sitarists from Bhaiya Saheb's time in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries also played alap. However, even the exponents of the Delhi style of Masit Khān, who were known for their slow style of composition and who also learned alap through their training in dhrupad, did not apparently perform alap in public (Miner 1993:107 citing an interview taken with Mushtaq Ali Khan in 1979). Though the more orthodox Senia traditionalists were also known to avoid alap in performance, two of their most legendary sitarists, Rahīmsen and his son Amritsen, the later being the teacher of Mugalu Khan, were acclaimed for their alap, which they called *jor*, and typically played prior to *gat* and *toḍā*, "as is normal in modern practice" (ibid.).

Bhaiya Saheb's performance of alap was therefore not in itself an anomaly, whether in the late nineteenth century or early twentieth. However, that alap was the *only* thing he played, devoid of any *gat*, made his style exceptional. While Rahimsen and Amritsen infused bin-style alap into the "tala-bound work" of the sitar (ibid.:106), Bhaiya Saheb went further, effectively playing bin repertoire on sitar.

Why Bhaiya Saheb focused solely on alap is a question most directly answered with reference to his teachers. Bhaiya Saheb's father, Nana Saheb, his father's teacher, Bande Ali Khan, and Bhaiya Saheb's primarily teacher, Murad Khan, all played the bin, an instrument that placed alap at the center of its repertoire. Why, then, did Bhaiya Saheb choose to play sitar instead of bin? Judging from the

kind of sitars that were prevalent in the family home (explored above), he might not have needed to. The size of these instruments would have made them well suited to playing alap.

Smita Nagdev, a student of Bhaiya Saheb's grandnephew, Vasudev Ashtewale, suggested another interpretation. She speculated that the family's tendency to emphasize alap might have been related to their lack of interest in becoming professionals. Recalling what her teacher once told her, she said, "Initially, Bhaiya Saheb did not want to play outside because, as he used to say, 'we are jahgirdars!'" (Interview, August 10, 2009). This resonates, of course, with the classist explanation typically given for Bhaiya Saheb's resistance to performing explored above. No doubt professional musicians were more compelled to round out their repertoire to suit different performance contexts.³²⁷ And certainly the absence of any pressure to appease a patron may have encouraged Bhaiya Saheb to focus on what he liked best, or to follow his whims and fancies. As Jyoti Thakar, Vasudev's daughter and my teacher, once put it to me, "they [our ancestors] were jahgirdars, so they played whatever they wanted" (interview, 12 September 2003). Artistic freedom, however, does not necessarily result in an interest in alap. Dhundiraj, for example, was more known for playing fast compositions and tans.

³²⁷ See, for example, Shanno Khurana's description of what her teacher, Mustaq Ali Khan, told her about the need for professional musicians to perform as wide a repertoire as possible in order to please an audience or a patron (Kobayashi 2003:128–29).

Heretical Manipulations

Yet another way of understanding Bhaiya Saheb's focus on alap, and one that highlights an influence from professionals, is to see it as stemming from a broad socio-musical strategy meant to circumvent the safeguarding of knowledge by orthodox musicians. This idea is derived from Dard Neuman's revisionist history of the modern origins of alap. Briefly stated, Neuman argued that the modern practice of alap, understood as a form distinct from the composition, was a product of the early nineteenth century and not traceable (in practice) to the thirteenth-century musical treatise, the *Sangītaratnākara*, as is commonly believed (e.g., Widdess 1981). Prior to this, not only was alap intrinsically tied to the unique phrasing of the composition, it was also much shorter and rarely played. Orthodox musicians, Neuman explained, held knowledge of compositions closely guarded, denying it to musicians from non-*Kalāvant* castes, such as *Mīrāsī*-s and *Dhāri*-s. (For a discussion of these terms, see McNeil 2007). This exclusion in turn compelled lower-caste musicians to develop an alternative form of alap independent from the composition and to some degree, the raga itself.³²⁸ As a consequence of this new system of elaboration, which Neuman described as "meerkund," meaning "backbone," the presentation of alap became elongated, growing into a unique form of its own (Neuman 2004:332).³²⁹ According

³²⁸ This new form of elaboration preserved the melodic pathways in which a given raga moves, but it could not, according to Neuman, account for the different emphasis of each raga on tonal register. Thus, a rag like Bihag, for which the middle register is the most important, would still be played beginning in the lower register, as were all ragas.

