

**Interlocking dimensions in Hindustani music:
texts of *caitī*, *kajrī*, and *jhūlā***

Dissertation

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“ महाशून्य
वह महामौन
अविभाज्य, अनाप्त, अद्रवित, अप्रमेय
जो शब्दहीन
सब में गाता है ”

अज्ञेय

(‘असाध्य वीणा’, आँगन के पार द्वार १९६१)

*“The great nothingness,
that great silence,
indivisible, unattained, unfathomable, inscrutable,
that, wordless,
sings in everything”*

Ajñeya

(‘Asādhyā vīṇā’, Āṅgan ke pāṛ dvār, 1961)

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Abbreviations and signs

| | |
|-------|--|
| A. | Arabic |
| Bhoj. | Bhojpuri |
| Brbh. | Braj bhāṣā |
| BSK | <i>Braj bhāṣā sūr koś</i> |
| cf. | <i>confer</i> (compare) |
| f. | feminine |
| H. | Hindi |
| KK | <i>Kajlī Kādambinī</i> , Premghan, 1913. |
| m. | masculine |
| MCG | McGregor, R.S. 1993. <i>Oxford Hindi—English Dictionary</i> . Oxford University Press. |
| MW | Monier-Williams. 2002. <i>Sanskrit English Dictionary</i> . |
| OED | <i>Oxford English Dictionary</i> (online) |
| P. | Persian |
| Skt. | Sanskrit |
| s.v. | <i>sub verbo</i> (under headword in a dictionary) |
| U. | Urdu |
| ≈ | equivalent to |
| — | <i>vide supra</i> (see above) |

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Note on transliteration

In the transliteration of words originally in Devanāgarī script and in the use of Hindi words, I have adhered to the method adopted by McGregor (*Oxford Hindi-English Dictionary*, 1993) mediating between a phonetic transcription and scientific transliteration. Therefore, I have opted for the transliteration system of Sanskrit omitting the ‘a’ when silent. Sanskrit terms are written in their conventional transliteration system universally accepted by scholars when they appear in a specific Sanskrit context, otherwise, the system for Hindi has been used. Sanskrit words in common use—such as *vaiṣṇava*, *praṇa*, *saṃsāra* etc.—are written according to the system of Sanskrit. Hindi terms in common use—such as yoga, Hindu, Hindustani, Sufi etc.—which have entered the English dictionary, are written with their English spelling. In my translations, terms appearing with different spellings, have been conformed to their standard Hindi form (e.g., Kanhaiyā). Place names and names of contemporary authors and performers are given in their anglicised form, without diacritic marks except when they appear in compositions.

Language names have been written in their established English spelling, except for Braj bhāṣā, Khaṛī bolī, Avadhī, and Apabramśa.

For the quotation of secondary sources, the system used by the writer is followed.

Names of *rāg*-s and *tāl*-s are capitalised and written in standard non-italic fonts as well as names of months, *melā*-s, *tīj*-s, *vrāt*-s, and *pūjā*-s.

Names of music genres (such as *caitī*, *kajrī* etc.) are in lowercase italics and pluralised with ‘-s’ when used to refer to compositions of the same genre (e.g., *caitī*-s, *kajrī*-s etc.).

Introduction

Some of the most widespread genres of Hindustani music—the music of North India—stem from a confluence and unique combination of aspects belonging to the folk culture of rural areas and models drawn from a codified urban tradition. This is the case for a rich variety of forms dubbed as ‘semi-classical’, ‘light-classical’, and ‘intermediate’, as they are located between the conventionally defined domains of ‘folk’ and ‘classical’. These genres are characterised by elements usually described as ‘classical’ and by flexibility, both from a musical point of view as well as on the level of text content and topics. Among them, *thumrī* and its related forms of *dādrā*, *ṭappā*, *horī*, *caitī*, *kajrī*, and *jhūlā* are found, along with the *bhajan* and *kīrtan*, expressions of popular Hindu devotion, and *qavvalī* and *gāzal*, associated respectively with Sufī and Islamic tradition. All these forms occupy a marginal position within an ideal hierarchy of traditional music genres, dominated by *dhrupad* and *khayāl*, which are considered as quintessential ‘art’ or ‘classical’ music, given their strict adherence to codified rules related to the mode (*rāg*) and rhythmic pattern (*tāl*).

The present work intends to explore and analyse three among those intermediate forms—namely *caitī*, *kājīrī*, and *jhūlā*—that, due to their ‘liminal’ status, challenge easy categorisation and, therefore, have been rather neglected by scholarly attention. Indeed, the discourse on music genres offers revealing glimpses of socio-political phenomena, religious aspects, and, in general, sets of values shared within a community. This dissertation aims not only at describing some underestimated music forms and their song-texts but, more importantly, at providing a wider picture of certain fundamental issues finding expression in music. In this light, remarks on rituals, traditions, social practices, cultural politics, folklore, and literary conventions—necessary for the contextualisation of the genres presented here—go into the direction of making this work valuable also in the field of post-colonial and gender studies. Song texts along with certain performative traditions deeply reflect society, culture, and politics to the extent that they can be regarded as ‘social texts’ (Shepherd 1991). Compositions, in a heterogeneous language and spanning from the *bhakti* period until post-colonial and contemporary India, are explored in their ‘pre-textual and ‘contextual’ life (Pellò 2015: 303) and are considered in an overarching perspective informed by anthropological, sociological, and linguistic attention as well. This critical analysis has been integrated with and corroborated by extended participant observation which offered the opportunity to observe from a

privileged standpoint musical, performative practices, and rituals by accessing contexts otherwise difficult to explore.

Chapter I of this dissertation begins with tackling the problem inherent to some musicological key concepts and their related terminology applied to the Indian context. Widespread definitions such as ‘semi-classical’ are indeed controversial, blurred, and result from an adaptation of the concepts of *ardhśāstrīya* and *upsāstrīya saṅgīt*. These labels, although functional for descriptive purposes, reveal to a certain extent a history of marginalisation for genres showing indeed their own specificity and idiosyncrasies.

Since ad hoc criteria for the definition of semi-classical music—and even for consistent classification of a genre—were absent in the Indian context, the subordination to codified ‘art’ forms appears to be motivated by nonconformity to the rules of *rāg* and *tāl*, folk origins, and association with the courtesan tradition.

Chapter II outlines the musical domain aptly defined by ethnomusicologist Manuel as the ‘intermediate sphere of Hindustani music’ as characterised by heterogeneous forms and genres identified as semi-classical (Manuel 2015b). It has been argued that devotion (*bhakti*) and the courtly culture of the *darbār* have constituted the two primary models shaping Hindustani music (Neuman 1990). A third ‘matrix’, the courtesan tradition, presents aspects of the former two models, and indeed goes beyond them. For this reason, it turns out to be instructive of the multifariousness of polyvalent music forms that have been long overlooked and simplistically described. The *bhakti* milieu and *sant* literature mainly moulded content and formal features, whereas the courtly model framed mainly the performative context.

Chapter III explores the main motifs and characters as portrayed in the intermediate music genres related to *ṭhumrī*. Theoretical frameworks codified in ancient Sanskrit literature are referred to, along with characters typically inhabiting the lyrics of North Indian folk songs.

Chapters IV, V, and VI analyse in detail the music forms of *caitī*, *kajrī*, and *jhūlā* respectively. Their origins, idiosyncrasies, and ‘intra-genre heterogeneity’ are investigated also in their performative context. Literary compositions not set to music and existing solely as poems are examined and contextualised within the ideological orientation and production of their authors. Cognate seasonal music expressions are also commented upon.

Chapter VII examines prototypical features of the text of the intermediate music genres from structural, linguistic, and stylistic points of view.

The second part of the dissertation contains an anthology of *caitī*, *kajrī*, and *jhūlā* compositions which are grouped thematically, translated, and analysed in their distinguishing traits. Imagery, motifs, intra-textual, and contextual references—to literary models, folk traditions, religious practices, customs, and rituals—are explained in the commentary. Translation choices, word derivation, and relevant paraphrases are provided when prompted by the text. The division by subject-matter is intended to facilitate the individuation of significant tropes.

The conclusion provides relevant remarks and general observations about the significance of the intermediate music forms appraised not so much and exclusively for their aesthetic value as for their versatility being emblematic of an entire cultural sphere and insightful on some fundamental aspects of life in North India.

The appendix includes a table that summarises the related season, the main motifs, the principal types, the *rāg* and *tāl*, and the religious festivals associated with each intermediate, *ṭhumrī*-allied form. The second part of the appendix contains a table with all synonyms and synonymic expressions referring to the main characters and core motifs of the song texts analysed in this work.

Methodology and motivation

The present work is based on an interdisciplinary approach drawing from multiple domains including literary studies, ethnomusicology, and linguistics.

Most of the research was carried out during multiple stays in India in 2016, 2018, and 2019 and articulated in two main phases. The first stage involved the acquisition of the relevant literature in Hindi and collection of texts taken from rare anthologies and heterogeneous material found mainly in the libraries of the Sangeet Natak Akademi and Sahitya Akademi (Delhi), BHU, the Nagri Pracarini Sabha (Varanasi), the National Library (Kolkata) and provided by the head of the World Bhojpuri Organization in Banaras. The collection of the relevant material often proved to be particularly difficult given the scarcity and unavailability of written texts. For oral texts, hours spent listening to audio recordings at the Archive of North Indian Classical Music at Jadavpur University (Kolkata) and subsequent conversations with experts provided precious insights on the topic.

The second fundamental experience that greatly contributed to my understanding was fieldwork conducted as a participant-observer. As a student of Hindustani art music myself, I spent time living in and amongst my Gurujī's vibrant musical family, proponents of the *Banāras gharānā*. It is here that I was first exposed to (*horī*), *caitī*, *kajrī*, and *jhūlā*, the focus of this dissertation. The exposure to these intermediate music forms through the study of music was the inspiration and motivation behind pursuing this investigation.

Throughout my time researching this kind of music, I had the opportunity to attend innumerable concerts, *melā*-s, and *daṅgal*-s performed both in formal and informal or family contexts. I have recorded and transcribed some of the compositions presented on those occasions in the following anthology. The process of transcription has been made more complex by the existence of different variants of some verses and compositions. In this case, I have considered the most widespread and known versions. Notably, a deeper understanding of the genres has indeed been gained through dialogues with practitioners, performers, aficionados, and scholars. For the interpretation of the texts, I relied on the mediation of native speakers who sometimes could unriddle the symbolism expressed through imagery pertaining to very specific contexts. Different has been the case for translation that had to measure with difficulties inherent to the language of the majority of the compositions. Indeed, it is an idiom resisting facile categorisation. At times it is

Braj bhāṣā, as in Bhārtendu and Premghan’s lyrics; in other cases, it is clearly Bhojpuri or is akin to Sādhukkarī bhāṣā. In an attempt to codify an often obscure language, I have resorted to several linguistic tools (quoted in the reference list at the end of the present work) that, however, could not provide an adequate response to all translation problems. Even native speakers—among which Hindi experts, performers, and vocalists—often gave contradictory and conflicting interpretations on the meaning of certain lyrics.

The definition of “*The Intermediate Sphere in North Indian music culture between and beyond “Folk” and “Classical”*” (2015) coined by Peter Manuel has represented the starting point and theoretical grounding for this dissertation, along with his other insightful writings. Lalita du Perron’s works, especially *Hindi Poetry in a Musical Genre—Thumrī lyrics* (2007), laid the foundations for a study based on linguistic and textual facts that shed light on the cultural and social background of the genre. Some basic notions inherent to the Hindustani music tradition expounded by Daniel Neuman (1990, *The Life of Music in North India—The Organization of an Artistic Tradition*) has offered significant points to consider.

Finally, the ethnomusicological studies on by Edward O. Henry (*Chant the Names of God: Musical Culture in Bhojpuri-Speaking India, Social Structure and Music: Correlating Musical Genres and Social Categories in Bhojpuri-Speaking India*”, 1988, *Jogīs and Nirgun Bhajans in Bhojpuri-Speaking India: Intra-Genre Heterogeneity, Adaptation, and Functional Shift*, 1991) have provided fundamental references.

Part I. Hindustani music and intermediate genres

Chapter I: The question of terminology in Indian musicology

1. Some musicological key concepts

Since several theoretical concepts in Indian music and musicology seem to have been moulded, adapted or, however, influenced by Western constructs, it is necessary to specify, in the first place, the meaning in the present context of the notions of ‘classical’, ‘folk’, and ‘popular’ music along with terms ‘genre’, ‘style’, and ‘authenticity’, originally envisioned in Western categories of thought. Hence, specific conceptualisations, such as ‘*gharānā*’ and ‘tradition’, deserve special attention.

1.1 The concept of ‘classical music’

Although the concepts of ‘classical’, ‘classic’, and ‘classicism’ were born in Europe to denote specific cultural phenomena and their outcomes, they have been expanded and applied to non-Western contexts as well with different connotations. The term ‘classical’ has a wide range of meanings and implies a plurality of culture-bound assumptions. In the Western world, there are many uses of the word ‘classical’ or ‘classicism’. In art history, it primarily refers to Greco-Roman civilisation and it is extended to periods, as the Italian Renaissance, characterised by art production inspired by that civilisation. Attributes of ‘antiquity’ and ‘archaism’ appear to be salient features of what is defined as ‘classicism’. Furthermore, the designation of ‘classical’ acquired over time an aura of truth and authority and, in many cases, dogmatism. From that, the ideation of ‘classical’ equates ‘superior art’ arose (Zerner 1988: 35).

In Western music, the term ‘classical’ is used to describe the art of the late XVIII century and the beginning of the XIX century, although no general consensus has been achieved among historians of music about the precise boundaries of the concept of ‘classicality’ (*Ibid.*: 36). In the European context, the notion of ‘classicism’ came to refer to a “performing repertory of music from the past, which is valued as a set of masterpieces, as models for judgements of new works” (Weber 1981: 100). Therefore the ‘classical’ represents a milestone and sets the ultimate attainment, the ideal of beauty of the aesthetic form.¹ It might be consequently inferred that establishing the ‘classics’ can be considered a process preliminary to the definition of ‘classicism’.

¹ According to Weber, the works of Handel are set as a milestone for further comparison (Weber 1981: 100).

Zerner argues that as the classical represents the norm and establishes a model, it necessarily implies the existence and imposition of a hierarchy. The art labelled as ‘classical’ is considered the highest one and placed at the top of such an imposed ideal pyramid. This inevitably involves an assertion of power and authority for what is considered dominant (Zerner 1988: 36).

In this regard, it is interesting to note the existence of a sociological nuance of the word ‘classical’ which adds a further dimension to the whole concept. As matter of fact, the ‘classical’ is, to a certain extent, related to the concept of ‘class’ generally perceived as pertaining to the culture of restricted, elite groups far from the mass and laymen.

Karnatak vocalist T.M. Krishna, an exponent of the stream of ‘counter thinking’ on the classical, has attempted to deconstruct this concept in the context of Indian music. He points out that the term ‘classical’ hints at something ancient, or particularly old, whereas the form is indeed modern, having developed only in the last few centuries. The main reason that Krishna challenges the notion of ‘classical’ is related to the specific sociological significance inherent to the denomination that links it to the concepts of social class and the caste system. In his perspective, music forms considered ‘high art’ eventually result from social inequalities, elitism, dynamics of conflict, and ideologies such as nationalism and revivalism (Vajpey 2015). The label ‘classical’, often viewed as a synonym of ‘high art’, typically involves certain expectations. It implies that the music defined as such is the outcome of a long-standing tradition, it is serious, austere, codified, and highly structured. It follows that its rigorous and systematised character makes it not easily accessible to an untrained audience and, therefore, a prerogative of the elites. In the context of Hindustani music, an equivalent of ‘classical’ has been found in the apparently univocal expression *śāstriya* (lit. ‘scientific’, ‘canonical’ music) which indicates literally the music based on *śāstra*-s, i.e., ancient treaties. However, such a definition, unbiased as it may seem, has been the object of a scholarly debate: according to ‘counter thinkers’, it would be grounded on a connection between music and normative literature that further reinforces the aura of authority, hieraticity, and sophistication associated with the so-defined ‘classical music’. As Vajpeyi has noted, the term *śāstra* involves a reference to rigorous discipline (*sādhana*), hard training, and practice (*riyāz*), continuous self-improvement, and solid preparation (*taiyārī*). All these aspects of ‘classical music’ “take it out of the realm of the spontaneous” (Vajpey 2015, para. II). Likewise, furthermore, they would hint at “aristocratic and spiritual overtones” (Dennen 2010: 149-179).

The concept of ‘classical’ acquires further meaning and specifically comes to indicate ‘art music’ especially when used in juxtaposition to music forms generally labelled as ‘folk’ or ‘popular’. Both the words, thus, come to designate two polar opposites. In the Indian context, it is difficult to find a clear, precise, and consistent definition of both the denominations; furthermore, as already noted, the terminology has been developed under the influence of European categories of thought (Allen 1998). However, it can be said that the modern debate and mainstream discourse have relied upon and elaborated ancient indigenous concepts, starting from the binary distinction between *mārga* (lit. ‘way’, ‘path’) and *deśī* (‘regional’ or ‘provincial’) *saṅgīta*. This dichotomy appears to first be introduced in *Bṛhad-deśī*, a VII-IX century treatise attributed to Mataṅga and was further incorporated in the XIII century work *Saṅgītaratnākara* by Śārṅgadeva.

South Indian musicologist Sambamurthy identifies *mārga saṅgīta* with Vedic music and describes it as “the art music of the land [...] different than the folk music, which was current amongst the lower strata of society” (Sambamurthy 1984: 105).

The differences between *mārga* and *deśī saṅgīta* have been extensively outlined and debated by scholars. Lewis Rowell who pinpoints that the distinction between the two categories is “essentially historical”, summarises their main features as follows (1992: 12):

| <i>mārga</i> | <i>deśī</i> |
|---|---|
| The classical phase of the ancient Indian musical theater | The vernacular phase, beginning ca A.D. 500 |
| A central ‘Great’ tradition | Many regional ‘Little Traditions’ |
| Primarily Sanskrit texts | Song texts in both Sanskrit and various provincial languages |
| A strict practice of composition | A relatively free practice, moving toward improvisation |
| Employed in the ritual theater music | Music for entertainment modelled upon the incidental music of the early theatre |
| Melodies based on the <i>jātīs</i> and <i>grāmarāgas</i> | Melodic basis expanded to include later types of <i>rāgas</i> |

It is interesting to note that in the context of historical linguistics the term *deśī* is found in reference to the traditional tripartite classification of Prakrit lexicon, where *deśī*

indicates “regional terms neither identical with Sanskrit etyma nor derivable from them” (Klein, Joseph, and Fritz 2017: 318).²

The term *deśī* has been used in combination with its counterpart *mārga* in performative arts, literature, poetry and, more recently, in modern linguistics (Rodríguez 2016).³

Some scholars state that the original significance of the terms *mārga* and *deśī* appears to be quite different from the meanings attributed later to ‘classical’, ‘folk’, and ‘popular’ music or, more generally, ‘non-classical’ forms. It has been observed that the translation ‘folk’ for *deśī* covers only partially the original meaning of the word. Since the adjective ‘folk’ has been used in opposition to ‘classical’ to denote unsophisticated and uncultivated musical traditions, the equation *deśī*/‘music of the masses and illiterate ones’ followed as a consequence of such view. In fact, the *deśī* music described by Maṭaṅga seems to include both what in modern times have been generally described as ‘folk’ and ‘classical’ music. According to Mukund Lath, both the categories are comprised in the original definition of *deśī*, rather than being opposed to each other. An alternative approach already present in Maṭaṅga’s systematisation—which seems more appropriate in the Indian context—consists in considering “*how* [music] is made” instead of “*who* makes it” (Lath 1988: 45). This debate became relevant on the basis of the observation that some forms of village music practised by untrained people show a high degree of sophistication; the only effective criterion for distinguishing them from ‘classical’ music was belonging to a social group (Neuman 1990).

Throughout the centuries, the term ‘classical’ has come to designate the prescribed forms of the “major, canonical, classical tradition”, whereas the latter “has come to mean all regional, localized, village traditions” (Babiracki 1991: 71). The shifting of meaning in the terminology has occurred as a result of an overlap of European categories of thought and indigenous concepts (Allen 1998: 25). This binary system has been applied to explain developments in culture in general. The model that postulates the existence of a ‘Great’ and ‘Little’ tradition(s) parallels the *deśī-mārga* distinction recognised in earlier times. First introduced in the 1950s by Redfield, the theory of a ‘Great’ and ‘Little’ tradition was later developed by American anthropologists Marriott and Singer in the context of Indian civilisation. They recognise the existence of a ‘Great Tradition’ based on a body of knowledge rooted in the ancient Sanskrit and Persian texts and identified with the

² See also Drocco 2012.

³ The same categories have been applied, at the end of the XX century, also to contemporary Indian literature in English along with the concept of ‘nativism’.

major religious systems (i.e., Hinduism and—to a lesser extent—Islam), and a ‘Little Tradition’ made of the many different regional and local cultural practices that find expression in folklore.

The anthropological theory turned out to be a potentially useful tool to describe, understand, and attempt to organise the striking diversity of Indian musical forms. It has also been praised for providing a conceptual framework that explains possible interaction patterns between the two cultural trends, a model that accounts for the interplay between what came to be identified as ‘high’ or ‘classical’ culture and ‘low’ or ‘folk’ culture.

In studying the relationship between the art music tradition of urban areas and folk music typically performed in villages, ethnomusicologist Daniel Neuman states that “the distinction between folk and classical music is as clear cut as cultural categories in India” (Neuman 2015: 138). According to him, the relevance of the concepts of ‘Great’ and ‘Little’ tradition lies in their mechanism of interaction as “intellectual categories which have their basis in reality but are not mutually exclusive concepts” (*Ibid.*). While he suggests that there are elements clearly belonging to either one or the other cultural tradition, he underlines that the existence of components that cannot be unambiguously identified are indicative of the influence mutually exerted by the two poles.

If on the one hand, the ‘Great/Little tradition’ theoretical model can offer interpretative perspectives on the interplay and functions of different cultural streams, on the other hand, its formulation appears to be grounded on an inherent bias: value, relevance, and hegemony are accorded to one cultural system identified with the ‘great’ Sanskrit tradition rooted in written texts and an exclusive preserve of the Brahmanical elite (Satchidanandan 2010: 255-56).

Scholars have suggested using the label of ‘art music’ instead of ‘classical’. Several musicologists argue in favour of such a denomination “as it seems less laden with hierarchical implications and more directly descriptive—art music as simply a music which is presented and consumed as art” (Allen 1998: 4). Besides, it is worth noting that how ‘art music’ has come to indicate musical forms outside the realm of folk music (Sambamurthy 1984: 27).

In an attempt to democratise what mainstream discourse considers ‘classical’ art forms in India, T. M. Krishna proposes to use the definition of ‘art music’, making the appellation free from the nexus of religion, political ideology, social discrimination, and exclusion.

Given the absence of precise correspondence between Indic and Western terminology, a possible denomination for expressions identified by practitioners and audience as ‘art music’ could be the ‘indigenous’ label of *rāg saṅgīt*, i.e., the North Indian music based on the *rāg* system.

Similarly to what happened in the West, in India, during the first half of the XX century, the process of ‘classicisation’ of the culture was also promoted, primarily by nationalists. The creation of a ‘great’ Indian cultural heritage was one of the main concerns in creating and strengthening the national identity of a country that was moving towards Independence.

In Europe ‘folk and ‘art’ music became meaningful concepts only at the end of the XVIII and the beginning of the XIX centuries, and only in relation to each other. Nationalists motivated the earliest classification of music based on origins and from that arose notions of folk music and art music (Gelbart 2007).

At this point, it is necessary to account for the existing definitions of the labels ‘folk’ and ‘popular music’ and to focus on their meaning and significance, given the wide variety of nuances and implications derived from the use of such terminology in the Indian context.

1.2 The concepts of ‘folk’ and ‘popular’ music

The denomination ‘folk music’ is quite generic and it is commonly used to describe different kinds of music. It has equivalents in numerous languages and is applied to many different cultures with varying shades of meaning and overtones according to the historical and cultural context of reference.

The English term ‘folk’ in its current modern meaning is related to ‘folklore’. The word coined in 1846 by William Thoms paved the way for the use of the adjective ‘folk’ to designate an artistic expression “relating to the traditional art or culture of a community or nation” (Stevenson 2010: 679). Formulations of ‘folk music’ have elaborated and expanded the discussion started at the end of the XVIII century by the German philosopher Herder who considered ‘folk songs’ as the expression of ‘the people’ (*Volk*), linking the concept to the idea of ‘nation’.

The term ‘folk’ applied to music implies some controversial discussion and there is no universal consensus on its use. Debates on its appropriateness have taken place ever since the introduction of this category in musical discourse. Attempts have been made to

introduce alternative labels that, however, did not prove to be completely cogent. There are nonetheless some generally agreed parameters and core characteristics identified by scholars concerned with finding a satisfactory and exhaustive formulation. According to the definition given in 1954 by the International Music Council, there are three main features distinguishing folk music:

(1) continuity which links the present with the past; (2) variation which springs from the creative impulse of the individual or the group; and (3) selection by the community which determines the form or forms in which the music survives (Karpeles 1955: 6).

Other distinctive qualities of folk music are the association with different aspects of life, such as life-cycle rituals, seasons, specific circumstances and occasions, work, and religious practices. In this regard, differently from art music, it can be described as participatory more than a presentational form of expression. From such definitions, it is possible to pinpoint the concepts of ‘tradition’ and ‘identity’ behind the idea of ‘folk’. It is also based on this observation that the alternative label ‘traditional music’ has been introduced. Furthermore, a general trend of using the denomination ‘folk music’ for defining traditional art music of extra-European cultures and distinguishing them from the Western classical system should be taken into account (Nettl 2019).

The main factors involved in shaping folk music tradition are generally related to orality, anonymity, and a set of shared values within a specific social reality. These aspects are all interconnected and determine the very nature of the genre. It is clear that in the Indian context the above-mentioned criteria are to be ruled out as discriminating for an effective and entirely satisfactory distinction between art and folk music. Admittedly, not only music but all music knowledge in India—whether pertaining to the folk or so-called ‘classical’ domain—is traditionally oral and aural; be it based on the *guru-śiṣya paramparā* (‘master-disciple tradition’) or learned and transmitted in informal and small social groups, it is a form of *gurumukhī vidyā* (‘knowledge transmitted by word of mouth’). This holds true for other performing arts as well.

One of the main parameters defining folk music has been explained in terms of a lack of a fixed, standard form, and the tendency to be prone to change according to the context of performance. Both Indian art and folk music are characterised by these trends which, therefore, cannot function as indicators for a clear and coherent musical distinction.

In the mainstream musicological discourse, ‘folk music’ has long been described as the expression of lower socioeconomic classes often linked to the concept of illiteracy.

This observation does not prove to be valid in the Indian context in which oral tradition is a fundamental cultural component and cannot be simply defined in terms of modes of transmission. Scholars have pointed out that even the component of orality cannot be considered a defining parameter of the folk musical tradition, but it is a prominent feature of folk music, as well as more elaborated forms in the world of Indian music.

Some important questions arise on the appropriateness of the terms conventionally used as synonyms of ‘folk’. For instance, designations such as ‘tribal’ referred to music exhibit a certain degree of “ethnological bias” (Ranade 1998: 1). The term ‘folk’—despite all its implications—appears once again to be the most suitable, given its etymological value of something originating from or related to, or traditional to the common people of a country, a community, or a nation.

Folk music has been described further, as opposed to art music, in terms of attitude and motivation behind its production and fruition. In this sense, folk music is characterised by ‘extra-musical’ features such as functionality. Its link with different cultural aspects reveals that the societal component is predominant over the merely aesthetic value and, for this reason, it is often erroneously considered as scant of artistic appeal.

In the Indian context, and in fact in the field of non-Western music, the denomination ‘folk music’ is often inappropriately used as a byword for ‘popular music’. ‘Popular music’ is generally agreed to describe

music that achieves a sense of popularity or strives to be popular [...]. [It has] evolved as a generalization that encompasses multifarious musical styles and practices, much of which can be seen to be situated within a commercially driven entertainment-based industry [...]

The sociology of popular music remains important and social, collective dimensions play a significant part in both the production and consumption of the music. However, rather than pursuing an essentially singular and restricted definition of popular music, it is perhaps best to positively embrace its ambiguities and differences, and view popular music as a fluid, changing musical landscape that has certain recurring characteristics and concerns but also powerful potential to change as part of a drive towards diversification within an ongoing interaction of musical, social and economic discourses (Gloag and Beard 2005: 86).

Essential features of popular music concern the role of mass media in contributing to making music a commodity produced according to the logic of the market. Consistent with the commercialisation of popular music, a general trend emerged to consider the genre as inferior to ‘cultivated’ and ‘nobler’ music forms. The criticism of Adorno

marked the beginning and climax of such a negative interpretation of modern popular culture in all its forms.

Popular music constantly interacts and intermingles with folk music at local levels; not only in India but in all of South Asia, it has become a mainstream genre addressed to a heterogeneous audience and increasingly developed into the growth of pop stylisations of regional folk music. In India, a vast part of popular music is represented by film music (*filmī saṅgīt*) which provides a model for much of the popular music outside the world of cinema (Manuel 1988).

Although the very *raison d'être* of popular music would theoretically distinguish it from folk music, the close connection and interplay between the two make those labels blurred and often interchangeable. As pointed out by Manuel:

the application of labels “popular” and “folk” may be somewhat arbitrary, as the influence of the commodification and the media upon style may be difficult to assess (Manuel 1993: XIV).

1.3 The concept of ‘genre’

A music genre is conventionally described as a category of pieces of music that present certain features and key elements. It has been defined as

a set of musical events (real or possible) whose course is governed by a definite set of socially accepted rules (Fabbri 2004: 7).

The concept has long been neglected until British and American musicologists started writing about it, providing some critical insights and taking up ideas introduced first by German scholars. Dalhaus in the 1960s was one of the first to stress the importance of an approach encompassing both text and context. More recently, scholars have suggested the idea of genre as a multifaceted notion or, better, a “communicative concept” built on a set of conventions and patterns that conditioned the interpretation by the listeners (Kallberg 1988: 243).⁴ The social and cultural dimensions, thus, play a crucial role in moulding the construct of ‘genre’.

The observation that extra-musical components are determining factors in the shaping, understanding, and reception of a ‘genre’ has been the starting point of current theories. For instance, Samson emphasises that the relevance of what he calls ‘context’ is

⁴ The basic assumption here is that both the performer (and/or the composer) and the listener have at least an elementary knowledge to understand a genre or, at least, to discriminate it, appreciating the difference with other forms.

determined by the function of the genre and its validation by the community, beyond formal and technical regulations (Samson 1989: 214).

Several contemporary scholars criticise the concept of genre. It is considered neither useful nor productive, given the difficulties that it poses, especially in the field of popular music studies. Different attempts seem to have failed in theorising a category of the genre itself and focus instead on elements of 'style' that usually distinguish only a localised version of a particular style (Keenan 2008: 113). Frith, Negus, and Holt, among others, assert the importance of genre studies. The existing scholarship on the topic leaves numerous questions still open and is mainly concerned with providing a theoretical model of the concept of genre. Aspects such as the tendency of music genres to change over time, the relevance of the concept of music genre applied to musical practices and the influence of culture on the process of genre categorisation have not been extensively explored.

The importance of categories not *per se* but instead in relation to their use as potential structuring forces of musical life has drawn a growing scholarly interest. An approach that could provide a starting point for the description of the complexity of musical forms aptly addresses the necessity of "understanding rather than defining genre" (Holt 2007: 8).

1.4 The concept of 'style'

It is evident that the terms 'genre' and 'style' are often used interchangeably since, to a certain degree, their spheres of reference overlap.

The notion and definition of style provided in literary criticism differ from the one used in musicology and history of art. While the former focuses more on the peculiarity and specificity of a piece of art and emphasises the concept of deviation from norms and conventions, the latter accords greater importance to common, shared features. As argued by musicologist Moore, in cultural and media studies the denomination of 'genre' is predominantly preferred over the term 'style', which in turn is more commonly employed in musicology and in the field of popular music studies. In undertaking a comparison of the usage of this terminology, Moore highlights the fact that both 'genre' and 'style' result from a process of establishing hierarchical categories and certain types of relationship, specifically:

[...] There are three types of relationship, which obtain between the two terms as they are used. First, they are employed to cover broadly the same ground, but sometimes with different nuances. Secondly, they are again used to cover the same ground but the relationship is a nested one, so that style pertains only to a portion of that ground (Moore 2001: 432-433).

For this reason, it seems more appropriate to prefer “a third type of relationship where the terms have different areas of reference” (*Ibid.*: 433).

According to their most prevalent usage, both the appellations hint at the existence of a hierarchical dimension. Scholars, such as Fabbri and Tagg, claim that ‘style’ is subsidiary and subordinate to ‘genre’ and that the latter concept is socially defined and functions more as an umbrella term.

Academics have stressed the socio-cultural connotation of the term ‘style’ as well. Meyer defines style as

a replication of patterning, whether in human behaviour or in the artefacts produced by human behaviour, that results from a series of choices made within some set of constraints (Meyer 1989: 3).

In this definition, ‘style’ is characterised as operating within certain limitations resulting from enculturating processes and arranged according to a hierarchical order. He describes three kinds of constraints: laws, rules, and strategies. Laws are “transcultural, universal physical or physiological constraints” relating to the perception and cognition of musical patterns and parameters. Rules are “intracultural, not universal” and are the “highest, most encompassing level of stylistic constraints”, which mark and distinguish different historical periods. The last type of constraint is represented by “strategies” that can be described as “compositional choices” made within the set of rules of a specific style; there are innumerable strategies within a finite number of rules. In Meyer’s view, changes occurring in styles are mainly due to different combinations of “traits” or a “cluster of traits” (Meyer 1989: 13). Furthermore, he asserts that in the style, the influence exerted by the past is a result of choices made in the present. In the Indian context, these observations seem to be particularly relevant.

According to several scholars, the concept of genre appears to be convenient as an organising system or in its function of setting conventions. Moore underlines how the conceptualisation of a “genre-system” in media studies and film theory has influenced positions of mainstream musicological discourse. The definition of genre as “a cultural practice that attempts to structure some order into the wide range of texts and meanings that circulate in our culture for the convenience of both producers and audience” (Fiske

1987: 109) developed with television culture and has turned out to be satisfying for music genres as well. Kallberg suggests conceiving genre as operating within the listener's set of expectations through specific conventions and patterns that activate the memory and the basis of comparison with similar texts (Kallberg 1988: 243).

The dimensions of 'commonality' and 'cohesion' has been central in the formulations of ethnomusicologists in the field of folklore studies.⁵

The multitude of definitions existing on the basic concepts of genre and style, in musicology and its related disciplines, poses several questions. The lack of consensus on the subject matter further challenges drawing a conclusion. In this regard, Moore provides a pertinent remark worth quoting:

there are four ways of distinguishing between the realms of reference of the two terms ['style' and 'genre']. First, style refers to the manner of articulation of musical gestures and is best considered as imposed on them. Genre refers to the identity and the context of those gestures. This distinction may be characterized in terms of 'what' an art work is set out to do (genre) and 'how' it is actualized (style). [...] Genre is normally explicitly thematized as socially constrained (Kallberg, Neale, Krims). Style, on the other hand, in its emphasis on technical features and appropriability (Moore 2001: 441).

From the above observations on an exhaustive definition of 'genre', 'style', and the classification of musical forms, it is clear that categorisation inevitably results in different manners and levels of abstraction. Nonetheless, this process should not be regarded as pure speculation; it arises indeed from the necessity of description in the activity of investigation. All these concepts operate on a dimension that is rarely the outcome of a self-conscious or formal instruction, rather they are "internalised" (Meyer 1989: 10).

As far as the Indian context is concerned, in Hindi literature on Hindustani music, the term generally used to describe music genres is the '*śailī*' that literally can be translated as 'style'. The word is found also in the context of philology and literature, and it can be considered as an equivalent of the Western concept of style in its broadest sense. It is worth noting that '*śailī*' is used to describe what in Western terms is defined as 'genre'. Interestingly, the polysemous word '*jāti*', apparently more appropriate for describing a 'genre', has a completely different connotation when referring to music. '*Jāti*' literally means 'birth' and, by extension, 'community', 'caste group', 'genus', 'species', 'tribe', and 'nation' among its several connotations. The term was originally introduced to indicate groups of 'modes', a concept very similar to what later came to be known as *rāg*.

⁵ For instance, see Bohlman 1988.

Its earlier mentions are found in Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* (VI century) and in Dattila's *Dattilam* (I-IV century),⁶ whereas in the modern musical sense, the term '*jāti*' designates the number of notes of a *rāg* (musical mode).

In conclusion, denominations of 'style' and 'genre' are often used interchangeably, as synonyms, within Hindustani music. However, it is important to keep in mind that these denominations, given their particular significance and value, should not be considered exact equivalent to the corresponding Western terminology.

1.5 Authenticity

The notion of authenticity has been long debated in different fields, from literature to music and musicology. The concept is germane to musical discourse about performance, in reference to critical theory and popular music (Beard and Kenneth 2016).

There is no consensus about the features that make a piece of music 'authentic'. The necessity of describing authenticity has generated not only in the field of musicology a heated debate characterised by several approaches. The quality of 'authentic' has been variously equated to 'real', 'honest', 'truthful', 'with integrity', 'actual', 'genuine', 'essential', 'sincere' (Moore 2002: 209). Further meanings attributed to the concept of authenticity involve notions of 'uniqueness', 'purity', 'tradition', and 'originality'.

Definitions provided by dictionaries focus on the fundamental quality of being "essential(iez) real, actual, essence" (Taylor 1997: 21). Besides the main meanings of reliability and credibility, 'authenticity' is linked to the notion of authorship, characterising it as "of undisputed origin and not a copy, genuine" and "proceeding from its reputed source or author" (OED *s.v.*).

In common usage, the term, being positively loaded, often implies even the idea of "correctness or moral justice" (Schippers 2006: 337). In philosophical discourse, the adjective 'authentic' would refer to something or someone being true to one/it-self; consequently, 'authentic' has become "a just synonym for good" (Davison 2001: 264).

Definitions of 'authenticity' have been questioned in the field of music performance and aesthetics especially by British and American musicologists in the 1980s and 1990s,

⁶ There is no consensus about Dattila being a predecessor, contemporary, or even little later than Bharata (Nijenhuis 1970).

which followed the contributions of the so-called ‘Early Music Movement’⁷ of the 1950s and 1960s and the subsequent decade of debate in the 1970s.

In the Western context, there is a tendency to define ‘authenticity’ in music as ‘historically correct or informed’ performance:

The term ‘authenticity’ has been used in several senses relating to music. The most common use refers to classes of performance that might synonymously be termed ‘historically informed’ or ‘historically aware’ or employing ‘period’ or ‘original’ instruments and techniques. A concern with historical performing practices is a by-product of 19th-century historicism (Butt 2001).

The attempt to be faithful to the context of the original performance and, consequently, of recreating the musical experience of the original audience is often indicated among the qualities of authentic performance.

Furthermore, another value usually attached to ‘authenticity’ in music is the feature of “being unaffected by outside influence” (Schippers 2006: 338). Authenticity here is defined in terms of cultural and ethnographical ‘genuineness’.

Since the 1960s, following Merriam’s conceptualisation of music that exists *in* and *as* culture (Merriam 1964), it has been contended that authenticity relies on interpretation and is related to the cultural context or, better, is a cultural construction. In other words, it is not an attribute inherent to music, but it is ascribed *to*, rather than inscribed *in* its performance (Moore 2002; Rubidge 1996: 219). The idea of ‘construction of authenticity’ seems, therefore, to be central in musical discourse. Attributing authenticity represents a strategy of appropriation through which credence and value are conveyed to the contemporary (Middleton 1990). By doing so, cultural disruption is accurately avoided, and creative appropriation of conventional elements is placed along the continuum of the tradition. In this perspective, this process of ‘construction’ and ‘authentication’ is not distant from the controversial concept of the so-called ‘invention of a tradition’ elaborated by Hobsbawm⁸ (Moore 2002).

⁷ The definition of ‘Early Music’ refers to the European medieval, Renaissance, and early Baroque music. The Early Music Movement of the late XX century was particularly focused on the concept of musical performance practice. The term ‘Early Music’ has come to indicate “any music for which a historically appropriate style of performance must be reconstructed on the basis of surviving scores, treatises, instruments and other contemporary evidence” (Haskell 2001 in *in Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online, s.v.*).

⁸ Cf. Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983.

Since authenticity—far from being a value-free notion—is an elusive conceptualisation, it is of primary importance to define the criteria and approaches adopted in referring to it.

Authenticity, often associated with the concept of continuity, has been used as a parameter for standardisation, classification, and as a hallmark to make evaluations. In order to operate, authenticity has to be placed within a framework made by an audience with certain expectations. It has been argued that there are different kinds of authenticity applicable to musical performance, among which the so-called ‘personal’ and ‘sensible’ authenticity appear particularly relevant. The former type of authenticity refers to the performer’s own interpretation and aesthetic experience that may differ from the composer’s one. The latter concept describes the meaning and the significance that may be attached to a performance by its audience (Kivy 1995). The implications of such definitions stress the importance of the artist’s creativity and originality operating in the appreciation of the musical performance. Therefore, the debate extends to aesthetic questions as well.⁹ It is clear that ‘authenticity’ is a complex and multi-faceted notion that can be understood only in relation to the context.

In the Indic milieu, this conception seems to be quite flexible. From a musical perspective, authenticity is strictly related to the idea of ‘authority’ and, generally, it refers to the body of knowledge that has been passed through the tradition, sanctioned by the guru or *ustād*. According to this view, authenticity is identified with a legacy and a repertoire. In this way, tradition acts in conveying authenticity. Equating authenticity to tradition may imply attributing a static nature to the concept. However, traditions—far from being invariable—change and constantly mould themselves to adapt to ever-transforming contexts.

At this point, it is useful to make some observations that are specific to the perception and interpretation of the concept of ‘authority’ in the Indian sensibility. The first remarkable difference drawing the attention of a Western observer is certainly the relatively unstated importance of the author/composer. This phenomenon is a constant of the Indian culture in its entirety, from literature to music. Hawley, writing on *bhakti* poetry, has aptly observed the central role of authors’ authority rather than their authorship (Hawley 1988: 270). The whole conception of authority/authorship seems to “invite us to reconsider our preconceptions about the relation between art and life” (*Ibid.*)

⁹ It is interesting to note that cultural and personal aspects of authenticity can function as operating conditions affecting the cognitive elaboration of music. In this regard, see Wu, Spieß, Lehmann 2017.

For instance, the name of the author stated in a poem implies a lot more is than simply making clear the identity of the author. Authenticity here is not related to the idea of ‘originality’; on the contrary, the reference of composition to a certain literary tradition, or musical school, makes it familiar, stable, and trustworthy, anchoring it to a set of associations that validate a performance placing it in continuity with which is sanctioned by the tradition. In the light of the above observations, it does not seem pertinent to speak about ‘authenticity’, at least not in Western terms, without due clarifications. It is evident that the concept of authenticity has multiple facets and posits several problems as it has been widely used and differently interpreted. There has been a general tendency to employ such terminology superficially and inappropriately. Finally, it is also difficult to view the concept devoid of its ‘moralising’ connotation, when one “simply cannot get rid of its moral and ethical overtones” (Taruskin 1988: 137).

According to recent scholarly debate, the dismissal of the use of the word ‘authenticity’ in musical discourse would be more desirable. During the 1990s, the term became discredited and today it can be said that references to it are accurately avoided.

Besides being a conception derived from Western categories of thought, ‘authenticity’ appears to be a value-laden term with numerous implications that demand a culturally specific framework for understanding concepts that have to be detached from the significance they commonly bear in order to be re-signified in the culture of reference.

1.6 *Gharānā*-s

The discourse on authenticity in the Indian context inevitably brings into play the concept of *gharānā*. The term *gharānā*—derived from ‘*ghar*’, meaning literally ‘house’—indicates the ‘household’, a lineage of hereditary musicians in Hindustani art music. As the etymology suggests, the idea of the house of a master is implied. *Gharānā*-s are named according to different criteria: the name of a geographical place—mainly of the locations of the courts where musicians performed—or the name of the founder/-s. Whereas the term generally used to designate a family of musicians is *khāndān* (‘clan’, ‘lineage’), the word ‘*gharānā*’ not only embodies the idea of kinship but it also designates a particular mode of transmission of musical knowledge. *Gharānā*-s can be ‘direct’ or ‘indirect’, depending on whether musical teachings are handed down to members of the family or, in the absence of offspring or talented successors, to disciples not bounded by any blood tie. The idea of pedigree present in the concept of *gharānā*, thus, is not limited simply to

belonging to a musical group but it also involves adherence to a certain musical style. However, it should also be observed that in modern times, it is not an uncommon practice for musicians to receive training from different teachers belonging to as many different *gharānā*-s. Therefore, it is well understood how both the social and musical dimensions are involved in the moulding of the definition of *gharānā*.

The *gharānā* system is a relatively new concept, born between the XIX and the XX century when the royal and princely patronage and the central role of the courts started to decline. *Gharānā*-s appear to be recent in their origins. Nevertheless, they have been attributed antiquity of centuries. As aptly explained by Neuman:

Once having been born, they assumed an appearance of being ages old. In discussion today, the idea of a gharana is that it is nothing else, hoary. This is not due to any artifice on the part of musicians but rather to their sense of historical time by which cultural salience creates chronological depth (Neuman 1990: 146-147).

The ‘invention’ of *gharānā* turned out to be functional for the creation, preservation, and sharing of a musical repertoire within a group of musicians that may be bound—although not necessarily—by blood relations and family pride. It finds its *raison d’être* in the *guru-śiṣya-paramparā* (master-disciple tradition), or, in a Muslim context, in the *ustād-śārgid* line of knowledge transmission, in which the relationship between teacher and pupil mirrors the kinship of father and son. The *gharānā* has played a pivotal role in forging specialised musicians and operating a selection and standardisation of knowledge to be handed from one generation to the next. It acted as a guarantee for artists’ social and musical identity on the background of a rapidly changing cultural backdrop (Neuman 1990). The advent of recorded music, the impact of the widespread diffusion of media, along with the increasing exposure to multiple and varying musical influences, have strengthened the necessity of affiliation to a cultural institution, such as the *gharānā*, to not remain anonymous to an audience increasingly wide and heterogeneous. The growing tendency towards the fusion of different musical components has contributed to undermining a clear-cut difference among styles of *gharānā*-s. At the same time, this phenomenon paves the way to the possibility of the creation of new *gharānā*-s, once a set of features deriving from the combinations of different elements is settled and becomes the standard.¹⁰

¹⁰ About the possibility of the creation of new *gharānā*-s see Deshpande 1973.

Indian musicologist Deshpande has explained how a musical tradition to be called ‘*gharānā*’ has to exist for at least three generations, each of which has to produce at least three able artists. The distinguishing musical characteristics of a *gharānā* are, according to the Indian musicologist, the “artistic discipline of its own in addition to a discipline common to all gharanas” (Deshpande 1973: 11).

Although the notion of continuity—and thus, ‘tradition’—appears to be embodied in the concept of *gharānā*, it is a flexible component. If, on the one hand, a style to be considered typical of a *gharānā* must exhibit a certain degree of continuity across generations, on the other hand, innovation and distinctiveness are appreciated and, in many cases, have led to the formation of new stylistic trends.

The definition of *gharānā* as ‘musical school’ has been contested based on the fact that *gharānā*-s appear to be “more sectarian in their attitude and on the whole more akin to family’s blood-relations” (*Ibid.*:8). Nevertheless, the conceptualisation of *gharānā* is relevant and useful in providing a frame of reference for the identification of a style. In this context, style is to be meant as a repertoire, made of compositions, ornamentations, and structural organisations shared within the musical community of the *gharānā* (Neuman 1990: 145).

Belonging to a *gharānā* involves compliance with certain formal rules and aesthetic norms of style, such as the selection of the *rāg*, its exposition and interpretation, the features and techniques of the voice, quality of sound, emphasis on the *laya*, performance format and, in general, music ideology.

An insight into the role of *gharānā*-s as a socio-musical organisation has been provided by Neuman:

Discussions about and between gharanas center ultimately on one issue, authority: the authority of gharanas as institutions determining stylistic appropriateness, and the relative authority of different gharanas as legislators of stylistic authenticity. Seen in a more general light, the question of authority is wedded to the definition and salience of tradition and the role of pedigrees as the embodiment of tradition. This is a problem which one readily recognizes as not limited to music culture alone; it speaks to the whole question of the place of tradition in any contemporary society (Neuman 1990: 145).

Semi-classical and intermediate music forms are not taught or learnt as part of the formal training in any specific *gharānā* (Deshpande 1973:22). However, for genres such as *thumrī*, distinct styles of singing are recognisable and are often part of the repertoire of musicians trained in the ‘classical’ tradition. The absence of *gharānā*-s in semi-classical

genres is in all probability primarily motivated by the fact that this kind of music was sung by female performers that, until the early XX century, were songstress courtesans; the only legitimate way for them to assert their artistic identity in a patriarchal system was the affiliation to a respected guru or *ustād* belonging to a *gharānā*.

1.7 The concept of tradition: some considerations

The concept of ‘tradition’ in the context of Hindustani music has a primary social dimension, in its function of fostering substantial preservation of ‘ancient’ cultural values and continuity with them, while balancing existing consolidated patterns with new emerging trends.

Tradition is defined in general terms as “the transmission of customs or beliefs from generation to generation” (OED *s.v.*). It is often associated with oral culture: one of the main modes of transmission of the tradition is ‘word of mouth’, a medium for the handing down of a set of established practices, symbols, images, models or beliefs.

Tradition, in its role to establish a continuity with the past, has long been looked upon as being static and invariable (Hobsbawm 1983). Quite the opposite. Far from being a monolithic block, tradition turns out to be a dynamic entity, constantly open to change and dialogue with different realities.

There is a plurality of definitions of the notion of tradition. The prevailing orientations and most productive descriptions today are grounded on a ‘dynamic’ approach according to which tradition can accommodate continuity and change, fidelity, and reorientation. The preservation of culture and flexibility operate as fundamental active shaping forces in today’s existing tradition.

A heated debate on the idea of ‘invented traditions’ has relied on the conceptions of traditions as ‘inauthentic practices’ or phenomena “which appear or claim to be old that are often quite recent in origin” or as “actually invented, constructed and formally instituted and [...] emerging in a less easily traceable manner within a brief and datable period” (Hobsbawm 1983: 1). Such formulations have been extensively discussed as having paved the way for questioning authority and authenticity. Furthermore, they have led to a lack of consensus on the very terms that define it in an ambiguous, quasi-oxymoronic connotation: if tradition is conceived as a result of the invention, it is inevitable to postulate the existence of a process of ‘manipulation’ and ‘forgery’. However, it has to be noted that traditions can be characterised by the coexistence of

diverging elements that, in many cases, can hardly be placed into definite ‘categories’ and rather can be located along a continuum typical of an evolutionary process.

The tendency towards a binary distinction between ‘genuine’ and ‘invented’ traditions could be misleading since it may oversimplify and reduce pluralistic contexts that are in turn the fertile ground for the very existence of the tradition. Tradition has been described as a “means to formulate and legitimize change” (Heesterman 1985: 1). The change appears to be indeed a key component (Pace 1996: 9), a motivating force that arises from a constant and never-ending interaction between different dimensions. Tradition may act as an effective tool to keep landmarks on the backdrop of a changing socio-cultural scenario. After all, change is integral to tradition and can occur in a relatively short time, during the very process of transmission and it is mainly due to different interpretations of symbols or practices. The variants of interpretations themselves become traditions. The requisite of tradition is that its “essential elements are recognisable by an external observer as being approximately identical at successive steps or acts of transmission and possession” (Shils 1981: 14). It derives that transformations are not usually noticeable or significant for the participants of a tradition that are bounded by a sense of affiliation.

The imbrication of tradition with discourses on authenticity, power, and authority is a significant recurring phenomenon. Du Perron observes that the label of ‘traditional’ gives value to a cultural product, rendering it unquestionable especially from within tradition (du Perron 2007: 117).

Tradition related to music can be envisioned as a set of repertoires selected by certain social groups and passed on according to specific rules. In the case of Hindustani music, patrons in princely courts and later *gharānā*-s sustained and promoted musical tradition.¹¹ In this sense, tradition is a social construction since it acts as a means of power and a way to assert authority. The process of ‘classicisation’ of an art form can be seen as an outcome of the

interplay between the tradition and the patron, an unspoken agreement that the classical tradition considers the item worthy of reproduction and that the elite patron values it as suitable for consumption (du Perron 2007: 119).

For this reason, it seems crucial to pay critical attention and analyse the roles of the individuals operating within the tradition: a strategic selection of the memory to be

¹¹ Musicians belonging to a *gharānā* are considered responsible for both the preservation and monopoly of the tradition. See Neuman 1990: 166.

handed on can indeed reinforce the concepts of legitimacy and authority (Squarcini 2011: 18-19). The quality of ‘traditional’ has come to represent an enhancement, a means for the ‘classicisation’—and, hence, ‘ennobling’—of an art form, such as the historically controversial Hindustani semi-classical music. A trend towards equating ‘classical’ to ‘traditional’ can be observed in those art forms characterised by a certain degree of continuity: in the process of being handed down from generation to generation, changes occur gradually and they may be so irrelevant or imperceptible that the recipients of the tradition remain unaware of them (du Perron 2007: 120).

The label ‘traditional’ is generally regarded as a synonym for ‘authentic’. In this perspective, it is well understood that the insertion of elements commonly perceived as traditional within relatively recent genres turns out to be functional to the survival and success of musical forms that, being placed along the continuum of the tradition, have undergone a process of acquisition of prestige.

Throughout the ages, Hindustani music has demonstrated its ability to implement certain adaptive strategies to respond to novelties and transformations that occurred in the socio-cultural environment. For instance, references to recurring elements such as traditional motifs, aesthetic features, formulas, and clichés from the literature have in a way ‘legitimised’ certain genres by conferring them an aura of ‘tradition’ against the challenges of modernity.

2. Between art and folk music: the question of ‘semi-classical’ and ‘intermediate’ music forms

Art and folk music—as described up to this point—despite being representative of different systems, should not be considered individual monolithic entities, but, in contrast, as parts of a continuum encompassing a considerable variety of diversified forms. As aptly noted by Prasad—author of a study on the folk music of Banaras—in India,

these two systems of music [folk and classical] are co-ordinates of an Indian musical tradition and at a level it is almost impossible to differentiate these two. It has so happened that with the development of harmony the classical music of the west for the past few centuries has become so different from their own folk music that the latter is almost a separate system. But not so in India. The difference between the tribal or folk and concert music is a matter of grammatization, not of dimension (Prasad 1987: 13).

The relationship between folk and art music has been explained by the International Folk Music Council in 1955 in the following terms:

[...] in the transition from folk music to art music or vice versa there must always be a re-creation. In the same way that folk music may constitute the raw material of art music, so may art music constitute the raw material of folk music (Karpeles 1955: 7).

The notion of ‘re-creation’ implies the evolutionary process typical of the oral tradition, of variation, selection, and adaptation operated by a community, in other words, a constant shaping and re-shaping of music material.

Among scholars in Indian musicology and musicians, there is no consensus on the directionality of the exchange between *śāstrīya* and *lok saṅgīt*. On the one hand, some assert that *śāstrīya saṅgīt* is the result of the evolution of *lok saṅgīt*. In support of this thesis, certain music forms have been considered as evidence for such a process. Among them, *bhajan* and *kīrtan* have been taken as indicative examples of genres that are considered ‘semi-classical’ due to their very peculiar status in the music scenario, in between ‘classical’ and folk tradition. The presence of a rural folk element in art music is often explained referring to musical terminology, specifically in the context of names of *rāg*-s and *tāl*-s clearly derived from ‘extra-urban’, uncultivated milieu. For instance, *rāg Gujārī Torī* is linked to the Gujar caste of cowherds; *rāg Pahārī*, literally meaning ‘of the mountains’, is believed to have originated from a Kashmiri folk melody (*dhun*) and also indicates the music of hill peoples (Neuman 2015: 140). *Tāl*-s, such as *Carcārī*, *Dhamār*, and *Jhūmra*, appear to have been derived from a common folk *tāl*. Furthermore, their names may have been originated from folk music genres, *dhamāl* of Rajasthan and

jhūmar of Uttar Pradesh, respectively. The strong influence exerted by folk forms on art music can be observed in sophisticated genres like *dhrupad*. Folk songs related to the spring festival of Holī have been the source of the most ancient form of *dhrupad*, called *horī-dhāmar*, which revolves around the motif Kṛṣṇa playing antics with the milkmaids of Braj (*gopī-s*) during Holī (Manuel 1989: 41). Besides, the ‘semi-classical’ genre of *horī* has its roots in folk songs performed during the spring celebration.¹² On the other hand, some other theories allege an absolute unrelatedness of the two traditions: in fact, they claim that folk music is a ‘corrupted’ form evolved from a sort of ‘proto-Indian’ ancestor (Neuman 2015: 139-40). However, the confluence of folk and art music traditions is evident on different levels. In this regard, Neuman in his insightful study on Mirāsī communities has shown the link between folk and art music in terms of social interchange between rural and urban music specialists (*Ibid.*). The term Mirāsī indicates a caste of traditional singers, musicians, and dancers that today live both in the countryside and urban areas. Many of them migrated to cities during the phase of decline of the courts, in search of new sources of patronage. Neuman claims that it is quite common for Mirāsī-s to trace their origins back to a specific village. This recognition of their rural belonging results in a common belief shared among musicians of the rural roots of Hindustani music. The ethnomusicologist argues that the courtesans’ salon (*koṭhā*) offered the opportunity for regular performance to folk musicians moving to urban centres.¹³ It is quite a controversial issue to discuss among musicians who generally try to distance themselves from the world of the *tavāyaf-s*. Among the evidence in support of his thesis, Neuman provides as main historical motivations the fact that, in the first place, in old accounts of courtly life, women performers were accompanied by *sāraṅgī* and *tablā* players (mainly coming from the Muslim Mirāsī caste) who were, in many cases, identified as their *ustād-s*. From a strictly musical point of view, the evidence is more nebulous, but there is some agreement in considering the so-called semi-classical music forms, such as *ṭhumrī* and *gāzal*, as ‘intermediate’ and transitional between folk and art music.

Certainly, the bi-directionality and the constant mutual exchange between different cultural flows goes beyond the realm of music: the particular nature of certain music forms leads one to reflect, for example, on literature. It has been observed that the influence of ‘classical’ literature on music, is easier to document through references to

¹² See Ch. IV, 5.

¹³ See Ch. II, 3.

specific sources (Manuel 1989: 8). The presence in relatively recent forms, like *ṭhumrī*, of elements clearly derived from the Sanskrit tradition, deserves special attention. There is a tendency among scholars and performers to trace certain aspects of these music genres back to aesthetic theories exposed in ancient treaties, starting from Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*. This kind of attribution is motivated on the one hand by the role of literature as a primary model and inexhaustible source of inspiration providing a reliable framework for genres outside conventional forms. On the other hand, the reference to ancient authoritative models has to be considered functional to the process of the 'classicisation' of arts that, in post-colonial and pre-independent India, needed to be distanced from the problematic association with the world of the courtesans.

In lack of a specific definition, or better, of a univocal distinction between Hindustani music forms that are often labelled 'semi-classical', it seems more productive to focus on the description of the features of these less acknowledged music genres exhibiting traits in common with both *śāstrīya* and *lok saṅgīt*. Certainly, the interaction and merging between these two music systems represent a constant and ongoing process in the Indian musical landscape at the point that often it is a difficult and almost impossible task to differentiate between them (Prasad 1987: 13). However, a description of this phenomenon can be documented from the XVII century. Since then, it is possible to find traces of music forms later described as 'semi-classical'.

The label of 'semi-classical' is controversial, not clearly outlined or equivocal. Nonetheless, it is the definition that is in most widespread use. The term—resulting from the application of Western categories of thought—is hardly found in the description of Western music and it seems to have been created specifically for the Indian context: in Hindustani music where we find the labels of *ardhśāstrīya* and *upśāstrīya saṅgīt*. Both the denominations lead back to the implications discussed above inherent to the concept of 'classical'. In particular, the latter, with the prefix '*upa*' (lit. 'sub', 'under', 'down')¹⁴ involves a pejorative connotation, since its literal meaning of 'sub-classical' hints at a subordination in an imposed hierarchy dominated by art music. In this sense, the very appellation of these genres is far from being value-free and implies by definition a certain dose of marginality. In scholarly discourse, the appellation 'semi-classical' has been viewed as somewhat detrimental for the forms subsumed under its domain, since it carries the stigma they underwent through their history, besides conveying the idea of

¹⁴ MW *s.v.*

‘incompleteness’, ‘defectiveness’ and, thus, ‘inferiority’. As a matter of fact, musical forms indicated as ‘semi-classical’ are considered marginal within the ideal hierarchy of traditional music genres topped by the severe *dhrupad* and *khayāl*, which are considered art music par excellence. It is important to note that marginality in the classification does not necessarily imply a form being more elaborate, sophisticated, and important than others occupying a higher position in a certain hierarchy. This observation holds true for religious texts as well. For instance, some *Purāṇa*-s—such as the *Devībhāgavata* and the *Viṣṇudharmottara*—are categorised as *Upapurāṇa* (‘minor’, ‘secondary’ *Purāṇa*) but are indeed as important as the *Mahāpurāṇa* (‘great’ *Purāṇa*). The distinction between the two groups has been drawn by modern scholarship and resulted in marginal interest and attention for literature considered subordinate (Rocher 1986: 63).

According to a commonly accepted definition, the label ‘semi-classical’ indicates forms of music exhibiting elements typical of art and folk music, from a technical point of view as well as on the level of text content and topics. Another denomination generally encountered in the description of these ‘in-between’ forms is ‘light classical music.’ Since ‘light music’ suggests the idea of a kind of music opposite to the ‘classical’, the ‘category’ of ‘semi-classical’ would be located somewhere between the two. The characterisation of ‘light-classical’ music has been applied to indicate some *filmī* music, considering that a significant amount of film songs are set into a specific *rāg* and *tāl*.

All the above-mentioned denominations refer to genres such as *gāzāl*, *ṭhumrī* and its allied forms of *dādrā*, *horī*, *caitī*, *kajrī*, and *jhūlā* but also to *bhajan* and *kīrtan*, which can be described as a mix of popular, ‘classical’ and devotional elements. Interestingly enough, the so-called ‘devotional music’ is often included in the realm of ‘semi-classical’.

As far as denominations are concerned, I reiterate that labels are instrumental and necessary tools for naming, describing, and ordering a variety of forms otherwise difficult to comprehend, provided awareness of the implications embodied in the chosen terminology exists. I assert that it is necessary to take into account a nomenclature that, despite being controversial and often inconsistently used, is accessible and familiar to the practitioners, audience, scholars, and critics engaging with those music expressions. In this perspective, it is important to analyse different descriptions of semi-classical genres.

Their most stressed feature is a free interpretation of the *rāg* and *tāl* that are generally of folk origin. Furthermore, a great premium is placed on the text: the importance accorded to the interpretations of the lyrics of the composition is paramount.

Some scholars claim that semi-classical genres are derivative forms, developed from music typically found in rural areas, linked to village life and the cycle of seasons. According to other interpretations, the connection with those genres lies more in the style (musical devices and features of vocal style) rather than in common roots (Manuel 1989: 8).

The ‘semi-classical sphere’ has been variously portrayed as a wide domain as including music characterised by “levity of mood and certain freedom taken with grammar” and that “forms a border line music, between the highly classical on one hand and the totally tribal at the other” (Deva 1995: 78).

Among the studies on the topic, Manuel describes a rich stratum of Hindustani music genres commonly grouped under the general denomination of ‘semi-classical’ since they are located “between folk and classical” or they are likened to a “regional classical music”, or they are “noted to be in some way related or similar to classical music, while being clearly distinct from it” (Manuel 2015: 82). The ethnomusicologist coined the definition of ‘intermediate sphere’, which—I contend—embodies the essence of a wide domain of Indian culture. According to Manuel the main features of the ‘intermediate forms’ are the following:

- the tendency of being regional rather than pan-regional;
- not (completely) based on an explicitly articulated theory;
- text-driven (indicated with the term *śabd-pradhān*);
- musical entities presented often as ancillary to ritual or narrative representations rather than autonomous arts;
- labelled ‘*lok gīt*’ by commentators (*Ibid.*: 86).

Manuel considers ‘intermediary genres’ also to be forms whose origins predate the advent of phonographs in 1900 and therefore, the mass media. Besides, he posits the inclusion in the intermediate sphere of

[...] genres that either (like *haveli saṅgīt*) may be informed by conventional *rāg* and *tāl* theory but have for centuries constituted distinct, parallel traditions to Hindustani music, or else (like Hathrasi rasiya) are grounded in a form of theory that is wholly separate from that of North Indian classical music (*Ibid.*).

It is evident that within such a domain a wide range of diversified forms is subsumed. For this reason, Manuel stresses the necessity to identify main categories within the ‘intermediate sphere’ and he delimits five groups, namely:

- Light-classical music represented by word-oriented genres that have become part of classical music repertoire since the mid-XX century. This category includes *dādra ṭhumrī*, and its related forms of *kajrī* and *lavnī* (those two entities are described as “elaborated stage renditions of folk-derived genres”).
- Sophisticated professional folk songs, performed by (usually hereditary) specialists (such as *Laṅgā*-s, *Māṅgaṇiyār*-s, *Qavvāl*-s) and characterised by a mix of elements belonging both to Hindustani music and other distinct forms.
- *Dhrupad*-related devotional genres, encompassing *qavāli vaiṣṇava havelī saṅgīt* (*kīrtan*), *samāj gāyan*, Sikh *gurmat saṅgīt* and Assamese *borgīt*. These are linked to *dhrupad* but are “best seen as parallel entities to Hindustani music” (*Ibid.*).
- Sophisticated prosody-driven genres, based on poetic and metrical rules such as *hāthrasī rasiyā*, *mirzāpurī kajrī*, and “related forms of vernacular theater music (especially that of the *naṭanki/swāṅg/bhagat/khyāl* complex)” (*Ibid.*).
- Sophisticated drum traditions related to the category of sophisticated professional folksongs (*Ibid.*).

The classification elaborated by Manuel proves to be highly detailed, comprehensive, and useful in its formulation. Nevertheless, it could be argued that this model includes different forms of the same genres under distinct categories of the ‘intermediate sphere’. Such is the case for *kajrī* which is subsumed under the labels of ‘light-classical music’, ‘sophisticated professional folksongs’ and, in its expression of *mirzāpurī kajrī*, under ‘sophisticated prosody-driven genres’. However, it should be noted that the genre of *kajrī* is extremely diversified in its rendering that can be, to different extents, either ‘classicised’ or folk-oriented. Furthermore, it should be kept in mind that the proposed taxonomy is not meant to introduce rigid and mutually exclusive categories but indeed offers a fluid conceptualisation aimed at establishing continua rather than boundaries.

Manuel has underlined the importance of the ‘intermediate’ realm, as it constitutes a wide stratum of Indian music culture that has been affected by modernisation and has come to embody neo-traditional forms as well. Interestingly, at the same time,

[...] in urban society, “the realm of “the folk” increasingly diminishes and acquires an archaic character, though its constituent genres maybe rearticulated into new commercial pop idioms (*Ibid.*:109).

The intermediate music genres analysed in the present work—namely *kajrī*, *caiti* and *jhūlā*—perfectly locate themselves into the sphere of semi-classical music: compositions expressing *śṛṅgār ras* and *virah* on the backdrop of the monsoon or spring constitute indeed the majority of the *ṭhumrī* repertoire. Sung especially as a conclusion of a *khayāl* concert, during the season they portray in their lyrics, these forms have gained relevance and came to be presented in festivals and events exclusively dedicated to *ṭhumrī*. In the functional shift or ‘genre drift’ (Henry 1991: 239) from purely participatory to predominantly entertainment forms, through the inclusion into *ṭhumrī* domain, they underwent a process of ‘classicisation’, following a phase of marginalisation due to the association with courtesans’ tradition (du Perron 2007). When it started to be performed on the modern stage by male performers, *ṭhumrī* was ‘ennobled’ and ‘sanitised’ from an erotic connotation and, hence, lent itself to a devotional interpretation. The same process occurred for other genres, such as *gāzal*, which came to constitute the ‘semi-classical’ realm of Hindustani music. The dynamics determined by historical and cultural changes motivate the ‘intra-genre heterogeneity’ (Henry 1988a) characterising those forms that exist in a wide variety of expressions, spanning from the semi-classical to the predominantly folk ones.

2.1 In quest of definitions

The lack of specific, precise, and comprehensive definitions of ‘folk’ and ‘classical’ music and, even of ‘genre’ in the Indian context, is followed by a significant overlap of the related terminology. A tendency can be noted within academic discourse regarding the preference for the use of denominations such as ‘art’ and ‘popular music’ rather than ‘classical’ and ‘folk’. Nevertheless, the same academics and connoisseurs use the latter labels in general, non-specialist discourse (Goertzen 2013).

Modern classifications appear to stem from a comparative approach and offer working definitions rather than univocal parameters. Although the tendency for systematisation is a typical trait of Indian culture, the actual classification of music genres has only quite recently developed under the influence of a Western cultural approach that attempts to rely on, incorporate, and elaborate ancient indigenous traditions. In fact, the strict classification of music genres in ‘classical’, ‘light classical’, and ‘folk’ was first introduced by All India Radio (A.I.R.) in line with a precise political strategy aimed at ‘purifying’ Indian music—Hindustani and Karnatak—from the contaminations, it underwent during the Islamic domination of Mughal and at the time of British rule. After Independence, in an attempt of creating a ‘great’ Indian cultural heritage increasingly identified with Hindu tradition, music broadcasting was significantly reorganised (Sujhata 2020).

The continued application of criteria developed by colonial scholars and the tendency to study music and text decontextualised, independently from each other, have been criticised by musicologists both within and outside Indian scholarship. The necessity of developing approaches *ad hoc*, not drawn from Western methodologies, has been emphasised by ethnologists as well (Bohlmann 1988: 132). The degree of adherence to codified rules and musical grammar appears to be one of the most used—and perhaps less questionable—criteria for the characterisation of genres.

Having established that specifications and classifications in absolute terms are to be avoided, definitions—despite being at times incongruous and frequently value-laden—turn out to be useful for descriptive purposes, for providing a picture that allows understanding and appreciation for the multifaceted variety of Indian music. Babiracki in arguing about the dichotomy of “classical” and “non-classical” in the Indic musical milieu points out that “conceptual classification [...] has been shaped to some extent by the nature and contexts of the musical expressions themselves” (Babiracki 1991: 85).

It is clear that it is complex to draw up a precise scientific definition of music genres, which will serve to differentiate them completely from all other forms. Labels such as ‘folk’ and ‘classical’ continue to be widely used and are functional to establish an association between the cultural knowledge, the cultural products they describe and a specific tradition. Here the concept of ‘tradition’ is to be understood in ethnological terms as a set of inherited practices, “the belief systems, repertoire, techniques, style and culture that is passed down through subsequent generations” (Duckles 2011, *s.v.*). In response to contemporary attempts of categorising Indian music genres, four main broad categories can be conventionally identified: *śāstrīya saṅgīt* or ‘art music’, *lok saṅgīt* or ‘folk music’, *upśāstrīya* or *ardhśāstrīya saṅgīt* or ‘semi-classical music’, and popular music, which includes a variety of genres such as the mainstream *filmī saṅgīt* or ‘film music’ (Prasad 1987: 80).

Existing categorisations are useful as they respond to the necessity of ordering, contextualising, and interpreting multiple forms that are particularly important in the culture of North India. After all, in the Indian tradition, the process of categorical distinction could potentially continue *ad infinitum* and lead to the generation of endless taxonomies, possibly lacking in mutual exclusivity and potentially muddy. All this process finds its *raison d'être* within the framework of Indian philosophy, where the ultimate truth is revealed and not achieved (Rowell 1992: 6).

In conclusion, I contend that once we are aware of the meaning of certain problematic definitions, and their inherent limitations, we realise that their use is neither aimed at imposing hierarchies, nor at oversimplification by stereotyping extremely rich and diversified music forms. Keeping in mind the descriptive goal—rather than focusing on a normative-oriented application of the monolithic conceptual models—in this work, I have opted for a balanced approach. I have considered both the tendencies of adopting widespread labels, as they are conventionally used by performers, practitioners, audience and a part of the scholarly community, and less value-loaded denominations. Specifically, I have chosen to employ the term ‘art music’, where possible, using ‘classical’ only in situations where the context has required me to do so for the sake of clarity and simplicity. Analogously, the adjective ‘semi-classical’—very peculiar and unique to the Indian context—has been preferred when a precise reference within the “intermediate sphere” of music has deemed it necessary. In this case, a higher degree of proximity to ‘art’ music forms is implied.

Chapter II: Intermediate and semi-classical music genres

1. Semi-classical genres: a ‘model of ambivalence’?

The main genres of Hindustani music have extensively been the object of scholarly attention and in-depth analysis from stylistic, historical, and social perspectives. A wide debate has been taking place among scholars driven by the necessity to delineate the tradition(s) within which music forms arose and developed under the influence of certain models. The concept of continuity in the Indian context is generally fostered and accepted, meeting a general consensus. Nevertheless, the inevitable consequence implied by the idea of a lack of disruption—reinforcing the construct of tradition—is that the endpoints of continua come to be considered as dichotomous. The tendency and need to identify recurring recognisable patterns in different musical expressions, has led to describe those same forms in terms of fundamental systems. In this regard, Neuman explains how in North India, music relies on two primary models: the court (*darbār*) and devotion (*bhakti*), commonly perceived as a bipolar tradition. The ethnomusicologist stresses that a third ‘paradigm’ exists bringing together elements of both the courtly and religious milieu. It is the “salon or courtesans’ model” (Neuman 1990: 222). In fact, the very nature of semi-classical genres as musical forms typically associated with songstress *tavāyaf*-s is characterised by a constant interplay between seemingly dichotomous spheres, such as worldly/devotional, urban/rural, and ‘classical’/‘folk’. For this reason, as suggested by Neuman, intermediate and semi-classical genres represent a “model of ambivalence”. Ambiguous song texts address the listener, involved in determining whether a worldly or devotional interpretation is prompted. The fundamental models of *darbār* and *bhakti* are furthermore linked with a lifestyle, set of values, tradition of musicianship, and presentation formats; they are regarded as the only two meaningful and, to a certain extent, ‘legitimate’ cultural domains that can be drawn upon for modern performances (*Ibid.*: 223).

The ‘intermediate musical sphere’, therefore, is revealed to be emblematic of a constant phenomenon characterising Indian culture: the interplay of multifaceted dimensions not to be conceived as mutually exclusive but indeed complementary and interrelated. Therefore, such polyvalence should be instructively considered as a reality of being, resulting from a regular interaction between varying interlocking contexts that create new spaces and extend possibilities of meaning.

2. The model of *bhakti* and the influence of *sant* literature

The word *bhakti* derives from the Sanskrit verbal root ‘*bhaj*’, which has several semantic nuances among which ‘to divide’, ‘to distribute’, ‘to share’ and ‘to participate’, ‘to partake’. *Bhakti* is both a general term—indicating ‘devotion’, ‘love’, ‘fondness for’, ‘worship’, ‘piety’, ‘faith’ and ‘attachment’—and a specific designation, used in reference to the movements of religious renewal that characterised the period conventionally defined as medieval Hinduism.

The core message of the new form of spirituality fostered by *bhakti* movements implied the idea of a ‘devoted love’ expressed with the participation of the worshipper to the divine dimension through the mercy that God himself bestows. Besides their religious and philosophical significance, the movements became a major cultural force shaping several aspects of society in India, including different artistic expressions. It developed and spread in multifarious manifestations and gave rise to multiple—at times parallel—streams.

Although the so-called *bhakti* movements started flourishing around the VI century, clear formulations of *bhakti* can be traced back to Vedic hymns—in which divinities are the object of worship—and the *Upaniṣad*-s. It is in the *Bhagavad gītā*, however, that the *bhakti*, exemplified by Arjuna’s ardent devotion to Kṛṣṇa, is presented as a path to salvation in the corrupt era of Kaliyuga. Moreover, the immense corpus of the *Purāṇa*-s is largely inspired by *bhakti*.

As popular movements, *bhakti* was born in South India, where it blossomed in the VI century with the Tamil singer-saints *ālvār*-s. It later spread northward and developed through the preaching of spiritual masters such as Rāmānanda, Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Vallabhācārya, and mystics such as Nāmdev, Kabīr, and other *sant*-s¹⁵ acquiring different features and connotations, according to contexts and geographical areas. The universal salvation path of *bhakti* spread at a popular level when the Hindu/Muslim contraposition led to tensions, contrasts, and narrow interpretations by both the communities that tended to be more oriented toward formal strict respect of ritual prescriptions. Prompted by the need for change and authentic spirituality, *bhakti* movements stood out as a popular, cross-cultural path, open to every individual, without caste, gender, and religious belief distinctions. The universalistic idea behind the conception of *bhakti* as religious devotion

¹⁵ The term *sant* indicates, in the field of literature, the movement of *nirguṇ* mystic poets of Indian Middle Ages.

in every form places *bhakti* movements at the crossroads of different cultural traditions. Such a universal connotation finds its full expression in the flourishing of a vast vernacular literature that significantly facilitated the dissemination of the movements on a mass level. This mystic literature can be defined as popular in all respects: for the humble origins of its authors, the modes of its transmission and the wide dissemination, even today, among the lower strata of society (Caracchi 2006: 492).

Within *bhakti* vernacular literature, scholars have distinguished the two main traditions of *nirguṇ* and *saguṇ bhakti* that reflects different ways of conceiving the Divine. The *nirguṇ/saguṇ* distinction found expression in a kind of taxonomy and grouping of poets in these two opposite orientations (Hawley 2005: 14). According to the *saguṇ* viewpoint, God is to be conceived as a personal deity ‘with attributes’ and always corresponds with a specific divine aspect that can be Rām or, more often, Kṛṣṇa. *Nirguṇ* devotion revolves around a conception of the Supreme Being that may coincide with *Brahman*—as the formless reality—or with a personal God, according to the mystical experience to be expressed but never coinciding with a specific deity of the Hindu or Islamic tradition.

Within the *saguṇ* tradition, Tamil *śaiva* and *vaiṣṇava* poets, and *sant*-s such as Surdās, Mīrābāī, and Tulsīdās are generally included, whereas *viraśaiva*-s of Karnataka and *sant*-s such as Ravidās, Raidās, Kabīr and Nānak are held to be *nirguṇī*. This distinction—that seems to have been developed to classify regional *bhakti* literature (Prentiss 1999: 21)—found one of its greatest formulations in Rāmcandra Śukla’s *Hindī sāhitya kā itihās* (1929).¹⁶ Based on the significant similarities, overlap, and shared history, some scholars even do not differentiate between *saguṇ* and *nirguṇ bhakti* (Lorenzen 1995: 14). However, the boundaries are often blurred and result from attempts to produce codified classifications and taxonomies that, although didactically useful, should not be considered absolute (Hawley 1988; Pauwels 1991: 24; Schomer 1987: 3).

¹⁶ See Ch. III, 2.3.

2.1 Kabīr and *sant* songs

The importance of Kabīr (ca. 1440-1518) within the entire Indian cultural milieu is paramount, not only for the great influence he exerted on the life and literature of medieval India but also for his extraordinary impact on modern and contemporary ideas. According to the legend, he was born in a Hindu Brahmanical household, adopted, and raised by a Muslim childless couple. His biography is shrouded in mystery and there is no consensus on historical details of his life, nor any reliable internal evidence in his writings. He is commonly believed to have been a disciple of Rāmānanda. However, his humble profession as a weaver is certain, as mentioned in several of his verses. Bridging religious ideologies and social prejudices, claiming that God is neither Hindu nor Muslim, the message of Kabīr stood out for its innovative power. The fostering of mysticism based on a *nirguṇ* conception of the divine, the criticism of superstitions, blind faith, superficial ritualism, and dogmatism are just a few elements found in his philosophy. An appraisal of Kabīr's enormous contribution to the Indian cultural heritage goes beyond the scope of this work. In the present argument, an attempt is made to evaluate the influence of Kabīr's poetry on the music forms taken into consideration.

The relevance of Kabīr in the field of music can be fully understood in the light of his legacy that remained mainly oral: it was transmitted through song performance and recitation in different contexts and came to constitute a repertoire handed down in different modes across time and space. As pointed out by Linda Hess:

we study “Kabir” through singers, listeners, music, performative circumstances, the fluidity and stability of texts, communities, and the interpretations produced by religious, social, and political contexts (Hess 2015: 8).

The musical legacy associated with the music of Kabīr has been defined as a ‘living tradition’ that moulded its features according to the linguistic and musical peculiarities of a geographical area and historical moment.

Kabīr's verses took the shape of a musical heritage finding expression in a variety of genres and styles—spanning from art to folk and popular music—constantly reshaping itself in order to preserve and keep alive the original message.¹⁷ The musical tradition

¹⁷ In this regard, Bahadur Singh relates an insightful anecdote worthy of reporting here and indicative of the process of adaptation that the oral tradition related to Kabīr underwent without compromising its core message. “Mr. Bhīkhārāmjī Śarmā, of Mokaṣsar, district Suratgarh, recited a text in which the journey to the city of immortality and the journey to the city of death are described as journeys by train, the body being considered an ‘engine’ (*anjan*) or a train (*tan gāḍī*). The passenger (*jīv*) is warned not to lose the ticket (*tigat*), the time is short (*ṭem jarāsī hai*), etc. Now I was careless enough to point out that Kabīr himself

related to Kabīr is, to many extents, representative of the ‘intermediate realm’ of Hindustani music. The name Kabīr is often associated with the designation ‘semi-classical’, not so much for the genre or the style in which songs are rendered but for their inclusion in the repertoire of a specific singer (Hess 2015: 8; McCall 2014: 42). Eminent performers, such as Kumar Gandharva, Bhimsen Joshi, and the Gundecha brothers are well-known not only for being renowned exponents of Hindustani art music but also for their renditions of Kabīr’s songs. ‘Kabīr music’—which would deserve to constitute a genre by itself—is usually connected to *nirgun bhajan*-s, although there are, for instance, compositions sung in *thumrī* style. The labels generally associated with Kabīr are ones of ‘folk music’—mostly due to the ‘non-elitarian’, egalitarian nature of his message addressed to the everyman, the musical style, and instruments used in the rendition of his verses—and ‘devotional music’. However, confining the music of Kabīr to one of such categories would be inappropriate since

Kabīr does not work within this framework of a distinct style, region, or sound-grouping, but rather crosses sonically into many contrasting musical styles, ideologically into religious and non-religious realms, and regionally into many regions with a number of different linguistic practices (McCall 2014: 11).

As noted by Hess, “Kabīr is usually studied through collections of poetry attributed to him”, although he was an “oral poet”, probably even illiterate (Hess 2015: 8). His words that had the shape of sung compositions were probably written down within approximately a century of his death and transmitted in the literary forms of *dohā*-s (‘couplets’) or *sākhī*-s (‘witnessings’), *ramainī*-s, *śabd*-s (‘authoritative words’), and *pad*-s (‘verses’). *Dohā*-s and *pad*-s especially were meant to be sung and seem to have stemmed also from folk songs adapted to religious contexts. *Pad*-s appear to have strongly influenced songs of the intermediate forms not only as far as text content is concerned but for the structure of sung compositions as well. Indeed *pad*-s, similarly to *caitī*-s, *kajrī*-s, and *jhūlā*-s, are short, rhymed poems set to a *rāg* (in the case of *pad*-s the *rāg* is generally indicated in the manuscripts). Moreover, *pad*-s, like the texts of the above-mentioned intermediate genres, feature a refrain called *rahāu* (lit. ‘stop’) or *ṭek*, (lit. ‘prop’, ‘support’), consisting of a full or half line either at the beginning or at the end of every

could scarcely have composed this text. But Mr. Śarmā was deeply hurt, and he replied that Kabīr was after all a seer and it was most natural that he should have perceived things to come. And I realized that I had committed a real error and hurt him in an entirely gracious manner.” (Singh 2000: 421).

stanza of the composition. In *pad*-s as well as in folk songs, the *tek* is repeated in a chorus between each verse or stanza (Vaudeville 1974: 53-54).¹⁸

However, not only Kabīr's *pad*-s, but also other types of his composition exerted a great influence on the forms taken into consideration in this work. The *Bījak* of Kabīr contains poems called *sabd* or *sabad* that are a kind of *pad*-s sung in a specific *rāg* by the Kabīr *panthī*-s. Furthermore, the *Bījak* includes a few poems composed in the language spoken in the neighbourhood areas of Banaras and named after local folk genres, such as *basant*, *hiṇḍolā*, and *carcarī* (Vaudeville 1974: 62). After all, it is common to find compositions featuring motifs typically found in Kabīr and exhibiting his 'signature' or 'stamp'. The so-called *bhañitā* (lit. 'what is said'), also known as *mudrikā* ('stamp') or *chāp* ('seal')—i.e. the formula bearing the name of the author and usually placed in the last verses of a *pad*—may be found in different kinds of compositions, from *caitī*-s to *ṭhumrī*-s and *bhajan*-s. Far from being an indication of authorship—as hinted at already¹⁹, it is difficult to ascribe 'ownership' to a specific composer—the indication of the name of the author serves to place the contents presented in a song within the frame of a certain trend and tradition of thought (Hawley 1988). The practice of signing compositions, either with the simple *chāp* or full *bhāñitā* (such as 'Kabīr says'), became common for *sant*-s and *vaiṣṇava* poets in north and central India from the XV century onwards (Vaudeville: *Ibid.*).

As far as the thematic content is concerned, motifs of the texts of intermediate forms analysed in this work are drawn from Kabīr's and the *sant* traditional imagery repertoire and include:

- The theme of the *virah* interpreted in a devotional key. The image of the lovelorn woman—in turn taken from the folk tradition of *virah gīt*—within the frame of *bhakti* comes to symbolise the soul longing for union with the divine. Closely connected to the depiction of separation, we find the portrayal of the painful condition of child marriage. As pointed out by Vaudeville:

[it is] Kabīr's favourite symbol to suggest the situation of the human soul who, though already belonging to God, and totally pervaded by his presence, has not yet been able to 'meet' Him: she longs for the meeting

¹⁸ Vaudeville pinpoints that the refrain is called also *dhruv* ('fixed point') and traditionally is placed after the first line or couplet of a song, as in the *Guru Granth Sāhib* (*Ibid.*).

¹⁹ See Ch. I, 1.6, 1.7. On the pen name see Ch. VII, 3.

or vision which would consummate the union and make her at last a *suhāginī*, a happy wife (Vaudeville 1974:146-47).

- The importance of the Name (*Nām*) for merging with the ultimate reality.
- The illusion of phenomenal reality expressed through metaphors equating the body to a clay-pot, a vessel (*ghaṭa*), or a cage in which the bird of the individual soul (*jīva*) is trapped, in consonance with a motif dear to *sant* and *jogī* repertoire.
- Cryptic imagery and allusive language reminiscent of *sant* and *jogī* songs.

As noted by Lorenzen, the impact of poetry and songs attributed to Kabīr is paramount also for its function in distinguishing four major religious traditions in the India of time: Hindus, Muslims, *yogī*-s, and *śaktā*-s (Lorenzen 2011: 34).

A further parallel between the songs of Kabīr and the intermediate forms worth considering concerns the language in which they were composed. *Sant*-s used Sādhukkarī bhāṣā, ‘the language of the *sādhu*-s’, a composite vernacular combining elements of Rajasthani, Khaṛī bolī and other dialects of the Hindi belt.