³²⁹ This term meerkund is alternatively rendered as *meru-khaṇḍ* or *khaṇḍ-meru*, khaṇḍ being "division" and meru being "support" or "backbone." Another equivalent term is *svaraprastāra*. See Jairazbhoy (1961) for a detailed treatment of the concept.

to Neuman's theory, then, Bhaiya Saheb's ability to play a stand-alone alap without reference to a composition owes itself to this modern heretical manipulation.

Neuman's theory is further born out in Bhaiya Saheb's case by his consideration of how meerkund spread through specific discipular connections. The first musician to develop the technique of meerkund, Neuman proposed, was Behram Khan Dagar, one of the most significant musical figures of the mid-nineteenth century, who Neuman portrays somewhat controversially as an upstart dhari-turned-*dhrupadiya* or orthodox dhrupad singer.³³⁰ Based on an anecdote taken from the memoir of Allādiyā Khān, Neuman speculated that Behram Khan might have gotten the idea for meerkund from his clandestine study of Sanskrit music treatises such as the *Sangitratnakara* (as a Muslim, he was apparently prohibited from doing so). In that text, he is believed to have come across the relatively analogous concept of *svara prastāvana* (extension of notes) (ibid.:54-56, 321-22).³³¹ Though textual in its origins, Behram Khan introduced (or reintroduced) this method of note-by-note development into oral circulation through his disciples, the most important for our purposes being Bande Ali Khan (ibid.:323).

As earlier noted, Bande Ali Khan is claimed to have studied with Behram Khan, in addition to being the son of Behram Khan's sister. Like Behram Khan, he is

³³⁰ Neuman gives the year of Behram Khan's birth as 1753 and his death as 1852. I discuss discrepancies between Neuman's and other scholars' dating of Behram Khan in Chapter One.

³³¹ Dard Neuman initially explains meerkund as a formulaic exercise that accounts for every conceivable combination / permutation of a given set of notes (2004:309). This seems quite unlike the note-by-note method of developing a raga's alap, which Neuman considers under the same name (ibid.:311). The relationship between the exercise of meerkund and meerkund as a method of alap development remains unclarified.

thought to hail from a dhari or lower-caste background. Neuman claims that all of the musical lineages stemming from Behram Khan and Bande Ali Khan, vocal and instrumental, are bound by the ubiquitous presence of meerkund alap in their playing and teaching. Conversely, the absence of meerkund distinguishes the more orthodox lineages (ibid.:319, 324–26).

Alap, as it is played and taught by Bhaiya Saheb's disciples and descendants, does, in fact, follow a relatively standard, note-by-note progression described by Neuman as meerkund. A composition does not serve as a basis for elaboration. It may be, therefore, that the Ashtewale family's penchant for alap stems from Behram Khan's appropriation, passed down through Bande Ali Khan and his disciple, Murad Khan.

“Orthodox Interdictions”

Neuman's theory of the birth of the modern alap tells a story of how historically marginalized musicians crafted innovative solutions to the social collusions formed against them. Musicians like Behram Khan and Bande Ali Khan descended from non-elite performing castes, mirasis and dharis who had once been accompanists and performers of a variety of entertainment genres (Schreffler 2011:14–20, 34–35; Lybarger 2011). The rise of these musicians to performers of elite music is one of the most significant social changes to have occurred in Hindustani music over the past two centuries, as both Daniel and Dard Neuman reveal.