2.2 The *jogī*-s and the peculiarity of their songs

The word *jogī*, a vernacular term for *yogī*, is an umbrella term used in differing ways to indicate a specific community, an ascetic, a person who practices yoga, and a wandering minstrel.

Jogī-s as a social group enjoys a peculiar status cutting across religious divides as, sometimes, it can combine both Hindu and Muslim identities. *Jogī*-s trace their origin back to the *nāth panth* also known as *nāth sampradāya*, a Hindu religious path, *śaiva* in orientation, dating back at least to XI century. *Nāth yogī*-s consider Gorakhnāth (Skt. Gorakṣanātha) as their main guru. The heterogeneity of their lineage stems from its origins in the tantric schools of different traditions (besides the *śaiva*, *śakta* and Buddhist). Moreover, remarkable mutual influences occurred between the *nāth panth* and several different *bhakti* movements such as the *nirguṇī*-s in North India, *vārkarī*-s in Maharashtra, and *nāyanār*-s in the South (Lorenzen 2011: XI). *Nāth yogī*-s were mainly associated with a soteriology based on yoga, tantric practices, rituals, and alchemy.

The terms *jogī* and *nāth* are often used interchangeably, although the two words carry different connotations within specific contexts. Like *nāth*-s, some of them were

renouncers, while others were householders. As stated by Edward O. Henry, author of a study on *jogī* music, nowadays *jogī*-s seem to be gradually disappearing, though recordings of their music were made as recently as the 1990s (Henry 2000: 671). Present day's *jogī*-s are mostly religious beggars and mendicant musicians that wander from village to village in North India, generally twice a year during harvest. Traditionally, they were also *sāraṅgī* players, and many of them appear to have been professional accompanists in courtesans' *mahfil*-s.

Hazārī Prasād Dvivedī illustrates the dual identity of *jogī*-s referring to the fact that in the middle ages *nāth jogī*-s in some places were forced to convert to Islam (Dvivedī 2000: 24). Shashi Bhushan Dasgupta, who researched the *jogī*-s of Bengal, supports Dvivedī's thesis tracing their origins back to the *nāth sampradāya*. Despite many *jogī*-s having been Muslim householders, their songs revolved around mainly *nirguṇī bhakti* themes (Dasgupta 1969).

Henry classifies the songs of the *jogī*-s into three main categories (Henry 1988a: 161):

1. Epic songs on Rājā Bharthari, considered a disciple of Gorakhnāth and one of the most prominent *nāth jogī*-s. This kind of song is based on several *nāth* legends and focuses on the antithesis between ascetic and household life.
2. *Saguṇ bhajan*-s. In this category, besides 'hymns' in honour of different deities, Henry also includes songs on philosophical matters (Henry *Ibid.*).
3. *Nirguṇ bhajan*-s. This group of songs in praise of a 'formless' absolute represents the core of *jogī* repertoire. Most of them share features and verses with songs of Kabīr and *nirguṇ sant*-s. They can be prevalingly described as *nirguṇ bhajan*-s since the most recurring motifs deal with the transience of life and the illusory nature of reality veiled by *māyā*. Such main themes are expressed with several variations. It is common to find the depiction of death accompanied by descriptions of the reactions of a deceased person's relatives in the imagery of the intermediate music forms as well in their folk counterparts. Another common trope juxtaposes a bird to the individual 'soul' (*jīva*) and the bodily existence to a cage that imprisons it, an image similarly dear to Kabīr.

Jogī-s are pivotal figures in Indian folklore transcending religious, geographic, and linguistic barriers. In describing the peculiar identity of *jogī*-s, Mukesh Kumar, in line with the standpoint of several scholars (Mayaram and Reifeld among the others), suggests using the adjective ‘liminal’, emphasising the “betwixt and between statuses” that characterise their ideologies (Kumar 2018: 219). *Jogī*-s are at the core of a vast corpus of folktales whose origins span the entire Indian subcontinent. Not only are they the source (as composers and tellers) of the stories and tales that came to be elaborated within *jogī* culture but also the subjects found at the heart of these folk legends, telling, and tales. The crucial importance of *jogī*-s within the intermediate sphere of Hindustani music can be fully understood in light of the ‘intra-genre heterogeneity’ of their song style (Henry 1991: 222). The extreme diversification within the same genre is due mainly to the different geographical, linguistic, and performative contexts. The process of interacting with various music forms determined a mutual influence and exchange that shaped their ‘hybrid’ nature. The recurring practise of drawing melodies from pre-existing musical genres and singing variations of the same song dates back to ancient times and proved functional for the adaption that music, a vehicle for the *jogī*-s’ message, had to undergo to survive socio-cultural changes. In the same direction, it can be viewed as a shift of function or, as aptly termed by Henry, ‘genre drift’ (Henry 1991: 224). *Jogī* songs, as well as other intermediate forms, for their very nature, were particularly prone to adaptation within new contexts. The role of wandering singers and musicians within the shaping of the intermediate musical sphere should not be underestimated since they were responsible for the exchange and circulation of new techniques, styles, lyrics, and song-texts. For instance, Mewati *jogī*-s created a particular musical style fusing an art music genre called *rāg dhāni* with *dohā*-s (Kumar 2019: 225).

Musical aspects of *jogī* songs. The performance format of *jogī* songs appears as a synthesis of elements of diverse origins. Typically, a singer accompanied by a *sārangī* plays a prelude followed by an *alāp* that, similar to genres such as *dhrupad* and *khayāl*, consists of a wordless section. Afterwards, the performance features a *sthāi-antarā* form: the initial fixed melodic line (*sthāi*) that contains the *mukhṛā* (lit. ‘face’)—the refrain that in folk music and many intermediate forms is called *ṭek*—is followed by the singing of one or more stanzas (*antarā*) in a higher octave. This kind of song delivery structure is typical of *ṭhumrī*, *gāzal*, *qavvālī*, and other semi-classical genres. Furthermore, on the other hand, several *jogī* songs are characterised by the absence of compositional

restrictions that on a musical level results in an open form marked by free rhythm (alternation of free and regular tempo) and elements borrowed from other music genres.

2.3. Kṛṣṇa *bhakti* and Mīrābāī

The polyvalent figure of Kṛṣṇa has been the source of inspiration for an immense variety of artistic expressions that informed an impressive amount of literature and art in all its multifarious forms, including iconography, music, dance, theatre, and drama.

The literature related to Kṛṣṇa *bhakti* is extremely vast and brings together poetic, philosophical, and religious material from heterogeneous sources, from the epics *Mahābhārata* and the *Bhagavad-gītā* to folktales, myths, and legends deeply rooted in popular tradition and passing through the religious and devotional productions with a landmark in the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*. The multifaceted character of Kṛṣṇa—be it the child butter-thief, the charming playboy, the mischievous prankster, or the righteous hero—has always played a crucial role in the cultic and devotional context. Krishnaite literature, dealing mostly with the episodes of the life of the god, spread from the VI century especially in the region of Braj, traditionally believed to be associated with the life of Kṛṣṇa. Not without reason, poetry and literature in his honour found expression in Braj bhāṣā that progressively became the literary language par excellence after Sanskrit, in today Hindi *saṃsāra*, and was still in use during the first decades of the XX century.

In the diffusion of the Krishnaite cult in North India, figures of spiritual masters like Caitanya and Vallabha were paramount.

Vallabha (1479-1531) spent most of his life in Braj, in Mathura and Vrindavan, and contributed to making Mathura the centre of the *puṣṭi-mārga* (“the path of Grace”) movement. According to his philosophical conception of the Śuddhādvaita-vedānta, the only existing entity is Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Being that constitutes and underlies the universe and that is not different from the phenomenal reality and individual souls (*jīvas*). From the doctrinal point of view, the phenomenal world is not conceived as *māyā* but rather as a real manifestation of the divine. Therefore, to reach *mokṣa*, man does not need to renounce the world but it is rather enough for him to concentrate his mind on Kṛṣṇa. The devaluation of *saṃnyās*, the renouncing of material possessions and emotions, results in the Vallabha *samparadāya* in the importance of emotional life and affirmation of the soteriological efficacy of *bhāv*. The personal intense emotion experienced in relation to Kṛṣṇa, the supreme *ras*, becomes the means to reach the union with him. In such a perspective, the emphasis accorded to *sevā*, the devotional service to Kṛṣṇa expressed

through congregational worship shaped by love is well understood (Timm 2006). This practice includes *mūrti pūjā*—the worship of the statue of Kṛṣṇa—and congregational singing (*samājgāyan*) of devotional poems composed by the so-called *aṣṭachāp* (lit. ‘eight seals’), the group of eight poets who were disciples of both Vallabha and his son Viṭṭhanāth.²⁰

Caitanya (1485-1533) was another prominent propagator of the Kṛṣṇa *bhakti* movement. According to his doctrine, fundamental importance is attributed to the emotive aspect of experiencing devotion. This concept was further developed as a core theme of his teaching by the gurus of his *sampradāya*, called Gosvāmī or Gauḍīya. Essential to their theology are the five *sthāyi bhāv*-s (permanent and dominant emotions) that represent the basis of the different forms of relationship with the absolute and ultimate reality of God. These *bhāv*-s have been extensively theorised by the Caitanya’s *sampradāya*; however, they are transversal to almost all the schools of *bhakti*, even though they do not have the same centrality and importance. In Gauḍīya’s view, the *bhāv* must be transformed into *ras* since God is the supreme *ras*. Precisely, Kṛṣṇa is at the same time the *ras* and *rasik*²¹ (‘relisher’, the aesthetic connoisseur) par excellence in that he eternally enjoys union with Rādhā, the supreme form of his *śakti* that is distinct yet identical to him. The goal of the path preached by Caitanya’s followers is not the *mokṣa* itself but the realisation of *prem* (‘love’) obtainable through an ascetic life and the identification of the devotee with Rādhā and the *gopī*-s.

Central to the religious traditions of both Caitaniya and Vallabha are a ‘theology of bliss’, and the idea of *līlā*—the divine play—considering the universe as a spontaneous and aimless manifestation of Kṛṣṇa. Typical of the Vallabha *sampradāya* cult is the practice of the *rās maṇḍal*, the circular divine dance of Kṛṣṇa, Rādhā, and the *gopī*-s that in the enactment are personified respectively by a *mahāraj gosvāmī*, who leads the dance, and the devotees.

At the core of Kṛṣṇa devotion lies the conception of the Divine representing the ultimate experience of desire and enjoyment derived from pure and unconditional love for the Lord (Caracchi 2006: 191-92). In order to attain salvation, the devotee can follow

²⁰ Along with Sūrdās, the other eight poets of the *aṣṭachāp* were Paramānanddās, Nanddās, Kṛṣṇadās, Govindsvāmī, Kumbhandās, Chitasvāmī, and Caturbhujdās. It is believed that four poets were appointed by Vallabha himself to sing *kīrtan*-s in seals). Four of the *aṣṭachāp* were appointed by Vallabha to sing *kīrtan*-s before Śrī Nāthj (‘auspicious Lord’), and four were chosen by Viṭṭhalanātha (Barz 2018).

²¹ The term *rasik*, used in context of aesthetics, indicates the connoisseur, someone who possess the discriminating taste.

several paths engaging in an emotional relationship with the divinity that retraces one of the characters who took part in Kṛṣṇa's worldly life. In this way, the love for God acquires different forms: the love of the servant for the Master (*dāśya*), as shown by Sudāmā, the love of the friend and mate for the Friend (*sakya*), exemplified by Uddhav, the love of parents for the Son (*vātsalya*), as in the case of Yaśodā for child Kṛṣṇa, or the love of the lover for the Beloved (*mādhurya*), epitomised by Rādhā and the *gopī*-s. In *mādhurya bhakti* ('*bhakti* of sweetness')—crucially important in a great variety of intermediate genres—the devotee, whose aim is the mystic union with God, 'tastes' the *śṛṅgār ras* through the identification with Rādhā or one of the *gopī*-s; in doing so, he can contemplate the divine greatness taking part in the *rāslīlā*, or the 'dance of divine love'. The *madhura bhāv* can find expression in passionate love, in the pleasure and bliss of union (*sambhog*), in the pain of separation (*vīyog*, *virah*) and longing for the lover. All these different ways of relating to the divine not only constitute the pillars of the *bhakti* cult but have also inspired motifs in Indian literature and art.

As far as Kṛṣṇa related literature is concerned, following McGregor, it is possible to distinguish three streams of literary production (McGregor 1974: 75). The first deals with the poetry inspired by the tenth book of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* and the Krishnaite motifs present in the folk tradition in which Kṛṣṇa is portrayed as an *avatār* of Viṣṇu.

The second kind of literature is represented by the poetry that developed from the XVI century, which was overwhelmingly dominated by themes that were absent or anyway marginal in the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*. Such motifs were drawn not only from the popular milieu but also from *kāvya* literature, starting from Jayadeva's *Gītagovinda* (XII century) in which the character of Rādhā acquires a role increasingly crucial and dominant.

Lastly, the third type of poetry consists of the literary production of the different *sampradāya*-s which is closely linked to specific rituals and religious festivities.

Of significance to the intermediate music genres discussed in this work is the influence of some *sant*-s, singer-poets whose *pad*-s consistently echo in the lyrics of various songs. Among the most prominent Krishnaite poets whose influence extended to music Sūrdās and Mīrābāī are major sources of inspiration.

According to the hagiographical tradition—mostly based on the *Caurāsī vaiṣṇāvan kī vārtā* (XVII century) attributed to Viṭṭalnāth's son Gokulnāth but probably written down by Harirāy (McGregor 1984: 209)—Sūrdās (1483-1563) is the blind poet from Braj and author of *Sūrsāgar* (the 'ocean of Sūr'). The anthology of poems is inspired by the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, especially by the episodes of Kṛṣṇa's childhood and youth. In

Sūrsāgar the theme of *virah* is particularly relevant; the distress of the *gopī*-s tormented by the suspect that the lover has spent the night with another woman is another recurring trope. *Sūrdās* can be said not to be specifically related to a singular sectarian community, although the Vallabha *sampradāya* has claimed his *pad*-s. A similar process has occurred for other *bhakti* poets (for instance Kabīr and Mīrābāī) that are kept in high esteem across different religious groups (Hawley 1988: 6).

Mīrābāī. Mīrābāī (1498-1546) is considered to be the embodiment of *bhakti* itself, being one of the most well-loved *sant*-singers that, along with Kabīr, is also renowned and celebrated outside the borders of the Hindi *saṃsāra*. Furthermore, her popularity goes beyond the boundaries of caste, class, religion, and culture. The Rājput princess challenged all the social conventions and restrictions of her times. She considered herself married to Kṛṣṇa, calling him especially with his epithet Giridhar (‘the mount lifter’) in her hundreds of songs. Mīrā dedicated her entire life to his worship identifying completely with the *gopī*-s in her ardent love and devotion for her Lord, whose descriptions are reminiscent of the portrayals of a youthful Kṛṣṇa as presented in the *Gītāgovinda*.

The importance of Mīrā’s songs is paramount within the context of music. The themes of her *pad*-s, along with other motifs common to the *sant* production (such as the importance of the Name, of the *Satguru*, and the *satsaṅg* etc.) are those characteristic of love folksongs typically sung by women, mainly:²²

- topics of the genre of *bārahmāsā* (or the ‘songs the twelve months’),²³
- the theme of ‘the wait for the rainy season’ that makes separation unbearable without the beloved;
- motifs related to *virah* in its diverse manifestations: sleepless and restless nights, the physical sensations associated with the sense of longing, the joy of an anticipated romantic tryst, tropes about the beauty of nature and the pleasantness of the monsoon that cannot be enjoyed with the lover and, therefore, sharpen the pangs of separation.

The subject-matters found in Mīrā’s poetry do not deal with the narration of the episodes of Kṛṣṇa’s life that are however implicit and, to a certain extent, given for granted. The

²² For a classification of Mīrābāī poems see Pandey and Zide 1965: 64.

²³ See Ch. III, 2.3 and Ch. VI, 6.1.

focus of the compositions is not the celebration or the telling of Kṛṣṇa's extraordinary deeds but rather Kṛṣṇa himself and, above all, Mīrā's love for him as his devotee.

Another motif of Mīrābāī's imagery repertoire that found resonance in the songs of the intermediate music genres taken into consideration is the reference to intentionally embracing the life of an ascetic. The act of becoming a *yoginī* (*joginī*) has multiple significances:²⁴ it implies wedding Kṛṣṇa—defined in several songs as a *yogī*—with the ultimate goal of mystic union concealed with detachment from the world. According to some scholars (Martin 2018), the apostrophe to Kṛṣṇa as *yogī* may hint at his indifference as a lover: not expressing attachment to anyone, he also did not prove to always be true to Mīrā. For this reason, she warns about falling in love with him.

Analogously to Sūrdās' and, generally speaking, other *sant* poems, the *pad*-s of Mīrābāī were meant to be sung: this is testified in the manuscripts by the clear indication of a particular *rāg* to be used associated with each composition. Mīrābāī used specific metres for her *pad*-s changing the original structure to fit words within rhyme and melody. Therefore, syllables of certain metres used are not always precisely indicated or accurate (Pandey 1965: 64). It is interesting to note that, the approximately seventy *rāg*-s used in Mīrā's songs are also found incorporated in art music repertoire and constitute the core *rāg*-s characteristic of semi-classical music. This is the case for *rāg* Malkauns, Toṛī, Pīlū, Khamāj, and Malhār, that in their *miśrit* (or *miśra*) form—i.e., 'mixed' with another *rāg*—are typical of *ṭhumrī*.

The presence of the polyvalent figure of Kṛṣṇa in the texts of semi-classical genres is an indicator of the deep interconnection between the sacred and worldly instances as an essential feature of *ṭhumrī* and its related forms. Born in the secular context of the courts as a purely aesthetic form of entertainment, *ṭhumrī* expresses at the same time the devotional connotations of the *bhakti ras* whenever the lover—the subject of the lyrics—coincides with God, the Divine Lover (du Perron 2007: 4). However, the intertwining and overlapping of sacred and mundane motifs are a constant presence of Indian literature and art. Rāmcandra Śukla—one of the most authoritative critics and intellectuals in the Indian cultural milieu until the 1930s—in his monumental *Hindī sāhitya kā itihās* (*History of Indian literature*, 1929) described two distinct periods, *bhakti kāl* (1318-1643) and *rīti kāl* (1643-1843) dominated respectively by devotional and religious literature and the mannerisms of erotic poetry. *Rīti* authors, contrary to the *bhakta*-s, were generally more

²⁴ Cf. Burger 2000: 430.

concerned with the exercise of rhetoric skills rather than the elaboration of original contents and promoted overtly sensual and mundane poetry dominated by *śṛṅgār ras*. In *rīti* works, the love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa progressively loses its mystic significance in favour of a mundane, secular connotation that fosters the idea of the divine couple representing the icon of ideal lovers in a predominately worldly perspective.

The deep interconnection of religious and secular motifs makes it problematic to establish a clear distinction between the two aspects: the sensual element has never been completely replaced by the devotional one and both the trends coexist and are often inextricably linked. Based on this consideration, it is possible to claim that both the tendencies, typical of semi-classical music genres, starting from *ṭhumrī*, can be traced to several previous sources. One of the most important Sanskrit works that inspired the literary production dedicated to Kṛṣṇa is the aforementioned *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, dating back to the VIII-IX centuries and that in turn seems to be inspired by the Tamil poems of the *ālvār-s* (*vaiṣṇava* saints). The Tamil epics of *Cilappatikāram*, composed between the IV and VI centuries, comprises the motifs that later became extremely popular in North Indian culture as well; this is the case for the trope of Kṛṣṇa stealing clothes from the *gopī-s* while they are bathing in the Yamunā (*vastra-cīraharāṇa*). The character of Kṛṣṇa as mischievous and naughty will be later portrayed and elaborated at the beginning of the XVI century by Sūrdās, considered the creator of the *dān-līlā* ('play of the toll'), an account of Kṛṣṇa's antics at the expense of the *gopī-s*. While the milkmaids of Braj are going to the market to sell their products, Kṛṣṇa demands to taste them. When the *gopī-s* refuse to pay the 'toll' of milk and curd, the god harasses them: he grabs them, tears their veils, and breaks their bangles, clay pots and jars full of milk.²⁵ This motif, widely developed by the sixteenth-century poet, probably dates back to ancient Tamil sources, starting from *Cilappatikāram*. The *dān-līlā* theme underpins songs related to the spring festival of Holī and specifically, is at the core of the genre of *horī*, although it features an important variation. In *horī*, Kṛṣṇa's shenanigans consist mostly of throwing coloured powder (*abīr*, *gulāl*) at the *gopī-s* rather than breaking their pots (du Perron 2002: 179). As far as the sources of inspiration of intermediate music genres are concerned, an important role is certainly played by a large body of heterogeneous material, which has mainly been transmitted orally and is an integral part of folk repertoire. Tales, anecdotes,

²⁵ The *dān-līlā* is also an episode of the devotional dramatic representation of the *rās-līlā*. In this regard, see Richmond, Swann and Zarrilli 1993. On *dān-līlā*, see also Entwistle 1987.

and narratives related to Holī and the multiple religious and ritual occasions (*vrāt-s* and special *pūjā-s*) exerted their influence in shaping music genres.

From a stylistic point of view, the texts *ṭhumrī* and its related forms bear many more similarities with *bhakti* literature than with *rīti* poetry. Despite the presence of the erotic and sensual element, *ṭhumrī* compositions do not present the complex metaphors, elaborate rhetoric devices, and Sanskrit lexicon that characterise ‘mannerist’ poetry. However, it should be noted that some *kajrī-s* penned by renowned authors, such as Bhārtendu Hariścandra and Premghan (XIX-XX centuries) resemble, to a considerable extent, poetry composed in *rīti* style.

Generally, the lyrics of intermediate music forms lend themselves easily to various interpretations, that are not mutually exclusive but reflect a shift in the devotional interpretation of a *ṭhumrī* text where any lover can be viewed as Kṛṣṇa (du Perron 2000: 5). Compositions that portray the separation of ideal protagonists refer to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, regardless of whether their presence in the text is explicit and are narrated in the first person from the female protagonist’s standpoint. The most recurring terms used to denote the lover—such as *sāṃvāriyā*, *piyā*, *bālam*, *saiyā*—are always uttered by a female character, be it Rādhā or one of the *gopī-s* who addresses Kṛṣṇa, often called with one of his many epithets (such as Śyām, Mohan, or Kanhaiyā).

3. The model of *darbār* and the performers of intermediate forms

The genres of *horī*, *caitī*, *kajrī*, and *jhūlā* encompass distinct forms acquiring their specificity in relation to the performance contexts that make them, with varying degree, ‘participatory’ or ‘non-participatory’ kinds of music (Henry 1991: 238), or, in other words, folk, semi-classical/intermediate, or art music forms.

The main performers of *ṭhumrī* and its related genres were songstress courtesans, *tavāyaf-s*, of the XIX century. Since the Maurya age, courtesans acted as mediators between rural and urban traditions, synthesised lively folk and sophisticated musical and dance forms which later on merged into *ṭhumrī*. For this reason, they have been inextricably linked to the emergence and development of semi-classical music forms. Courtesans trained in dance, music, and poetry were patronised by the upper classes for singing and dance performances (*mujrā-s*) during *mahfil-s*, private gatherings organised at the homes of noblemen and rich merchants. Furthermore, courtesans’ performances constituted the main attractions of *jalsā-s* (gatherings, social functions) taking place in numerous temples,

on the occasion of *śṛṅgār* celebrations, when the image or statue of a Hindu deity was decorated as part of a ceremony that featured also the singing of *bhajan*-s and *kīrtan*-s. The overlapping of an overtly worldly form of entertainment with a devotional component became, for the reformists fostering the so-called ‘Anti-nautch’ movement, one of the favourite arguments used to condemn the activity of songstresses women and dancers. In a nationalistic attempt to ‘moralise’ and create a ‘Great’ Indian cultural heritage, the anti-dance campaign promoted by British colonial rulers and supported by missionaries and Western-educated Indian elites at the end of the XIX century led to the persecution and ban of *devadāsī*-s (temple dancers) first, and later, all the *tavāyaf*-s. From being urban cultural institutions, women dancers and singers—having lost status, fame, courtly patronage, and financial support—increasingly turned to prostitution, therefore reinforcing the idea of immorality imposed on them.

In the 1950s, after a transitional phase that lasted approximately a decade, *tavāyaf* performance officially ended. The campaign for ‘moral sanitisation’ which had already begun in the 1920s peaked in the lead-up to Independence, with the suppression of *koṭha*-s (brothels) and the official ending of courtesan performances in temples, that seem to have become totally extinct after the 1950s (Kumar 1988: 143).

The role of the courtesan tradition in shaping *ṭhumrī* and the overall development of Indian music is still marginally or reluctantly acknowledged within traditional settings. Indeed, the importance of *tavāyaf*-s in preserving and fostering music and other performative arts was fundamental. In fact, it has been suggested that the *koṭhā*, or courtesans’ salon, acted as a primary junction or interface between the folk and art traditions (Neuman 2015). Not only did it serve as a new urban source of patronage, after the decline of *darbār*-s but it also provided a fundamental institution for the employment of folk musicians migrating from rural areas to big cities. The cultural function exerted by *tavāyaf*-s as promoters of new musical ideas and styles can be ascribed to their background practice of combining elements belonging to rural folk tradition with an intense training based on an artistic exchange with revered *ustād*-s, including several prominent *khayāl* vocalists and *sārāṅgī* players (Manuel 1989: 73).²⁶ The original folk tunes and meters sung by courtesans came to be regarded as semi-classical.

As far as participatory forms of *caitī*, *kajrī*, and *jhūlā* are concerned, unlike many other folk musical expressions in India, they are not exclusively associated with a specific

²⁶ See Ch. I, 2.

social group. Although in their original form they were songs sung initially by village women and later by men as well, they developed and flourished consistently refining, and broadening their scope. Performed on the modern stage at the end of *khayāl* concerts during the season or festivities they are associated with, *ṭhumrī*-related forms have gained relevance and have come to be presented in festivals and events exclusively dedicated to *ṭhumrī*. As a result of a ‘genre drift’ (Henry 1991: 239), *caitī*, *kajrī*, and *jhūlā* underwent a functional shift from being purely participatory to predominantly entertainment forms, subsumed under *ṭhumrī* and progressively came to be ‘classicised’ following a phase of marginalisation due to the link with the courtesan tradition (du Perron 2007). Furthermore, in modern times when it started to be performed by male vocalists as well, *ṭhumrī* was ‘ennobled’ and ‘sanitised’ from its erotic connotation, lending itself to a devotional interpretation. In this way, those forms along with *gāzal* came to constitute the semi-classical domain of Hindustani music.

Among the main performers of those genres, there were some of the most illustrious names of *ṭhumrī* vocalists such as Gauhar Jaan (1873-1930), Rasoolan Bai (1902-1974), Ram Prasad Mishra, ‘Ramu ji’, Siddeshwari Devi (1908-1977), Begum Akhtar (1914-1974), Naina Devi (1917-1993), Girija Devi (1929-2017)—the ‘Queen of *ṭhumrī*’—Shobha Gurtu (1925-2004), Mahadev Prasad Mishra (1906-1995), Bageswhvari Devi, Nirmala Devi (1927-1996), Purnima Chaudhury (1946-2013), Savita Devi (1940-2019) Channulal Mishra, and Rita Ganguli.

Among folk performers, besides the main vocalists who founded the several *akhārā*-s engaging in ‘musical battles’ singing *kajrī*, hailing from the Bhojpuri speaking area, some renowned names are Bindhyabasini Devi, Sharda Sinha, Bharat Sharma Vyas, and Ram Chandra Dubey.

Chapter III: Interlocking dimensions in the intermediate music genres

1. The quintessence of the ‘intermediate sphere’: *horī*, *caitī*, *kajrī*, and *jhūlā*

The music genres analysed in the present work can be regarded in all respects as paradigmatic of the intermediate sphere of Hindustani music as it has been described thus far. The *ṭhumrī*-related forms of *horī*, *caitī*, *kajrī*, and *jhūlā* are indeed emblematic of the multifariousness of a single genre existing in a heterogeneous variety of expressions, spanning from simple folk genres to refined and elaborate semi-classical forms and even purely art music-oriented styles, such as is the case of *horī*, included in its variant *horī-dhamār* in *dhrupad* repertoire.

Horī, *caitī*, *kajrī*, and *jhūlā*, despite their great stylistic diversification, in their semi-classical manifestation are simplistically described as *ṭhumrī* ‘sub-genres’ or even as an integral part of *ṭhumrī* repertoire presented during performances reserved for the time of the year they are related to. Therefore, the label of ‘seasonal’, commonly attributed to those genres, appears as an oversimplification and reductive characterisation imposed on otherwise multifaceted musical expressions. Although seasonality is their intrinsic feature, those forms present a broad scope as is evident from their musical format and textual content.

From a terminological point of view, the denominations of *horī*, *caitī*, *kajrī*, and *jhūlā* commonly designate both the music forms and compositions found within the genres of the same name.

The complexity of the intermediate genres can be explained and understood in reference to certain aspects derived both from the longstanding codified Sanskrit tradition and a variety of influences exerted by multifarious folk and rural expressions. Literary, aesthetic, and theoretical frameworks—such as the *nāyikā-bheda* theory and the themes associated with *śṛṅgār ras* and *virah*, expounded in ancient treatises and poetry—came to underlie the composition and interpretation of intermediate forms and contributed to the ‘ennobling’ of semi-classical genres. Among the elements deeply rooted in the culture of rural areas, characters, and motifs ever-present in folk songs and oral literature are extensively found in intermediate music. Cross-cutting subject matters—such as the description of the season as a backdrop of the feelings of a female protagonist, and themes of the *bhakti*—show the richness of those music forms resulting from a regular interplay of interwoven dimensions and different contexts.

2. Motifs

2.1 The *nāyikā-bheda* theory

The ‘emotions’ described by Bharata are experienced and embodied by eight types (*bheda-s*) of female protagonists. The classification of the main characters—‘heroes’ (*nāyaka-s*) and ‘heroines’ (*nāyikā-s*)²⁷—embodying aesthetic experiences had already been the object of the more ancient *Kāmasūtra* by Vātsyāyana (V-IV century.). The *nāyikā-bheda* theory inspired subsequent dramaturgy, literature, and texts of diverse music forms, including intermediate genres upon which it has exerted direct and indirect influences. Several *ṭhumrī* composers, especially before the 1900s, have clearly based their texts on such a theoretical framework and today performers still rely on it as a guide for interpretation. Certainly, the reference to a codified ancient model contributed to the formulation of the label ‘semi-classical’ attributed to forms such as *ṭhumrī*. Manuel, in his monograph on *ṭhumrī*, has analysed in detail, providing textual examples, the eight categories of female protagonists conventionally portrayed in the genre (Manuel 1989: 9). At this point, it is worth outlining the eight basic *nāyikā-s* as presented in Sanskrit literature with special reference to the *Nāṭyaśāstra*:

1. *Vāsakasajjā-nāyikā*: ‘one dressed up (to receive her lover)’. In some poetry, the heroine is described as eagerly waiting for her lover or preparing for an encounter with him. A detailed description of beauty ornaments is often found in the portrayal of this *nāyikā*.
2. *Virahotkaṇṭhitā-nāyikā*: ‘one distressed by separation’. This is the most recurring heroine-type, ever-present in *ṭhumrī* and semi-classical genre compositions, being strictly related to the main motif of *virah*. This category subsumes the majority of women protagonists and crosses both the devotional and secular sphere.
3. *Svādhina-bhartṛkā* or *svādhina-patikā-nāyikā*: ‘a *nāyikā* having her husband under her own control’. There are no clues about this kind of protagonist in semi-classical musical texts, as this model does not portray a lovelorn, distressed woman.

²⁷ Although the term ‘heroine’ is generally accepted as equivalent of *nāyikā* for describing the leading female role, it has been argued that the word seems inappropriate and “misleading” (Srinivasan 1985: 7).

4. *Kalahāntarītā-nāyikā*: ‘one departed/separated [from her lover] by a quarrel’.²⁸
5. *Khaṇḍitā nāyikā*: ‘one distressed, in anguish for the absence of her lover’. According to later theorists, “the heroine enraged by her lover” or “one whose sense of honour is wounded because of her husband’s infidelity” (Rākeśagupta 1967: 338).²⁹
6. *Vipralabdā-nāyikā*: ‘the *nāyikā* disappointed by her lover (breaking an appointment)’. The heroine is angry at her lover who, having promised to meet her at an appointed place, eventually did not turn up. In such a state of disappointment, she is not able to react nor to think.
7. *Proṣitabhartṛkā-nāyikā*: ‘the heroine whose lover is away in a distant land’. This is a broad category that includes a large number of semi-classical texts. It is strictly connected to the *virahotkaṇṭhikā-nāyikā* type.³⁰ The emotional state of this heroine prevents her from enjoying those same elements of nature that used to please her when she was in her lover’s company. There are three types of *proṣitabhartṛkā-nāyikā* according to the classification of Bharata (Hussain 1982: 173-174):
 - *pravasatpatika*: ‘[a heroine] whose husband is in a foreign country’;
 - *pravatsyatpatikā (pravatsyatvallabhā)*: ‘[a heroine] whose lover is about to leave for a foreign land’;
 - *āgatapatikā (āgatavallabhā)*: ‘[a heroine] whose lover is about to come back but has yet to meet her’.
8. *Abhisārikā-nāyikā*: ‘the heroine who goes and meets her lover’. This *nāyikā* is described as strongly determined to meet her lover, being ready to renounce her modesty and break the social rules and conventions. There are different types of *abhisārikā-nāyikā*, classified according to the time of day, the venue, and the garments worn for the encounter with her lover

²⁸ According to the reading of Rākeśagupta and du Perron: “one suffering remorse after a quarrel” or “after having repulsed her lover out of indignation” (Rākeśagupta 1967: 51; du Perron 2000: 6).

²⁹ “A heroine is Khaṇḍitā when her lover, bearing marks of his union with another woman, stands before her” (Rākeśagupta 1967: 338). See also Cavaliere 2013.

³⁰ Rākeśagupta suggests the use of the more comprehensive term *viraha-pīḍitā* to indicate the heroine-type suffering for the absence of her lover (Rākeśagupta: *Ibid.*).

(Hussain: 1982: 180-81). The most important *abhisārikā-nāyikā*-s are the *kṛṣṇābhisārikā* and the *śuklābhisārikā*, indicating the heroine who goes to meet her lover with, respectively, black, blue, or white clothes in the dark or moonlight night. The different attires worn by the *nāyikā* are supposed to work as devices to make her as invisible as possible, blending in with the surroundings. The *abhisārikā-nāyikā* par excellence is usually identified with Rādhā.³¹

In addition to these eight female protagonists, Bharata and subsequent *rīti* theorists recognise the existence of a threefold classification of heroine-types, based on the relationship with the hero (*nāyaka*) namely:

- *svakīyā*: the heroine who is married to the hero she is devoted to;
- *parakīyā*: the heroine who loves someone other than her husband;
- *sāmānyā*: the ‘common’ heroine, identified with the courtesan and described as “one pretending love for money” (Rākeśagupta 1967: 96); this kind of character finds mention already in the *Nāṭyaśāstrā*. It has been argued—in questionable terms—that the *sāmānyā-nāyikā* should not be recognised as a type of heroine, since she does not embody the *śṛṅgār ras* and does not express a genuine love for a man. In the wake of a general moralising tendency within Indian culture, this category has been discarded and it has been claimed that as soon as a courtesan, having renounced to her greed for material possessions, develops a true love for a man, she is no longer a ‘common heroine’ in relations to the hero. Therefore, according to many theorists, the category of *sāmānyā* would prove to be inconsistent and incompatible with the formulation and expression of *śṛṅgār ras* and, for this reason, considered of minor importance.

Although several texts may belong to more than one category—or, conversely, to any of them—the model of the heroine-types provides a valuable theoretical tool to analyse and appraise semi-classical compositions. The reference to theories expounded in ancient

³¹ Siegel notes that “the convention of the woman going to the man reflects perhaps the cosmological notion of the female as the active principle and the social precept that the man was free from the moral stain of adultery if the woman came to him.” (Siegel 1978: 116).

Sanskrit treatises functions as an authoritative model and useful framework for contextualising the lyrics, in order to appreciate their subtleties, from the perspective of both creative and performative processes. As pointed out by du Perron, the awareness of the *nāyikā-bheda* theory seems to benefit performers from the educated middle class rather than traditional musicians who likely do not have any knowledge of concepts exposed in Sanskrit works (du Perron 2000: 12). Moreover, the strict adherence to stereotypes and formulas may result in an impediment for the creation of original texts (*Ibid.*). However, it is generally acknowledged by scholars as well as composers and performers that the classifications of Bharata prove to be useful to understand all the potential meaning of a piece of music.

Līlā Kārval, author of a monograph on *ṭhumrī*, has identified within the general rubric of the amorous feelings of the heroine for her beloved, four conventional motifs in *ṭhumrī* texts, identifying five typical situations for the *nāyikā*:

- the heroine is in distress and upset as she fears her beloved is entertaining another woman (*saut*, *sautan* ‘rival’ or ‘co-wife’);
- when she finds her husband at home after he had spent the night out, she wakes him up and starts asking him where he had been, what he was doing and the reason why he came back so late;
- she threatens her beloved that if he continues like that, she will not speak to him any longer;
- she experiences happiness that thrills her whole body just thinking about her beloved holding her on his return (Kārval 2008: 39).

It is important to note that, given the association of semi-classical music forms with courtesan culture, the existence of ancient authoritative theories responds to a desire of locating these controversial genres in an “aesthetically sanctioned realm” (du Perron 2000: X). Besides, if on the one hand, referencing stereotyped schemes may be problematic, as categorisation is in general, on the other hand, it turns out to be convenient not only for the sake of a successful interpretation but also for a comprehensive evaluation of the literary relevance of these musical genres that can be fully appreciated when situated on the backdrop of the Indian poetical tradition.

2.2 *Śṛṅgār ras* and *virah*

The *śṛṅgār ras*—differently translated as ‘erotic’, ‘romantic’ or ‘amatory mood’—is the fulcrum of the vast majority of the lyrics of semi-classical music forms. It represents not only the prevalent orientation of the texts but also places the genres in a rich cultural background shaped by literary theory and Krishnaite theology (du Perron 2007: 37).

Before focusing on *śṛṅgār ras*, it is worth dwelling first upon the very concept of *ras* (Skt. *rasa*). The word *rasa*—literally meaning ‘juice’, ‘essence’, ‘flavour’—is found in Sanskrit literature, although with a different meaning from the one it acquired later. It was first used in reference to the aesthetic theories exposed in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the most ancient Sanskrit treatise known on dramaturgy traditionally attributed to the sage Bharata. According to his elaboration and subsequent theories developed by scholars such as Abhinavagupta (X century), it would indicate the goal of the aesthetic experience: ‘savouring the *ras*’, by immersing completely in the essence of a work of art, temporal and spatial limits, determined by the law of cause and effect, are transcended and the subject is elevated momentarily above the phenomenal reality of the *saṃsāra* (Gnoli 1956: XI-XII). In order to be relished, the *rasa* implies the presence of a sensitive and sensible connoisseur (*rasika*) who possesses not only theoretical knowledge but is also empathetic with the creator of the work of art. Such a recipient connoisseur is termed *sahṛdaya* (since the time of Abhinavagupta), literally meaning ‘one of the same heart’, i.e., having the mind attuned with the author’s values. Starting from the *Upaniṣad*-s, savouring the *ras* has been equated to the divine bliss derived from experiencing the *Brahman*. Clearly, whereas the ultimate experience implies stable, undecaying attainment of absolute bliss, the aesthetic experience is bound to end.

The term *ras* has no exact equivalent in other languages given its dense semantic significance. The definitions of ‘mood’, ‘aestheticised emotion’, or ‘aesthetic sentiment’ cover only partially its rich range of meanings. In emphasising the problems posed by the English translation of the terminology, Pollock suggests using the word ‘erotic’ for *śṛṅgār*, to be conceived as ‘desire’, thus stressing above all the physical dimension rather the emotional aspect related to love (Pollock 2016: XVI). In contrast to this view, a lot has been argued about the essence of the *śṛṅgār ras* as not necessarily erotic but also as a means to pursue *mokṣa* or another *puruṣārtha*. All the theological and devotional interpretations of one of the most prominent among the *rasa*-s went in this direction. As noted by Wilke:

Rasa became the key for conceptualising affect and determined the cultural evaluation of feelings and emotionality—and in fact, it has become a major term for emotion (Wilke 2018: 50).

The aesthetics at the core of the *ras* theory in its complexities and subtleties pervades the entire Indian culture and represents a unique modality of perception and experience.

According to the formulation found in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, there are eight ‘basic, enduring emotional states’ (*sthāyī bhāva-s*) whose intensification, through the aesthetic experience stimulated by art, raises as many intersubjective fundamental *rasa-s*. Moreover, the theory accounts for the existence of thirty-three ‘accessory’ and transitory subjective emotional states (*sañcārī bhāva-s*).

The aesthetic theory of Bharata played a crucial role in providing the theological foundations for *vaiṣṇava bhakti* that accorded a special prominence to *śṛṅgār ras*, considered the most important *ras* in its function of arising out of the primary emotion of love for God.

The concept of *ras* appears to encompass at least three different levels: biological, aesthetic, and devotional. The three aspects have been synthesised in relation to the love for Kṛṣṇa by Jayadeva in the *Gītagovinda* (XII-XIII century). Besides, the Vaishnavism of Bengal, culminating in the *gauḍīya vaiṣṇava sampradāya*, the movement promulgated by Caitanya conceived Kṛṣṇa as the supreme *ras*, source of all others, elaborating an aesthetic system into a theological one.³²

The *śṛṅgār ras*—considered the *rājā ras*, the ‘king’ among the eight *rasa-s* codified by Bharata (a ninth *ras*, *śānta*, was introduced by later theorists)—is a constant presence and inspiring motif crossing over art, poetry, and music.

The etymology of the word *śṛṅgār* is particularly relevant as it can shed light on the multiple semantic connotations of the term. The nuances of meaning connect it directly with desire, sexual passion, and erotic sentiment. A possible link has been speculated between Sanskrit *śṛṅga* literally meaning ‘horn’ but also ‘summit’, ‘peak’; among other connotations, there is also the sense of “rising desire” (MW, s.v.). The sexual undertone implicit in the image of the horn is clear, recalling the *liṅga* as a symbol of power and prosperity. K.S. Srinivasan has noted that the term is also related to the verb ‘*sri*’, meaning “to be devoted [and] it denotes mutual involvement”. The same verb also stands for ‘to trouble’, ‘to kill’, “in which sense it imparts to the word *śṛṅgār* the idea of a deadly force”

³² See Ch. II, 2.3.

(Srinivasan 1985: 13). The erotic, wordly dimension of *śṛṅgār* has been the core of much of the production of *rīti* poetry.

The *śṛṅgār ras* has a two-fold facet as it is expressed both in union (*sambhog*) and separation (*vipralambh*). In the context of *kṛṣṇa bhakti*, the former aspect is symbolically represented by the dance that Kṛṣṇa performs with the *gopī*-s (*rās*) while the latter can be of two types: a ‘temporary separation’—occurring after a quarrel with a *gopī* or when Kṛṣṇa is going away for the day to graze the cattle—or a ‘final separation’ implying the departure of Kṛṣṇa from Mathura (Hardy 1983: 52). The theme of *sambhog-saṃyog* is usually portrayed as the ‘bliss of union’ or ‘reunion’ that temporarily soothes the pain of separation, whereas *vipralambh* takes the form of the mainstream theme of the *virah*, the pangs of separation (*viyog*), centred on the condition of distress and desperation (*vyākultā*) of a lonely lovelorn woman (*virahinī*) who suffers being apart from the beloved she longs for. This leitmotif is rendered in a remarkable variety of forms and is generally featured in the majority of semi-classical compositions.

Virah is not exclusive to the Hindu milieu but has been developed in other religious traditions as well, from Jainism to Sufism.³³ Furthermore, within the conventional framework of the depiction of restless love, it is an ever-present motif in Indian art in general and it offers a wide scope for elaboration.

The subject matter of *virah*—recognised as one of the first prominent topics in new Indo-Aryan literature—originated in the context of the *bhakti*, with special reference to the Krishnaite devotional poetry of the Tamil *ālvār*-s. The separation and union of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa have been extensively featured in Indian literature culminating in the Sanskrit poetry of Jayadeva’s *Gītagovinda*. Later, during the so-called *rīti kāl* (generally glossed as a ‘period of high style’³⁴ or ‘ornate poetry’) in the XVIII century, it was further developed in the form of manneristic poetry.

The theme of *virah* lends itself to several diverse readings and interpretations. On a spiritual and devotional level, it expresses the longing of the devotee’s soul for union with the divine. This condition represents a method for the *bhakta* and, at the same time, the goal of the spiritual practice: the longing becomes: “the highest expression of the bond

³³ Within the genre of *bārahmāsā* and *caumāsā* centred on the motif of *virah* and, therefore, pure ‘*virah-gīt*-s’, different types of traditions can be distinguished. The Jain *bārahmāsā* were the principal means for preachers to dispense moral and religious teachings. In the Sufi milieu, *virah-bārahmāsā*-s in Avadhī functioned as allegorical edifying stories in which *virah* is interpreted as equivalent of ‘*ishq*’ (‘love’, ‘passion’), tormenting a male protagonist (*virahī*) rather than a heroine (Vaudeville 1986: 38).

³⁴ Busch 2003: 33.

between the human and the divine” (Hillgardner 2017: 84). From a worldly perspective, it is the distress of a lovelorn woman yearning for her beloved.

Virah is the main source of inspiration for poetry and music. It is one of the most recurring themes in *khayāl* and *thumrī*, especially in the *bol banāo* style, in which it offers the possibility of manifold expressions and elaborations.

Conventionally centred on the theme of *virah* is the genre of *bārahmāsā* (‘[the song of] the twelve months’) with its cognatic form *caumāsā* (‘[the song of] the four months’). These poetic and music genres typically voice the suffering of a lovesick woman, pining for her lover’s return throughout twelve or four months, through the description of the cycle of seasons. The *caumāsā*, which portrays the four months of the rainy season, has been aptly described as a pure *virah-gīt* since it depicts these four months of the year that for the heroine are even harder to sustain than the other eight since the monsoon brings no relief without her beloved. Vaudeville further argues that “the *caumāsā* (*caturmāsya*) [...] is the oldest lyric type known in the written literature of the Indo-Aryan languages” and precisely:

The ancient origins of the conventional motif of a young woman left alone in love distress by a migrant husband has been explained by some scholars as particularly relevant as it can be considered paradigmatic of the women condition in the Indian context (Vaudeville 1986: 30).

The separation of couples appears to be a constant inspiring theme that has its roots in the sociological phenomena of Indian history. Some scholars have explained how men’s seasonal journeys were common in a society in which the main traditional occupations were agriculture, trading, and soldiering (*Ibid.*:33). Since the inception of the Delhi sultanate, peasants, and workers from the regions of North India were compelled to migrate to distant lands in order to serve their masters. Literature—mainly poetry—,folk tales and folk songs provide evidence of constant migrations, especially from rural areas, starting, at least, from the XV century (Kumar 2017: 21-24). From a sociological point of view, the separation of lovers is a condition occurring frequently. Social pressure and demands, issues related to the concepts of family and caste limit to a great extent the autonomy of individuals. Besides, it is a common aspect of the life of many married couples in India, especially in traditional rural contexts. The condition of joint families living together or often sharing the same domestic space leads to the inevitable segregation of men and women, husbands and wives that seldom get the chance to spend time together alone. In a rigid and conservative social system, the expectations of the

individual are to be sacrificed for the sake of social cohesion and order. For this reason, the abundance of artistic products arising from the need to express frustration, sorrow, and hopes is well understood (Manuel 1989: 17).³⁵

On the backdrop of the description of the beauty of the monsoon season is found the portrait of the *virahinī*, mostly in the aspect of *proṣitabhartṛkā-nāyikā* (the heroine suffering from the distance of her husband who is in a distant land). The pain of separation becomes even more unbearable for the female protagonist since she cannot relish the delight of the rain with her beloved. In many cases, there is a dialogue between the *nāyikā* and the nature that surrounds her; she often asks the clouds or birds to bring a message to the distant lover. There are *kajrī*-s and *caitī*-s in which the heroine expresses her desire to embrace an ascetic life, tired of the sorrow caused by her beloved's absence.³⁶ As aptly pointed out by Asha Singh, in *kajrī* the female protagonist is “constantly addressing ‘her husband’ who is not the physical, real-life audience of these songs” (Singh 2018: 208). In this regard, *caitī* and *kajrī* songs can be viewed as a cultural and artistic expression portraying gender relations and socio-cultural realities as it is the phenomenon of male outmigration. This holds especially true in a rural (folk) performative context, in which women sing for and with other women and there is no distinction between the performer and audience (*Ibid.*).

The central theme and core poetic inspiration for countless songs are represented by what is generally defined by Indian performers and scholars as *śṛṅgār ras*, conceived as a fundamental *ras*—regardless of its erotic or devotional interpretation—that, therefore, is expressed in endless forms.

³⁵ Russel and Islam have explained how, since Mughal domination in India, “love was seen as a danger to ordered social life and was persecuted accordingly. It is important to realise that the unfortunate lovers themselves shared this view of love” (Russel and Islam 1968: 3).

³⁶ See Ch. III, 3.3.

2.3 The description of the seasons: *vasant* and *varṣā ṛtu*

Music and art in India have always drawn great inspiration from seasonal poetry. The portrayal of the cycle of seasons is among the most recurring themes in Indian literature, in various genres encompassing prose, drama, poetry, epics, or didactic works of different religious movements (Feller 1995: 1). The depiction of nature on the backdrop of the passing of the seasons constitutes a Sanskrit literary genre by itself, the *ṣaḍa-ṛtu-varṇana* ('the description of the six seasons'), of which the best known is the *Ṛtu-saṃhāra* ('The circle of seasons'), traditionally ascribed to Kālidāsa but probably written sometime between the I and the V century and attributed to an unknown poet.

The subject of the description of the seasons can be traced back to the *Ṛg-Veda*; unlike poetry, however, the context is exclusively religious. Vernacular literatures of North India feature themes of the seasons in both the oral village and the more sophisticated written tradition. The genre of *bārahmāsā* is emblematic of the importance and richness of forms rooted in peasant life and related to seasonal and agricultural cycles. As argued by Zbavitel and Vaudeville, *bārahmāsā*, far from being a "by-product or a rough imitation of an older, more refined literary type", constitutes indeed a parallel genre to Sanskrit *ṣaḍa-ṛtu-varṇana* (Vaudeville 1986: 7). Having its own specificity, *bārahmāsā* is still extraordinarily popular in North India and holds a place of honour in tradition (*Ibid.*: 3).

Among the six seasons, spring and monsoon time are especially important, not only for the changes they bring about in nature and the climate but also for their symbolic value and emotional import. The relevance of the seasons in poetry can be better understood in their function of interacting with the lyrical subject. Orsini, talking about *bārahmāsā* songs, has aptly pointed out:

[...] the landscape hits the subject—who responds to it according to the situation she is in. The same objects and natural and climatic elements that provoke grief in poems about the woman separated from her beloved produce happiness instead when the two are united as a couple (Orsini 2018: 103-104).

In the vast majority of the texts of the music genres analysed in the present work, the beauty of nature during the spring and rainy season is closely interconnected with the motif of *virah*. The pangs of separation are sharpened and become all the more unbearable during the most pleasant seasons of the year.

Vasant, the spring. Spring—*vasant* or *basant*—stretching over the months of Cait (March-April) and Vaiśākh (April-May), is considered to be the *ṛtu rājā* (lit. the 'king of

the seasons’). Nature comes alive again: *mahuā* flowers and mango buds blossom, black bees hum and hover around intoxicated by sweet nectar, a soft cool scented breeze makes one drowsy, and the sweet cry of the cuckoo (*kokil, koyal*) sounds like a haunting melody for estranged lovers.³⁷ Kāma, the god of love and presiding deity of the season, wields a bow and shoots an arrow decorated with five flowers to wound lovers with passion and desire. Spring is indeed associated with *śṛṅgār ras* and *virah*.³⁸ Days get longer and lazy, nights are made to be spent outdoors. Early morning sleep is delightful, and no one wants to be awakened from the sweet slumber. Sleep, intoxication, and languor are in fact among the favourite subjects of the lyrics of *caitī* and its related folk forms.

Varṣā ṛtu, the rainy season. The monsoon—called *varṣā, prāvṛṣa* or *pāvas ṛtu*—is not only a crucially important time of the year that brings rains after months of scorching heat, but it also has a fundamental symbolic value in the Indian collective consciousness and literary milieu. Besides the vital importance within the economy and life of India, the monsoon with the charm of rain represents a conventional motif in almost every art expression, from painting to literature, from music to dance. It holds a special place in erotic poetry, being the time of the year most congenial to the pleasure of love. The rainy season offers the most fertile ground for elaboration on the amorous sentiment in its different manifestations. The effect of the rain can either take the form of a joyful occasion, such as it is for a young woman who hurries to meet her beloved (the state of *abhisārikā-nāyikā*) and enjoy the ‘love in union’ (*sambhog-śṛṅgār*), or it can have a destructive outcome, as in the case for the *virah* experienced by the inconsolable heroine whose lover is far away (*proṣitabhartṛkā-nāyikā*) and has not returned yet at the beginning of the monsoon.

The artistic importance of the theme of the monsoon crosses the boundaries of any specific tradition and better locates itself in the realm of the ‘intermediate’ cultural arena of the Indian tradition. This observation leads us back again to the strong link that unfolds as a constant interaction between and the mutual influence of what have been long considered different spheres of Indian culture. As explained by Lienhard, scholars assume that:

³⁷ Cf. Pandit 1947: 63. (*Rtu-saṃhāra* VI, 63). The cry of the cuckoo is believed to be based on the fifth note (*pañcam*) of the scale in Indian music.

³⁸ The essence of spring in the month of Cait is epitomised in the *vasant khaṇḍ* of the *Padmāvat* (29: 5) (Shirreff 1944: 203).

early authors were stimulated by folksongs, perhaps sung by women in Apabhraṃśa, telling of the approaching rains and the joys and sorrows of love (Lienhard 1984: 110).

Feller corroborates this thesis, claiming that

it seems highly plausible that the season descriptions were originally folksongs describing the activities of the people at various times of the year and were maybe more intimately connected with the festivals taking place during each season (Feller 1995: 25).

In this regard, it is interesting to note the existence of a type of sung poetry, called *gītakāvya*, that used to be accompanied by dance and instrumental music. There are instances of this kind of poem centred on the theme of the rains, as experienced by an estranged lover whose husband is far away (*Ibid.*: 111). Among them, the most renowned is the *Ghaṭakarpara* ('The Broken Jug'), traditionally attributed to Kālidāsa.

According to the Hindu calendar, *varṣā* spans the months of Sāvan and Bhādoṃ (July-August and August-September) and it is the time of some important religious festivals.

The arrival of the monsoon, featured in art and literature by conventional imagery, is traditionally heralded by the dark sky overspread with black clouds, by the flashing of the lightning and the roaring of thunder. The rain regenerates nature which blossoms and comes to life. The peacock (*mor*, *morvā*)—the bird most associated with the rains—cries out and waits for the rain to start its dance, intoxicated and frenzied; the cuckoo (*cātak*) sings, longing for raindrops and frogs croak. White cranes (*bālāk-s*) fly in garland-like formations crossing the sky at the side of the clouds. Detailed descriptions of flowers celebrated for their fragrance are extensively found in the literature of *kāvya*. Another trope is represented by the description of the insects typical of the rainy season: the little, red-mantled beetles called *indragopa-s* (lit. 'those who has Indra as their protector') that, on the verdant rain-moistened earth, create rainbows and fireflies (*khadyota-s*) shedding light on dark nights without a moon or stars.

The description of the monsoon appears in the *Rāmāyaṇa* (IV, 27) and *Rāmcaritmānas* (IV, 12-14) when Rām, forced by the rains to interrupt his journey to Lanka to rescue Sītā, describes the atmosphere of the monsoon to his brother Lakṣmaṇ. The portrayal of the rainy season is particularly enthralling: bees are humming, greedy for honey, forests are verdant and luxuriant abounding with trees and blossoming with an astonishing variety of scented flowers and plants; peacocks are dancing, roaming clouds are thundering in the sky in which bolts of lightning are flashing fitfully; low dark rainclouds

seem to touch the ground that shines with the gleam of fireflies. The earth is rich and generous with crops and the rivers are now swollen.

The monsoon is recurrently described in its function as the temporary suspender of kings' wars and expeditions as well as ascetics' peregrinations and wanderings (Feller 1995: 44). Rām's love-longing is heightened by the beauty of the season as it is with the grief of every separated lover. The predominant mood is *śṛṅgār ras* in the form of *vipralambh*.

The intertwining of the motif of the rains with the theme of *virah* is particularly relevant in literature. One of the best exemplifications is Kālidāsa's *Meghāduta*—'The cloud messenger' (V century), among the most renowned Sanskrit poems set in the rainy season—recounts the story of a *yakṣa*, exiled by his master on a lonely mountain peak, pining for his distant wife who dwells in the city of Alakā on mount Kailaś. At the arrival of the monsoon, he asks a dark cloud passing by the peak of the hill of Rāmgiri (the 'mountain of Rām'), to deliver a message to her beloved. The theme of the pangs of separation is further emphasised by the association with the hill where Rām and Sitā resided during the days of their exile.

The description of the monsoon season is the favourite topic of the music genre of *kajrī*. The portrayal of nature during the rains constitutes both the setting and the main subject matter of the majority of the compositions. The singing of birds, especially, constitutes an effective narrative device that confers the landscape an aural dimension as well. The onomatopoeic use of bird songs is particularly effective and poignant. The *papīhā*—the pied-crested cuckoo—sounds the call "*piu, piu*", "*pī, pī*" or "*piyā, piyā*" (meaning 'beloved, beloved'), and recalls the absent lover to the mind of the troubled *virahinī*. The *koyal* (Skt. *kokila*)—or koel—speaks sweet words, sharpening the pain of separation as does the song of the *cātak*. Cuckoo birds, a constant presence in the poetry on the monsoon and *bandiś*-es, are often confused with each other (Rajamani 2018: 43). In Sanskrit literature, they share the denomination *cātak*, the bird which is a metaphor for devoted love, symbolising the soul longing for the divine. According to tradition, the *cātak* would drink nothing all year but raindrops falling from the sky only during *svāti nakṣatra*, a period of approximately two weeks in the month of Bhadra.

2.4 Conjugal life

Closely related to the theme of *virah* is the motif of conjugal life, which finds expression in *kajrī*-s, *caitī*-s, and folk songs under different forms.

The union in marriage is contrasted with the woman protagonist's state of loneliness accentuated by the pleasantness of the rainy season. Several compositions are in a form of a conversation of a married woman who cries with her friends and confidants for the absence of her husband. There are *kajrī*-s in the form of a dialogue in which a wife complains to her husband about the strife and oppression she has to undergo within the in-law family (Singh 2018: 210). References to the post-marriage status are recurring both in *kajrī* and *caitī* songs. *Gaunā*³⁹ ceremony is mentioned in songs often in relation to its liminal function in marking the passage from puberty to married life. After the farewell to her parental home (*vidai*), the bride is brought to her husband's place where she is supposed to fulfil her marital duties. The consummation of marriage is an implicit issue that legitimises the wife's revenge to return to her natal home. The husband's indifference and will to leave the house entitle the woman to take revenge for not keeping the promise involved in the *gaunā* (Singh 2018: 212). The bride's natal home—alternatively indicated as *maikā* (lit. 'maternal home') or *naihar* ('wife's paternal home')—is often depicted as a world immune to the sorrow characterising the life of a married woman.

In the genre of *caitī*, a cliché is represented by the young bride's refusal to perform the *gaunā* and desire to spend the night alone in the wedding bed. It should be kept in mind that early marriage was a common practice in India. Traditionally, the *gaunā* ceremony was performed when the girl attained the age of puberty. Until that time, when she was ready to be taken to her spouse's house, she used to remain at her parents' place. For this reason, *gaunā* is also called a 'second marriage' (Tewari 2006: 9).

Another conventional motif portrayed in *kajrī* and *caitī*—that can be viewed as one of the multifarious expressions of *virah*—is represented by the husband who, after the *gaunā*, leaves her wife waiting for him in vain.

³⁹ The word *gaunā* comes from the term *gavanā*, equivalent to *gaman*, literary meaning "the act of going" (MCG, s.v.), i.e., 'departure'.

3. Characters

3.1 *Nanad*, sister-in-law

The main protagonist of semi-classical, intermediate, and folk songs is more often than not a *virahinī*, a lovelorn woman who, in many cases, finds herself in a specific social and familiar context. A large number of *kajrī*-s and *caitī*-s provide valuable insights into conventional relationships in terms of power dynamics in traditional familial settings in North India, encompassing mainly the Bhojpuri-speaking areas of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, but that turn out to be generally valid for the whole of India. In such contexts, a prominent role is performed by the female protagonist sister-in-law, the *nanad* (husband's sister). Together with the *sās* (mother-in-law), the sister-in-law—especially the elder one if there are other siblings—is feared by the bride for the harsh treatment and tribulations she can inflict. In folk songs, it is a *topos* for the woman protagonist to complain about the *nanad* who enjoys an established and better status within the household, having more freedom of action and wider access to the domestic resources (Singh 2018: 210). The *nanad-bhābhī* relationship is characterised by jealousy and resentment, as the sister-in-law turns out to be more influential, both on the protagonist's husband and on her mother-in-law with whom she has to share the same space, daily. The *nanad* depicted in some compositions plays the role of the confidante, conventionally performed by a female friend (*sakhī*). On the other hand, in a great variety of songs, the sister-in-law acts as a villain, given her conventional function in preventing the heroine from meeting her husband.

3.2 *Devar*, brother-in-law

The husband's younger brother represents one of the most important relatives for the newly married woman. The *bhābhī-devar* relationship is often mentioned in folk songs and finds its own space in multiple semi-classical compositions as well.

In the loneliness experienced by the bride, the husband's younger brother turns out very frequently to be the only sympathetic person with whom she gets the chance to spend time within the household. After marriage, the woman is deprived of the companionship of her brothers and cousins and, besides, she may find herself disappointed by the unfulfilled expectations of romantic marriage. Since, according to an implicit and subtle rule, the woman is supposed to almost avoid or, at least, keep some distance from the older male family members by marriage, the *devar* becomes her only confidant with

whom she may build up a platonic love. This relationship is generally accepted by the family, it is not subjected to restrictions and, at times, is encouraged, as it is regarded as a bond of friendship and affection (Roy 1992: 106). On the other hand, the younger brother-in-law—generally still young and unmarried—might also be attracted to his *bhābhī* who, usually, is close to him by age. In many compositions belonging both to the semi-classical and folk-songs sphere, it is possible to find references to such a tension existing in the *bhābhī-devar* relationship that may develop into a *liaison*. Frequent are the allusions to the jests and jokes played by the *devar* who tries to console the lonely and distressed sister-in-law.

Analogously, the transgressive relationship of the elder brother with his sister-in-law (*jīā-sālī*) is the theme of various folk songs across North India. Such a romance is portrayed, for instance, in *jhaṅgu* (lit. ‘jungle’) songs belonging to the genre of Garhvālī *bājūband gīt*. These songs, named after the custom of being sung in the jungle by women cutting grass, consist of a romantic dialogue between estranged lovers across the hills (Capila 2002: 185).

The relevance of such a theme can be historically understood in the light of the custom practised in ancient times by several communities in India of polyandry by which the brother of a deceased man had to marry his brother’s widow in order to secure her and her children the necessary protection to live within a patriarchal society. Hansen has pointed out that the *bhābhī-devar* relationship—described by anthropologists as a “joking one”—has been an important subject-matter of Nauṭaṅkī theatre. It has been noted that the role of the sister-in-law in teasing her younger brother-in-law should be seen as an “initiatory” in its function as an “educational task, as part of the male’s necessary preparation and “warming up” for marriage, and not viewed as sexual aggression on the part of the sister-in-law” (Hansen 2006: 29 n24). Furthermore, the character of a lustful *bhābhī* desiring her *devar* is a narrative device commonly employed in the Nauṭaṅkī-derived North Indian theatre of Nauṭaṅkī śahazādī (Ray 2005: 116), where the worldly tension of such a relationship is sublimated in a devotional perspective by referring to the dalliances of a mischievous Kṛṣṇa and an ambivalent Rādhā. The motif, being entirely traditional, has been re-elaborated in the genre of *rasiyā* and, after the cassette boom of the 1980s, features mainly *maseladār* (‘spicy’) verses set to or inspired by traditional tunes (Manuel 2015a: 6).

3.3 The *jogī*

The persona of the *jogī* inhabits the North Indian collective imagination and makes its appearance in various songs of the intermediate genres. His multivalent identity finds expression in the popular imagery: the *jogī* is generally depicted as an ambivalent character embodying on the one hand mystical and sexual powers—a holy man—and, on the other hand, he is often a sly beggar, sometimes even dangerous (Magriel and du Perron 2013: 199).

In *caitī* compositions translated and analysed in the present work, there are recurring references to the figure of a *jogī*, to be meant in this context not as a mendicant musician or a beggar, but more generically as an ascetic (*yogī*). In those songs, the *yogī* is no other than the lover of the female protagonist. His presence is functional to the main theme of the *virah*: the lovelorn woman suffers for the choice of her beloved who, having renounced the world, is indifferent to her. She, in turn, decides to take the ascetic garb and become a *yoginī*.



Fig.1. A *jogī* in Rajasthan (photo by Erika Caranti).

Chapter IV: *Caitī*

1. Origins

The genre of *caitī*—alternatively *caitā*—takes its name after Cait (Skt. Caitra),⁴⁰ the first month of the Hindu lunar calendar corresponding to March-April.⁴¹ It marks the beginning of spring and several festivals are celebrated at this time of the year. *Caitī* singing typically begins on the night of *pūrṇimā* (full moon) of the month of Phāgun (Skt. Phālguna) in February-March, i.e., the night of Holī, and continues until the night of Citr Pūrṇimā, also known as Caitrī. The denomination *caitī* is the Apabhraṃśa term for Caitrī.

Analogously to *kajrī*, *caitī* is a multivalent term indicating a variety of diverse musical forms showing certain mutual features. The term designates both the genre and the compositions belonging to it. As folk songs (*lok gīt*), *caitī*-s are typical of the areas of eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar and are associated with the end of the harvest season, marking the beginning of spring; they are also often described as *masuamī gīt*-s (‘seasonal songs’). In Bhojpuri, *caitī* is called *ghāṭo* or *ghāṇṭo*, in Maithili *caitāvar* and in Magahi *caitār*. In the month of Cait, in rural areas, every night people sing these songs with the accompaniment of *ḍholak*, *mañjirā*, and/or *jhāl* (a kind of cymbals). Like *kajrī* and *jhūlā*, *caitī* exists as a semi-classical form and is generally considered a *ṭhumri*-related genre; it is indeed regarded as a ‘sister-genre’ of *horī*.

The history and development of *caitī* have not been documented or, at least, have not been the object of specific scholarly attention. *Caitī* is mentioned as a *rāginī* of *rāg* Hiṇḍol in *Tuḥfat al-Hind*, an Indo-Persian treatise on different sciences—including music—of the XVII century (Trivedi 2012: 45). George Grierson (1851-1941)—a linguist and then Magistrate of Patna—in his essays collecting songs of the districts of Bihar, has referred to *caitī*, classifying it under the rubric of Bhojpuri songs. He considered the genre as a synonym of *ghāṇṭo*. In his words:

The metre is founded on 6+ 4+4+2 instants, with the word *rām* at the commencement of every second line, and the words *ho ramā* at the end of every line (Grierson 1886: 248).

⁴⁰ The full moon of Cait (*pūrṇimā*) is in the constellation of *citrā*.

⁴¹ The varying correspondence is due to the existence of an extra-month (*puruśottama* or *adhik māsa*) added to the Hindu lunar calendar to keep it aligned with the solar one.

It seems that *viṣuddhh* (‘pure’) *caitī* was born in southern Bihar, specifically in the areas of Arrah, Chapra, and eastern Uttar Pradesh. The genre does not appear to be indigenous of Mithila. Here it seems that *caitī*-s in Magahi and Bhojpuri underwent changes regarding the subject matter and language, Maithili being the local idiom (Jain 2012: 45).

2. Religious connotations

The singing of *caitī* is especially associated with the festivity of Rāmanavamī, the ninth and last day of Caitrā navarātri when the birth of Lord Rām is celebrated. In fact, it is maintained that *caitī* is a *vaiṣṇava* contribution. During the month of Cait, get-togethers for the singing of the *rāmkaṭhā* and *kīrtan*-s are commonly held in villages across North India. For this reason, it is common to find *caitī*-s characterised by the insertions of certain *bol*-s derived from verses of the *Rāmcaritmānas*. Likewise, there is also a custom of singing the *rāmkaṭhā* set to tunes typical of *caitī* (Jain 2012: 37). *Caupāī*-s of the *Rāmāyaṇa* are alternated with the singing of *bol*-s belonging to *caitī* compositions that can be rendered in different ways. Generally, after the singing of two verses of a *caupāī*, lyrics of *caitī*-s are inserted and followed by the reprise of the *caupāī*.

A distinguishing feature of *caitī* texts is the insertion of *pad stobh*-s⁴², or filler phrases, ‘*rāmā*’ at the beginning of every line and ‘*ho rāmā*,’ and/or ‘*āho rāma*’ at the end.⁴³ These *stobh*-s function as filler-phrases or interjections and do not have a meaning but rather act as a marker of the genre and contribute to creating the overall atmosphere or are simply inserted for metrical reasons. However, since the term ‘*rāmā*’ means “beautiful or charming woman” (MCG, *s.v.*), it cannot be excluded that the word was originally conceived as an apostrophe addressed by the woman protagonist to her confidante or *sakhī*. After all, it is important to remember *caitī*-s origin as women’s songs.

The religious connotation of *caitī* is evident not only in its connection with the figure of the god Rām. As already mentioned, the month of Cait is particularly rich in festivals and celebrations marking the coming of spring. Associated with the festivities, there are as many ritual *vrāt*-s. Among them, the spring Navarātri—marking the beginning of the lunar year—is especially connected with the cult of the Devī, being the period of nine nights when the Goddess is worshipped in nine of her different forms.

⁴² See Ch. VII, 1.

⁴³ This characteristic is recognised as typical of *ghaṇṭo caitī*.

In the area of Braj during Cait, it is a custom to sing songs in honour of Navadurgā Devī. Particularly important is the *pūjā* of Mātā Śītalā, one of the manifestations of the Goddess, worshipped for her power to cure smallpox, pustules, fever, and other infectious diseases. The celebrations take place on the day called Śītalā aṣṭamī, the eighth day after Holī. On this occasion, a *rat jagā*⁴⁴ occurs, characterised by the singing of chants and devotional songs dedicated to the Devī. Other types of songs include compositions sung by women throughout the whole duration of the festivities (Jain 2012: 39).

Considering the importance of the cult of the Goddess in the month of Cait, it is not surprising to find an important presence of songs classified as *caitī*-s dedicated to the Devī and the *pūjā* in her honour.

In Bihar, Cait is associated also with the so-called Caitrī chaṭṭ, the Chaṭṭ vrat starting on the fourth day of the bright fortnight (*śukla pakṣa*). This votive ritual, related to the Chaṭṭ vrat occurring in the month of Kārtik (October-November) dedicated to god Suriyā, is marked by a special *pūjā* to Chaṭṭ Mātā (also called Chaṭṭ Maiyā), considered to be Suriyā's sister and the bestower of health and prosperity. Sometimes this deity is identified with Pārvaṭī (Pintchman 2016: 309).

Among religious-oriented *caitī*-s, there is a number of compositions revolving around Kṛṣṇa and the description of his dalliances with the *gopī*-s. Among the most recurring themes, are those inspired by episodes of the *dan-līlā* portraying the god pranking the milkmaids of Braj whilst on their way to market or the well. The same motif of shenanigans is also presented also from a purely worldly perspective, where, instead of a *gopī*, the sister-in-law as the protagonist goes to a *ghāṭ* to fetch water and is harassed by some mischievous villager.

⁴⁴ The Hindu ritual of *rat jagā* (also called *jāgaran*, *jāgratā*, *rātrijāgaran*) consists of an all-night vigil that includes performing *pūjā*, *ārtī*, singing of *bhajan*-s, dance, and listening to *kathā*-s in honour of a particular deity.

3. Types of *caitī*

The wealth of *caitī* stylistic expressions has been exhaustively described by Shanti Jain who accounts for three main groupings, namely ‘common’ *caitī*, *ghāṅṅo*, and *gaurī caitī* (Jain 2012: 53-59). To such categorisation, the form of semi-classical *caitī* should be added.

3.1 ‘Common’ *caitī*

‘Common’ *caitī* is generally sung in a group with or without the accompaniment of musical instruments typical of folk music, such as the *ḍhol*. This is a broad classification including different expressions of the same song form, namely:

- *Khaṛī caitī* (‘proper’ *caitī*). Usually set in *Kahravā tāl* (eight *mātrā*-s), they can be *nirgunī*, *sagunī*, or *jhūmar caitī*-s and are linked to folk songs. Several *khaṛī caitī*-s are sung to the same melody (Grierson 1886: 248).
- *Jhalkuṭiyā caitī*. The word derives from ‘*jhāl*’ indicating hand-cymbals typical of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh folk music, and ‘*kuṭna*’, ‘to beat’. The denomination connotes *caitī*-s sung in a group with the accompaniment of cymbals. They are commonly sung by two groups, each presenting a verse in a higher pitch. When the performance reaches its climax, the lead vocalist sings in the highest pitch. Both the groups speed up the rhythm playing the cymbals.
- *Khañjariyā caitī*. As the name suggests, these *caitī*-s are sung with the accompaniment of *khañjarī*, a tambourine commonly used in folk music. This genre of *caitī* is usually performed by a group of men and its format is similar to the one of *jhalkuṭiyā caitī*-s: a line sung by a group or a single vocalist is followed by a verse sung by another vocalist or group of singers. Variations regarding *bol*-s, *tāl*, and *laya* may be introduced in between. For instance, it is common to find *khañjariyā caitī*-s set in a specific *tāl* that during the elaboration switches to a quicker one and ends with the original rhythm.

3.2 *Ghāṇṭo caitī (caitā)*

The name *ghāṇṭo* (spelled also *ghāmṭo*, *ghāṭo*) probably derives from the verb *ghoṭnā* meaning ‘to grind’, ‘to mix’, and ‘to churn’. The etymological origin of the word could be related to the performative style of the genre characterised by the energetic swinging of the singers. *Ghāṇṭo* is also commonly called *caitā*. The instrumental accompaniment of this music form mostly consists of *ḍhol* and *jhāl*. The format is not different from that of simple and *khañjariyā caitī*-s, where two groups alternate each other in singing. The only remarkable feature distinguishing it from the other styles is the tempo (*laya*), which in *ghāṇṭo* is fast, accompanied by vigorous singing, suited to the male vocal range. In musicological discourse, *ghāṇṭo* is not considered different from ‘common’ *caitī*; indeed, the two terms seem to be often used as synonyms. *Ghāṇṭo* songs are traditionally sung on the evening of Dhuraḍḍī, the day of Holī when people, after having played with coloured powders, visit temples wearing new clothes.

3.3 *Caitā gaurī*

In Uttar Pradesh—besides the different styles of *caitī* described above—it is possible to distinguish a form called *caitā gaurī*. This denomination is used to indicate *caitī* in honour of Pārvaṭī, although it is more common to find *kajrī*-s dedicated to her worship. This kind of song is particularly rooted in the musical tradition of Banaras, where it seems it originated and from here later become part of the repertoire of Faizabad and Lucknow *gharānā*-s.

The origin of *caitā gaurī* can be traced to the custom of singing tunes set to *rāginī gaurī* (alternatively spelt *gaurī*) in the evenings of the month of Cait. *Gaurī caitī* is a form of *rāg Gaurī* mentioned in the *Guru Granth Sāhib*. As already explained above, the singing of *caitī* is closely connected to the worship of the Devī. Furthermore, it should be noted that Caitragaurī is also the name of a festival occurring in Cait and celebrated in Maharashtra. On this occasion, Gaurī (Pārvaṭī) is worshipped especially by married women who decorate and dress the statues of the goddess and perform a special *pūjā*; on the third day of the bright fortnight of Cait (*caitra śukla tṛtīyā*), statues and images of Pārvaṭī and Śiva are installed on a brass swing. Ladies’ get-togethers (*haldī kumkum*, lit. ‘turmeric saffron’) involving merrymaking and singing of traditional songs are commonly held in every house. Sprouted chickpeas are distributed as a gift as a part of the celebration (Gupte 1994: 18-19). In light of the connection with Maharashtra, I contend that this form

of *caitī* may not be exclusive to Uttar Pradesh. Indeed, it has likely originated in Maharashtra and later, similar to other forms such as *lāvnī*, spread to northern regions, was adapted into local idioms, and changed under the influence thereof.

3.4 Semi-classical or (*ardh*)*śāstrīya caitī*

Like the other genres of *kajrī* and *jhūlā*, *caitī* is considered an integral part of *ṭhumrī* repertoire and is generally described as a *ṭhumrī* ‘sub-genre’. It is indeed presented with the stylistic devices typical of *ṭhumrī gāyakī*, featuring the use of the technique of *bol banāo* and the presence of complex *alaṅkāra*-s, such as *khaṭkā*, *murkī*, and *mīṅḍ*. The compositions found in the semi-classical repertoire are predominantly based on *śṛṅgār ras*, and the texts are lyrical and do not portray social themes. From a musical point of view, this kind of *caitī*-s are set to *rāg*-s belonging to *thāṭ* Khamāj or Kalyāṇ. However, it is possible to hear *caitī*-s exhibiting characteristics of folk music sung in *rāg* Pīlū, Deś, Tilak Kāmod, Gārā, Jaijaivantī, Khamāj, Kāfī, and Tilaṅ. They are rendered in styles reminiscent of elaborations in *dhrupad (horī) dhamār*. Like folk songs belonging to the same genre, these *caitī*-s show as well a shift of *tāl* that becomes faster in the singing of the *antarā* and feature multiple musical ornaments (*alaṅkāra*-s). From a musical perspective, *śāstrīya caitī*-s are not very different from *horī*-s, indeed the two are considered ‘sister-genres’. Among the *tāl*-s most commonly used, there are Rūpak (seven *mātrā*-s) and Kahravā, with a medium-paced tempo (*madhya laya*).

3.5 Literary *caitī (sāhitiyā caitī)* and its composers

The genre of *caitī*, being deeply rooted in the popular traditions of North India, has been embraced by *sant* poets who spread the message of *bhakti* chanting verses set to a specific *rāg* and metrical patterns typical in the style of *caitī*.

One of the most prominent poet-singers associated with the genre of *caitī* is Bulākīdās (c. 1693-1768). His actual name seems it has been Bulākīrām and his identity apparently coincides with that of Bullā (or Bullāh) Sāhab (alternatively found as Sāhib). A disciple of Yārī Sāhab (died c. 1684)—the first important poet of the Bhuṛkurā lineage—Bulākīdās was born a Muslim and, as his guru, he must have been Sufī. His verses are imbued with *nirguṇī* mysticism that was deeply influenced by the Sufi movement. With his disciple Gulāl Sāhab, Bullā Sāhab is considered the founder of the Bhuṛkurā monastery in Ghazipur district, in modern Uttar Pradesh. He is believed to be the author

of compositions collected under the title of *Caitī ghāṅṭo pad*, dating from around 1723 (Jain 2012: 46). He is among the *sant*-s who were influenced, directly or indirectly, by Kabīr. *Chāp*-s featuring his name are found in several *ghāṅṭo*-s. Nevertheless, they are not a guarantee of authorship and may have been inserted by his disciples. Bullā Śāh was also the name of a Punjabi poet who lived between 1860-1758, although there is no consensus about his identity and literary production. His popularity crosses communal and religious boundaries since his verses feature aspects of Islam, Sufiism, Sikhism and Hinduism.⁴⁵

Among Bullā Śāh's disciples, Rāmdās (not to be confused with the *sant* Samarth Rāmdās) composed *caitī*-s in which appears the name of his guru. The dates associated with the life of Rāmdās are not certain.

Dariyā Sāhab of Bihar (1674-1780), who referred to both Kabīr and Dharamdās as his predecessors (Upādhyāya 1987: 4; Juergensmeyer 1991:29) composed verses on *nirguṇī* concepts that have been described as *ghāṅṭo*-s (Jain 2012: 46).

Bulākīdās's contemporary, the *sant* poet Keśavdās (also Kesodās) composed some *nirguṇī bhakti* songs around 1783 that display features of *caitī*, although they are not explicitly named as such.

Generally speaking, *sant* literature is rich in verses that hint at the tropes recurring in some seasonal music genres rooted in the folk tradition. As pointed out by Lorenzen, several *bhakti sant*-poets composed songs about spring and, above all, Holī, Basant pañcamī, and related celebrations.⁴⁶ Sometimes, these kinds of songs were conceived in the form of hagiographic testimonials (Lorenzen 1996: 163).

⁴⁵ On the Punjabi Bullāh Śāh see Rinchart 1999.

⁴⁶ Basant pañcamī—the festival that marks the beginning of the spring, particularly celebrated in North and East India—was popular also among the Sufi community that used to hold celebrations at major shrines. *Basant* is especially associated with a repertoire of songs attributed to Amir *Khushro* (Blum and Neuman 1993: 115).

4. *Caitī* in Banaras

4.1 Buḍhvā maṅgal

Caitī singing enjoys great popularity, especially in the city of Varanasi, representing an important component of the musical tradition of the *Banāras gharānā*. Among the several occasions dedicated to the singing of the genre, there used to be *melā*-s held in the month of Cait, where the performance of *caitī*-s played a pivotal role. One of the most important events in the life of the city was the Buḍhvā Mangal melā. Traditionally celebrated on the first Tuesday (*maṅgal*) of Cait after Holī, it became a symbol of the *banārsīpan* (local, denotes ‘Banarasiness’). Special *pūjā*-s and rituals were observed with thousands of people visiting Hanumān temples in the city. The festival initiated by Raja Balwant Singh, king of Kāśī, is supposed to have been developed by the Muslim governor Mir Rustam Ali at the beginning of the XVIII century. The peculiarity that made it different from the majority of *melā*-s was its spontaneous organisation promoted mainly by local authorities.

On the occasion, large boats, and barges, called *bajrā*-s, in the river Ganges became the stage for the grand *mahfil*. Musical performances by *tavāyaf*-s, *gaunhārin*-s, and renowned musicians were attended by all the people of the city who used to listen from other boats or simply sat on the steps of the *ghāt*-s, from Ramnagar up to Raj ghat. The nobility, the *rais*, the *mahārāj* (*kaśī nareś*), and the general public alike used to participate in and enjoy presentations of *horī*, *caitī*, *dādrā*, and *ṭhumrī* as well as folk songs. Bhārtendu Hariścandra was an enthusiast and active supporter of the festival that seems to have reached its peak during his time. Descriptions of the grandeur and pomp of Buḍhvā maṅgal melā are found in his prose and verse, specially composed for the occasion. A poetic composition—enclosed in the present work⁴⁷—epitomises its splendour and uniqueness in verses that are sometimes curiously included in *kajrī* anthologies.

Due to the increasing pressure of nationalist propaganda in the 1920s and 1930s, authorities, *raīs*-es and *mahārāj*-s decided to stop the Buḍhvā maṅgal celebrations. The reformist impetus and moralist tendencies marking the decades towards Independence deeply affected the celebrations of the *melā* that came to be regarded as ‘immoral’ (Kumar 1988: 131). As reported from the accounts of the time, the presence of courtesans, liquor

⁴⁷ See B38.

consumption and an overall atmosphere of rowdiness and indulgence in luxury and pleasures came to be deemed as inappropriate.⁴⁸

4.2 Gulāb bārī

The Gulāb bārī—certainly one of the most important festivals in Varanasi—is named after the practice of decorating the venue of the *mahfil* with rose petals. It was a common custom to throw rose petals and scatter them on musicians and performers to show appreciation. Guests and participants of the Gulāb bārī, dressed in white garments as required by etiquette, used to enjoy a unique atmosphere scented of rose water and traditional perfumes (*itr*). Before Independence, *gaṇikā*-s and *tavāyaf*-s used to perform with the most renowned musicians in the two-day long concert. According to the typical format, the first day was dedicated to the singing of *khayāl*, and the second to the performance of *caitī* preceded by presentations of songs set in *rāg* Bhairavī. The festival was punctuated by breaks during which food and refreshment were served to the attendees who represented a diverse cross-section of the society at the time.

The multiple festivals and *melā*-s centred on the performance of a variety of music forms—among which the intermediate ones were particularly prominent—played a crucial role in fostering a legacy of traditions and performative arts of different kinds. They also acted as a ‘melting pot’ between the refined urban and lively folk traditions. In modern times, these events, if they exist at all, have lost their original and authentic significance, as a result of a wider process of cultural transformation involving inevitable changes in the arts and social status of the artist in Indian society. Likewise, the function of these *melā*-s in the XX century and today has been deeply modified, their main purpose being an attempt to preserve and revive endangered traditions. Promoters and recipients today consist, to a greater extent, of cultural elites rather than a wide audience in a joint mode of entertainment during the celebration, when social differences seemed to be momentarily mitigated.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ For detailed descriptions of the Buḍhvā maṅgal celebrations see Kumar 1988: 126-131, Parvatkar 2012: 265-269 and Premghan in Upādhyāya 2003: 110-132.

⁴⁹ During one of my stay in Benares, in 2016,, in the month of Cait a private concert hosting prominent musicians in the Gulāb bārī’s style took place in a mansion of some wealthy patron who was a music lover. Admission and attendance were by invitation only and the guests were required to wear white or light pink garments, as prescribed by traditional code.

5. *Caitī*-related forms: the spring music genres

Caitī presents interesting connections with both folk forms associated with the spring (*vasant ṛtu gīt-s*) and the semi-classical *ṭhumri*-related genre of *horī*, as well as certain kinds of folk literature, as expounded in greater details below.

- *Horī*. This genre is named after the spring festival of Holī, celebrated throughout India and especially popular in the area of Braj. Originally a folk-song genre, *horī* exerted a strong influence on art music: *horī-dhamār* constitutes indeed an important part of the *dhrupad* repertoire. *Horī* is generally subsumed under *ṭhumrī* and considered one of its ‘sub-genres’ (du Perron 2007: 42). Semi-classical and art music *horī-s* portray in their lyrics the frolicsome play of Kṛṣṇa, Rādhā, and the *gopī-s* smearing each other with coloured powder and sprinkling coloured water with water-guns (*pickārī-s*). Du Perron points out that the themes appear to be the same as those found in the episodes of Sūrdās’ *dān-līlā* featuring a mischievous Kṛṣṇa hindering the milkmaids, while they are on their way to market to sell curd, “with the main difference being that in *horī-s* Krishna’s teasing consists of throwing colour rather than breaking pots of curd” (*Ibid.*). Generally, semi-classical *horī-s* are set to *tāl-s* such as Dīpcandī, Tīntāl, and Jat and the following *rāg-s*: Khamāj, Kāfī, Bhairav, Bhairavī, Pīlū, Kalyāṇ, Purvī, Tilak Kāmod, and Toḍī. A few folk *horī-s* have overtly erotic, lewd, and obscene lyrics in accordance with the mood of the festival of Holī, characterised by a momentary breaking down of social roles and caste barriers and by close interactions between men and women.
- *Phāgu*. *Phāgu* (also *phāg* or Bhoj. *phāguva*, *phāguā*) is traditionally sung in the month of Phāgun from Basant pañcamī until the second Tuesday after Holī. Vaudeville points out that *phāg* or *phāgu* (derived from the Apabhraṃśa *phaggu*) is the Rajasthani-Gujarati name for the festival of Holī, derived from the red colour of *gulāl*, the powder that people throw at each other in during the celebratory merrymaking (Skt. *phalgu* means ‘red’). Furthermore, *phāgu* literature in Apabhraṃśa comprises some of the oldest vernacular texts of northern India by Jain authors (Vaudeville 1986: 21; 23). *Phāgu-s* revolve around the leitmotif of *śṛṅgār ras* both in separation (*vyog* expressed as *virah*) and union

(*saṃyog*); *phāgu*-s featuring episodes of the life of Rām and Kṛṣṇa can also be found. Moreover, it should be noted that several *nirguṇī pad*-s are sung in *dhun* typical of *phāgu* (Tivārī 1980: 52).