Central to this story is the idea that heterodox musicians faced an “orthodox interdiction” to hereditary knowledge (ibid.:264). It was this interdiction, after all, which compelled them to seek solutions to their alienation in the first place (the solution discussed here being the development of meerkund as an alternative form of rag development).

As such, Neuman’s theory potentially holds profound consequences for the central issue that the last two chapters seek to address. The notion that orthodox kalawants, who happened to be Muslim, denied knowledge to heterodox musicians, who also happened to be Muslim, suggests that claims to ustadi intransigence not only have some basis in reality, but more importantly, that this basis has more to do with caste than religion.

While I think it is necessary to decouple religious identity from the issue of ustadi intransigence, replacing it with another binary—that of the orthodox-heterodox—is similarly problematic. Furthermore, it is also challenged by some of Neuman’s own evidence. Take, for example, a passage from Alladiya Khan’s memoir described by Neuman in which Alladiya Khan’s father, the orthodox Ahmad Khan, refused to allow his son to learn from Behram Khan because, as Alladiya Khan explains, “Behram Khan belonged to the Dadhi community” (Alladiya Khan 2000:40–41, cited in Neuman 2004:264). In the context of Alladiya Khan’s narration, what makes this refusal surprising is the fact that Ahmad Khan and Behram Khan are otherwise shown to have been great friends; not only do they “discuss music together for long hours,” but, in fact, Ahmad Khan *shares a good deal of hereditary*

knowledge with Behram Khan. For example, when Behram Khan asked Ahmad Khan to show him a couple of dhrupads in the rag *shudha sārang*, the latter not only obliged, but went on demonstrating dhrupads in the rag for the next three hours until Behram Khan had enough of it!

What I find interesting about this passage is that Ahmad Khan, the supposedly stingy orthodox musician, did not refuse to *give* knowledge to Behram Khan, the heterodox musician; he refused to *take* knowledge (or have his son take it). Ahmad Khan's concern, in other words, was not with maintaining the secrecy of his hereditary tradition, which he openly shared with Behram Khan. Rather, he did not want Behram Khan's spurious knowledge to flow back through his son. A flow of knowledge *was* permitted, but it was permitted in one direction only, from orthodox to heterodox. Neuman additionally related a similar "one-sided movement of pedagogical exchange" between Faiyaz Khan, whom Neuman identifies as an orthodox musician, and the sitarist Imdād Khan, who represents the heterodox position (ibid.:257).

Modern alap may have resulted from the manipulations of heterodox musicians, but the orthodox impediment against which they are theorized to have acted may not have been as severe as Neuman portrayed it. As this dissertation and this chapter in particular have attempted to show, the notion that Muslim hereditary professionals were reluctant to teach Hindus is betrayed by evidence to the contrary. The notion that heterodox Muslim musicians were somehow kept out of the elite musical fraternity because of their humble origins also needs to be questioned.

Murād Khān: The Beginning and End of an Era

It is fitting to end this chapter with a section on Murad Khan (1858–1928), the musician whose entire lifetime parallels and intersects with the history of Hindu-Muslim discipleship in the Ashtewale family. As a son and disciple of the Ashtewales' very first teacher, Mugalu Khan, Murad Khan lived with the family on and off since his childhood (Garg 1984:494). He was a contemporary of the second generation of Ashtewales, Nana Saheb, with whom he also shared a guru, Bande Ali Khan. He then became guru to Nana Saheb's son, Bhaiya Saheb, thereby further integrating the lines of musical descent between these two families. Bhaiya Saheb learned from others, of course, including his own father, as well as Bande Ali Khan and Murad Khan's brother Imdad Khan, though to what degree it is not known. (For this reason, I have not indicated this relationship in Figure 1). Of course, Murad Khan also taught other students.³³² And he also held positions in different Maratha courts.³³³ However, Murad Khan was Bhaiya Saheb's primary teacher, the one with whom he shared a *ganḍā-bandhan* (literally, “tying the cord”) relation, marked by the ceremonial tying of a thread around the student's wrist (Anand Ashtewale, interview, 12 August 2009).