- *Cautāl*. *Cautāl* is a folk genre typical of the Bhojpuri-speaking area, very similar to *horī* and *phāgu* and traditionally performed during Holī. Originally unique to the Purāb region, it became a wide genre comprising several local variants, spreading to the Caribbean and Fiji with the diaspora of indentured workers at the end of XIX and the beginning of the XX century. In his detailed study on the genre, Manuel describes *cautāl* as being made up of

a set of subgenres, including that specifically known as chowtal, all performed in a distinctive antiphonal format [...]. These genres can include *dhamārī*, *kabīr*, *jogira*, *rasiyā*, *jati*, *jhūmar*, *bilvariya*, *baiswāra*, *lej* (Manuel 2009: 3).

Furthermore, Manuel pinpoints that *cautāl*, like the above-mentioned folk forms, is traditionally sung by male groups, with the accompaniment of folk instruments such as *ḍholak*, *jhāñjh* (brass cymbals), *khartāl* (metal or wooden sticks), and *jhikā* (shaken wooden frame with jingles. (*Ibid.*).

- *Kabīr*. *Kabīr*-s are folk songs, often with obscene lyrics and built on wordplays, sung in the month of Phāgun, usually with the accompaniment of instruments such as *ḍhol* and *mañjīrā*. The name *kabīr* has no apparent connection with the medieval *sant* and poet, nor with the song's content, which is frequently incoherent. However, the genre seems to be named after the inclusion in the lyrics of the distinctive phrase ‘*a ra ra ra ra ra ra kabīr*’ or ‘*sa ra ra ra ra ra ra kabīr*’. At the end of the XIX and the beginning of the XX century, *kabīr* folk songs started to typically feature social and nationalistic commentaries (Tivārī 1980: 56).
- *Jogīrā* (*jogīrā*). Similar to *kabīr*, *jogīrā* (or *jogīrā*) is a kind of *lok gīt* sung during Holī. The name derives from the word *jogī*; indeed, their paradoxical nature relates these songs to Kabīr and *sant*-s’ *ulṭavāṃsī*, ‘upside-down’ sayings and poems. Some *jogīrā*-s sung in Bhojpuri-speaking areas and, in general, in the Gangetic valley, are based on dialogues and debates (*vād-vivād*) between Kabīr and Gorakhnāth (Tivārī 1980: 57, Henry 1988a: 125). Some songs have obscene

lyrics and many of them consist of funny and at times aggressive musical verbal exchanges built on wordplays. Furthermore, in the age of Bhārtendu and Dvivedī, a number of booklets of *jogīrā*-s were published (Tivārī *Ibid.*). The songs are characterised by the typical meaningless filler expression ‘*sa ra ra ra*’. Again, Tivārī describes three types of *jogīrā*, namely: *bīsā*, *mukhtāl*, and *bāt*. The former two are based on the principle of ‘free association’ and have *nirarthāk* (‘meaningless’) lyrics. *Bāt* is similar to *lāvnī* and *dohā* and deals with different topics (*Ibid.*: 58). The connection with *lāvnī* is particularly interesting and would deserve further attention.

Chapter V: *Kajrī*

1. Definition

According to a description, commonly encountered in the literature on the topic, *kajrī* is a *sāvan gīt*. i.e., a folk-song genre traditionally sung by women in the month of Sāvan (Skt. Śrāvaṇa), corresponding to July-August. Despite the appellation, it is sung throughout the entire rainy season—including the months of Asāṛh, Sāvan, and Bhādom (from June to September).

‘*Kajrī*’ is essentially used as an umbrella term for different forms sharing certain characteristics, the most relevant of which is the seasonal aspect. The genre indeed encompasses distinct forms that acquire their specificity in relation to the performance context. Different types of *kajrī* have been identified by ethnomusicologist Edward O. Henry who, in his extensive studies of the folk music of North India, and specifically of Bhojpuri-speaking areas, has distinguished the following five main types within *kajrī*:

1. A women’s genre meant to accompany a type of dance.
2. A song-form, performed by both men and women, while swinging on swings during the monsoon.
3. A men’s genre sung to accompany a kind of dance—typically the circle one called *dhunmuniyā* originally performed only by women—using a pair of sticks.
4. A men’s genre, sung by professional or semi-professional performers on stage for formal occasions.
5. A form—mostly vocal but present as instrumental type as well—that is part of Hindustani art music repertoire (Henry 2000: 669).

The first three categories are in line with the characterisation of *kajrī* as a folk-song genre, typical of the Bhojpuri-speaking area, encompassing primarily western Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh. Unlike other folk musical expressions, it is not exclusively associated with or confined to a specific social group, caste, or group of castes (*Ibid.*). According to Prasad, it is difficult to find an invariant structure in all the different forms of *kajrī*; however, it is possible to distinguish four main styles: *dhunmuniyā*, “proper” *kajrī* (identified with the two styles of *mīrzāpurī* and *banārsī kajrī*), *śāyri* or *daṅgalī kajrī*, and *śāstrīya kajrī* (Prasad 1987: 67)

No consensus exists on the possible origin and development of *kajrī*. The word *kajrī* is said to derive from Braj *bhāṣā* and has its Hindi equivalent in the form ‘*kajlī*’. There are several different opinions about the etymology of the term (Tivārī 1980: 39, Ranade 2006: 97). It is generally accepted that it has originated from the Sanskrit ‘*kajjala*’, meaning ‘cloud’ and ‘lampblack’, which is associated with various readings.

First, the term may refer to the black colour of *kājal* (*kohl*) characterising the clouds of the monsoon season, when these compositions are mostly sung. It is assumed that, in course of time, the term gave rise to the variants ‘*kājar*’ or ‘*kājara*’, words signifying ‘greenery’ and ‘vegetation’. This observation is indeed motivated by the summer rain of the monsoon rendering forests luxuriant and vegetation abundant. It is interesting to note that sheaves of fresh corn are called *kajrī* as well (Sinha 1990: 101).

According to another possible linguistic interpretation, the term may hint at the Kajlī Devī, the goddess Kālī of Vindhyachal (Tivārī 1980: 37), a town located on the banks of the Ganges in the district of Mirzapur, the site of the prominent temple of Vindhyavāsīnī (‘she who dwells in Vindhya’, another name of the Goddess).⁵⁰

A third etymological reading relates the word to the Kajrī vrat, the ritual fast associated with the Kajrī tīj (or Kajlī tīj, lit. ‘black third’), the festival occurring on *śrāvāṇa tṛtīyā*. Kajlī tīj is also known as Haritālikā⁵¹ tīj, Būṛhī tīj or Satva tīj.⁵² This *vrat* is observed by married women within their parental houses through fasting and worshipping the goddess Kajjli⁵³/Pārvatī in the form of Tīj Mātā for attaining a long and healthy life to be bestowed on their husband. On this auspicious day, women perform a dance in a circular formation called *ḍhunmuniyā*. Kajlī tīj represents one of the main occasions for the worship of the Goddess and is celebrated in several different ways, varying from place to place. In the districts surrounding Banaras, it is a custom for sisters to sprout barley and put sprouts on their brothers’ ears wishing for their prosperity and well-being (Eck 1993: 266). On this day, in Varanasi and neighbouring areas, a great celebration occurs every year in honour of the goddess Viśālaksī (lit. ‘she who has large eyes’). The Devī is revered as a manifestation of Pārvatī and the temple dedicated to her, situated in Mīr ghāṭ, is considered to be one the *śakti pīṭh*-s and hosts special ceremonies during Kajlī tīj.

⁵⁰ Vindhyachal is one of the *śakti pīṭh*-s, places sacred to Devī or Śakti who according to Hindu mythology were originated from one of the limbs of Satī’s corpse cut into pieces by Viṣṇu.

⁵¹ Vaudeville explains that the name apparently refers to the ancient mother-goddess Harīti of Harītā, invoked as a protector of children (Vaudeville 1986: 84, n.4).

⁵² The denomination of Satva tīj originates from the custom to consume ‘pure’ food made of *sattū*, a kind of chickpeas flour. Cf. Ranade 2006: 97.

⁵³ Kajjli, one form of the Goddess, means ‘she who removes all the sins’.

Lastly, according to a poetic reading, the word *kajrī* refers to the *kājal*, which, intended as a metonymy, indicates the kohl-lined eyes of *virahinī*-s. The referenced female protagonist could be any woman—a generic *nāiykā* according to aesthetic theories—or specifically Rādhā, or one of the *gopī*-s longing for Kṛṣṇa.

Bhārtendu Hariścandra—intellectual, poet and playwright considered the ‘father of modern Hindi’—relates the origin of *kajrī* to the death of the king Dādū Rāy of Kantit in the district of Mirzapur (Uttar Pradesh). Grierson supports Bhārtendu’s thesis according to which, after the death of the king, his wife sacrificed herself on her husband’s funeral pyre, as prescribed by the ritual of *satī*. Women of the populace of Kantit, afflicted by grief and distress due to the loss of their sovereign, in praising their king gave rise to the musical compositions called *kajrī*. Therewith derives the gloomy and sad nature of most of these songs. Additionally, the name hints at the forest, the locality believed to have been the venue of the first performance of *kajrī* (Tivārī 1980: 39).

2. Origins of *kajrī*

It has been argued that the origins of *kajrī* can be traced back to the age of the *Purāṇa*-s, the dating of which is highly controversial and can be placed approximately around the IV-V century (Piano 2000: 219).

There is no consensus about the literary antecedents of the genre. It has been claimed that references to *kajrī* seem to have first appeared in the *Bhaviṣya-purāṇa*⁵⁴ (Prasad 1987: 67). Here god Kṛṣṇa describes the rituals that should be observed on the occasion of Haryālī tīj. It is prescribed to perform a *pūjā*, narrate auspicious stories, and sing songs throughout the night. Having celebrated all the rituals typical of a *jāgaraṇ*, at sunrise women would bathe in any sacred water body. The observance described in the *Bhaviṣya-purāṇa* actually seems to refer to Harithālikā tīj also known as celebrated on the third day (*trītyā*) of the bright fortnight (*śukla pakṣa*) of the month of Bhādrapada, whereas *Kajārī*

⁵⁴ शुक्ले भाद्रपदस्यैव तृतीयायां समर्चयेत् | सर्वधानयैसतां विरुढां भूतां हरितशङ्कुलाम् || हरकालीं देवदेवीं गौरीं शङ्कारवल्लभाम् गन्धैः पुष्पैः फलैर्धूपै नैवेद्यैर्मोदकादिभिः || १

प्रिणयित्वा समाच्छाद्य पद्मरागेन भास्वता || २

घंटावाद्यादिभीर्गितैः शुभैर्दिव्यकथानुगैः | कृत्वा जागरणं रात्रौ प्रभाते हृद् गते रवौ || ३

सुवासिनीभिः सा नेया मध्ये पुण्यजलाशये | तस्मिन्विसर्जयेत्पार्थ हरकालीं हरिप्रियाम् || ४
Bhaviṣya Mahāpurāṇam. III: 20 (Upādhyāya 2003).

tīja (H. Kajrī tīj) occurs on the third day (*tṛtīyā*) of the dark fortnight (*kṛṣṇa pakṣa*) of the month of Bhādom.

According to some scholars, the origins of *kajrī* are linked to the Śakti pūjā or Gaurī pūjā (Jain 2014: 8). This celebration—a spring festival of harvest—is dedicated to Mahāgaurī, the eighth among Navadurgā-s that is worshipped on the eighth day of Navarātri. On this occasion, women observe a ritual fast that lasts eighteen days. It is a prominent festivity also known as Maṅgalā Gaur and it occurs on Tuesdays (*maṅgalvār*) in the month of Sāvan. It is believed to be a particularly auspicious occasion for newly married women who perform the *pūjā* of a Śiva *liṅga*, praying for the well-being of their spouse and family. It is prescribed for brides to follow this practice for the first five years of marriage. The celebration includes an evening get-together of married women who regale each other with folk tales, traditional games, and typical songs. Young brides are asked to sing so-called *ukhāne*, improvised compositions in which the wife is not supposed to directly utter the name of her husband, but she has to skilfully intertwine it in rhymed couplets.

The several references to the character of Kṛṣṇa and the numerous episodes of his worldly life provide evidence of a close association of *kajrī* with *vaiṣṇava* devotional music. Ultimately, music is a very important component of Kṛṣṇa’s worship, in which a pivotal role is played by the *mādhurya bhakti* that acquires different features according to the *sampradāya* or *vaiṣṇava* religious tradition related to Kṛṣṇa. For instance, in the Vallabhā *sampradāya* or *puṣṭi-mārga* (‘the path of grace’), the *rāslīlā* is an integral part of worship.

3. Connection with other music forms: the case for *lāvnī*

The genre of *kajrī* shows interesting probable connections to the form of *lāvnī* with which it is likely that shares—to a certain extent—its origins. The word *lāvnī* (also spelt *lāvnī*) is interestingly polysemous within the same domain. It indicates both a folk music genre of Maharashtra and a different one in the Braj area (Manuel 2015a: 107). Although only the North Indian form appears to be connected to *kajrī*, it is worth considering the two different genres bearing the same name as they can be viewed as paradigmatic of certain recurring trends in the distinction and description of Indian cultural expressions, from the contradictory use of nomenclature to the fluidity and permeability of definitions. The term *lāvnī* is traced back to two possible etymological origins. The word is believed to derive from the Sanskrit ‘*lāvanya*’ meaning ‘beauty’, ‘loveliness’, and ‘charm’. At the same time, it is presumably related to the Marathi *lāvane*, ‘to plant’; therefore, *lāvnī* would stand for ‘plantation song’ and it indicates the compositions that may have been originally sung in the fields at the time of sowing grain. As pointed out by Thielemann, *lāvnī* as a genre exists in three major styles which consistently differ from one another: Marathi, Kannaḍa, and Tamil *lāvnī* (Thielemann 1999: 521). The style of *lāvnī* with connections to *kajrī* is closely related to the traditional theatrical form of Nautankī, in which the songs are widely used to portray a variety of moods and motifs. Considered one of the main expressions of the folk theatre of Uttar Pradesh, Nautankī became widely popular in all of the Hindi-speaking areas, including Bihar, Rajasthan, Haryana, Punjab, and Madhya Pradesh.

As a song-form, *lāvnī* is usually accompanied by drums, such as *ḍholak* and *caṅg*⁵⁵, and sung by two competing groups (*akhārā*-s) that engage in ‘question-answer’ (*sāval-javāb*) competitions in the format of a musical contest known as *daṅgal*. In this function, *lāvnī* is linked to another type of folk poetry composed extempore called *khayāl*. Interestingly, the word *khayāl* has multiple meanings as well: it designates not only the Hindustani art music genre but also a form of the folk theatre of Rajasthan, where its texts along with a kind of extempore folk poetry are sung in the genre of *lāvnī*. It is assumed that when *lāvnī* reached the areas further north than Mumbai, informed by Hindi-related idioms, it became associated with *khayāl*—the folk theatre of Rajasthan in Marwari and other dialects (Hansen 1992: 63). It is believed that the origins of *khayāl-lāvnī* date back

⁵⁵ *Caṅg* is a kind of duff, a tambourine played in the folk genre of *lāvnī*. The word is also the name of a folk dance of Rajasthan (*caṅg nr̥tya*) performed especially during the time of Holi.

to XVII century Maharashtra. From here, *lāvnī* was brought to the North—to the Hindi *samsāra*—by *akhārā* troupes that followed the camps of the Maratha army in the XVIII century. In support of the thesis of a possible connection existing between *kajrī* and *lāvnī*, I argue that it is worth considering another ‘intermediary’ genre, the Rajasthani *vāt*. This form of oral expression, widespread in Rajasthan, shares certain features with both the above-mentioned genres and has been described as:

a ‘tale’ or ‘epic’ or prose narrative [that] derives from the Sanskrit ‘*vārtā*’ meaning account. Grounded in the oral traditions, *vāt* are authored, preserved and transmitted by specialist castes such as the Charan, Bhat, Mirasi and Rao. In form, rhyme and meter *vāt sāhitiya* (*vāt* literature) is not very different from written poetical composition and, hence, exposes the artificial dichotomy between the oral and the written, the folk and the classical (Mayaram 2003: 318).

The common ground here lies not only in the stylistic format *per se* of the *vārtā*—performed as a dialogue or conversation with the audience—but also in its original function. Sanskrit *vārtā kathā*-s were performed by a reciter (*vyāsa*) and specifically addressed to women fasting for the longevity of their husband. A *vārtā* also implies a *vrat*⁵⁶, a ‘vow’ or ‘fast’, a ritual observance important in *bhakti* religious practices, and associated with the recitation of a *kathā*⁵⁷ (Kumar 2019: 224).

During my fieldwork in Banaras, I observed that my informants denied that *lāvnī* could have been born in Maharashtra and claimed indeed that the form had originated in the areas of Mirzapur and Jaunpur.⁵⁸ Although the two forms called *lāvnī* present remarkable differences, I believe that some essential features and historical connections have constituted a common ground for development. As a matter of fact, it is clear that the genre was born in modern-day Maharashtra that, for its geographical position, was linguistically and culturally influenced by the exchanges with the north. Such interaction explains how several genres typical of Maharashtra and South India, such as *lāvnī*, have extended their influence towards the north (Thielemann 1999: 443).

⁵⁶ As pointed out by Wadley, *vrata* in Sanskrit means ‘what is willed’ or simply ‘will’. “*Vrat*, in modern meaning, implies a vow to gain some desired end. But a *vrat* is not merely a fast (*upavāsa*) and it is not a festival (*utsava*) although both are often associated with a *vrat*” (Wadley 2005: 38).

⁵⁷ The term *kathā* indicates a story, narration, or tale. Notably, “it is at once story, scripture lesson, sermon, poetry reading, and musical performance” (Alter 1993: 104). It has also been described as “a very refined way of presenting doctrines through narrations” (Bonazzoli 2003: 160). *Kathā*-s function as vehicles of religious, moral philosophical teachings along with a variety of topics and are part of collective memory and consciousness. Furthermore, *kathā*-s are constantly adapted and reshaped acquiring “various shades of meaning, according to the experiences and life-needs of the individuals” (Zimmer 1972: 40).

⁵⁸ Personal communication, Banaras, April 2019.

The South Indian form of *lāvnī* is primarily a folk dance typical of central and southern India, particularly popular in South Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu. In the last three states, a typical regional style with different and specific features can be recognised. In Maharashtra, *lāvnī* enjoys great popularity and is an integral part of folk theatre. It is generally acknowledged that the genre was born in the XVII century, although similar musical forms were performed already in the XIII century. The songs deal with different subject matters, from devotion and spirituality to love. The latter type of compositions, in particular, depict the longing of a married woman for her lover and/or her farewell to the husband who is leaving for war (Murray and Nadeau 2016: 169), a theme that is prominent especially in *lāvnī*-s from Madhya Pradesh. The different performative styles of the genre have given rise to various formats of *lāvnī*, namely *phaḍācī* and *baiṭakīcī*. While the former was traditionally addressed to a large audience in an open public space, the latter was restricted to a selected elite within the closed and intimate setting of the *saṅgīt bārī*, a private gathering organised by a wealthy patron. As the name suggests, the *baiṭakīcī lāvnī* is sung in a seated position and involves the use of *abhinaya*-s that allow the female performers to build direct contact with the audience. It has been claimed that *lāvnī* resembles, to a certain extent, the compositions by the *sant*-s who practised the *virah bhakti* (Paniker 1997: 375). Indeed, the genre focuses on various motifs revolving around different aspects of love and even overtly erotic lyrics are commonly found. The songs are usually set to a fast tempo and accompanied by a kind of two-headed hand-drum called *ḍholkī*—similar to the *ḍholak*—typically used in folk music.

It is clear that *kajrī*, in many respects, is closely connected to several music forms belonging to the folk tradition. It is interesting to note the link of *kajrī* with religious rituals performed mostly by women and related to certain aspects of rural life, such as seasonality. The association with a season, especially with spring and summer being crucially important in the life of rural communities and, therefore, highly symbolically loaded—leads back to a direct folk origin of many ‘semi-classical’ and ‘intermediate’ music forms. This justifies the widespread tendency to describe and classify those genres as folk forms.

4. Types of *kajrī*

The genre of *kajrī*—as its related intermediate forms—is highly diversified into a wide variety of musical expressions, from folk to the more art-oriented ones.

Kajrī is believed to have been born and developed in the area of Mirzapur, in Uttar Pradesh, the location of the famous temple of Vindhyachal. From its original nucleus, the genre spread to other districts of Uttar Pradesh and was cultivated, especially in Varanasi. *Mīrzāpurī* (alternatively spelt *mirjapurī*, according to a phonetic trend typical of eastern Hindi forms) and *banārsī kajrī* are considered ‘proper *kajrī*’, besides being the most popular and prominent styles of the genre. According to the geographical area, *kajrī* developed different stylistic features, thematic contents, and musical peculiarities. The genre enjoyed a great diffusion and popularity even in big urban centres, such as Mumbai and Kolkata. In this regard, it is possible to recognise quite different styles in local languages, like the so-called *kalkatiyā kajrī* and *mumbaiyā kajrī* distinct from the styles typical of Uttar Pradesh (Prasad 1987: 67).

4.1 *Dhunmuniyā*

Dhunmuniyā-s are described as *nṛtya gīt*-s, i.e., songs performed by women while dancing in a crouched position and snapping their fingers. These musical forms, characterised by a fast rhythm, suitable for dance, are deeply rooted in the folk tradition and village country life of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar; they are even considered one of the oldest forms of *kajrī*.

Hirālāl Tivārī, in his work on the music of the Ganges valley, has described in detail four types of *dhunmuniyā* song associated with as many dance forms.

The first one is performed by women that, in a circle, hold each other’s hand while standing; when they join their hands, they stoop and start singing.

In the second kind of *dhunmuniyā*, women sing while simply spinning around in a circle.

A third variant sees women standing at first and then stooping and snapping their fingers. When they stand up again, all together start dancing in a circle.

In the last type of *dhunmuniyā*, only two women crouch, snap their fingers and walk in opposite directions; after going at some distance from each other, they simultaneously start turning and, eventually, they walk again in opposite directions (Tivārī 1980: 48)

The performance of *dhunmuniyā* is participatory and does not involve the presence of an audience. Commonly, it is a mainly vocal form, sung without the accompaniment of

musical instruments, although only one seated woman may play the *ḍholak*. In this occurrence, the player is surrounded by other women who sit around her and sing without dance movements (Henry 2000: 669). In the presentation and performance format, *ḍhunmuniyā kājrī*-s have many features in common with folk songs related to specific rituals (*saṃskār gīt*; especially *sohar gīt*—women songs sung after childbirth) or activities. It is assumed that *ḍhunmuniyā* was the early stage of *kajrī*. A solely women’s genre, *ḍhunmuniyā* underwent transformations regarding the content and musical features before being sung by men as *kajrī*.

Henry, in one of his detailed analysis of Bhojpuri folk music, describes *ḍhunmuniyā* as follows:

seen from the above, the dance resembles the revolving of a spoked wheel. Each “spoke” is composed of two or three men. Side by side, each has one arm about the other’s waist. The units of two or three trace the paths of spokes as they step and snap their fingers in time with music. Their postures somewhat stylized and knees bent, they glide around smoothly and gracefully. The music is antiphonal. When one or more couples are singing, they stand in one place as the other couples move around to come up behind them. At the completion of the stanza the now-silent unit begins to move around the arc, and the couple(s) that had come up behind them initiate a new stanza. There was no instrumental accompaniment of the dances I observed (Henry 1988a: 134).

Henry argues that *ḍhunmuniyā* originally evolved in Mirzapur and later spread throughout eastern Uttar Pradesh. According to some of his informants, the term has probably derived from ‘*ḍhunmun*’, indicating “the uneven gait of a child” (Henry 1988a: 134). Other sources relate it to the root ‘*ḍhun*’ that means ‘to search, to wander’ and would refer to the genre as a type of “dance originally performed by young women and symbolized their search for husband”. The meaning of ‘searching’ and ‘investigating’ of the Hindi verb *ḍhurhnā* may hint to such an etymological explanation of the origin of the dance name (*Ibid.*).

It is interesting to highlight how from a musical perspective these folk song-forms resemble, to a considerable extent, some *rāg*-s such as *Jiñjhotī*.⁵⁹ This observation leads us back, once again, to postulate the existence of a continuum of tradition that further challenges categorisation and reinforces the assumption of an original core made of heterogeneous folk heritage.

⁵⁹There is a general consensus among musicians that *rāg* *Jiñjhotī* derives from folk melodies (Prasad 1987: 71).

It seems that prototypical *kajrī*-s were characterised by the absence of metre and rhyme schemes (*nibaddh* style). Only later *kajrī*-s started to be sung in specific fixed tunes.

4.2 *Śāyri* and *daṅgalī kajrī*. Their *akhārā*-s

Śāyri and *daṅgalī kajrī*-s are usually grouped based on their *raison d'être*, the performative context that determines their very nature. They are considered a development of the *dhunmuniyā* style and can be described as professional or semi-professional stage genres.

The adjective *śāyri*—qualifying a specific form of *kajrī*—draws upon the analogy with the homonymous Urdu form of poetry, consisting of compositions made of at least one couplet (*śer*). The word ‘*śāyri*’ has the twofold meaning of a piece of poetry and/or art and practice of poetry; the recitation of poems in a gathering is called *śāyri* and has a long-standing tradition, dating to the Mughal era when poetic symposia—known as *muśāyirā*-s (or *muśā'irah*-s) were commonly held. On these occasions, prominent wealthy patrons used to invite poets to recite their own compositions—traditionally *gāzal*-s—crafted according to set conventions and specific metrical patterns. The audience was an essential element of the performances, due to the great extent of interaction in showing appreciation or inviting artists to render the same *gāzal* again or to further demonstrate their skills in engaging with other poems.⁶⁰ Criticism and comments could be openly expressed and were greatly appreciated. The tradition of *muśāyirā* extensively contributed to the development of Urdu poetry and became an integral part, first of the court-culture of Indian *navāb*-s and *zamīndār*-s (Dehlvi 1970: 69) and later of all Urdu literature.

Muśāyirā-s are still popular today—they are also broadcast via media as part of radio and TV programmes—especially in Delhi, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Hyderabad, Pakistan, and areas where Urdu is spoken (Imam 2008).

The equivalent Hindi tradition of poetry recital is represented by poetic gatherings, called *kavi* (or *goṣṭhī*) *sammelan*, *kavi samāj* or *kāvya sabhā*. These assemblies, varying both audience size and topic, were animated by literary contests based on the composition of impromptu poetry. Among the variety of extemporaneous compositions, particularly popular was the *savaiyā*, a form of *samasyāpūrti* in which a given line of verse was set as a task, or posed as a problem (*samasyā*), to be elaborated upon (*pūrti*), according to fixed metrical rules. As an oral tradition, it was a typical courtly pastime and its origins

⁶⁰ On the interaction at *muśāyirā*-s see Naim 2004.

can be traced back to Sanskrit poetry. Written evidence proves that *samasyāpūrti* must have been in vogue until premodern times (Busch 2015: 280).⁶¹

In relatively recent times, a trend has emerged combining *muśāyrā*-s with Hindi literary get-together-s, Urdu and Hindi being mutually intelligible.

Given the poetic nature of *śāyrī kajrī*, the adherence to certain formal rules, pertaining metrics and textual content is often indicated as a quintessential feature of the genre. For this reason, several *śāyrī kajrī*-s are considered *sāhityik* (‘literary’) *kajrī*-s. This kind of songs—in Khaṛī bolī Hindi, Urdu, Sanskrit or Farsi—seems to have originated in the XX century (Tewari 1974: 272). *Sāhityik kajrī*-s feature a considerable variety of metres or prosodic-melodic formats, often combined with stock tunes. The two most recurring meters are *bandh* and *chand*⁶², with all their variations (Prasad 1987: 78). Interestingly, under the rubric of *śāyrī kajrī*-s are sometimes included compositions, which may not be composed according to fixed canons. Such is the case for the so-called *daṅgalī kajrī*-s that are generally considered folk music. The term *daṅgal*, indicating an ‘arena’, especially for wrestling, denotes contests in which performances of folk-song genres, such as *kajrī*, *birahā*, *rasiyā*, and impromptu folk poetry, attract large audiences. A typical *daṅgal* performance setting closely resembles *muśāyrā*-s and *kavi sammelan*-s with a stage usually positioned in a public square, a marketplace, a roundabout, or any other open area that can host a large number of people in a town or village. The event is generally sponsored by wealthy patrons and, in modern times, loudspeakers broadcast the music to neighbourhoods. Manuel has described the *daṅgal* within the genre of *hāthrasī rasiyā*, a type of Braj folk song sharing features with *kajrī* and other intermediate genres (Manuel 2015a). In a *daṅgal*, often lasting several hours from late evening throughout the night, competing performing groups called *akhārā*-s sing *kajrī*-s in the form of *savāl-javāb* (‘question-answer’) musical dialogue, *khaṅḍan-maṅḍan* (‘provocation’, ‘polemics’), *laṛant* (‘fight’) or *joṛ-tor* (‘provocation’, musical quarrel) (Prasad 1987: 27). *Kajrī*-s sung by rival teams in the context of these musical duels are also known as *akhāriyā kajrī*-s. Compositions, rich in extempore verses, revolve around questions or riddles on religious, philosophical, political or mythological topics. The competition unfolds and is made more challenging by establishing a specific prosodic metre, melodic pattern or rhyme scheme. A concise description of *daṅgal*-s is provided by Ranade who depicts this competitive performance as an old practice occurring on a specific occasion,

⁶¹ Another practice similar to *samasyāpūrti* was the Urdu *tarah*.

⁶² *Chand* is another polysemous word. It can indicate a specific meter or only prosody in general.

beginning on Gaṅgā daśahrā, after a ceremony in which the *ḍholak* is worshipped, and ending on Anant caturdaśī—therefore, going from the tenth day of the bright fortnight in the month of Jeth (May-June) to the fourteenth day of the bright fortnight in Bhādoṃ (August-September). A typical *daṅgal* begins with a guru singing a *sumirati*⁶³ with the musical accompaniment of *ḍholak*, *caṅg*, and *lakṛī*⁶⁴. Following the question or riddle posed by the first *akhārā*, while the other guru is preparing for the answer, other singers in the group (called *devādiyā-s*) continue to repeat the refrain (*ṭek*). The ‘fight’ between rival groups reaches its climax with the singing of *bārdastā* and *phaṭahā* songs. In Ranade’s words, the former are “obscene verses critical of the opponent” and the latter consist of “extempore compositions composed to answer the opponent”. It is a custom for one *akhārā* to invite another to a challenge by sending cardamom (Ranade 2006: 98).

Daṅgalī kajrī-s which are not built on any specific formulae or metres and are not performed in *theṭh* Hindi—colloquial’, ‘day-to-day’ language influenced by dialectal forms—are called *kharī raṅgat kajrī-s*. This type of *kajrī-s* seems to have developed and spread during the second half of the XIX century as there is no evidence of their existence before 1857 (Prasad 1987: 78). Prasad, consonant with a general trend in Indian musicology of avoiding strict classification in absolute terms, equates *śāyṛī* to *daṅgalī kajrī* and describes it as

[an] elaborative and explanatory type of performance similar to a performance done by a *ramayni* (one who recites the *Rāmayaṇ*) who to convey the meaning of a composition has to explain word by word. (Prasad 1987: 89).

Lutgendorf in *Life of a text* has pointed out that *kajrī* lyrics are commonly inserted in *Rāmcaritimānas* singing to embellish the texts and convey a ‘seasonal flavour’ evoked by associations with the tropes of the genre and offering “an emotive folk commentary on the epic lines” (Lutgendorf 1991: 110).

At this point, it is worth it to report the classification elaborated by Hirālāl Tivārī who grouped *daṅgalī kajrī-s* based on the following thematic contents:

1. *Bhakti*. Under this rubric are included three main types of *daṅgalī kajrī-s* dealing with devotional themes:
 - a. *Hadīsī kajrī*. This category is not described in detail by Tivārī and would indeed deserve scholarly attention. The term *hadīs*

⁶³ It might refer to *sumiran*, i.e., invocation of deities.

⁶⁴ All are percussion instruments. *Lakṛī* is a pair of sticks used in folk dances.

derives from the Arabic word *ḥadīth*, meaning ‘talk, discussion, narrative’ but also ‘communication, story, conversation’ (Azami 2002: 1). In the Islamic tradition, it indicates a literary genre particularly significant for its association with the prophet Muhammad and his disciples. *Ḥadīth* consists of brief accounts of Muhammad’s sayings, statements, and actions, and includes narrations about his companions and successors. This corpus of telling was mostly transmitted orally. Along with the Qur’ān, *ḥadīth* represents a set of traditions offering guidance on behaviour and lifestyle for Muslims. In India, the study of *ḥadīth* literature was an essential component of traditional educated Muslim religious intellectuals, the *ulemā*-s, since the XVI-XVII century. The ‘science of *ḥadīth*’—as the study of such religious tradition was called—represented an important tool for the exegesis of the scriptures and a re-interpretation of Islam. A new approach was consonant with the new challenges faced by the Muslim community first in a predominantly Hindu cultural milieu and later, towards the XVIII and XIX centuries, in a colonial, increasingly westernized context (Zamam 2009: 225). It can be said that the *ḥadīth* tradition is an integral component of Muslim identity and has influenced different aspects of Islamic life. In India, it was not only part of the cultural heritage of *ulemā* scholars but also entered the daily life of Muslims. *Ḥadīth* is quoted in secular, general conversations and is found in mass media communication as well (Claus and Mills 2003: 277). Therefore, it is not surprising that *daṅgalī kajrī*-s feature motifs of *ḥadīth* tradition: the genre is indeed performed by folk belonging to lower castes that often were Muslim. During my fieldwork, I was not able to find any specific information about *hadīsī kajrī*. Even the work of Tivārī does not include any of such compositions. Some of my informants acknowledged the existence of these kinds of songs and claimed that they are related to a particular kind of *daṅgal* more common in Pakistan, and rarely held in North India where *kajrī* is widespread.

- b. *Nirgunīyā kajrī*. Songs in praise of a formless god, with special reference to *sant* songs.
 - c. *Līlā gān*. Tivārī identifies the main feature of *kajrī*-s belonging to this category in the “description of the deeds of Lord Rām and his devotees” (Tivārī 1980: 75). However, the denomination *līlā gān* seems to have a broader meaning since it includes singing the acts of a generic deity.
2. *Raskhān*. *Raskhān kajrī*-s are characterised by *śṛṅgār ras*, given their predominant romantic and erotic nature. Tivārī further distinguishes between two predominant types of such *kajrī*-s, namely:
- a. *iṣikyā*, purely erotic and amatory songs dealing with motifs of union (*saṃyog*), separation (*vyog*), marriage proposals and romantic teasing.
 - b. *Nakhsikhā*, i.e., songs featuring detailed “descriptions of every part of goddesses’ and women’s body and attire”⁶⁵ (Tivārī *Ibid.*). *Nakh sikh* is the term used to indicate a genre consisting of poems describing female beauty through conventional metaphors indulging in detail from “the toenail to the top-knot”. This kind of poetry was especially in vogue during the *rīti kāl*.

Tivārī in his work does not provide any specimen of *raskhān kajrī* which would indeed deserve scholarly attention. *Raskhān* was a poet of the *bhakti kāl*. Born a Muslim, Syed Ibrahim Khan (ca 1548) is usually believed to have been one of Viṭṭalnāth’s disciples who devoted his entire life to Kṛṣṇa’s worship. *Raskhān* was the author of compositions shaped by a merging of Sufi devotion and Kṛṣṇa *bhakti*. Some of *Raskhān*’s *bandīś*-es are sung in *khayāl* and his *mudrā* is found also later than the XVII century in verses composed by other poets (Nagasaki 2018). The inclusion of a signature of a prominent spiritual figure or poet was a common practice among followers and adherents of a sect, religious path, or poetic school (Hawley

⁶⁵ My translation from Hindi.

1988). I argue that it should not be excluded that some of Raskhān's compositions in praise of Kṛṣṇa were sung in *kajrī* style during *daṅgal*-s. After all, many of Raskhān's compositions were framed according to a metric pattern called *savaiyā* combining Perso-Arabic influences with the Indic prosodic system: this made his poems resemble *gāzal*-s, with a rhyme at the end of each line (*Ibid.*)

3. *Bayān*. The term seems to be rather generic and designates descriptive kinds of *kajrī* dealing with episodes from *Itihās* or *Purāṇa*-s and tellings or accounts of floods, earthquakes, tragedies, mishaps, accidents (for example, during a Kumbh melā or rail disaster) and other more or less relevant facts. During my research, I was able to retrieve a few songs mentioning some historical events, such as a *kajrī* by Bhārtendu, describing the famous destruction of the temple in Somnath.⁶⁶
4. Social (*sāmājīk*). This is a recurring kind of *kajrī* focusing on social issues such as child marriage, the condition of village women with migrant husbands and the exploitation of workers (for instance, the difficult conditions of *riksāvāle* and farmers).
5. National (*rāṣṭrīya*). This category includes *kajrī*-s voicing national pride, especially in the context of India's struggle for Independence. In this regard, it is worth remembering that *kajrī*-s were also penned by renowned intellectuals and functioned as a medium for political propaganda in fighting against colonial rule and fostering nationalism.
6. *Javābī* (lit. 'answer, reply'). In the *daṅgal*, the two rival groups face each other, and every group sings two songs: one represents an answer (*javāb*) to a question posed at the beginning of the contest, whereas the second song is a question asked for challenging the other team. The *javāb* can also consist of completing a description begun by the rival group. The winner of the contest is decided based on the answer given.

⁶⁶ See B39.

7. *Phaṭkā* and *karḥā* ('doggerel poems'). During the question-and-answer duel, two opponent *akhārā*-s insult each other (*gālī guftā*), sometimes in rhyming verses. Premghan noted that in the mutual provocation rival vocalists threaten each other wielding shoe-clubs (*lāṭhī*-s) and sticks (Upādhyāya 2003: 304).
8. *Jotū* or *barjastā*. This denomination indicates extempore *kajrī*-s, composed on the spot and dealing with miscellaneous topics.

***Akhārā*-s of *kajrī*.** The word *akhārā*—differently used in multiple contexts—refers in the first place to a structured social organisation and it exists in different contexts. It can indicate a wrestling club and the arena of the *daṅgal* or a monastic organisation pertaining to different *sampradāya*-s of *saṃnyāsī*-s, *bairāgī*-s, and *yogī*-s. Some monastic *akhārā*-s used to provide for combat martial training as in the case of the *akhārā*-s associated with the Daśanāmī-s of Adi Śaṅkara (Lorenzen 1978).

The notion of *akhārā* can be better understood in the light of the concept of a lineage or school and is related to the system of *guru-śiṣya-paramparā* since it implies the figure of a founder, a teacher, and the existence of hierarchical order. In a musical context, the term '*akhārā*' not only designates the groups animating the *daṅgal* but also embodies the idea of belonging to a specific tradition. The *akhārā* is indeed a school, a sort of institution that draws together professional entertainers. For this reason, *akhārā*-s have been compared to *gharānā*-s or even explicitly described as *gharānā*-s of folk music. Such identification is motivated mainly by the stylistic kinship and traditional transmission of knowledge integral to and a constituent of the *gharānā* system. Henry points out that in *akhārā*-s a singer decides to become a disciple (*celā*) of a poet who has the role of guru or *ustād* in teaching and sharing his compositions (Henry 2000: 670). It should be noted that *akhārā*-s are made by groups of hereditary musicians from different castes. As explained by Manuel—who has described *akhārā*-s performing the genre of *hāthrasī rasiyā*—the *akhāra* should be able to present themes related to philosophy, mythology, history, and prosody. Therefore, the role of the guru or *ustād* is pivotal along with the presence of a designated poet (*śāyr* or *kavī*) skilled in composing impromptu poetry. The structure of an *akhārā* includes other members (*bāzī*-s) as well, typically harmonium and *dholak* players (Manuel 2015a: 9).

In the area of Banaras, according to the interpretative style of content and motifs presented in a *daṅgal*, it is possible to identify four distinct *akhārā*-s of *kajrī*, namely:

1. *Kalgī*: so-called for an ornament affixed to a turban worn by the members of the same *akhārā*.
2. *Turrā*: as the *Kalgī*, owes its name to a plume used a distinctive sign of the group.
3. *Sehrā*: named after a type of Muslim song sung by the bride's or groom's relatives as the groom is garlanded (the word *sehrā* indicates also the garland worn by the groom during the *nikāḥ*, the Islamic wedding ceremony).
4. *Ḍūṇḍā*: Prasad claims that it takes its name from a hole in the middle of the crown in which the *kalgī* is inserted.⁶⁷

Kajrī-s usually sung by the first two *akhārā*-s display a preference for philosophical contents, *Sehrā*'s compositions show social overtones, whereas *Ḍūṇḍā*'s revolve around trivial motifs, at times expressed with explicit, almost vulgar lyrics (Prasad 1987: 35).

Analogously to *gharānā*-s—formally introduced in relatively recent times—*akhārā*-s of folk music seem to have been created during the XIX century. They are characterised by different repertoires centred on various subject matters, from religious to social themes. Like *gharānā*-s, they are named after the place where they are born or after their founder, referred to as 'guru'. Some of the most known *akhārā*-s, popularly called 'gharānā-s', are the *śāyṛ* Baffat, Chabirām, Rāmprakāś Paṇḍit, Bhairo Ghaṛī Sāj, Katavārū, and the *Jahāṅgīṛ gharānā*, from Mirzapur; Dargāhī, Najar, and Alībakhś *gharānā*-s originating from the area of Jaunpur. Independent singers who are unaffiliated with any *akhārā*-s or are not employed as composers for any publishers are labelled as belonging to the Sarasvatī *gharānā* (Tivārī 1980: 182)

⁶⁷ The word *ḍūṇḍā* literally means 'single-horned cow'; interestingly the same term means, by extension, 'empty, unequipped, without ornaments' (Chaturvedi 2009, s.v.) Interpreting the latter meaning, it could be only tentatively assumed, contrary to Prasad's statement, that it might refer to the distinguishing feature of the *akhārā* that, unlike the others, did not use to have any particular ornament.

4.3 (*Ardh*)*śāstrīya kajrī*

The denomination *śāstrīya kajrī* designates ‘literary’ *kajrī*-s or, better, *kajrī*-s composed according to a canon of rules; in other words, since there are no *śāstra*-s or treatises establishing norms about *kajrī* lyrics writing or singing, it seems more appropriate to describe them as compositions exhibiting various literary features and that are bound to certain codified conventions. For this reason, they are considered *sāhityik kajrī*-s, existing simply as text, independent from music. Therefore, the word ‘*kajrī*’ may refer to a literary—and not only and necessarily—a music genre.

The *sāhityik* or *śāstrīya kajrī* set to music—thus, to a specific *rāg* and *tāl*—are usually integrated into the *ṭhumrī-dādra* repertoire, often presented at the end of a *khayāl* concert. Hence, they are frequently termed *ardhśāstrīya*. Moreover, they are considered *kāvya saṅgīt*, lit. ‘poetical music’ i.e., poems that lend themselves to be sung and framed into a musical form. It is important to remember that it was an established practice among poets, starting from the *sant*-s, to sing their verses to a *rāg*. It is quite common to find forms described as *kāvya saṅgīt* that have been set to music by artists coming from different stylistic backgrounds. Indeed, a piece of *kāvya saṅgīt* can be rendered in different musical styles.

In Hindi literature, there are instances of great intellectuals, scholars, and leaders of the Indian nationalist movement who penned *kajrī*-s that came to be considered *śāstrīya*. Among them, Bhārtendu Hariścandra, Badrī Nārāyaṇ Caudhrī ‘Premghan’, and Madan Mohan Mālviyā used to compose *kajrī*-s for pleasure. The attention devoted by some Hindi authors to *kajrī* has largely contributed to make it a literary genre, independent from music. Although most of the *sāhityik kajrī*-s exist as independent works of poetry, lacking musical notation, and are not usually sung given the complexity of their text, a few performers have revived them and set the poems to music in recent times. An eminent example is provided by Hindustani vocalist Shubha Mudgal who reconstructed Premghan’s verses, setting them to music and rendered some of his *kajrī*-s in *ṭhumrī* style.⁶⁸

Semi-classical *kajrī* features *rāg*-s and *tāl*-s commonly found in *ṭhumrī*, especially monsoon modes of Megh, Megh Malhār, along with Pīlū, Tilak Kāmod, Pahārī, Jhiñhotī, Sāraṅg, and the *tāl*-s Tīntāl, Dādrā, Kahravā.

⁶⁸Sharma, Manik. “Monsoon wedding: Poems of rain sung by Shubha Mudgal”. *Hindustan Times*, August 19, 2017. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/music/monsoon-wedding-poems-of-rain-sung-by-shubha-mudgal/story-YKOWlt45NBJVhbZstj51yJ.html>. Accessed April 20, 2020.

4.3.1 Bhārtendu Hariścandra and *kajrī*

Bhārtendu Hariścandra (1850-1885) was a great *kajrī*-s composer and actively participated in the public folklife of the city of Benares. His interests were confined not only to the Sanskritised tradition but also encompassed regional folk culture.⁶⁹ It seems that thanks to the contribution of Bhārtendu's work, the content of *kajrī* extended to cover various themes including religious and political issues, rural life, and family relationships.

Born into a wealthy *agravāl* family of Banaras, of merchants *vaiṣṇava* devotees and followers of the Vallabha *sampradāya*, Bhārtendu had an English education that exposed him to new ideas coming from the West. At the same time, he cultivated and fostered the lifestyle of the Persian courts. Being the son of a prominent Braj bhāṣā poet, Gopālacandra, Bhārtendu enjoyed a wide cultural background that included a deep knowledge of Sanskrit, Persian, Urdu, Bengali, and English (McGregor 1984: 76).

Bhārtendu was a disciple of Śiva Prasād Siṃh (1823-1895), the first promoter of *nagrī* Hindi and exponent of a progressive intellectual group in the *vaiśya* community of Varanasi. Bhārtendu distanced himself from his master known with the epithet *Sitār-e-Hind* ('Star of India', according to a title—conferred by the British Empire—of Companion of the Order of the Star of India) by taking the Sanskrit-derived appellative 'Bhārtendu' ('Moon of India'). This pseudonym, given to the author by his compatriots, synthesises Hariścandra's intellectual view, in contrast with his predecessors who were in favour of a language deeply influenced by Persian and Urdu (*Ibid.*: 34).

The recognition of Urdu by the British administration as the official language of the government of the United Provinces led to a growing idealisation of the polarity of Hindi as the language of Hindus and Urdu as that of Muslims. In this way, the linguistic controversy between the two religious communities, each determined to promote the language arbitrarily connected to its own culture and tradition, was exacerbated. Bhārtendu sided with Hindu traditionalist and conservative positions. Moreover, his attitude towards the British *rāj* has been considered ambivalent by some scholars since the critics of its negative aspects were secondary compared to the resentment towards the Muslim invaders. Hariścandra was the main promoter of the nationalist movement on a linguistic basis that began to emerge in India in the 1870s. He was the first to foster a "vernacular nationalism" and stress the link between Hinduism and the Hindi language

⁶⁹ On Bhārtendu Hariścandra see also Freitag 1989.

(Dalmia 1997). Overall, in literature, he favoured a writing style free from Arabic and Persian influences.

Bhārtendu played an important role in the culture of the Banaras of his lifetime. Closely linked to the emergent middle classes as well as to the old aristocracy and the *mahārāj*, Hariścandra made a major contribution to the most important events in the city: from the Rāmlīlā of Ramnagar to the Buḍhvā maṅgal festival⁷⁰ that he fervently supported.

Considered the creator of the modern Hindi novel and drama, Hariścandra often wrote under the pen name ‘Rasa’. His enormous literary production included poetry, prose, and dramas that were published in journals and periodicals. He established *Kavivacansudhā* (1867-85), *Harischandra’s Magazine* (1873), later renamed *Hariścandra Candrikā* that featured miscellaneous material. His lyrical production includes 1500 *pad*-s composed as *gīt kāvya* (or *kāvya saṅgīt*), i.e., compositions that could be sung (Dalmia 1997: 283). According to the subject matter, Bhārtendu’s poems can be classified into three main categories. The first one comprises devotional verses inspired by the tradition of the Vallabha *sampradāya*. A second group consists of a vast amount of poetry in *rīti* style, focused on the erotic motifs of *śṛṅgār*. A third category includes occasional poems, panegyrics, and eulogies, composed for any particular occurrence in the British royal family.

The lyrical production of Bhārtendu includes verses composed as *savaiyā*-s⁷¹, published in the *Kavivacansudhā* and *Hariścandra candrikā*. These compositions perfectly exemplify how old themes and forms could be re-signified in accordance with the changing socio-cultural environment. Furthermore, making such forms accessible to a wider audience and readership, Bhārtendu certainly contributed to the emancipation of traditional Braj bhāṣā poetry from the courtly or devotional connotation, to include a variety of social and political issues in line with his times. The language of Bhārtendu’s poetry was almost entirely Braj bhāṣā, which—according to him—remained the poetic language par excellence, the unsurpassed standard language for poetical composition.

For the purpose of this dissertation, I will first focus on the poem category and devote special attention to compositions belonging to a collection entitled *Vārṣāvinod* (lit. ‘A diversion for the rain’) penned by Bhārtendu in 1880. This work has been aptly described by McGregor as

⁷⁰ See Ch. IV, 4.1.

⁷¹ See Ch. V, 4.4.

a miscellany of songs more literary than religious. Prominence is given to Eastern *kajlīs*, a type of folk-song sung in the rainy season, and to the theme of *virah*, which is sometimes linked to Kṛṣṇa themes. This collection well illustrates that the new arrangements of the kaleidoscope of traditional subject matter could be still aimed at and realised effectively in the late nineteenth century (McGregor 1984: 82).

Hariścandra's *kajrī*-s span from pure, overtly Krishnaite themes, expressing a *puṣṭi-mārga* conception, to *rīti* compositions, portraying the tropes of the monsoon season. It is interesting to note that some compositions dealing with social themes are classified under the rubric of *kajrī*, although they do not seem to show any typical features of the genre. The inclusion could be explained based on the fact that compositions were created during the monsoon season and presented during festivals occurring at that time of the year. Bhārtendu can be credited as being the first author to confer *kajrī* the status of literary form. He experimented with the genre, freeing it from its prevalent association with the romantic motifs of the *virah*. Some of Hariścandra's *kajrī*-s centred on political and social issues were set to polemical tones towards the effect of Muslim and Western domination, and the passiveness of present-day society. Overall, a feeling of nostalgia for an ideal glorious past prevails in several of his compositions (Dalmia 1997) which, very likely, were seldom sung as they appeared mainly in printed media, typically the literary journals curated by the author himself.

4.3.2 Premghan and *kajrī*

Upādhyāya Badri Nārāyaṇ Śarmā Caudharī (1855-1922), known by the pen name 'Premghan', was a prominent intellectual and member of Bhārtendu's literary circle. Belonging to a rich *zamīndārī* Brahman family of Mirzapur, he turned from a cultivated nobleman fond of luxury living into a socially and politically committed author, after meeting Bhārtendu (Chandra 2014). Along with his vast prose and journalistic production, Premghan penned a number of *kajrī*-s. His *sāhityik kajrī*-s feature a *rīti* poetic style, rich in elaborate conceits, rhetorical devices, and a diverse vocabulary drawing from Sanskrit, Braj bhāṣā, Bhojpuri, and Urdu. His *kajrī*'s are collected in an anthology entitled *Kajlī Kādambinī* (1913) that includes compositions that were written as poetic exercises. It is interesting to note that 'Kādambinī' is the name of a *rāg* Megh's *rāginī*⁷², associated with rain; the term, as a common name, indicates a cluster of clouds.

⁷² According to the *saṅgīt śāstra*-s a *rāginī* is the wife, or feminine counterpart, of a *rāg*. From a technical point of view, a *rāginī* can be defined as a derivative melody related to a *rāg*.

In his essays *Kajlī Kutūhal* and *Kajlī kī kuch vyākhyā* (1913), Premghan describes the genre in detail, lingering on *kajrī*'s (which he calls 'kajlī') origins and features. In particular, he stresses the rural (*grāmya*), folk roots of the genre, which he relates to women's seasonal songs. Furthermore, he highlights that *kajrī* developed from different kinds of folk songs, specifically sung by women. A direct derivation can be spotted in the song-type called *sāvan* or *savnī*.

Premghan provides an insight into the nature and status of *kajrī* during his time. In this regard, he devotes particular attention to describing the performers, grouping them into nine categories:

1. rural women;
2. urban, low-caste women that use to play *ḍhunmuniyā*-s;
3. vocalists belonging from upper-castes accompanied by *ḍholkī* and *mañjīrā*-s;
4. female singers (*gavanahārin*-s) of two kinds: one group includes vocalists related to Mirāsī professional musicians who used to perform on special occasions and important festivals and a second larger group of low-castes *khāngī* who used to sing along with *śahnāī* players and dance to the rhythm of a *ḍholak*. *Khāngī*-s were married women from respectable families who were secretly associated with the *koṭha* for financial reasons (Oldenburg 1984: 136);
5. *naṭnī*-s, dancers blamed by Premghan to have distorted the genre;
6. *raṇḍyā*-s, who sang peculiar songs that mixed melodies, *tāl*-s and ornamentations such as *zamzamā*-s and *mīṇḍ*-s. The term 'raṇḍī' indicated lower rank *tavāyaf*-s who were regular prostitutes;
7. *gavaiyā*-s, singers belonging to Kalāvant, Ḍhaṛī, Kathak, and Bhagatiyā music communities;
8. *akhārā* vocalists;
9. *kajlībāz*, i.e., 'kajlī players' who composed their own *kajrī*-s and played in a folk style with the accompaniment of *khāñjarī*, a small tambourine. Premghan in these groups also included certain poets that wrote cheap booklets with vulgar and low-level compositions to earn money (Premghan 1913: 31-34).

Premghan pinpoints the peculiarity of *kajrī* analysing the following aspects:

- *Rāg*. There are no specific fixed rules, as with folk music. In *kajrī* modes different from the ones found in *ṭhumrī* are used, influenced by the *dhun*-s of *sāraṅgī* players and featuring notes belonging to different *rāg*-s, such as Goṛ Malhār, Deś, Sindh, Jaṅglā, Barvā, Pīlū, Jhiñjhoṭī, Yaman (Iman), Tilak Kāmod, Bihārī, and Pahārī.
- *Tāl*. Similarly, there are no fixed rules. The majority of *kajrī*-s are in Tīntāl but Premghan accounts for compositions in Khenṭā and some other *tāl*-s as well.
- Metre (*chand*). The metre is described as a secondary component that may or may not be present. No canon exists to suggest otherwise.
- Language. Premghan asserts that the original language of *kajrī* is the typical idiom spoken by rural women from the region of Kantit, from the areas of Vindhyachal and Mirzapur. Modern *kajrī*-s are composed in a mixed language that draws heavily on Braj bhāṣā. There are compositions in Sanskrit, Bengali, Urdu, Farsi, and English, but they represent, in Premghan's opinion deformation of *kajrī*'s authentic form. The original idiom is defined by the author 'grāmya bhāṣā' ('rural language') and 'banārsī miśrit bhāṣā' ('mixed language of Banaras') characteristic of the Eastern Provinces of Kantit, Mirzapur, and Chunar. Premghan considered *kajrī*-s in other languages a modern creation.
- *Bhāv*. Permeating women's folk songs, it confers the genre with a unique depth of expression. The prevalent *ras*, *śṛṅgār*, is intensely emotional; *karūṇ*, *hāsyā*, *vīr*, and occasionally *sānta ras* can be present.
- Modes of composition. They differ according to the performers although they share certain mutual characteristics. Premghan accounts for the following varying denominations: *kajrī*, *kajlī*, *ujlī* (or *kajrā*, *kajlā*, *ujlā*), *lagnī*, *bhaddhī tukbandī* (similar to *phaṭkā*-s) and *svatantra kavītā* ('independent, free' poems) (*Ibid.*:39-44).

Premghan stresses that *kajrī* has degenerated over time. Responsible for the 'corruption' of the genre were mainly *lāvnī* and *khayāl* (the folk form, not to be confused with the art music genre) *akhārā*-s. When *kajrī*-s began to be included in their repertoires, the genre

would have been spoiled with the attribution of stylistic features typical of less ‘noble’ forms of music and the incorporation of Urdu and Arabic words. Furthermore, the author argues that the use of the variant of Urdu from Lucknow vs. the standard ‘pure’ Urdu in effect ruined the elegance of *rekhta* poetry.

Throughout the entire essay, Premghan repeatedly stresses that *kajrī* is an authentic creation of rural women among a multiplicity of genres dominantly performed by men, such as the form of *horī*.

Premghan on *kajrī melā*-s. A typical setting of *kajrī daṅgal*-s and musical-poetical duels featured in several folk genres (such as *birahā*, *rasiyā*, *lāvnī* etc.) is the *melā*, a religious fair occurring on specific occasions and times of the year that usually gather a large number of people. One of its main features is the seasonality or, better, the ‘seasonal appropriateness’ that requires it to be held at a specific time established by the Hindu calendar. A key component of a *melā* is indeed the ‘seasonal music’, commonly indicated as “*mausamī chīz*”⁷³ or ‘seasonal composition’ (Kumar 1988: 133).

In his essay, *Kajlī kutūhal arthat kajlī kā tyohār, uske mele aur kajlī kī gītōm kā tatva, bhed, vibhed, utpattī aur tatsambandhī itihās ādi kā varṇan* (1913), Premghan has vividly described some of the festivals and events entirely dedicated to the singing of *kajrī* that used to take place in what is now eastern Uttar Pradesh and enjoyed great popularity, especially in Benares. The following is a portrayal, depicted by the author, of the main occasions devoted to the performance of *kajrī*.

- *Kajarhiyā melā*. As the name suggests, the festivity occurred by the pond (*tālāb*) of Kajarhiyā in Mirzapur—where the genre is believed to have originated. Soon after Nāgapañcamī, common rural women gathered together to sing *kajrī* and play *dhunmuniyā*-s. The singing used to start on the second day of the waxing fortnight (*śukla dvitīyā*) reaching its climax on the following day after a night *rat jagā*. Men participated indirectly in the celebration as observers.

⁷³ *Cīz*. Literally means ‘thing’, in the context of vocal music it indicates a composition. It has a similar meaning of *bandīś*, although the latter term is more specific and seems to be preferred in instrumental music. Cf. Ranade 2006: 79.

- *Dhunmuniyā melā*. From the outset of Nāgapañcamī common women belonging to low castes used to play *dhunmuniyā* in the streets. The author notes that such a custom was still in vogue during his time.
- *Rāt kā melā*. Wealthy patrons who started to take interest in *kajrī* used to organise private *mahfil*-s, inviting *randī*-s to perform in their houses. Some common people were allowed to attend the *melā* on payment. The festival began on the eleventh day of *bhādra śukla* and continued until the second day of *bhādra kṛṣṇa*. Over time, with the attendance of a more heterogeneous audience, this type of *melā* grew in importance and popularity. Not only for the business elite, nobility and commoners alike participated in dance and music performances by courtesans often accompanied by the finest *sāraṅgī* players.
- Private *jalsā*-s. Wealthy patrons used to organise numerous private gatherings animated by the dancing and singing of courtesans, especially during the days of Holī and Kajlī tīj when the performances used to last an entire week and gather thousands of people.
- *Mahant's melā*. Among the several *jalsā*-s, the one in honour of Śrīmān Jayarām Giri, a famous *raīs* and *mahant*, was particularly sumptuous. It used to take place on the full moon night of Sāvan (*śravaṇa pūrṇima*) at Giri's mansion at Śivālā where four different stages were set in unique locations for singers and dancers. Wealthy patrons, aristocrats and nobility could attend dance performances by the finest courtesans in a private hall in the palace, while common people could enjoy the music in the garden. In Premghan's time, the festival was no more celebrated.
- *Talaiyā's melā*. At sunset on the third day of *bhādra śukla*, courtesans, starting from the *mahant's* home, used to perform in several gardens where stages had been set on the occasion of this festival ('*talaiyā*' means 'pond', *tālāb*, and it refers to the name of the venue where the *melā* began). According to custom, the arrival of the *mahārāj* of Banaras (Kaśī nareś) at the *melā* would cause the whole festivals to stop.

- Miscellaneous *melā*-s. Alongside the main most popular festivals, there used to be numerous minor *melā*-s dedicated to the singing of *kajrī* that used to attract all the common people of Benares. Premghan provides insightful and valuable portrayals of the cultural landscape of the Benares of his time. It should be noted that, like his associate Bhārtendu, he wrote extensively about the Buḍhvā maṅgal *melā*. He intersperses his elaborate, detailed, and evocative descriptions with criticism and comments revealing his nationalist sympathy and, overall, a conservative attitude. His essay is overtly dominated by a nostalgic feeling emphasised by idealising a glorious past sharply contrasting with an increasingly decadent present.

5. *Kajrī* in Banaras

The city of Banaras is especially known for its numerous festivals and multifarious musical events marking the cycle of seasons. These celebrations, particularly popular until the years following Independence, used to attract a large number of people belonging to different social strata. The main promoters were the upper classes that granted patronage to professional musicians and dancers. Social changes, a shift in the promotion of arts and economic transformations have deeply affected the dynamics behind these events. Nowadays some of them are still taking place but are addressed mainly to lower castes and villagers. Consequently, the format, quality, and taste in music have changed dramatically in favour of mainstream film-oriented music styles. In many cases, performances have been replaced by the broadcast of recorded music played by loudspeakers set up along the streets. *Kajrī* singing has almost disappeared from these festivals and it seems to remain confined to a few events and occasions specifically dedicated to the performance of the genre.

In Varanasi, the monsoon season is particularly rich in fairs celebrating the arrival of the rain. Previously, and continuing into the first decades after Independence, multiple festivals renowned for dance and music performance existed, significant examples being, besides the already mentioned Buḍhvā maṅgal, the Lolark chat *melā*, Śankundhara *melā*, Sohrahiyā *melā*, Durgājī *melā*, and Kajlī *melā* (Kumar 1988: 132). In the months of Sāvan and Bhādom the most important *banārsī* festivals dedicated to *kajrī* were the Durgājī *melā*, Sārṇāth *melā*, and the Śankhatīrth (Śankadhārā) *melā*. Among the most widely celebrated, the Durgājī *melā* used to take place every Tuesday of Sāvan and reached its climax on the last in the occasion of a *pūjā* in honour of Durgā. On this auspicious day,

kajrī-s were sung in private gatherings in the gardens of wealthy patrons or for the general public in the Durgā temple and the adjacent streets of the Durgā Kuṇḍ area (Kumar *Ibid.*:133; Parvatkar 2012: 261). Exclusively dedicated to the performance of the genre, the Kajlī melā was one of the main occasions in Banaras that showcased *kajrī daṅgal*-s in which both men and women took part. The festival used to occur between the months of Sāvan and Bhādoṃ when Kajlī tīj is celebrated to worship the goddess Pārvaṭī in the form of Maṅgalā Gaurī. On this day, married women fast to obtain marital harmony and to bestow upon their spouse a long and healthy life or, if they are single, to get a good husband. On Kajlī tīj, it was a custom to hold the so-called *rat jagā*, all-night singing of *kajlī*-s on the *ghāṭ*-s, in the streets or open-air spaces and temples. Celebrations included the recitation of *kathā*-s (‘stories’) and mythological tales portraying Pārvaṭī as a model of determination and dedication in getting married to Śiva.

It is interesting to note that recreational singing get-togethers involving a large number of people, irrespective of religion, class, and gender represent a practice common to other intermediate music forms as well (for instance, *horī*).

Another major festival in Varanasi renowned for *kajrī* singing was the Śankundhara melā, also known as Katāhriyā melā for the custom of selling jackfruit (*kaṭahal*). The fair, attended by people from every social background, was animated by performances by the most prominent musicians and was an important event for the city. Temples and public open-air spaces were the only locations where this festival was enjoyed by both the upper and lower classes; private gatherings used to be held in gardens of the gentry and aristocrats, while laymen attended performances in their *mohallā*-s (neighbourhood, quarter). Although they are quite rare, *mohallā daṅgal*-s still take place today, while the joint mode of enjoyment has ended. Furthermore, for a long time until nowadays, and in contrast with the *melā*-s of the past, the concepts of a general audience, made of all different kinds of common people, and public gatherings were not considered appropriate for respectable professional artists. There is a tendency, also among great well-known artists who used to perform in these important events, to deny this past due to the presence of courtesans who were the main performers. The nationalist propaganda, reformist impetus, and moralist tendency marking the decades towards Independence deeply affected the celebrations of such *melā*-s that, at a specific point in time, started to be regarded as ‘immoral’.

6. *Kajrī*-related forms: the monsoon music genres

Kajrī, as a seasonal genre with folk roots, is deeply connected with various song-genres of the rainy season, collectively found under the umbrella of *sāvanī* or *varṣā ṛtu gīt-s* on the basis of their connection with the monsoon. Among the many monsoon song genres, the following forms are worth examining (Jain 2014: 16-18).

- *Caumāsā*. Called also *caumāsī* or *comāsī*, it is described by Vaudeville as a poetic form. A “scaled-down model” of the main type *bārahmāsā*,⁷⁴ it is a song-genre portraying the four months of the rainy season, from the month of Asāṛh (Skt. Āṣāḍha, June-July) to Āśvin (or Kvār, September-October) and, occasionally, from Sāvan to Kārtik (October-November) (Vaudeville 1986: 3). A rain song voicing the longing for the reunion of a lovelorn *virahinī*, it is “the oldest lyric type known in the written literature of the Indo-Aryan languages, originally developed from village women’s songs”. Vaudeville pinpoints that within *caumāsā* are subsumed a large number of folk songs, including Sāvan (*Ibid.*: 27-29).
- *Sāvan gīt*. This form includes a variety of songs depicting sibling love and expressing *karuṇ ras*. A common trope is represented by young women during Sāvan longing to go back to their maternal home to play on swings with their brothers.
- *Malār*. A form of Maithili and Braj *kajrī* on the themes of *virah* sung in separate groups by men and women, respectively, with and without instrumental accompaniment.
- *Cauhaṭ*. It is sung in Magadh, encompassing a large area of Bihar, in a *savāl-javāb* format.
- *Birnā*. Jain relates the term to the word ‘brother’ and describes this form as a song on the frolicsome play of brother and sisters during the monsoon (Jain 2014: 16).

⁷⁴ See Ch. III, 2.2 and 2.3.

- *Barsātī*. Songs performed by women villagers to invoke the god Indra.
- *Cāñcar*. Sung by farmers after sowing of crops and performed in a *savāl-javāb* format by two competing groups, set in a specific tonality.
- *Birahā (birhā)*. It is a folk music genre particularly popular in Bhojpuri-speaking areas. It developed from being a song restricted to the cowherd castes of the Āhīr and Yādav, to becoming the most popular folk genre of the entire region. Originally containing only sung poetry centred on the motifs of *virah*, *birahā* songs came to include the following themes: religious stories based on the *Mahābhārata*, *Rāmāyaṇa*, and *Purāṇa*-s, nationalist deeds of Indian revolutionists, the fight for Independence, current events, commentary on news, social and political issues and regional epic tales (such as *Canainī* and *Ālhā*) (Marcus 1992: 101). This genre is traditionally performed in *daṅgal*-s. Especially in the 1960s and 1970s, it was consistently refined by inserting film-song tunes that facilitate its appearance in mass media and, consequently, its appreciation among a wider urban audience. *Birahā* has been the object of study, given its interesting evolution from an exclusively rural folk song to a cross-regional entertainment form and the level of social organisation that it exhibits (Marcus 1989). As is clear from this brief overview, this genre share several features with *kajrī* and they are interconnected, in many respects, not only for their common musical, stylistic, and performative characteristics but also for their interwoven stories: it has been noted by Marcus that several *kajrī* singers started singing *birahā*, in this way establishing their own new lineages.
- *Uddhav gīt*. A type of *virah gīt* sung in the rainy month of Jeṭh (May-June) when looming clouds become the messengers between estranged lovers and *gopī*-s, pining for the absence of the beloved Kṛṣṇa, ask Uddhav to convey him their love message.
- *Vrat* or *tīj gīt*. Typical folk forms of the monsoon are songs associated with the several *vrat*-s occurring during this time of the year such as the Nāgpañcamī vrat (on *śrāvan śukla*), Madhuśrāvaṇī *tīj* (on *śrāvan śukla tṛtīyā*), and Bahurā vrat (on *bhādra kṛṣṇa caturdaśī*).

More often than not, among *varṣā ṛtu gīt*-s, the genre of *jhūlā* or *hiṇḍolā* is also included. In the present work, special attention has been devoted to *hiṇḍolā/jhūlā* as a genre representative of Hindustani intermediate music presented in its complexity as a folk, semi-classical, and a literary form as well.

Chapter VI: *Jhūlā* or *hiṇḍolā*: definition and features

Among the intermediate music genres, *jhūlā*—also called *hiṇḍolā*—is considered a ‘sub-type’ of *kajrī* and represents another excellent example of an ‘in-between’ form characterised by fluidity and multifariousness within the same genre.

The terms *jhūlā* and *hiṇḍolā*, literally meaning ‘swing’, are applied to the genre and its compositions which are usually sung by women during the rainy season, in the months of Sāvan and Bhādom, whilst swinging on swings. *Hiṇḍolā* is also the name of a *rāg* that, according to *śāstra*-s is considered to be related to *rāg* Megh or Megh Malhār. It is an ancient custom in India, as mentioned in Vātsyāyana’s *Kāmasūtrā*, to set up swings in gardens. The motif of a woman singing on a swing is closely connected to the monsoon and celebrates the coming of the long-awaited rain. This trope is associated with the reunion of lovers in the most romantic time of the year. Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa represent the archetypical couple traditionally depicted singing in the rain with the *gopī*-s of Braj. Numerous *jhūlā*-s portray women who, in the absence of their husband, momentarily abandon their domestic chores to play on swings with their *sakhī*-s. The poignancy of the monsoon heightens the *virah* and the feelings of yearning and anticipation of a meeting with the beloved. Vidya Rao has vividly described the peculiarity of *jhūlā* in the following terms:

While *kajri* speaks of ‘the rains of estrangement’, *jhoola* simply describes women playing on swings. They enjoy the cool breeze and light drizzle of the early monsoon. Sometimes they implore their lover to push the swing gently. Sometimes the swinging women just revel in the exhilaration of soaring through the air, tasting freedom for a brief moment (Rao 2018:415).

The portrayal of the divine couple in *jhūlā* songs is accompanied by descriptions of golden swings hung from the branches of sandalwood or *kadamb* trees with silk ropes. When a generic *nāyikā* is the protagonist, she is a *proṣitpatikā* (‘one whose lover is away in a distant land’) who—at the request of her sister-in-law to rock the swing hanging from a tree—voices her sorrow and longing; she recalls her childhood and her carefree play with her girlfriends in her father’s home.

Jhūlā songs are typically performed on *śravan śukla pakṣa*, the fortnight that coincides with the waxing of the moon in the month of Sāvan, from *ekādaśī* (eleventh day) to *puṇṇimā* (fifteenth full moon day). On this occasion, festivals called Jhūlan Yātrā, Jhūlan Utsav, Jhūlan Līlā and *Hiṇḍolā* Utsav take place all over North India and are celebrated

with particular fervour and devotion in the places associated with the cult of Kṛṣṇa, especially Mathura and Vrindavan. In temples, statues and images are placed on swings decorated with flowers, during *śṛṅgār* ceremonies. Devotees rock the swings while singing auspicious songs. Several *bhajan*-s and *kīrtan*-s feature *jhūlā* motifs. However, between the genres, there are remarkable differences in the musical format and content. Nevertheless, the majority of *jhūlā*-s are typically set in a Krishnaite idiom and even when references to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are not explicit, the association with the divine couple is often immediate.

Jhūlā-s are sung throughout North India, although they are typical of the Braj area, eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, in the region known as Pūrab. Among the many vernaculars in which they are composed, it is worth noting the preference for Braj bhāṣā—even for songs composed in modern times—motivated by its inextricable link with *kṛṣṇa bhakti*.

From a musical point of view, *jhūlā*-s can be set to typical monsoon *rāg*-s such as Megh (or Megh Malhār) but there are however several songs in *rāg*-s as Sāraṅg (or Vṛṇḍavani Sāraṅg—typical of folk-oriented music forms), Pīlū, and Khamāj, which are characteristic modes of *ṭhumrī*. Vidya Rao has aptly pointed out that *kajrī*-s and *jhūlā*-s are often sung in *rāg*-s such as Kāfī and Pīlū, that are linked to spring and the festival of Holī, and, therefore, have no connection to the monsoon. Nevertheless, the association with rain is skilfully evoked by using musical ornamentation and devices, such as the brief, but audibly apparent inclusion of notes typical of the monsoon *rāg*-s (Rao 2018: 431). The genre of *jhūlā* exhibits the use of a particular technique that has been described as ‘word-painting’, in analogy with the musical device found in Western art music. The vocalist endeavours to portray a particular textual image through singing (Manuel 1989: 137). Tagg has described the ability of the singer to exploit the semantic potential of the text in theorising what he calls ‘anaphones’. In his words, an anaphone consists of

[...] using an existing model outside music to produce musical sounds resembling that model. An anaphone is basically an iconic sign type and be sonic and/or kinetic and/or tactile (Tagg 2004: 2)

Among the different kinds of anaphones recognised by the musicologist, the so-called ‘kinetic’ ones are particularly relevant in the case of *jhūlā*. Kinetic anaphones are stylised musical representations of movement (*Ibid.*). In *jhūlā*, anaphones are realised through the use of *alāṅkā*-s or ornaments, mainly the following:

- *āndolan* (or *āndolitā*) ‘oscillation’: a slow oscillation of a note (similar to *vibrato*);
- *tān*: a rapid melodic passage;
- *murkī*: a swift trill (similar to the mordent or *acciaccatura* of Western music);
- *mīṇḍ*: a *glissando* that slides smoothly from one note to another;
- *khatkā*: (lit. ‘knock’) similar to *murkī*, it entails a faster attack on the main note (similar to the *gruppetto* of Western music);
- *bol banāo*: the elaboration of melodic phrases and words to evoke different moods and shades of meanings hidden in the text, a technique typical of *ṭhumṛi*, that distinguishes the homonymous style of the genre.

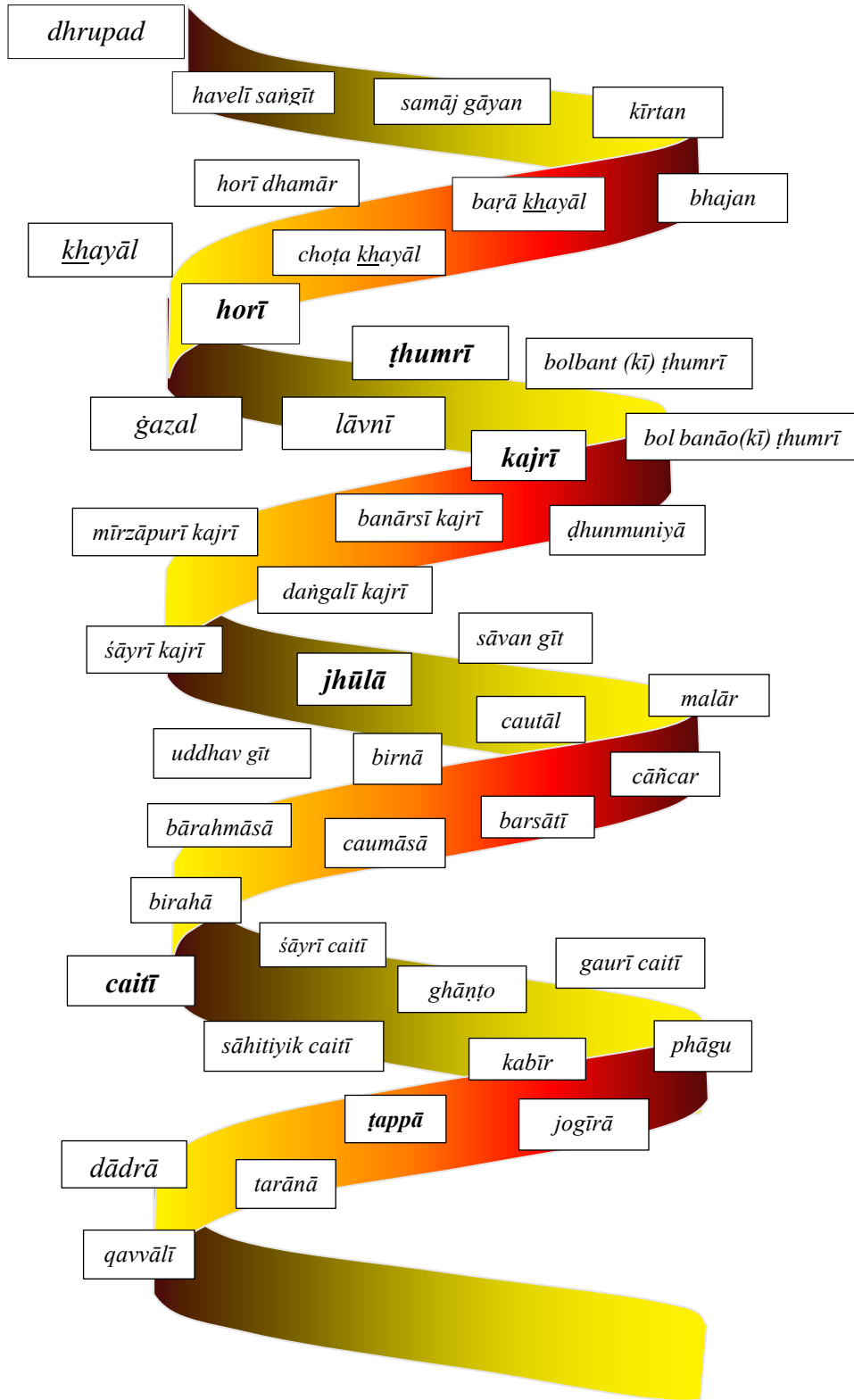


Fig. 2. The spiral of Hindustani music forms. Hindustani music genres can be envisioned as constituting a spiral, a symbol of variation within recurrence. Its infinite curves represent the change unfolding around an axis made of constant musical features and tropes ever-present in the Indian collective consciousness. As time in the Indian sense can be conceived as a spiral, repetitive in the sequence of cosmic eras but never identical in the manifestation of events, likewise the vortex of musical expression stretches in a continuum, non-linear expansion weaving together different dimensions (source: Erika Caranti).

Chapter VII: The text of the intermediate genres

1. Text structure: terminology and features

Among the main features of the intermediate forms of Hindustani music, alongside the flexible and free use of *rāg* and *tāl* and the fusion of musical elements of various origins, is the centrality of the lyrics. Based on the degree of textual density or, in other words, the prominence accorded to the lyrics and adherence to the text, within the intermediate music forms, semi-classical genres occupy a special position: they can be described as *rāg* and word-oriented since both the music mode and the lyrics play a pivotal role within the composition. In predominantly word-based (*śabd pradhān*) genres, such as *lok gīt* and *bhajan*, the importance of the lyrics is paramount. Besides, these forms are not conventionally set to any specific *rāg* and the texts have an existence independent of the music.

In Hindustani art and semi-classical music, the pre-composed text, expounded and elaborated within the frame of *rāg* and *tāl*, is called *bandiś*. The eminent vocalist Prabha Atre points out that two types of compositions exist in Hindustani art music: the *bandiś* and extempore composition. The former—comprising words with or without meaning—is defined as a “unifying force to bind different music material together through *tala*” standing as the “main pillar around which the development of the *raga* and the genre takes place through characteristic phrases” (Atre 2008: 158). The latter is characterised as a complex phenomenon relying mostly on the artist’s skills and sensitivity. The *bandiś* functions as the fulcrum from which extempore performance can arise. Atre stresses that “a *bandish* definitely represents a genre”. However, it may or may not represent a *raga*” (*Ibid.*: 159). The vocalist’s view on the importance of the composition in different music genres reflects a general opinion among musicologists. In art music, the *bandiś* in its textual component is secondary to the elaboration of the *rāg*, whereas, in semi-classical genres, such as *thumrī* and *dādrā*, the melodic presentation is as important as the lyrics; both the components are “interdependent” and “dependent” from each other. In *śabd pradhān* genres, such as *gāzal* and *bhajan*—and forms that have been defined here as ‘intermediate’—the words of the compositions play a pivotal role and may exist independently. Furthermore, the *rāg* is not always necessarily present (*Ibid.*: 160).

In conceptualising the importance of the words in different genres of Hindustani music, several scholars have envisioned a continuum built on textual density and

emphasis accorded to the lyrics in response to a tendency to erect hierarchical pyramids (Manuel 2015: 84-85; Magriel and du Perron 2013:100, Atre 2008: 160-161). Indeed, music forms can be visualised as being located along a spectrum as presented below.

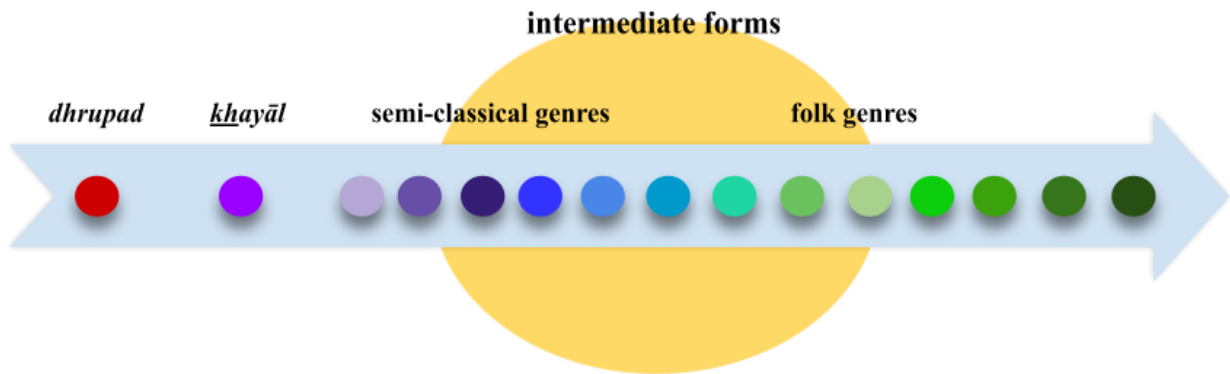


Fig. 3. The continuum of textual density in Hindustani music genres (source: Erika Caranti).

The continuum of music genres moves along a vector represented by the degree of abstraction of the lyrics of the compositions. At one end, there are forms such as *dhrupad*, in which words can simply be syllables for melodic elaboration, whereas the ‘wordier’ folk expressions are placed at some distance from art music at the other end. Genres featuring a marked complementarity between music and lyrics are found in the middle. It is important to stress that the endpoints of this continuum should not be devised as dichotomous.

Moving along the continuum implies a change in the terminology used to designate both lyrics and melody. Specifically, in art music, terms such as *bandiś* and *rāg* are employed to indicate respectively the composition and melody, but the expressions ‘(*saṅgīt*) *racnā*’ and ‘*dhun*’ are preferred in some intermediate and folk genres.

In the present work, when a reference to the concept of ‘text’ is made, both the musicological and literary dimensions are considered. In musicology, the term ‘text’ indicates the lyrics, i.e., the words of a piece of music. In the case of the forms analysed here, the text also has literary value. On the one hand, the denomination of *sāhitya*, indicating the textual element in music or the verbal text of vocal composition, aptly

embodies this aspect. On the other hand, the poetic quality of the text should not mislead one to think that in certain forms—especially those included in the semi-classical realm—the lyrics assimilate to the text to the extent that “poetry gives up its literary status in song and becomes a purely musical element” (Manuel 1989: 136).⁷⁵ In this regard, Vidya Rao points out that, not without reason, in genres such as *ṭhumrī*, it would be more appropriate to use the term ‘*bol*’ rather than ‘*śabd*’. The denomination ‘*bol*’ accounts for both the poetic and musical texture of the text, since it is “more dynamic”, meaning “both word, sound or syllable, but is also an entreaty to speak (it is both noun and verb)” (Rao 1990: 33). The most general sense of the term ‘text’ embodies the ideas of authorship, especially when related to a written form. This poses a problem within the context of Indian music and ‘oral’ literature. Therefore, it is necessary to make some specifications regarding the context in which the term ‘text’ is employed. The composition should be conceived as “a concept for the performance” where performance is “an actualisation of a composition” (de Groot 2009: 88).

Scholars have suggested conceiving ‘text’ as defined by ‘folklorists’ as

a written representation of an original that is spoken, sung, gestured or crafted from a larger oral and customary exchange among people” (Titon 1995: 433).

This definition, reinforcing the idea of orality, should not lead one to envision text as a reduction or some sort of approximate representation. In order to emphasise other aspects involved in the notion of text, in ethnomusicology, a preference has emerged to describe practices such as singing, storytelling, and poetic recitation as performative texts, rather than simply oral (Orsini 2015: 7; Hawley 1988: 25, Hess 2015). Moreover, in Indian music, the text is not traditionally meant to be used as a script associated with a score but represents only one among countless variations and possible renditions of a song or piece of music.

As underlined by Titon, folklorists fostering the idea of text as performance have stressed the components of reflexivity, intersubjectivity, and intertextuality inherent to them (Titon 1995: 436). Concerning such multidimensionality of text in the Indian milieu, it seems appropriate to refer to its “pre-textual and con-textual” life as well (Pellò 2015:

⁷⁵ Manuel in reflecting on the aesthetic process of singing *ṭhumrī* takes up Langer’s theory of the “principle of assimilation”, “whereby one art ‘swallows’ the products of another” and, therefore, “when a composer puts a poem to music he annihilates the poem and makes a song” (Langer 1953: 157). Manuel claims that words, when being sung, change “their entire aesthetic significance [...] from literary to musical” and concludes that “because of assimilation *ṭhumrī* remains music, not melody plus poetry. The two elements are not really equal partners, operant at the same level.” (Manuel 1989: 136).

303). This way of conceptualising texts gives relevance not only to their oral, aural, and performative aspects—informed by the ever-changing settings in which texts are sung, performed, or recited—but also stresses their existence across different genres.