³³² Murad Khan's most noted disciples include his son, the vocalist and binkar Nisar Husain (d. 1929); Musharaf Khan, a sitar and bin player from Murad Khan's native town of Javrā (Jaora), who later relocated to Ahmdabad; Nazir Khan, also from Jaora; Babu Khan from Indore; Eknath Pandit from Gwalior; Krishnarao Kolhapure of Bombay (d. 1953); and Krishnarao Palande from Dharwad.

³³³ Murad Khan is claimed to have been employed at the court of the Maharaja of Dewas Junior for some time (Pyarelal 113; Deodhar 82). He also appears to have been resident at Dhar, as his application for employment to the Indore court in 1918 associated him with that state. See Bhopal State Archives, Indore, Huzur Part II pg. 290, 5836 Progs., Nos. 197, 1918. B. No. 94, “Application of Murad Khan Binkar of Dhar for Employment.”

Perhaps most significantly for our purposes, Murad Khan was also the last Muslim musician to substantially teach any Ashtewale family member. Prakash Ashtewale did learn for a brief period from Abdul Halim Jaffar Khan in Bombay during the late-1960s—significant because Abdul Halim’s own teacher and uncle, Babu Khan, was both a student of Murad Khan and a close acquaintance of the Ashtewales. However, by the time that Prakash Ashtewale came to live in Ujjain in the early 1950s, the Ashtewale home was largely free of its Muslim musician-residents. A tradition of Muslim-Hindu discipleship effectively died out with Murad Khan and Bhaiya Saheb.

We do not know why, following Bhaiya Saheb, future generations of the family stopped learning from Muslim musicians. Perhaps there was less need to seek instruction outside of the family due to the acclaim that Bhaiya Saheb achieved. Perhaps there were already a significantly less number of Muslim musicians within the family's immediate circle. Whatever the reasons, they remain speculative.

A NEW ERA

Just as Bhaiya Saheb's death in 1960 marked the end of an era—that of Muslim-Hindu apprenticeship within the family—the next generation of Ashtewale sitar players marked the beginning of another era. They were the first to learn music from primarily within the family itself, thereby assuming, in a way, the role of hereditary musicians. Following Bhaiya Saheb, the family practice of music skipped a generation. Though Bhaiya Saheb and Dhundiraj bore children, none of these

children bore much interest in music. Instead, Bhayya Saheb became teacher to his grandnephews, first Vasudev (1925-1993), Anand (b.1934), and later Prakash (b.1944), and Kiran (b.1947). Significant about this new generation was their newfound professionalism—three of them relied on music as their sole source of income. The eldest, Vasudev, first taught music at a college in Ujjain, the Kala Niketan, and later at the Model Higher Secondary School in Bhopal. Anand taught music at Udaipur's Sangit Natya Niketan for more than twenty years. And Prakash taught at B.R. Deodhar's school in Bombay for more than twenty-five years.

The reason for relying on music as a sole-source of income has been explained to me as the result of necessity—music was the only talent cultivated in the family, and when the going got tough, it became the only trade they had. The overall wealth of the family was at its height during the Nana Saheb's time. However, it was also during this time that the family began to accrue some debt, which is attested to in Dhundiraj's plea to British officials to transfer the hereditary pension into his name. The pension itself was fixed at a particular amount, so its value steadily declined as inflation rose. And as the family grew, whatever income received from hereditary payments and properties became further and further divided.

For some family members, then, music was a default career path, one made increasingly available to them as new institutions for music began sprout up all over the country during the early and mid-twentieth century. Furthermore, as Max Katz has argued through his work on the Bhatkhande Music College (earlier the Marris College), there was an implicit preference for “respectable” middle-class Hindu

teachers in such institutions over “illiterate” Muslim hereditary professionals (Katz 2012: 288).

Through it is probably true that the growth of Hinduized public sphere for music privileged the continual presence of the Ashtewale family in music, it did not motivate or influence their entrance into this field. As the foregoing chapters have shown, the forces that conditioned the family’s participation in music were far removed from the imperatives of nationalism.