Songs of the intermediate music forms analysed in this work show a variable and flexible metrical structure. The metre (*chand*) of the majority of the compositions belonging to these musical forms is typical of folk songs (*lok gīt-s*) of the Bhojpuri-speaking area. Overall, a greater number of songs features a free metre (*mukta chand*). The *chand* consists of different components, namely:

- *mātrā*, ‘measure’, ‘measured quantity’, ‘metrical instant’. In Hindustani music, it is also the single count or beat representing the basic unit of time measurement;
- *caran*, ‘foot’, ‘part of a verse’;
- *yati*, ‘caesura’. In *lok gīt-s*, it is called *ṭhahrāv* or *virām* and, different from its position in poetry, is moveable. The singer, relying on improvisation, is free to insert a pause according to his creativity and inspiration. The *ṭhahrāv* is recurring in songs set to a fast tempo (*drut laya*), whereas it is more rarely found in compositions in a slow tempo (*vilambit laya*) (Tripathi 2011:143);
- *tuk*, ‘rhyme’. Many songs feature rhyme, both end of the verse as well as internal;
- *stobh*, ‘chanted interjection’, ‘pause sound’, ‘filler-word’. In the *Sāmaveda*, the term *stobha* indicates a partic division of hymns and meaningless syllables inserted where a lack of phonetic material occurs (Wilke and Moebus 2011:4 26). In song texts, *stobh-s* are used to embellish the lyrics, emphasising certain words. Three types of *stobh* are commonly found in the songs analysed in this work, namely:
 - *varṇ stobh-s*. Syllables inserted at times at the end and between words. This is the case with endings such as *-vā*, *-iyā*, *-na*, and *ho*, *he*, *re*—typical of *mirzāpurī kajrī* and *ḍhunmuniyā*— *-nā* and *-nnā*. Hirālāl Tivārī described them as a kind of *mātrā* (Tivārī 1980: 268);

- *śabd stobh*-s. Words that constitute the opening *caran* or the final one. They can be of two kinds: *sārthak*, ‘with meaning’ and *nirthak*, ‘meaningless’. The former consist of vocatives, such as *rāmā*, *rām*, *hari hari* (*re harī*), *choṭī nanadī*, (*re*) *saṁvāriyā*, whereas the latter include words such as *loy, hari*, *rāmā*;
- *pad stobh*-s. Phrases inserted at the beginning or the end of a *pad*. They are a prominent feature of *caitī*, *kājrī*, and *jantasār*. For instance, *caitī*-s are marked by the presence of ‘*āho rāmā*’ or ‘*e rāmā*’ at the beginning and ‘*ho rāmā*’ at the end of the compositions.

Some songs analysed here—especially in the semi-classical form—feature a bipartite structure in both *sthāī* and *antarā*, typical of genres such as *khayāl* and *ṭhumrī*. Folk-oriented songs of the same genres are generally articulated in *pad*-s, or ‘stanzas’. The *pad* is also the verse form most commonly used in *bhajan*-s. The *sthāī* (or *sthāyī*) is the first part of the composition generally consisting of notes belonging to the middle register (*madhya saptak*, excluding those higher than the upper tonic). The first line of the *sthāī* extending up to the *sam* (the first beat of the *tāl* or rhythmic cycle) and identifying the composition, is called the *mukhrā* (lit. ‘face’) and is repeated during singing. The *antarā* is the second section of the composition, usually consisting of notes in the upper register (*tār saptak*). However, in genres such as *ṭhumrī*, that in its *bol banāo* style shows to great extent flexibility and freedom of elaboration, there are no strict rules and clear-cut distinctions: it is generally the *mukhrā* that provides the rhythmic frame in between improvised segments.

In folk forms, the opening *pad*, generally shorter than the others and repeated at the end of every stanza, is called *ṭek*. In other words, the *ṭek* can be defined as the ‘folk’ equivalent of the *sthāī* (and *mukhrā*), a refrain consisting of a full or a half line placed either at the beginning or after the first stanza and repeated at the end of every *pad*. Its final syllable is usually prolonged and elaborated upon: this final foot or *caran* of *ṭek*, constantly emphasised during the song, is called *uṛan*. *Kājrī*-s, *caitī*-s, and *jhūlā*-s included in the present work have different structures, the most recurring ones being repetitive, *ṭek/ṭek* or, at times:

- binary: *tek, uṛan*;
- tertiary: *tek/cauk/uṛan*;
- quaternary: *tek/cauk/laṭkā/uṛan* (Prasad 1987: 89).

Structural variations are noted between different styles of *kajrī*. For instance, *śāyri kajrī*-s are characterised by an explanatory type of performance in which every word of the composition is usually explained and commented upon.

2. Language and text formatting

The compositions of the intermediate genres included in the present work are characterised by a peculiar language, varying according to the style and geographical area. Specifically, folk songs are mostly sung in regional idioms. *Kajrī*-s, *caitī*-s, and *jhūlā*-s are commonly composed in Bhojpuri, Bihari, Maithili, Avadhī, Braj bhāṣā and, to a lesser extent, other languages and dialects.

The texts sung in folk styles of the genres analysed here are mostly in Bhojpuri, a language spoken in the provinces of western Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh, with a centre in Varanasi, in the area known as Purvanchal.

Bhojpuri is classified as an eastern neo-Indo-Aryan language and—along with Magahi and Maithili—constitutes the sub-group of the Bihari languages. Following Independence, Bhojpuri literature grew considerably. Bhojpuri encompasses four dialect variants; the compositions presented here feature the Western dialect spoken in the areas in and around Varanasi, and specifically in the districts of Varanasi, Chandauli, Jaunpur, and the western districts of Ghazipur Azamgarh, Mirzapur, Sonbhadra, Sant Ravidas Nagar, and Bhadohi in Uttar Pradesh. This language variant is also called Pūrbī.

The language used in the ‘non-folk’ and semi-classical styles of the genres described in this work exhibits a combination of Khaṛī bolī Hindi, Urdu, Braj bhāṣā, Bhojpuri, Avadhī, and other dialects of Hindi. Overall, it can be said that the non-standard Hindi of the texts shows a basic matrix of Braj bhāṣā, as in *ṭhumrī*.

Braj bhāṣā (also known as Braj bhākhā or Antarbedī)—belonging to the group of western Hindi dialects—is the language of the Braj maṇḍal (encompassing the localities of Gokul and Vrindavan), corresponding to the district of Mathura, also called Antarbed, the region of the Gaṅgā-Yamunā *doāb*. Today this language is widely spoken in Uttar Pradesh, south-east Delhi areas and the neighbouring territory in Rajasthan. The literary and lyrical production in this language—whether in secular or devotional motifs—is

paramount. The reasons for the use of Braj bhāshā in music are multiple and worth analysing. As noted by van der Meer (1980: 91) and Manuel (1989: 4), the preference for Braj in a number of Hindustani music forms—especially within art music—is motivated primarily by the very phonetic nature of the language. The lack of harsh consonant clusters and the presence of abounding open vowels make it particularly soft and suitable for singing. Undoubtedly, the predominance of vocal sounds, dental and palatal consonants, and the scarcity of hard conjuncts—compared to Sanskrit or modern standard Hindi—render Braj and eastern Hindi forms appropriate for the romantic mood evoked by the lyrics and, above all, offer a wide scope for melodic elaboration with the elongated open vowels. Furthermore, Braj bhāshā was the literary language par excellence—at least in nowadays so-called Hindi *samsāra*—until the beginning of the XX century, when it was substituted by Khaṛī bolī. As well, from the XIV century, Braj became the language of Kṛṣṇa *bhakti* literature. Finally, as explained by Manuel in his monograph on *ṭhumrī*, folk songs belonging to the genres of *horī*, *rās*, and *carcarī*—considered the predecessors of *ṭhumrī*—were sung mainly in Braj bhāshā (Manuel 1989: 5).

It should be noted that songs part of the folk tradition—or rendered in folk styles—are prevalently sung in the local language. For instance, the compositions sung in the Purvanchal are in Bhojpuri and do not seem to be significantly influenced by other idioms.

Influences of eastern Hindi. A feature of the texts of *caitī*, *kājrī*, and *jhūlā* deserving particular attention is the presence of elements clearly derived from eastern Hindi linguistic forms. A fundamental role is played by several words ending in ‘-iyā’ (ex. *badariyā*, *kajariyā*, *sakhiyā*) and ‘-vā’ (ex. *morvā*), ‘-rā’ (ex. *jiyarā*), suffixes typical of eastern Hindi languages like Bhojpuri, and that are also used to build diminutives, often hard to render in English. The same trend has been noted in other forms of Hindustani music, not necessarily of eastern provenance, including *khayāl*. This phenomenon suggests that those suffixes and the elongated ending vowels are not necessarily markers of a specific geographical origin but are rather poetic devices meant to convey a “bucolic charm” and a sense of intimacy and informality (du Perron and Magriel 2013: 230).

Among the ingredients creating the eastern flavour are the realisation of the Sanskrit palatal ‘śa’ as a sibilant ‘sa’, (for example, as in ‘*syām*’ instead of ‘*śyām*’), the substitution of the syllable ‘va’ with ‘ba’, and the cluster ‘kṣa’ with ‘cha’ (as in ‘*Lakhan*’ for ‘*Lakṣman*’). All these phonetic elements contributing to the openness and softness of sound offer a broad scope for melodic elaboration (*Ibid.*).

Punctuation, caesurae, and verse subdivision generally do not bear any syntactic value but are rather indications for the interpretation, marking pauses in the singing and musical phrase rather than unity of meaning. The lines are loosely defined and often the punctuation does not follow the rules of syntax and grammar but turn useful within the economy of the performance. The same observation holds true for phenomena such as elongated or shortened vowels, the realisation of phonemes and nasalisation divergent from the standards recurrently found in the song texts analysed here.

3. Stylistic features of texts

The texts of the *kajrī*, *caitī* and *jhūlā* compositions present a set of specific constant features that allow the outlining of some general traits.

In the case of the texts of the intermediate music forms, the observations made by du Perron and Magriel on *ṭhumrī* and *khayāl* texts prove to be particularly apt. Indeed, the compositions taken into consideration in the present work—especially those belonging to the semi-classical style and part of the *ṭhumrī* repertoire—are characterised by conciseness and allusiveness. Their language is ungrammatical: frequently words are omitted or implicit and rules of number and gender are only laxly observed. Therefore, the style appears elliptic, fragmentary, allusive, and often plays on puns built on the several meanings of a single word. Being relatively simplified, the language extensively relies on formulae mostly drawing on conventional images and clichés (du Perron 2007: 66). Both imagery and linguistic formulae work by evoking associations with the cultural tropes deeply rooted in the Indian collective consciousness. In the performance, a text echoes a whole repertoire and the predictability of the themes and certain technical devices create a sense of recognition and familiarity that is appreciated by the listener (du Perron and Magriel 2013: 101-102). In describing *khayāl* compositions, du Perron consistently stresses the essential function of the text in providing identity and creating a mood through the language and subject matter (*Ibid.*).

The song texts of the more folk-oriented styles of the intermediate forms appear less elusive and concise; they are indeed more repetitive, descriptive, and strophic. This is mainly due to the pivotal role of the lyrics and the secondary function of the melody. Being predominantly text-driven, like folk songs, these compositions provide a narrative and deep insight into the society they depict. Moreover, a further remark should be made on women's songs, and generally, songs featuring a female protagonist, since they offer

“ironic and subversive commentaries on the representations of gender and kinship role found in the epic texts, in male folklore genres, and in a good deal of everyday talk” (Raheja and Gold 1994: 13).

As far as *sāhityik* compositions are concerned—especially those penned by Bhārtendu and Premghan—they are characterised by flowery, elaborate phrases contributing to a high poetic register, alongside stereotypical imagery drawn from the long-standing literary tradition that stemmed from Sanskrit *kāvya*. Furthermore, differently from the compositions rendered in semi-classical and folk styles, many of Premghan’s compositions show a strong influence of both the Perso-Arabic and Sanskrit lexicon, when they are not explicitly written in Urdu or Braj bhāṣā.

Formulae. The notion of ‘formula’ is particularly relevant in the context of oral literature and music. Initially developed in the field of the study of epic poetry, the so-called ‘theory of oral-formulaic composition’ introduced by Milman Parry in the 1920s provides a useful framework to understand the modes, functions, and *raison d’être* of formulaic language. In Parry’s view, a formula is

an expression that is regularly used, under the same metrical conditions, to express a particular essential idea (Parry 1930: 80).

Poets would compose poetry by linking and combining a set of pre-existing conventional stock expressions. This conceptualisation seems to have some limitations when applied to the context of the songs of the intermediate genres for two main reasons. First, formulas are not always repeated *verbatim* but are often presented in variations where a part of a formula is replaced by a similar one or moved in the utterance. Secondly, song texts do not often feature fixed metrical patterns. Wray aptly suggests referring to the definition of a “formulaic sequence”, described as:

a sequence, continuous or discontinuous, of words or other elements, which is, or appears to be, prefabricated: that is, stored and retrieved whole from memory at the time of use, rather than being subject to generation or analysis by the language grammar. [...] The word *formulaic* carries with it some associations of ‘unity’ and of ‘custom’ and ‘habit’, while *sequence* indicated that there is more than one discernible internal unit, of whatever kind. (Wray 2002: 9).

In reflecting on the implications involved in the use of this terminology in the context of *ṭhumrī* texts, du Perron suggested using the label of ‘propositional formula’, working as ‘collocations’ in linguistics, “in that if one condition is fulfilled there is a high probability

that a contingent situation will arise” (du Perron 2007: 112). Such formulae operate in meeting the expectations of the audience on familiarity, recognition, and cultural identity. On a formal level, they have a metrical value, being functional to the *tāl* structure, and operate as memory triggers, providing ‘ready-made blocks’ to be promptly used when a phrase has been forgotten (*Ibid.*), similar to filler-words.

Some of the most recurring ‘propositional formulae’ with their variations are listed in the following table, by way of example, in order to understand their nature, relevance, and functionality in the compositions of the intermediate music genres.

| Propositional formula | Meaning | References |
|---|---|---|
| बादल गरजे बादर गरजि घन गरजे | Clouds roar | B7, B16 B33 B40 |
| बरसे बादरिया बादल बरसे | Clouds rain | B16, B45 B13 |
| बिजुरी चमके बिजुली चमके चमके...बिजुरिया चपला चमकि | Lightning flashes | B7, B33, B43 B13 B14, B21.2 B35 |
| जियरा ललचे — तरसै दडपै जियरा जियरा डरपाया — डरै — डरत है — घबराय जिया लरजे | My heart aches My heart gets scared | B13 B31 B31 B56 B58, C5 C3 B56 B16 |
| घेरी घेरी आवे...बदरिया बदरिया घेरी अइले बदरिया घिर आई आई...बदरिया | Clouds have spread all around Have come...clouds | B11 B21.1 B21.2, B21.3 B14 |
| पिया...गइले परदेसवा परदेस गये मोरे साँवरिया पिय परदेसवाँ छाये सैययां छाये परदेस | The beloved went to a distant land My dark one went to a distant land The beloved went to a distant land My lord settled in a foreign land | B10 B16, B54 B55 |
| सोने के थाली में जेवना परोसलों | On a golden plate, I served the food | B18, B19, B22, B25, B26 |
| एहि पार गंगा, ओहि पार जमुना | Here there is the bank of the Gaṅgā, there the bank of the Yamunā | A4, A5 |
| पिया नाहीं आये स्याम नहीं आये | My lover did not come The Dark One did not come | A14, B15 B14 |
| भीजी...चुनरिया भींजत...चुनरिया | The wet veil | B21.2 B14 |

Tab. 1. Propositional formulae

Another recurrent feature of the song texts analysed below is the use of the same *mukhrā*, in the case of compositions in a semi-classical style, or *tek*, for folk songs, in combination with a number of different *antarā*-s or *pad*-s.⁷⁶

Figures of sounds. Reduplication, repetition (anaphora), alliteration, onomatopoeia—which are inherent characteristics of Hindi and hardly find an equivalent in the English translation—considerably enrich the phonic and semantic texture of the compositions, making them particularly evocative and expressive.

Rhetorical questions. The song texts taken into consideration in this work abound in formal devices aimed at engaging the listener. This is the case for rhetorical questions that directly address the audience inviting it to empathise with the female protagonist pining for her beloved and voicing her lovesickness. In the case of *daṅgalī kajrī*, questions act as riddles posed by one *akhārā* to the other. A few illustrative examples are presented in the following table.

⁷⁶ Cf. du Perron 2007: 82.

| Rhetorical questions | Meaning | References |
|--|--|---------------------|
| लगाएगा क्या कोई उसे जो बड़ा अनल से लगा हुआ | If someone is set aflame by a big fire, may any other fire burn him? | B3 |
| कब अइहैं | When will he come? | B10 |
| कहाँ बरस गये मेह | Where did rain fall? | B12 |
| करूँ कौन जातन अरी ए री सखी | What should I do, oh <i>sakhī</i> ? | B16 |
| कइसे खेले जाइबी हम सावन में कजरिया | How can I go and play <i>kajrī</i> in <i>Sāvan</i> ? | B21.1, B21.2, B21.3 |
| आई क्याही भाई भाई दिल को यह प्यारी बरसात | Oh brothers, has the rainy season dear to the heart come? | B49 |
| गैरों से मिल मिल कर मेरा क्यों दिल जिगर जलाते हो | Why do my heart and my mind burn when he meets others? | B50 |
| सावन मास चलन कित चाहत | Where did the desire go in the month of <i>Sāvan</i> ? | B58 |
| कइसे के, आँगाना बहारबी | How shall I sweep the courtyard? | A28 |
| कइसे के जोबना छिपाइबि बला जोबनावा कइसे छुपाई | How shall I hide my bosom? | A28 A41 |
| केकरा से कहबि दिल के बतिया | To whom shall I tell the secret of my heart? | A28 |
| कइसे काटबि चइत दिन चंचल | How will I spend the ephemeral days of <i>Cait</i> ? | A32 |
| केइ मोरे, हरेले दरदिया | Who will take my pain away? | A36 |
| काहे अइसन हरजाई | Why my lover is this way | A41 |

Tab. 2. Rhetorical questions

Apostrophes. Analogous to rhetorical questions, apostrophes are effective devices employed in song texts to directly address the listener. Among the most recurring ones, besides invocations to the lover, apostrophes to the *sakhī(-s)*, the female friend(s), are commonly found. In folk-oriented styles, the *nanadī*, the younger sister-in-law, is an ever-present interlocutor. Compositions having the *virahinī* as a protagonist feature vocative referring to birds, especially the koel (*koyal*, *kokil*).

| Apostrophe | Addressee | References |
|--|--|---|
| पिया जनिया बालमुवाँ (मोरे) राजा | Lover | B59, C4 B9 B40 B41, B18 |
| ननदी छोटी ननदी | Sister-in-law Younger sister-in-law | A6, A33, B21.1, B21.2, B21.3, B29 A23, C6 |
| सखिया/सखी सजनी | (Female) friend/confidante | B2, B13, B16, B55, C10 A34 |
| कोइलरि | Koel | A16 |

Tab. 3. Apostrophes

Rhyme. As already pointed out, the rhyme scheme is paramount to the musicality and lyrical flavour of the compositions. Rhyme presents varying degrees of complexity. Overall, the most recurrent pattern features internal and end-rhyme, frequently built on the suffix (*varṇ stobh*) ‘-(i)yā’ or ‘-vā’. The internal rhyme is also frequent.

Pen name. Several compositions, in particular most of the *sāhityik kajrī-s* and *caitī-s*, are characterised by the insertion of the author’s name in the last line of the composition. This signature is indicated with different terms: In the context of *sant* literature, the pen name present in medieval *pad-s* and *dohā-s* as a formula is called *bhāṇitā* (lit. ‘what is said’). The term is considered as a synonym of *mudrikā* and the more common *chāp*. The observations made by Hawley on the *chāp* of *bhakti* poems holds true for the songs of intermediate genres as well.⁷⁷ In Hawley’s words:

⁷⁷ See Ch. I, 1.5.

[...] it anchors a poem to a life, a personality, even a divinity that gives the poem its proper weight and tone; and it connects it to a network of associations that makes the poem [...] something that has been heard before and respected, something familiar and beloved [...]. [It establishes] an aura in which the act of listening can be as intense as the speech (*Ibid.*: 287-88).

In the context of musical compositions, along with the Hindi term *chāp*, the Urdu word *takhallus* is used especially in the context of *khayāl* and *gāzal*. Ranade (2006: 229) and Wade (1984:20) employ the label *mudrā* bearing a wide significance: not only does it refer to the name or pen name of the composer, but it can also include the name of the *rāg* and *tāl* in which the composition is set or mention the name of the guru, or possibly even a patron (Ranade *ibid.*). Du Perron has noted that for *dhrupad* and *khayāl*, performers appreciate texts featuring such a signature to a greater extent than in *thumrī*. In fact, in *thumrī* the presence of the *chāp* distinguishes the two different styles of *bol bant* and *bol banāo*: in the former style, the composer's name can mark the proud belonging to a certain musical tradition. In the latter, it is rarely found, and when present, it is emphasised in order to confer an aura of antiquity and authenticity to the texts. Furthermore, one of the reasons that may have led to a certain reluctance to include the composer's name in *thumrī*-s resides in the association of the genre—especially in the *bol banāo* style—with the world of the courtesans (du Perron 2007: 77).

All the different terms used to describe the author's pen name are used interchangeably, as synonyms. In the present work, I have opted for the Hindi term *chāp* when referring to a Hindi context or in relation to *sant* and *jogī* songs, whereas I have preferred the Urdu word *takhallus* in Urdu-influenced texts.

The insertion of the pen name is particularly relevant, not so much for revealing the composer's identity, but for placing him within a tradition—be it devotional, musical or literary—and referring to a network of associations. For instance, the *chāp* 'piyā' (literally meaning 'beloved'), frequent in a number of *bol bānt thumrī*-s, distinguishes a group of XIX-century composers from Lucknow.

The *chāp*-s are more often than not inserted ad hoc in the texts since they play on the polyvalent meaning of words and introduce a lyrical flavour by triggering a range of images as part of the collective consciousness. For instance, pen names such as 'Chabīle', (literally meaning 'foppish lover') or Premghan ('cloud of love') perfectly suit respectively a text on *virah* and the depiction of the monsoon; the *chāp* 'Rasik Kiśori' denotes that the composer, presumably a Kṛṣṇa devotee, experiences the *madhur ras* by identifying with a *gopī*.

Moreover, signatures built on wordplay allow for multiple interpretations of the same line, leading to the expression of all the potential emotive nuances hinted at by a word.

It is important to note that it is not unusual that a specific *chāp* originally found in a song was not always retained through the process of transmission.

4. Translation: problems and strategies

The task of translation poses several problems, and all sorts of difficulties arise, in the first place, from the idiosyncrasies found in both the source and target language. Considerations on non-linguistic factors building the word significance and representing two different cultural systems are critical issues to tackle while translating. A further challenge is posed by oral, performative, and song texts, especially in the context of Indian music. As already stated above, the performance seldom conforms to the written form of the lyrics which mainly functions as an outline or framework for countless and ever-changing renditions. Therefore, translation always implies inevitable losses since it cannot convey all the shades of meaning and peculiarities of the original text. In an attempt to keep music and text parallel and “to say almost the same thing”, as asserted by Umberto Eco (1993), the translation involves compromises and negotiations. It is, therefore, a process of interpretation that results inevitably in a loss on the level of phonic and stylistic features, cultural associations and significance, and emotional connections, for all emotionally and culturally loaded untranslatable words.

Being aware of such premises and the approximation intrinsic in the translating process, I have tended towards a compromise between a literal translation and a poetic paraphrasing: I opted to provide necessary explanations and contextualise culture-bound concepts and imagery in the notes.

Elements such as interjections and filler-words—which often function as genre markers—have not been translated.

Page layout. Original texts are given in the Devanāgarī script and when copied from written sources preserve the existing punctuation and layout.

Lines of the original texts are numbered for ease of reference in the translations and commentary (when present).

In the translations, square brackets are used when words are inserted for the sake of clarity.

Texts presented on the same page are interconnected (either as indicated in the heading under the title (e.g., B50, B51 or, such as in the case of B3 and B4, are antiphonal, i.e., ‘question’ and ‘answer’ songs). In the case of composition B21, three variant versions (B21.1, B21.2, B21.3) are included.

For ease of reading, original texts and translations of the compositions are presented in sequence; thus, the presence of some blank spaces between song-texts.

In the commentary of several compositions, for certain words in languages different from Hindi or, however, deviating from standard forms, the equivalent Hindi terms with their relative meaning are supplied along with grammatical explanations and further information functional to the understanding of the texts.

Part II. Anthology of texts

A. Caitī

*“I will go to meet my lover, ho rāmā.
Wearing a skirt of satin, wearing flowers of all colours,
I will sing the praise of God, ho rāmā”.*

(A10)

1. *Caitī*: the motif of *bhakti*

1.1 Ramaite *caitī*

A1 रामजी के बनमा पठौलऽ हो रामा⁷⁸

1. रामजी के बनमा पठौलऽ हो रामा
2. कठिन तोरा जियरा |
3. बसिहें न अवधा नगरिया हो रामा
4. जइहें जहाँ राम के बसेरवा हो रामा
5. कठिन तोरा जियरा |
6. मारियो न गलइ केकइया निरदइया
7. जारे मुख कठिन बचनमा हो रामा
8. कठिन तोरा जियरा |
9. राम लखन बिनु सुनना हो रामा
10. नागिन लोटह भानमा हो रामा
11. कठिन तोरा जियरा |

1. Rām went to the forest, *ho rāmā*.
2. Hard is your heart.
3. The inhabitants of the town of Avadh, *ho rāmā*,
4. went to Rām’s shelter, *ho rāmā*.
5. Hard is your heart.
6. They cursed Kaikeyī’s cruelty.
7. May that mouth that uttered harsh words burn, *ho rāmā*.
8. Hard is your heart.
9. Without Rām and Lakṣmaṇ, [Ayodhyā] is empty, *ho rāmā*.
10. The venomous woman languishes in the palace, *ho rāmā*.
11. Hard is your heart.

This *caitī* is described as based on *karuṇ ras* and centred on a theme dear to the Ramaite devotion: the distress of Ayodhya dwellers blaming Kaikeyī for having sent Rām into exile to the forest for fourteen years. King Daśarath’s wife here seems to play the role that in the genre is usually performed by the rival: she is malevolent and merciless in keeping the beloved away. For this reason, she is compared to a she-snake (*nāgin*). The queen’s cruelty is underlined by the repetition of the *tek* ‘*kaṭhin torā jyarā*’.

The last lines of the composition feature the trope of the ‘empty town’, recurrent in *ṭhumrī* and linked both to mundane and devotional love.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Jain 2012: n. 19 p. 76.

⁷⁹ A13, B35.

A2 रामा राजा जनक जी कठिन प्रन ठाने हो रामा⁸⁰

1. रामा राजा जनक जी कठिन प्रन ठाने हो रामा
2. देसे देसे लिखी लिखी पतिया पाठावे हो रामा
3. देसे देसे |
4. देसे रे बिदेसवा के भूप सभ अइले हो रामा
5. केहू नहीं संकर चाप चढावे हो रमा, केहू नहीं |
6. अजोध्या नगरिया बसेले राजा दशरथ हो रामा
7. उनहूँ के, राजा कुँवर दोउ भइया हो रामा, उनहूँ के |
8. एक हाथे रामचन्द्र धेनुहा उठावे हो रामा
9. दूजे हाथे कीट मुकुट सरिहावे हो रामा,
10. दूजे हाथे |

1. *Rāmā*, king Janak made a difficult vow, *ho rāmā*.
2. Messages were written and sent to every country, *ho rāmā*;
3. to every country...
4. Kings from the country and abroad have come to the assembly, *ho rāmā*.
5. No one has strung the bow of Śaṅkar, no one indeed.
6. In the city of Ayodhyā dwelled the king Daśrath, *ho rāmā*.
7. He had two princes brothers, *ho rāmā*, he had.
8. With one hand, Rāmcandra lifts the bow, *ho rāmā*;
9. with the other hand, he places the crown [on his head], *ho rāmā*;
10. with the other hand.

This very popular *caitī*, in praise of the extraordinary qualities of Rām, is inspired by the episode of Sītā's *svayaṃvar* (bridegroom choice) occurring in the *rāmkaṭhā*⁸¹. Jain notes that it is set to *Kahravā tāl*. This same composition is found in Upādhyāya (1999: 259) with the insertion of the *pad stobh* 'āho rāmā' and set to a fast tempo (double tempo, *dugun drut laya*).

Line 1. *Janak...thane*. The "difficult vow" mentioned here refers to Janak's promise to marry his daughter Sītā only to the one who would have been strong enough to lift and string Śiva *dhanuṣ*, Lord Śiva's bow. None of the suitors among the kings and princes gathered at the *svayaṃvar* could succeed in the hard task but Rām who effortlessly (lines 7-8) won Sītā's hand.

Line 8. *Kīṭ* ≈ *krīṭ* (≈ Skt. *kirīṭ*). 'Crown', 'diadem'. *Kīṭ mukuṭ* is a type of *dvandva samās* or coordinative compound, in which the two terms have identical meanings.

⁸⁰ Jain 2012: 97.

⁸¹ *Adhyātmārāmāyaṇa* I, 6: 18-27, *Vālmīkī-Rāmāyaṇa* I, 66-67, *Rāmcāritmānas* I, 240-265.

A3 आहो रामा पहिले सुमिरन आदि भवनी हो रामा⁸²

1. आहो रामा पहिले सुमिरन आदि भवनी हो रामा ।
2. कण्ठे सुरवा; होख ना आजु सहइया हो रामा ॥१॥
3. कण्ठे सुरवा ।
4. आहो रामा चैत अजोध्या राम जनमले हो रामा ।
5. घरे घरे; गाजेला आनंद बधइया हो रामा ॥२॥
6. घरे घरे ।
7. आहो राम जिरवा के बोरसी, लवँगिया के पासड हो रामा ।
8. सोने छुरिया; आरे नारावा काटाइबि हो रामा ॥३॥
9. सोने छुरिया ।
10. आहो रामा सोने के चउकिया राम नहवाइबि हो रामा ।
11. सखि सभ; मंगल गावे हो रामा ॥४॥
12. सखि सभ ।
13. आहो रामा केहू लुटावे अन, धन, सोनवा हो रामा ।
14. केहू लुटावे; धेनु गइया हो रामा ॥५॥
15. केहू लुटावे ।
16. आहो रामा दशरथ लुटावेले अन, धन, सोनवा हो रामा ।
17. कौसिला लुटावे; धेनु गइया हो रामा ॥६॥
18. कौसिला लुटावे ।

1. *Āho rāmā*, first I will remember Pārvaṭī, *ho rāmā*.
2. May she help me in singing melodious notes today *ho rāmā*!
3. Melodious notes...
4. *Āho rāmā*, in the month of Cait in Ayodhyā Rām was born, *ho rāmā*.
5. In every house, the joy of celebration resounds, *ho rāmā*.
6. In every house...
7. *Āho rāmā*, in the *borsī* cumin and sticks of clove-tree [are burning], *ho rāmā*.
8. With a golden knife, I will cut the umbilical cord, *ho rāmā*.
9. With a golden knife...
10. *Āho rāmā*, I will bathe Rām and put him on a golden seat, *ho rāmā*.
11. All the *sakhī*-s sing auspicious songs, *ho rāmā*.
12. All the *sakhī*-s...
13. *Āho rāmā*, someone distributes food, someone money, and gold, *ho rāmā*.
14. Someone distributes milk cows, *ho rāmā*.
15. Someone distributes ...
16. *Āho rāmā*, Daśarath distributes food, money, and gold, *ho rāmā*.
17. Kauśalyā distributes milk-cows *ho rāmā*.
18. Kauśalyā distributes...

⁸² Upādhyāya 1999: n. 6 pp. 217-218.

This *caitī*, celebrating the birth of Lord Rām, gives an insight into the rituals and traditions associated with childbirth. The day of Rāmanavamī holds a twofold significance: it is the birthday of god Rām and, as the last day of Navarātri, also marks the end of the period of nine nights dedicated to the worship of the Devī. Therefore, the invocation to Pārvatī opening the song is particularly relevant and worthy of further consideration in its connection with Shivaite devotion. The *Rāmcaritmānas*—the most popular *rāmkaṭhā* in which Śiva is one of the main narrators—enshrines indeed the spiritual bond between Ramaite and Shivaite *bhakti*.

Line 2-3. *Kaṅṭhe survā*. Here my translation relies on the metonymical connotation of the phrase. *Kaṅṭhe* literally means ‘throat’ and, by extension, ‘voice’ or ‘sound of singing’ (MCG, *s.v.*).

Line 7. *Borsī*. Earthen round pot for holding fire. As explained by Upādhyāya in the comment on this song, after childbirth near the door of the lying-in room in the house, it is a custom to keep a pot in which the baby’s umbilical cord is burnt with a piece of dry dung (*kaṇḍā*). The fire is then constantly fuelled and is believed to drive away ghosts and evil spirits. As mentioned in this song, after Lord Rām was born, in the *borsī*, instead of a piece of dry dung, cumin seeds and a stick of clove-tree (*pāsaṅg*) are burnt (Upādhyāya 1999: 218).

Line 11. The term *maṅgal* indicates auspicious songs. *Bhakti* poets such as Tulsīdās composed *Jānki maṅgal* and *Pārvatī maṅgal*. In this composition, the auspicious songs mentioned are *sohar gīt-s* (also known as *jaccā*) sung by the women of a household with the birth of a baby. As noted by Henry, a large part of *sohar* texts concerns the birth of Lord Rām (Henry 2000: 79).

1.2 Krishnaite *caitī*

A4 आहो रामा छोटी मोटी ग्वालिन हुई पनिहारिन हो रामा⁸³

1. आहो रामा छोटी मोटी ग्वालिन हुई पनिहारिन हो रामा ।
2. चली गइली; मथुरा नगरि दहि बेचने हो रामा ॥१ ॥
3. चली गइली ।
4. आहो रामा एह पार गंगा ओह पार यमुना हो रामा ।
5. बिचवा में; परि गिले रेतवा हो रामा ॥२ ॥
6. बिचवा में ।
7. आहो रामा ताहि बीच कान्हर धइले अचरवा हो रामा ।
8. ताहि बीच; आँचर धइ बेलमवले हो रामा ॥३॥
9. ताहि बीच ।
10. आहो रामा छोडु छोडु कृस्नाजी हमरो अँचरवा हो रामा ।
11. परि जइहे; दहि के छिटिकवा हो रामा ॥ ४॥
12. परि जइहे ।
13. आहो रामा तोरे लेखे ग्वालिन दहि खिटीकवा हो रामा ।
14. हमरा लेखे; बरसेला अतर गुलबवा हो रामा ॥५ ॥
15. हमरा लेखे ।

1. *Āho rāmā*, there was a little cowherdess that went to fetch water, *ho rāmā*.
2. She went to the city of Mathurā to sell curd, *ho rāmā*.
3. She went...
4. *Āho rāmā*, on this bank the Gaṅgā, on the other bank the Yamunā, *ho rāmā*.
5. In the middle there was a sandbank, *ho rāmā*.
6. In the middle...
7. *Āho rāmā*, in its midst Kanhaiyā grabbed the hem [of the *saṛī*], *ho rāmā*.
8. In its midst, he grabbed the hem and hindered her, *ho rāmā*.
9. In its midst...
10. *Āho rāmā*, leave my hem, leave it Kṛṣṇa, *ho rāmā*.
11. A drop of curd fell, *ho rāmā*.
12. It fell...
13. *Āho rāmā*, oh cowherdess! For you the drop of curd, *ho rāmā*.
14. For me, rose essence rains, *ho rāmā*.
15. For me...

This *caitī* portrays the typical motifs of the *dan-līlā*: Kṛṣṇa stops a *gopī* by grabbing the hem of her *sāṛī* while she is on her way to the market to sell curd. The milkmaid asks the god to leave her as a drop of curd fell out. Kṛṣṇa replies that the spilling of a drop of curd is for him as a rain of rose essence. This metaphor clearly embodies the concepts of *bhakti ras* and *kṛṣṇa-līlā*.

⁸³ Upādhyāya 1999: n. 1 p. 212.

Line 8. *Tāhi*. Brbh. *tīhi* oblique of *so*, ‘it’.

Line 14. *Lekhe*. Brbh. (\approx H. [*ke*] *liye*) ‘For’.

A5 रामा एहि पार गंगा, ओहि पार जमुना हो रामा⁸⁴

1. रामा एहि पार गंगा, ओहि पार जमुना हो रामा
2. तेहि बिचे कृष्ण खेलले फुलगेनमा हो रामा ॥
3. रामा गेना जब गिराले मजधरवा हो रामा
4. तेहि रे बीचे कृष्ण खिलले पतलवा हो रामा ॥
5. रामा लट धुनि केसिया जसोमति मैया हो रामा ॥
6. एही राहे मानिक हमारो हेराइल हो रामा ॥
7. रामा एक जाल बीगले, दोसर जाल बीगले हो रामा
8. बाझि गइले घोंघवा सेवारावा हो रामा ॥
9. रामा पइठि पताल, नाग नाथल हो रामा
10. रामा काली फन ऊपर नाच कइलन हो रामा ॥
11. रामदास बुलाकी संग घाँटो गावल हो रामा
12. गाइ रे गाई, बिरहिन सखि समुझावल हो रामा ॥

1. *Rāmā*, here there is the bank of the Gaṅgā, there the bank of the Yamunā, *ho rāmā*.
2. In the middle Kṛṣṇa is playing with a ball, *ho rāmā*.
3. *Rāmā*, while playing, the ball fell in the middle of the stream, *ho rāmā*.
4. He played with the ball in the underworld, *ho rāmā*.
5. *Rāmā*, Yaśodā tears her locks out,
6. On my way, I have lost my precious stone, *ho rāmā*!
7. Nets were thrown one after the other, *ho rāmā*.
8. Only snails and algae were caught, *ho rāmā*!
9. *Rāmā*, [Kṛṣṇa] has entered the underworld and tamed the cobra, *ho rāmā*.
10. *Rāmā*, he has danced on the hood of the black cobra, *ho rāmā*.
11. Ramdās sings *ghāṅṭo* with Bulākī, *ho rāmā*.
12. Singing and singing console the *virahinī*, *ho rāmā*!

This *caitī* depicts Kṛṣṇa as Kāliyadamana (‘the destroyer of Kāliya’) as portrayed in the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* (X, 16). While Kṛṣṇa was playing with his cowherd mates along the banks of the river Yamunā, the ball fell into a dangerous whirlpool where the giant black snake Kāliya dwelled. The waters around it were befouled by poison and only a solitary *kadamb* tree stood nearby. To retrieve the ball, Kṛṣṇa climbed it carelessly and plunged into the river where the *nāg* dragged him down trying to constrict him. In the following compositions, the focus is on Yaśodā’s anguish and on the distress of all the cowherds and people of Gokul who tried to rescue Kṛṣṇa. After engaging in a fierce battle, Kṛṣṇa rose from the bottom of the river and danced on the hood of the dreadful cobra. Overpowered by Kṛṣṇa, Kāliya surrendered and begged the god to spare his life. Thus,

⁸⁴ Jain 2012: n. 62 p. 92.

with great joy from the people in Vrindavan, he left the waters of the Yamunā and returned to the ocean.

Line 4, 9. *Patalvā, patāl*. It indicates the *pātāl*, the ‘underworld’ or ‘netherworld’ according to the Hindu cosmology. However, here it simply refers to the depths of the Yamuna into which Kṛṣṇa plunged to defeat Kāliya.

Line 10. *Rāmdās...Bulākī. Chāp* of the composition. Rāmdās was a disciple of Bulākīdās. As the name suggests, the author was a devotee of Rām.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ See Ch. IV, 3.5.

A6 आहो रामा नदिया के तीरवा चनन गाँछि बिरवा हो रामा⁸⁶

1. आहो रामा नदिया के तीरवा चनन गाँछि बिरवा हो रामा ।
2. ताहि तरे; कुँवर मोरे अलसइले हो रामा ॥१॥
3. ताहि तरे ।
4. आहो रामा बिल में से निकलेले काली नगिनिया हो रामा ।
5. डँसि देले, कुँवर का कानी अँगुरिया हो रामा ॥२॥
6. डँसि देले ।
7. आहो रामा साँझे के सूतल फूटेले किरिनिया हो रामा ।
8. तबो नहीं; जागेले पियवा आभागवा हो रामा ॥३॥
9. तबो नहीं ।
10. आहो रामा गोड़ तोर लागीले बहुरी ननदिया हो रामा ।
11. रचि एक; आपन भइया देहु ना जगाई हो रामा ॥४॥
12. रचि एक ।
13. आहो रामा कइसे के भउजी भइया के जगाई हो रामा ।
14. मोर भइया; मातल निदिया अलसइले हो रामा ॥५॥
15. मोर भइया ।
16. आहो रामा तोरा लेखे ननदी भइया अलसइले हो रामा ।
17. मोरा लेखे; चानावा छपित भइले हो रामा ॥६॥
18. मोरा लेखे ।

1. *Āho rāmā*, on the bank of the river, there is a sandalwood tree, *ho rāmā*.
2. Under it, my young prince idles, *ho rāmā*.
3. Under it...
4. *Āho rāmā*, from a hole, a black she-serpent came out, *ho rāmā*,
5. and bit my young prince's little finger, *ho rāmā*.
6. She bit...
7. *Āho rāmā*, he was sleeping since the evening when a ray of sunshine broke, *ho rāmā*.
8. Even then my poor beloved did not wake up, *ho rāmā*.
9. Even then...
10. *Āho rāmā*, I fall at your feet again and again, oh sister-in-law, *ho rāmā*.
11. For a moment, wake up your brother, *ho rāmā*.
12. For a moment...
13. *Āho rāmā*, how can I wake up my sister in-law's brother, *ho rāmā*?
14. My brother was idling when he fell into the sleep of intoxication, *ho rāmā*.
15. My brother...
16. *Āho rāmā*, for you, oh sister-in-law, my brother was idling, *ho rāmā*!
17. For me, he made the moon set, *ho rāmā*.
18. For me...

⁸⁶ Upādhyāya 1999, n. 4 pp. 215-216.

This *caitī* revolves around a traditional motif in folk songs, the quarrel between sisters-in-law, presented here from an unusual perspective. The reason for discord in this text is represented by the husband's death due to the bite of a poisonous serpent. Curiously, the snake mentioned is a 'she-serpent' (a *nāginī*), which may allude metaphorically to another woman, the rival or *sautan*.

Line 1. *Canan gāñci*. I consider this as a *dvandva samās*, since both the terms mean 'tree'.

Line 2. *Alsaile*...The motif of drowsiness associated with the pleasantness of spring is a recurring trope in the genre and it is usually linked to the image of an indifferent husband.⁸⁷

Line 3. *Tare*. (\approx H. *nice*). 'Under', 'below'.

Line 8. *Ābhāgvā*. I read it as *abhāgvā*, with the short initial 'a' as a synonym of *abhāgī* meaning 'poor', 'unfortunate'.

Line 13. *Ke baujī ke bhaiyā*. Periphrasis for husband. A traditional custom bans women from calling their husbands by their name.⁸⁸

Line 14. *Mātal nidiyā*. "The sleep of the intoxication" can be caused both by the poisonous bite of the snake or, metaphorically, by the infatuation for the *sautan*.

⁸⁷ See 3.2 p. 176.

⁸⁸ See B11, B26.

1.3 *Śaiva caitī*

The following two *ghaṇṭo caitī*-s offer a particular depiction of Lord Śiva who requests his consort Pārvatī to prepare the intoxicant drink (*bhāṃg*) he is greatly fond of. Gaurī cannot grind hemp for her husband since on her lap sits child Gaṇeś (*bāl Gaṇpati*).

A7 होत फजिरवा ए रामा, होत फजिरवा⁸⁹

1. होत फजिरवा ए रामा, होत फजिरवा |
2. आहो शिव जी जगावसु हो रामा ||१||
3. होत फजिरवा° |
4. उठ गउरा रगरि भँगिया पिआवहु हो रामा ||२ ||
5. | उठ गउरा °|
6. कइसे हम उठीं रामा, कइसे हम उठीं |
7. आहो भोला शिव जोगिया हो रामा ||३||
8. होत फजिरवा° |
9. मोरा गोदी गनेस बाड़े लरिका हो रामा ||४||
10. | मोरा गोदी °|

1. It is Phāgun, *e rāmā*, it is Phāgun!
2. Oh! Śiva *jī* awakes, *ho rāmā*!
3. It is Phāgun...
4. Wake up Gaurī, grind *bhāṃg* and give it to me to drink, *ho rāmā*!
5. Wake up Gaurī...
6. How can I wake up, *rāmā*, how can I wake up?
7. Oh Bolā Śiva Yogī, *ho rāmā*!
8. It is Phāgun...
9. Chubby boy Gaṇeś sits on my lap, *ho rāmā*.
10. On my lap...