The only heir to this hereditary and now professional musical lineage is Mrs. Jyoti Thakar (b.1956). From her early childhood until 1975, Jyoti learned sitar in the city of Bhopal from her father, Vasudev. She then married and moved to the home of her in-laws in Pune, where she continued studying under two non-Ashtewale students of Bhaiya Saheb, Krishna Gadgil (1920-1989) and Narayan Gadgil (1922-1998). Jyoti is the first woman in the family to pursue music professionally, though unaffiliated to any institution. The ways in which Jyoti's pursuit of music intersects and often collides with her gender, class, religion, and family history (i.e., the multiplicity of her identity [Lowe 1996]) is deserving of separate treatment.

CONCLUSION

The history of Hindu-Muslim discipleship in the Ashtewale family, which lasted for approximately one hundred years from the 1820s to the 1920s, demonstrates that the claim to Muslim intransigence was simply inaccurate; Muslim hereditary professionals, whether heterodox or orthodox, taught students outside of

their family, and this fact, along with the strategic accommodations that Dard Neuman discusses, explains how a generalized shift in professionals from hereditary to non-hereditary (both Muslim and Hindu) was accomplished in the twentieth century. However, this chapter has also shown that traditional ustads did, in fact, enact a certain amount of resistance to sharing their art, particularly when it came to playing for ill-mannered audiences and having their records played in public commercial spaces—in other words, situations that were felt to compromise their honor and integrity as elite musicians. What I have argued is that this type of resistance, rather than being a trait that distinguished professionals from patrons and Muslims from Hindus, was actually something that brought these apparent poles together. The origins of this synchrony lay in the crucible of discipleship, wherein both the Ashtewale family and the Muslims who taught them forged mutual dispositions I have termed jahgirdari and ustadi. Certainly by the early decades of the twentieth century there was much that threatened to divide this family from their teachers, whether the narrow politics of Hindu nationalism or the cultural expression of this politics in the musical reform movement and its claim to a monopoly on religiosity. The fact that ties between these families did not last past the mid-twentieth century may be considered evidence for the eventual success of these forces. Nevertheless, stories of a tradition of Hindu-Muslim discipleship remain. If nothing else, they serve as an alternative imaginary beyond the limitations of the present.

CONCLUSION

The motivation of Brahmans to take up classical music in the early nineteenth century (Part One) cannot be reduced to any single determining factor, whether the indirect consequences of colonialism, reflected in the hereditary pension that the Ashtewales received (Chapter One); the precedent for Hindustani musical patronage established by the Mughalized, Maratha-ruling elite in North India, such as the Sindiya family of Gwalior where the Ashtewales lived (Chapter Two); the alternative (and speculative) notion that early Brahmans imagined themselves to be participating in an ancient, pre-Mughal Hindu tradition (Chapter Three), or some other factor that this dissertation has failed to address.

Certainly it was not the case that the Ashtewales were prohibited from participating in this music by a jealously guarded Muslim monopoly (Part Two). The notion of a Muslim dominance has never been a static one, but developed in subtle increments over a period of more than a century and through the writings of authors from a divergent array of subject positions (Chapter Four). It is a notion, furthermore, that grew up in tandem with the increasing communalization of musicians' identities over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, suggesting that the primary "shift" in the population of musicians was not from one ready-made oppositional identity to another, from Muslim to Hindu, but towards a greater definition of those very categories of identity (Chapter Five). In contrast to this narrative of a Muslim dominance, the history of Hindu-Muslim discipleship in the Ashtewale family

(Chapter Six) has allowed us to see other possibilities, such as the mutually constructive dispositions of ustadi and jahgirdari, the former of which helps us reinterpret the occasional reluctance of some professional musicians to perform in undesirable contexts as a kind of upper-class elitism and not as an expression of their unwillingness to teach or share knowledge beyond their kin or extended relations.

Accounting for the various historical imperatives that lay behind the Ashtewales' transformation into patrons and performers of music in the early nineteenth century is significant because it illuminates an alternative impetus for Brahman participation in classical music beyond nationalism, and questions the commonly held assumption of a previous Muslim monopoly in music. Their story therefore cautions us against applying the current weight of polarized identities to contexts that predate this polarization. Indeed, the continuous link that this family holds with this past may offer alternatives to this polarization even in the present.

ROMANIZATION SYSTEMS FOR DEVANAGARI

Devanagari ¹	Hunterian ²	IAST	UN	Kyoto- Harvard	ALA-LC	ISCII	ISO
Vowels							
अ	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
आ	ā / a ³	ā	ā	A	ā	ā	ā
इ	i	i	i	i	i	i	i
ई	ī / i ⁴	ī	ī	I	ī	ī	ī
उ	u	u	u	u	u	u	u
ऊ	ū	ū	ū	U	ū	ū	ū
ऋ	ri	ṛ	ṛ	R	ṛ	ṛ	ṛ
ए	e	e	e ⁵	e	e	e ⁵	e ⁵
ऐ	ai	ai	ai ⁶	ai	ai	ai	ai
ओ	o	o	o ⁵	o	o	o ⁵	o ⁵
औ	au	au	au ⁶	au	au	au	au
ँ / अँ	–	–	ă	–	ê	ê	ê
ऑ	–	–	–	–	ô	ô	ô
Velar							
क	ka	ka	ka	ka	ka	ka	ka
क़	qa	–	qa	–	qa	qa	qa
ख	kha	kha	kha	kha	kha	kha	kha
ख़	kha	–	ḵha	–	<u>kha</u>	<u>kha</u>	<u>kha</u>
ग	g	ga	g	g	ga	ga	ga
ग़	gh	–	ḡa	–	<u>gha</u>	<u>gha</u>	ḡa
घ	gh	gha	gha	gha	gha	gha	gha
ङ	ng	ṅa	ṅa	G	ṅa	ṅa	ṅa
Palatal							
च	cha	ca	cha	ca	ca	ca	ca
छ	chha	cha	chha	cha	cha	cha	cha
ज	ja	ja	ja	ja	ja	ja	ja
ज़	za	–	za	–	za	za	za
झ	jha	jha	jha	jha	jha	jha	jha
ञ	ny	ña	ña	J	ña	ña	ña

Devanagari ¹	Hunterian ²	IAST	UN	Kyoto-Harvard	ALA-LC	ISCI ²	ISO
Retroflex							
ट	ta	ṭa	ṭa	T	ṭa	ṭa	ṭa
ठ	tha	ṭha	ṭha	Tha	ṭha	ṭha	ṭha
ड	da	ḍa	ḍa	D	ḍa	ḍa	ḍa
ड़	ra	–	ṛa	–	ṛa	ḍa	ṛa
ढ	dha	ḍha	ḍha	Dha	ḍha	ḍha	ḍha
ढ़	rha	–	ṛha	–	ṛha	ḍha	ṛha
ण	na	ṇa	ṇa	N	ṇa	ṇa	ṇa
Dental							
त	ta	ta	ta	ta	ta	ta	ta
थ	tha	tha	tha	tha	tha	tha	tha
द	da	da	da	da	da	da	da
ध	dha	dha	dha	dha	dha	dha	dha
न	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
Labial							
प	pa	pa	pa	pa	pa	pa	pa
फ	pha	pha	pha	pha	pha	pha	pha
फ़	fa	–	fa	–	fa	fa	fa
ब	ba	ba	ba	ba	ba	ba	ba
भ	bha	bha	bha	bha	bha	bha	bha
म	ma	ma	ma	ma	ma	ma	ma
Semivowels							
य	ya	ya	ya	ya	ya	ya	ya
र	ra	ra	ra	ra	ra	ra	ra
ल	la	la	la	la	la	la	la
व	wa / va ⁷	va	va	va	va	va	va
Silabants							
श	sa / sha	śa	sha	za	śa	śa	śa
ष	sha	ṣa	ṣha	Sa	sha	ṣa	ṣa
स	sa	sa	sa	s	sa	sa	sa
Glottal							
ह	ha	ha	ha	ha	ha	ha	ha
ळ	l	l̥	l̥	–	l̥	l̥	l̥
Nasalization							
ँ	m / n ⁸	m̃	m̃ ⁹	M	m̃ ⁹	m̃ ⁹	m̃ ⁹
ं	m	ṃ	ṃ ⁹	–	ṃ	ṃ	ṃ ¹⁰

¹ For more details on the information contained in this table, including the references consulted and the full names and years of the systems, see my note on the use of foreign words in the preliminary pages of this dissertation. Most of the systems covered here allow for several additional Devanagari characters peculiar to languages other than Hindi and Marathi, such as the short and long vocalic l (ल and लः) and the long vocalic r (रः). I have not included these, as I am only concerned with Hindi and Marathi. It should also be mentioned that fine distinctions between Hindi and Marathi orthography, such as the shape of *kh* and *l*, for example, are not reflected here.

² I have been unable to locate a contemporaneous source that lays out Hunter's system in detail. My description of Hunter's system therefore relies on Penderson's, and on the brief comparison between Hunter's system and the UN system made in the United Nations' *Technical Reference Manual for the Standardization of Geographical Names* (2007:27).

³ If word ending, then *a* is adopted.

⁴ If word ending, then *i* is adopted.

⁵ Several southern languages, such as Tamil and Malyalam, contain short versions of the vowels *e* and *o*, rendered in Devanagari as ऐ and औ respectively. Some transliteration schemes, including this one, allow for the inclusion of the short *e* and *o* when used for languages that contains them. For these languages ऐ and औ are transliterated as the unmarked *e* and *o* respectively, and the "long" vowels ए and ओ, which go unmarked when transliterated from Hindi and Marathi, take a macron (*ē* and *ō*). This alternative rendering is often stated negatively: "As Northern scripts do not have short ऐ and औ, the long vowel ए and ओ can also be rendered without diacritic mark as 'e' and 'o' respectively" (ISCII-91 33).

⁶ The 2003 UN report stated that, "if each letter of a digraph or any two parts of a trigraph has a distinct independent sound then it should be indicated by a hyphen, thus d-h" (ISCII-91, p.33). The report did not, however, make this observation regarding the Marathi pronunciations of *ai* and *au*, which might thus alternatively be rendered as *a-i* and *a-u*.

⁷ *v* is marked as exceptional, coming before *i*, for example.

⁸ *m* if labial and *n* if dental.

⁹ Several options are available for the transliteration of this nasalization, which is termed as anusvar (*anusvār*) (lit., "after-sound") and rendered in Devanagari by a superscript dot. The simplest option, represented in the table, is to transliterate it as either *m̐* or *m̄*. This option, however, does not indicate whether the anusvar represents the nasalization of a vowel, or a specific nasal consonant, and if so, which one. Assuming the latter (nasal consonant), anusvar could be more specifically transliterated as *n̐*, *ṅ̐*, *ṇ̐*, *n̄* or *m̄* depending on the class of the consonant that follows. Thus, anusvara before a consonant of the velar class (starting with क) becomes *n̐*; before the palatal group (starting with च), *ṅ̐* and so on. If the anusvara instead represents the nasalization of a vowel, then a tilde is indicated above the vowel. If a diphthong (*ai* and *au*), then the second letter receives the tilde.

¹⁰ If the chandrabindu represents the nasalization of a vowel, it takes the form of a tilde above the vowel. In the case of two-letter vowels (*ai* and *au*), the second letter receives the tilda. If representing the nasalization of a semi-vowel (*y*, *r*, *l*, *l̥* or *v*), the chandrabindu is given to the preceding letter.

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