This composition is interestingly considered a *caitī*, although in the *ṭek* the seasonal reference hints at Phāgun, the month preceding Cait. It should be noted that the festival of Śivarātri—during which Śiva devotees consume *bhāṃg*—falls on the fourteenth day of the waning moon (*caturdaśī kṛṣṇa pakṣa*) of the month of Phāgun. However, the insertion of the *pad stobh* ‘*ho rāmā*’ is a marker of a *caitī*. Furthermore, the theme of the family portrayal of Śiva, Pārvatī, and child Gaṇeś recurs in several compositions belonging to the genre.

Line 1. *Phajirvā* (Bhoj.). The month of Phāgun.

Line 3. *Gaurā* (≈ H. Gaurī). Another name of Pārvatī.

⁸⁹ Upādhyāya 1990a: n. 185 p.414.

A8 रामा शिव बाबा चलले हा पुरुब बनिजिया हो रामा⁹⁰

1. रामा शिव बाबा चलले हा पुरुब बनिजिया हो रामा |
2. लादि लिहले, भंगिया, धतूरवाअ हो रामा ||१ ||
3. लादि लिहले
4. रामा होत भिनुसारावा सिवजी जगावे हो रामा |
5. उठ गउरा भंगिया रगरि के पिआव हो रामा ||२||
6. उठ गउरा
7. रामा कइसे में उठी सिव महादेव हो रामा |
8. मोरा गोदी गनेस बाड़े बालक हो रामा ||३||
9. मोरा गोदी
10. रामा गनपति बालक पलंग सुताव हो रामा |
11. इचि एक; भंगिया रगरि के पियाव हो रामा ||४||
12. इचि एक

1. *Rāmā*, Śiva *bābā* went to the East for trading, *ho rāmā*.
2. He loaded *bhāṃg* and *Datura*, *ho rāmā*.
3. He loaded...
4. *Rāmā*, at dawn Lord Śiva awakes, *ho rāmā*.
5. “Wake up, Gaurī and grind *bhāṃg* and make me drink it, *ho rāmā*.”
6. Wake up Gaurī...”
7. “*Rāmā*, oh Śiva Māhadev how can I wake up, *ho rāmā*.”
8. On my lap is chubby baby Gaṇeś, *ho rāmā*.
9. On my lap...”
10. “*Rāmā*, put baby Gaṇpati to sleep in the bed, *ho rāmā*.”
11. A little bit of *bhāṃg*, grind it and make me drink, *ho rāmā*.
12. A little bit...”

Line 1. *Bābā...purūb banijyā*. The appellative ‘*bābā*’ could be an abbreviation of Śiva’s title ‘*Bābā Bhaṅgherī*’, i.e., ‘Lord of hemp’ (Storl 2004: 198). It is interesting to note the worldly characteristics attributed to the god; here he plays the role of a migrating husband who leaves for the ‘eastern region’ to seek his fortune⁹¹.

Lādi lihale. Here it is implied that Śiva loaded Nandī, the sacred bull gate-guardian of mount Kailāś and his vehicle (*vāhan*).

Line 2. *Bhaṅgiyā* (Bhoj. ≈ H. *bhāṃg*). The narcotic drink made of hemp sacred to Śiva.

Dhatūrvā (Bhoj. ≈ H. *dhatūrā*). *Datura stramonium*, commonly also known as thorn apple, devil’s trumpet, or devil’s weed, is a poisonous plant associated with Lord Śiva. It is particularly consumed during Sāvan. Offering *Datura* flowers to Śiva during this month is recommended by *Vāmana-purāṇa* (17, 32). According to the latter, *Datura* flower arose from the chest of Mahādev after he drank *halāhal* (or *kālakūt*), a poison obtained from the churning of the cosmic ocean (*samudra manthan*) (*Vāmana-purāṇa* 18.4). Hemp and *Datura* seeds are smoked together by Śiva devotees to ecstatically unite with him, especially on the occasion of monthly celebrations (such as Śivarātrī) in his

⁹⁰ Upādhyāya 1999: n.24, p.232.

⁹¹ Cf. A8, A28, A32, B24.

honour. Mahāśivarātri, occurring in the month of Phāgun, holds special importance in the Hindu calendar.

1.4 *Śakta caitī (caitā gaurī)*

A9 चइत मासे चुनरी मँगइबै हो रामा⁹²

1. चइत मासे चुनरी मँगइबै हो रामा
2. जइबे देवी धमवाँ
3. फल फूल धूप धार नरियर चुनरिया
4. अच्छत कपूर रोरी संगवाँ हो रामा
5. जइबे देवी धमवाँ --- चइत...
6. देवी दरस के तरसैं नयनवाँ
7. सधिया लगल बाटे मनवाँ हो रामा
8. जइबे देवी धमवाँ --- चइत...
9. ममता मयी मइया दानी बरदानी
10. नव-नव रूप नव नमवाँ हो रामा
11. जइबे देवी धमवाँ--- चइत...
12. मनसा पुरावै माई दुःख ओखावैं
13. पूरन होला सबै कमवाँ हो रामा
14. जइबे देवी धमवाँ--- चइत...
15. 'जीत' के गीत गाइ माई के मनइबै
16. गइबै गुन पूजबै चरनवाँ हो रामा
17. जइबे देवी धमवाँ --- चइत...

1. In the month of Cait, I will get a *cunrī*, *ho rāmā*.
2. I will go to the Devī, *dhavām*.
3. I will carry fruit, flowers, a coconut, a *cunrī*,
4. unbroken rice, camphor, red powder all together, *ho rāmā*.
5. I will go to the Devī, *dhavām*...Cait
6. Eyes are thirsty for Devī's *darśan*.
7. In the mind, the craving [for Devī's *darśan*] arouses along the way, *ho rāmā*.
8. I will go to the Devī, *dhavām*...Cait
9. Tender mother, my ma, mama, the giver of gifts!
10. You have nine forms, nine names, *ho rāmā*.
11. I will go to the Devī, *dhavām*.
12. Oh Ma, fill my mind and eradicate the pain,
13. fulfil all my desires, *ho rāmā*!
14. I will go to the Devī, *dhavām*...Cait
15. I will celebrate Ma by singing songs of Jit.
16. I will praise and worship her feet, *ho rāmā*.
17. I will go to the Devī, *dhavām*...Cait

⁹² Siṃh 2003: 16.

Line 1. *Cunrī*. A decorative red piece of cloth, usually with a golden border, used in *pūjā* or on auspicious occasions to cover the statues of gods.

Line 2. *Dhavām*. I have opted not to translate the term *dhavām*, the onomatopoeia reproducing the drum roll of percussion instruments, given the difficulty of finding an equivalent word for rendering it in English. Drumbeats are an essential component of *pūjā*-s and festivities associated with Durgā.

Line 3-4. *Pha, phūl...rorī*. These are all items typically used for performing a *pūjā*.

Line 7. *Bāṭe*. ‘On the way’. Probably, on the way to the temple.

Line 15. *Jīt*. The pen name of the composer interestingly plays on the meaning of ‘*jīt*’ as ‘victory’. In this line, the pun ‘*jīt ke git*’—‘songs of Jīt’—literally means ‘songs of victory’.

1.5 *Nirguṇī caitī*A10 पिया से मिलन हम जाएब हो रामा⁹³

1. पिया से मिलन हम जाएब हो रामा
2. अतलस लहँगा कुसुम रंग सारी
3. पहिर पहिर गुण गाएब हो रामा |
4. बाजूबन्द अनन्त पहिरके
5. नाम के नथ झामकाएब हो रामा ||
6. ज्ञान ध्यान के घुँघरु बाँधे
7. सबदन माँग भाराएब हो रामा ||
8. कहत कबीर सुनो भाई साधो
9. बहुरि न याहि जग आएब हो रामा ||

1. I will go to meet my lover, *ho rāmā*.
2. Wearing a skirt of satin, wearing flowers of all colours,
3. I will sing the praise of God, *ho rāmā*.
4. I will wear an armlet in the shape of Anant.
5. The nose-ring of the Name will twinkle, *ho rāmā*.
6. I will tie the anklets of *jñān*.
7. I will decorate the parting of the hair with the Word, *ho rāmā*.
8. Kabīr says: “Listen brother *sādhu*.”
9. I will not come again in this world, *ho rāmā*”.

This *caitī* attributed to Kabīr is emblematic of how the mystic deploys symbols and imagery to describe concepts and experiences beyond the reach of common words. For this reason, Kabīr depicts the experience of the ultimate reality like an encounter with a worldly lover: the soul of the devotee is the bride who dresses up wearing the ornaments, metaphors of the means to reach the absolute, obtaining *mokṣa*.

Line 4. *Anant* (Lit. ‘endless’). It refers to the cosmic serpent named also Śeṣ (the ‘remainder’, ‘residue’), a manifestation of Viṣṇu and king of *nāga*-s. According to the *Paurāṇik koś* (s.v.), it has one thousand hoods one of which holds the Earth. Anant represents everything remaining after the universal dissolution of the *pralaya* that is still endless.

Line 5. *Nām*. The ‘Name’ and its repetition is a means to reach the *Brahman*. For Kabīr, constantly repeating and remembering the name of Rām (*jaṇ*) provides not only a means for concentration, but its incessant continuation merges with the breath and pervades all activities.

Line 6 *Jñan*. The *jñan margā* (the ‘path of knowledge’) with yoga and *bhakti*, is one of the three paths to follow in order to reach *mokṣa*.

⁹³ Jain 2012, n. 58 p. 91.

Line 7. *Sabdan*. ‘The Word’ (*śabd*) is the most recurrent term used by Kabīr and the *sant*-s to indicate the absolute (as *śabd brahman*), a modality of experiencing the ultimate reality, a way in which the absolute manifests itself during the mystic experience (the *anahad śabd*) and a means to reach such experiences, through the concentration on the *śabd* or the repetition of the Name of God. *Śabd* can indeed be the *Nām*, the word and the *mantra* given by the guru (Caracchi 2017: 311).

Line 8. *Kahat Kabīr suno bhāī sādhu*. This formula is often recurring in Kabīr’s verses. Its value lies not only in its function of introducing the *chāp* but is a clear expression of Kabīr’s intention to directly address the listener. In Linda Hess’s words:

The reader is central in Kabir. Nearly everyone in North India is familiar with the formula *kahai Kabīra suno bhāī sādho*—“Kabir says, listen brother sadhu!” or *suno ho santo* “Listen, oh saints!”. It is Kabir’s trademark. But far more than a formula, it signifies Kabir’s passion to engage, to wake people up, to affect them (Hess 2002: 9).

2. *Caitī*: the motif of *virah*

2.1 Depiction of *virah*

A11 सुगना बोलै रे हमारी आठरिया हो रामा⁹⁴

1. सुगना बोलै रे हमारी आठरिया हो रामा
2. कागा बोलै कोइली बोलै
3. अरे बोलेला भिंगराजवा हो रामा |
4. का तू कागा बोलिया बोले
5. अरे बलमा परदेसिया हो रामा |

1. In my bedroom the parrot speaks, *ho rāmā*.
2. The crow speaks, the cuckoo speaks,
3. oh, the *bhṛṅgrāj* speaks, *ho rāmā*.
4. Crow, what did you say?
5. Alas! My beloved is in a foreign land, *ho rāmā*.

⁹⁴ Jain 2012: n.35 p. 84

A12 नाहीं बूले रे तुमारी सुरतिया हो रामा⁹⁵

1. नाहीं बूले रे तुमारी सुरतिया हो रामा
2. जब से प्रति लगी है तुमसे
3. सूनी लागे रे हमारी नगरिया हो रामा |

1. I did not forget your face, *ho rāmā!*
2. Since I fell in love with you
3. my town seems empty, *ho rāmā.*

This composition presenting the themes typical of *ṭhumrī*—the *virah* and the ‘empty town’⁹⁶—can be distinguished as a *caitī* since it features the *pad stobh* ‘*ho rāmā*’, marker of the genre.

⁹⁵ Jain 2012: n. 38 p.84.

⁹⁶ See A1, B35.

A13 रतिया के देखलौं सपनवाँ हो रामा⁹⁷

1. रतिया के देखलौं सपनवाँ हो रामा
2. की प्रभु मोरा आयल |
3. मोहि बिरहिन के बान सम लगाय
4. पपिहा क निठुर बयनमा हो रामा
5. प्रभु मोरा आयल |
6. खान पान मोहि किछु ने भावय
7. भावय न सुख के सयानमा हो रामा
8. प्रभु मोरा आयल |
9. आप जाय कुब्जा रस बस भेल
10. छन नहिँ मोहि चयनामा हो रामा
11. प्रभु मोरा आयल |

1. At night, I saw in my dreams
2. that my lord came, *ho rāmā*.
3. The cruel singing of the cuckoo
4. strucks me *virahinī* like an arrow, *ho rāmā*.
5. My lord came.
6. I cannot eat nor drink anything.
7. Nor can I derive pleasure from sleep, *ho rāmā*.
8. My lord came.
9. He fell into the power of the love-philtre of Kubjā
10. I do not have a single moment of peace, *ho rāmā*.
11. My lord came.

In this *caitī* the pangs of *virah* are sharpened by the singing of the cuckoo, resulting in the physical distress and anguish of the *nāyikā*. It can be assumed that the protagonist of the composition is a *gopī*: the image of the hunchbacked woman is a clear reference to an episode in the *Kṛṣṇa-līlā*.

Line 9. *Kubjā*. The term literally means ‘hunchbacked woman’ and is the name of the young hunchbacked Kāṁsa’s servant whom Kṛṣṇa meets in Mathura and turns into a beautiful woman delivering her from her painful condition. The episode is described in the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* (X, 42) and in Sūrdās’s *Sūrsāgar* (3665/3047, 3667/3049, 3669/3051). According to the former version, Kubjā (here named Trivakrā), charmed by Kṛṣṇa’s beauty, invites him to her house, but the god declines promising he will come back in the future. In the *Sūrsāgar* the description of the encounter is not as detailed as the one of Kṛṣṇa’s visit to the woman’s house. As pointed out by Pauwels (2008: 318-19), this very episode is the main topic of a whole series of Sūrdās’ poems. The character of Kubjā and her story—generally regarded respectively as a model of the devotee and an allegory of God’s infinite grace—are presented under a different light in this composition. The hunchbacked woman acts as a rival, playing the same role of the *sautan*, or rival in love, in semi-classical compositions.

⁹⁷ Jain 2012: n. 22 p. 77.

A14 आइल चइत उतपाती हो रामा⁹⁸

1. आइल चइत उतपाती हो रामा
2. पिया नाहीं आये ॥१॥ टेक
3. आधी आधी रतिया के बोलेले कोइलिया ।
4. आधी आधी रतिया के बोलेले कोइलिया ।
5. पिया बिनु दरके मोर छतिया हो रामा ॥२॥
6. पिया नाहीं आये ।
7. आमावा के डाली पर लगे मोजरिया ।
8. महुआ गिले कोंचाइ हो रामा ॥३॥
9. पिया नाहीं आये ।
10. आइल चइत उतपाती हो रामा ।
11. पिया नाहीं आये ।

1. The troublesome Cait has come, *ho rāmā!*
2. My beloved did not come. *Ṭek*
3. In the middle of the night, the koel sings.
4. In the middle of the night, the koel sings.
5. Without my love my heart aches, *ho rāmā.*
6. My beloved did not come.
7. On the branches of a mango tree, buds are in flower.
8. On the *mahuā* tree, buds have blossomed, *ho rāmā.*
9. My beloved did not come.
10. Cait has come, *ho rāmā.*
11. My beloved did not come. *Ṭek*

Line 1. *Utpātī*. Meaning ‘aggressive’, ‘violent’ (MCG, *s.v.*). The month of Cait is often denoted as troublesome, mischievous, and pernicious since the *virahinī* cannot enjoy its charming beauty.

Line 8. *Mahuā*. It is the *Madhuca* tree (*Madhuca longifolia*) very common all over India. The fragrance of *mahuā* tree buds is a trope of *caitī* songs and one of the distinctive signs of spring. *Mahuā* is an important plant in India, having a socio-economical value for *ādivāsī* tribes that consume it as a ritual, as part of celebrations. In the month of Cait, Goṇḍ tribes spread in Madhya Pradesh, eastern Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Odisha celebrate a festival called Caitr mahāparv during which *mahuā* flowers are plucked. Flowers and seeds are dried and used to produce liquor; they are also the basic ingredient for several culinary preparations (Nagar 1985: 340).

⁹⁸ Upādhyāya 1990a: n.183 p. 493.

A15 आहो रामा सूतल में रहली पिया संग सजिया हो रामा⁹⁹

1. आहो रामा सूतल में रहली पिया संग सजिया हो रामा ।
2. बिरही कोइलिया; सबद सुनावे हो रामा ॥१॥
3. बिरही कोइलिया ।
4. आहो रामा गोड तोर लागेली बाबा के बहेलिया हो रामा ।
5. बिरही कोइलिया; मारि ले आऊ हो रामा ॥२॥
6. बिरही कोइलिया ।
7. आहो रामा तब ले बहेलिया हनेला निसनवा हो रामा ।
8. जब ले कोइलिया; सबझ सुनावे हो रामा ॥३॥
9. बिरही कोइलिया ।

1. *Āho rāmā*, I sleep on the bed with my beloved, *ho rāma*.
2. I listen to the songs of the lovesick koel, *ho rāmā*.
3. The lovesick koel...
4. *Āho rāmā*, oh my father's fowler! I fall at your feet, *ho rāmā*!
5. Kill the lovesick koel, *ho rāmā*!
6. The lovesick koel...
7. *Āho rāmā*, when the koel began to sing, *ho rāmā*
8. Then the fowler shot and killed her, *ho rāma*,
9. The lovesick koel...

In this song, the woman protagonist is experiencing the joy of union (*saṃyog*) with her beloved when she hears the koel singing. Thus, she addresses her father's fowler and asks him to shoot it. I interpret this request as motivated by the fact that the sweet voice of the koel is a bad omen for the woman since it anticipates the pangs of the *virah* while she is enjoying the pleasure of the moment. Upādhyāya offers a different explanation: the protagonist wants the death of the *koyal* because its sweet singing could wake up her beloved (Upādhyāya 1999: 225).

Line 3, 6, 9. *Birahī koiliyā*. It is a female koel as indicated by the adjective '*birahī*', 'lovesick' or 'affected by *virah*'. Therefore, the identification with the *nāyikā* is evident.

⁹⁹ Upādhyāya 1999: n.14 p. 225.

A16 रामा सूतल सइयाँ के जगवलू हो कोइलरि¹⁰⁰

1. रामा सूतल सइयाँ के जगवलू हो कोइलरि |
2. तोरी मीठी बोलिया, लागेला हो रामा ||१||
3. तोरी मीठी°
4. रामा अब ले तू बोललू कोइलरि साँझि विहनवा |
5. अब तू बोलेलू निसुरतिया हो रामा ||२||
6. तोरी मीठी°
7. रामा अब ले तू रहलू कोइलरि बन के कोइलिया |
8. अब तू हु भइलू सवतिनिया हो रामा ||३||
9. तोरी मीठी°
10. रामा अगिया लगाइबि कोइलारि तो हरी ही बोलिया |
11. जरी के कटाइबि घनी बगिया हो रामा ||४||
12. तोरी मीठी°

1. *Rāmā*, you have awakened my lord, oh koel!
2. Your sweet chirps have begun, *ho rāmā*.
3. Your sweet ...
4. *Rāmā*, oh koel, now you will chirp from morning until evening.
5. [but] now you will tweet the whole night, *ho rāmā*.
6. Your sweet ...
7. *Rāmā*, until now you have been a koel of the forest.
8. Now you have really become the rival, *ho rāmā*.
9. Your sweet ...
10. *Rāmā*, I will set every chirp of yours on fire, oh koel!
11. I will uproot [your] thick garden, *ho rāmā*.

This composition combines a trope of the rainy season, the koel’s song—generally found in the genre of *kajrī*—with a typical motif of *caitī*—the beloved’s awakening. The interlocutor of the female protagonist here is the bird itself that is compared to the rival in love, or co-wife. The “sweet chirps” of the koel triggers the jealousy of the heroine who destroys the garden where the bird has its nest.

Line 5. *Nisuratiyā*. *Dvandva samās* meaning ‘day and night’.

Line 8. *Savatiniyā* (Bhoj. ≈ H. *sautan*). Rival, co-wife.

Line 11. *Jarī ke...bagiyā*. I translated this sentence trying to keep the literal meaning of ‘uprooting’. *Jar* (≈ *jarī*) *kātnā* metaphorically means also ‘to destroy’, ‘to damage’ (MCG, s.v.).

¹⁰⁰ Upādhyāya 1999: n. 27 p. 234.

A17 चैत मासे बोले रे कोयलिया हो रामा¹⁰¹

1. चैत मासे बोले रे कोयलिया हो रामा
2. मोरे अँगवाना ॥
3. कुहूक करे कारी रे कोयलिया
4. कुहूक उठते मोरे मनवा हो रामा |
5. मोरे अँगवाना ॥
6. आवत जब पिया के मिलन की
7. भर भर आवेला नयनवा हो रामा |
8. मोरे अँगवाना ॥

1. In the month of Cait, the koel sings, *ho rāmā*.
2. in my courtyard...
3. 'Cuckoo, cuckoo' sings the black koel.
4. The 'cuckoo' makes my mind restless, *ho rāmā*.
5. In my courtyard...
6. When comes the tryst with the beloved.
7. my eyes will fill with tears, *ho rāmā*.
8. In my courtyard...

This composition, emblematic of the genre, is generally rendered in a semi-classical *ṭhumrī* style. In Banaras, I had the opportunity to listen to several renditions of this *caitī* usually sung from Rāmanavmī to Holī and set to *rāg* Mīśra Pahārī and *tāl* Dīpcandī.

¹⁰¹ My transcription of a popular *banārsī caitī* sung by exponents of the *Banāras gharānā* (Banaras, March 2016).

2.2 The beloved and *virahinī* becoming asceticsA18 आहो रामा सूतल रहलीं पिया संगे सेजिया हो रामा¹⁰²

1. आहो रामा सूतल रहलीं पिया संगे सेजिया हो रामा ।
2. बाते बाते लागि गइले पियवा से रेरिया हो रामा ॥१ ॥
3. बात बाते ।
4. आहो रामा मुहँवा से निकलेला बोलिया कुबोलिया हो रामा ।
5. ताहि बोलिये; पियवा भइले बयरगिया हो रामा ॥२॥
6. ताहि बोलिये ।
7. आहो रामा बाट चलत बटोहिया भइया हितवा हो रामा ।
8. एहि बाटे; देखअ भइया बयरगिया हो रामा ॥३॥
9. एहि बाटे ।
10. आहो रामा देखली हम हाजीपुर के हटिया हो रामा ।
11. हाथ लेले; तोतवा, मयनवा हो रामा ॥४॥
12. हाथ ले ले ।

1. *Āho rāmā*, I was sleeping in bed with my beloved, *ho rāmā*.
2. Talking and talking a fight arose with my love, *ho rāmā*.
3. Talking and talking...
4. *Āho rāmā*, from the mouth words and bad words came out, *ho rāmā*.
5. His words: my beloved has become an ascetic, *ho rāmā*.
6. His words...
7. *Āho rāmā*, [to] a gentle wayfarer on the way, *ho rāmā*, [I asked]
8. “Brother, have you seen an ascetic on your way?”, *ho rāmā*.
9. On your way...
10. *Āho rāmā*, I have seen him at the market of Hājipūr, *ho rāmā*.
11. holding in his hands a parrot and a mynah, *ho rāmā*.
12. Holding in his hands...

This *caitī* presents the theme of the deserted woman who believes her beloved has become a *yogī* following a love quarrel. While searching for him, she comes across a “gentle wayfarer” who claims to have seen him at the market of Hajipur.

It is interesting to note how different characters make their appearance in folk *caitī*-s, playing the role of the addressees which in semi-classical forms typically belongs to the *sakhī*-s.

Line 8. *Bayaragiyā* (\approx H. *bairāgī* or *vairāgī*). The term indicates an ascetic, someone who is free from worldly attachment and desire and, specifically, a *vaiṣṇava* renouncer of the Rāmānandī order.

¹⁰² Upādhyāya 1999: n. 2 p. 213.

Line 10. *Hājīpūr ke haṭiyā*. Hajipur in Bihar was an important trading centre, especially at the time of the British *rāj*. According to Upādhyāya, it is the place of the famous Sonpūr melā, also known as Hariharkṣetra melā (Upādhyāya 1999: 214). The fair is mostly renowned for being the biggest cattle fair in Asia. This explains the image of the beloved holding two birds bought at the market.

A19 आहो रामा भभूती रमइबो जोगिनि होइ जइबो हो रामा¹⁰³

1. आहो रामा भभूती रमइबो जोगिनि होइ जइबो हो रामा ।
2. बाटे बाटे; पियवा के करबो उदेसवा हो रामा ॥१॥
3. बाटे बाटे ०।
4. आहो रामा बाबा के सागरवा हिरामन पोखरवा हो रामा ।
5. ताही घाट; साँवरि झरे लामी केसिया हो रामा ॥२॥
6. ताही घाटे ।
7. आहो रामा काहे लागि जोगिनि भभूती रमवली हो रामा ।
8. काहे लागि; साँवरि झार लामी केसिया हो रामा ॥३॥
9. काहे लागि० ।
10. आहो रामा जोग लागि जोगिनि भभूती रमवली हो रामा ।
11. पिया लागि; साँवरि झारे लामी केसिया हो रामा ॥४॥
12. पिया लागि ०।
13. आहो रामा छोटका बलमुआ बडा नीक लागे हो रामा ।
14. आँचारा ओढाई; सुताइबि भरि कोरवा हो रामा ॥५॥
15. आँचारा ओढाई० ।
16. आहो रामा कारावा फेरत कंगन घइया लागे हो रामा ।
17. सुसुकि सुसुकि रोवे सरहनवा हो रामा ॥६॥
18. सुसुकि सुसुकि० ।

1. *Āho rāma*, I will smear ashes on my forehead and become a *yoginī*, *ho rāmā*.
2. In every street, I will search for my love, *ho rāmā*.
3. In every street...
4. *Āho rāma*, by Bābā Sāgār Hīrāman's pond, *ho rāmā*,
5. on that *ghāṭ*, a beautiful woman combs her long hair, *ho rāmā*.
6. On that *ghāṭ*...
7. *Āho rāma*, for whom the *yoginī* smears ashes, *ho rāmā*?
8. For whom, the beautiful woman combs her long hair, *ho rāmā*?
9. For whom...
10. *Āho rāma*, for yoga a *yoginī* smears ashes, *ho rāmā*.
11. For her beloved, the beautiful woman combs her long hair, *ho rāmā*.
12. For her beloved...
13. *Āho rāma*, my little darling looks very handsome *ho rāmā*.
14. I will wrap him in the hem of the *sārī*, take him on my lap and sleep, *ho rāmā*.
15. I will wrap him in the hem of the *sārī*...
16. *Āho rāma*, turning while lying on one side, my bangle wounded him, *ho rāmā*.
17. Sobbing and sobbing he cries, sitting at the head of the bed, *ho rāmā*.
18. Sobbing and sobbing...

¹⁰³ Upādhyāya 1999: n. 9 p. 220 ff.

This *caitī* seems to feature two different portrayals. The first one presents the recurrent motif of a lover becoming a *yogī* and the resolution of the lovelorn female protagonist to embrace in turn an ascetic life. The theme, reminiscent of several of Mīrābāī's *pad*-s, is particularly popular and can be found in a number of folk songs. In the second image, the condition of child-marriage is sketched, as explained below.

Line 4. *Sāgār Hīrāman*. It is unusual to find mention of a proper name in this kind of folk songs. From this line, Bābā Sāgār Hīrāman seems to be the name of the *pokhar*. My informants from the musical community of Banaras asserted that it is also the name of a Bhojpuri poet. Therefore, the insertion of the name could also be considered a kind of *chāp*.

Line 13. *Choṭkā balmuā*. "Little darling". According to Upādhyāya, this expression hints at the young age of the husband. The childish reaction of the beloved sobbing after being wounded by his wife's bangles further reinforces this observation (Upādhyāya 1999: 221).

Line 17. *Sihhanvā* (\approx H. *sirhāne*). 'At the head of the bed' (MCG, s.v.).

A20 रामा ओह पार जोगिया धुनिया रमावे हो रामा¹⁰⁴

1. रामा ओह पार जोगिया धुनिया रमावे हो रामा ।
2. एह पार, साँवलि सुरूज मनावे हो रामा ॥१ ॥
3. एह पार
4. रामा जोग लागि जोगिया धुनिया रमावे हो रामा ।
5. पिया लागि; साँवलि सुरूज मनावे हो रामा ॥२॥
6. पिया लागि
7. रामा जोगिया के टूटेला जोगवा हो रामा ।
8. साँवरो के, जूटेला जनम सनेहिया हो रामा ॥३॥
9. साँवरो के

1. *Rāmā*, on that bank a *jogī* lights a *dhunī*, *ho rāmā*.
2. On this bank, a beautiful woman worships the sun, *ho rāmā*.
3. On this bank...
4. *Rāmā*, the *jogī* lights *dhūnī* for his yoga, *ho rāmā*.
5. The beautiful woman worships the sun for her beloved, *ho rāmā*.
6. For the beloved...
7. *Rāmā*, the *jogī*'s yoga breaks, *ho rāmā*.
8. His life got absorbed in the love for women, *ho rāmā*.
9. For women...

¹⁰⁴ Upādhyāya 1999: n. 25 p. 233.

3. *Caitī*: the motif of *vasant*

The following section is dedicated to compositions depicting springtime romantic scenes: blossoming flowers, unripe mangoes, the singing of the koel, a gentle evening breeze blowing and bringing relief from the increasing heat of the day carrying the sweet scent of jasmine, rose, and *māhua* buds. The brevity of the season is associated with the fugacity of youth, ebbing away even more quickly in the absence of the beloved.

3.1 The description of spring: a season and allegory of ebbing youth

A21 हमारे अँगनवा चइत रे मासे¹⁰⁵

1. हमारे अँगनवा चइत रे मासे
2. चैत मे फुलेला गुलाबवा हो रामा |
3. बेला फूले चमेली फूले
4. जुहिया फूलेला आधी रतिया हो रामा |
5. अमवा की डाली पे लागल मोजरिया
6. कुहू कुहू बोलेले कोयलिया हो रामा |

1. In my courtyard in the month of Cait,
2. during Cait roses have blossomed, *ho rāmā*.
3. *Belā* flowers and jasmine blossomed,
4. *Jūhī* flowers blossomed at midnight, *ho rāmā*.
5. On the branches of the mango tree, buds flowered.
6. “Cuckoo, cuckoo” calls the koel *ho rāmā*.

Line 2-3-4. *Belā*, *camelī*, *juhiyā*. Respectively *Jasminum sambac*, *Jasminum grandiflorum* and *Jasminum multiflorum* are species of jasmine renowned for their extraordinarily sweet fragrance.

¹⁰⁵ Jain 2012: n102

A22 चइत महिनवाँ¹⁰⁶

1. निदिया न आवै सारी रतिया हो रामा
2. चइत महिनवाँ |
3. एक टुक अँगने न रेंगलें सगुनवाँ
4. अउतै सरकि गइलें झप से फगुनवाँ
5. करकि दरकि गइलीं छतिया हो रामा
6. चइत महिनवाँ |
7. अनियासै पोरे-पोरे पिरकी पिराइल
8. कइसे बताई काहे मन महुआइल
9. पवना भइल उतपतिया हो रामा
10. चइत महिनवाँ |
11. घट-घट कुअँना पियासल लागै
12. आस भरि अगबै उदासल लागै
13. सून बिना लेजुरी जगतिया हो रामा
14. चइत महिनवाँ |
15. भोरवा के हथवा में काँची कइनियाँ
16. गन गन काँपैले कारी रइनियाँ
17. अल्हरी उमिर एकताँ हो रामा
18. चइत महिनवाँ |
19. सुधिया में बरबस केहु गोहरावै
20. पिछिली पिरितिया कै गीत दोहरावै
21. आवै नाहीं सुख कै संघतिया हो रामा
22. चइत महिनवाँ |

The month of *cait*

1. Sleep does not come the entire night, *ho rāmā*
2. The month of Cait.
3. In the courtyard, not even a single inch did proceed the *śagun* ceremony.
4. As soon as it arrived, it went away in the blink of an eye Phāgun.
5. My heart cracks with pain, *ho rāmā!*
6. The month of Cait.
7. Without any explanation, I feel pain in every part of the body.
8. How should I tell that my mind is intoxicated by *mahua*?
9. The wind wreaks havoc, *ho rāmā*.
10. The month of Cait.
11. Every jar is thirsty [of the water] of the well;
12. first, hope fills [them], then comes despair.
13. Without the rope, they remain empty in this world, *ho rāmā*.
14. The month of Cait.

¹⁰⁶ Dvivedī 2013: 47.

15. In the morning in the hands a twig of [tender] bamboo.
16. Trembling in pain in the dark night.
17. The carefree age [is] an *ektār*, *ho rāmā*.
18. The month of Cait.
19. In innocence, someone helpless calls, *ho rāmā*.
20. Sing again the song of lost love!
21. The companion of happiness does not come, *ho rāmā*.
22. The month of Cait.

Line 3. *Śagun*. Here the term seems to refer to the ceremony during which “a present (such as money, sweets) is given at an engagement by the fiancée’s relatives to those of the fiancée” (MCG, *s.v.*). The female protagonist of this *caitī*, suffering from the separation from her lover, is probably lamenting the fact that her beloved had to leave before their engagement, hence her intense grief. The statement referring to *śagun* may also be a hint to the hardship caused by in-laws to the bride-to-be.

Line 7. *Anyāsai*. (Bhoj. ≈ H. *amiyā*). Unripe mango. The beauty of the season with the blossoming of trees is extremely painful for the lonely *virahinī*.

Line 8. *Mahuā*. *Mahuā* flowers are known for their fragrance and intoxicant properties. They are used to produce liquor as well.¹⁰⁷

Line 9. *Pavnā*. (≈ H. *pavan*), ‘wind’, ‘air’. The cool mango-blossoms and *mahuā*-scented breeze gently blowing at night in the month of Cait brings relief to the scorching heat of the day but not for the lovelorn protagonist. For her, the whistling wind with its sweet intoxicating fragrance stirs up the pain of unrequited love.

Line 11. *Ghaṭ-ghaṭ*. The jar is a recurring image in *sant* poetry. The word ‘*ghaṭ*’ can also designate the heart or mind.

Line 12. *Ās...udāslal*. The wordplay built on the assonance and contrasting meanings (hope/despair) is lost in the English translation.

Line 13. *Lejurī* (≈ H. *lejur*). ‘Rope’. The rope hints at the image of the well. The lover is like a rope that allows drawing water, the source and symbol of life. Images of the emptiness experienced without the beloved are a trope of folk and *ṭhumrī*-related forms.

Line 15. *Kāmcī kaniyam*. Twigs of different trees and plants are traditionally used for cleansing the teeth.

Line 16. *Ektār*. It is a simple folk instrument with only a single string. Here it is the metaphor for the loneliness of the woman protagonist juxtaposing with the idea of youth as the most light-hearted time of life.

¹⁰⁷ See A14, note line 8.

3.2 The motif of sleep and intoxication

Related to springtime is the motif of sleep; be it the drowsiness induced by the heat, the sweet slumber of the beloved resting under the shade of a tree, or the narcosis caused by intoxicating substances, such as *mad* or *bhāmg*. In certain compositions, it is the torpor deriving from the bite of a poisonous snake. On the other end, the sleep eludes the *nāyikā* tormented by the *virah* and is portrayed as a foe taking away her lover.

A23 आहो रामा नदिया के तीरवा चनन गाँछि बिरवा हो रामा¹⁰⁸

1. आहो रामा नदिया के तीरवा चनन गाँछि बिरवा हो रामा |
2. ताहि तरे; कुँवर मोरे अलसइले हो रामा ||१||
3. ताहि तरे |
4. आहो रामा बिल में से निकलेले काली नगिनिया हो रामा |
5. डँसि देले, कुँवर के कानी अँगुरिया हो रामा ||२||
6. डँसि देले |
7. आहो रामा साँझे के सूतल फूटेले किरिनिया हो रामा |
8. तबो नहीं; जागेले पियवा आभागवा हो रामा ||३||
9. तबो नहीं |
10. आहो रामा गोड़ तोर लागीले बहुरी ननदिया हो रामा |
11. रचि एक; आपन भइया देहु ना जगाई हो रामा ||४||
12. रचि एक |
13. आहो रामा कइसे के भउजी भइया के जगाई हो रामा |
14. मोर भइया; मातल निदिया अलसइले हो रामा ||५||
15. मोर भइया |
16. आहो रामा तोरा लेखे ननदी भइया अलसइले हो रामा |
17. मोरा लेखे; चानावा छपित भइले हो रामा ||६||
18. मोरा लेखे |

1. *Āho rāmā*, on the bank of the river, there is a sandalwood tree, *ho rāmā*.
2. Under it, my young prince idles, *ho rāmā*.
3. Under it...
4. *Āho rāmā*, from a hole, a black she-serpent came out, *ho rāmā*,
5. and bit my young prince's little finger, *ho rāmā*.
6. She bit...
7. *Āho rāmā*, he was sleeping since the evening when a ray of sunshine broke, *ho rāmā*.
8. Even then my poor beloved did not awake, *ho rāmā*.
9. Even then...
10. *Āho rāmā*, I fall at your feet again and again, oh younger sister-in-law, *ho rāmā*.

¹⁰⁸ Upādhyāya 1999: n. 4 p. 215.

11. For a moment, wake up your brother, *ho rāmā*.
12. For a moment...
13. *Āho rāmā*, how can I wake up my brother, oh sister-in-law, *ho rāmā*?
14. My brother was idling when he fell into the sleep of intoxication, *ho rāmā*.
15. My brother...
16. *Āho rāmā*, for you, oh younger sister-in-law, my brother was idling, *ho rāmā*.
17. For me he made the moon set off, *ho rāmā*.
18. For me...

This *caitī* is centred on a traditional motif in folk songs, the quarrel between sisters-in-law, presented here in an unusual perspective. The reason for discord in this text is the husband's death due to the bite of a poisonous 'she-serpent'. Curiously, the snake mentioned is a she-snake, a *nāginī* that may allude metaphorically to another woman, the rival in love or *sautan*.

Line 1. *Canan gāṁci*. I consider this as a *dvandva samās* in which the two words have the meaning of 'tree'.

Line 2. *Alsaile*. The trope of the drowsiness associated with pleasantness is often associated with the image of an indifferent husband.

Tare (Bhoj. ≈ H. *nice*). 'Under', 'below'.

Line 8. *Ābhāgvā*. I read it as *abhagvā*, with the short initial 'a' as a synonym of *abhāgī* meaning 'poor', 'unfortunate'.

Line 14. *Mātal nidiyā*. "The sleep of intoxication" can be caused both by the poisonous bite of the snake and metaphorically by the infatuation with the *sautan*.

A24 रामा चइत के निंदिया बड़ी बइरिनिया हो रामा¹⁰⁹

1. रामा चइत के निंदिया बड़ी बइरिनिया हो रामा |
2. सुतलो बलमुआ; नाहीं जागे हो रामा ||१||
3. सुतलो बलमुआ |
4. रामा गोड़ तोर लागीलें लहुरी ननदिया हो रामा |
5. रचि एक; भइया तू जगावहु हो रामा ||२||
6. रचि एक |
7. रामा कइसे के भउजी भइया के जगाई ए रामा |
8. मोर भइया, निंदिया भइले मतवाला ए रामा ||३||
9. मोर भइया |
10. रामा भरि छीपा चनन रगरेले सोहागिन ए रामा |
11. छींटि छींटि; आपन पियवा जगावे ए रामा ||४||
12. छींटि छींटि |

1. *Rāmā*, the sleep of the month of Cait is a great foe, *ho rāmā*.
2. My sleeping beloved does not awaken, *ho rāmā*.
3. My sleeping beloved...
4. *Rāmā*, I fall at your feet, younger sister-in-law, *ho rāmā*.
5. For a moment, wake your brother, *ho rāmā*.
6. For a moment...
7. *Rāmā*, oh bride, how can I wake my brother, *e rāmā*?
8. My brother sleeps the sleep of intoxication, *e rāmā*.
9. My brother...
10. *Rāmā*, the wife filled a vessel of sandalwood paste, and rubbed it, *e rāmā*
11. Smearing and smearing she woke her beloved, *e rāmā*.
12. Smearing and smearing...

This *caitī* is the form of a dialogue between the woman protagonist and her younger sister-in-law. Along with the theme of the lover's sleep of intoxication, the heroine is depicted as an example of marital devotion.

Line 4. *Rāmā...ho rāmā*. This verse reprises line 10 of A23 with the variation 'lahurī' (instead of 'bahurī'). In this kind of songs, part of the oral tradition is extremely common to find the same verse sung with only slight variations and frequently set to different tunes.

Lahurī (Bhoj. ≈ H. *choṭī*). 'Younger'.

¹⁰⁹ Upādhyāya 1999: n. 19 p. 228.

A25 ए कवना मदमाते हो रामा; कवना मदमाते¹¹⁰

1. ए कवना मदमाते हो रामा; कवना मदमाते |
2. आहो राजा के त हथिया हो रामा ||१||
3. कवना मद मेते |
4. मतेले पतरी तिरियवा हो रामा ||२||
5. कवना मद माते |
6. मदवा से मातेले, राजा के हथिया हो रामा ||३||
7. मदवा से |
8. आहो रामा, जोवना से मातेले |
9. पतरी तिरियवा हो रामा ||४||
10. जोवना से |

1. Eh! Who is inebriated, *ho rāmā*? Who is inebriated?
2. *Āho!* The king's she-elephant, *ho rāmā!*
3. Who is inebriated?
4. The slim girl is inebriated, *ho rāmā!*
5. Who is inebriated?
6. The king's she-elephant is inebriated, musth-maddened, *ho rāmā!*
7. Musth-maddened...
8. *Āho rāmā,* the slim girl is inebriated by the young man, *ho rāmā!*
9. By the young man...

This *caitī* draws a parallel between a 'she-elephant' and a young woman, both inebriated with love as an intoxicant.

Line 6. *Mad*. The 'fluid' mentioned here is the *mast* (musth, scientific name: temporin), a substance secreted by male elephants' temporal glands during the rut that makes them frenzy and aggressive. References to musth can be found in Sanskrit literature, with a classic example in the *Meghadūtā* by Kālidāsa where a water-bearing cloud colliding against a mountain is described as an elephant in musth. Alter aptly notes:

The fluid that streams down the face of a musth elephant is often described by Sanskrit poets as the supreme elixir of love and passion. In the Ramayana epic, when Rama and Sita are married, the streets of Ayodhya are flooded with the temporal juices of royal elephants. Honeybees are said to swarm around an elephant in musth, attracted by the cloying sweetness of its secretions. And the monsoon rains, which brings fecund earth to life, are repeatedly compared to the flow of musth (Alter 2004: 33).

The entire composition plays on the pun build on alliterating terms belonging to the semantic field of *mad* (*madmāte*, *mete*, *matele*, *madvā*) revolving around the idea of passion, intoxication, and frenzy.

¹¹⁰ Upādhyāya 1990a: n. 187 p. 496.

A26 आहो रामा ऊँच ही मन्दिल चढि मोर सँइया सोवे हो रामा¹¹¹

1. आहो रामा ऊँच ही मन्दिल चढि मोर सँइया सोवे हो रामा |
2. हम धनि; बेनिया डोलाइबि हो रामा ||१||
3. हम धनि |
4. आहो रामा बेनिया डोलावत बहियाँ मुरुकली हो रामा |
5. टूटि गइले; गज मोती हारावा हो रामा ||२||
6. टूटि गइले |

1. *Āho rāmā*, in the upper room my lord sleeps, *ho rāmā*.
2. I, woman, will wave the fan, *ho rāmā*.
3. I, woman...
4. *Āho rāmā*, by dint of waving the fan, I sprained my arm, *ho rāmā*.
5. The pearl necklace broke, *ho rāmā*.
6. It broke...

Line 2. *Beniyā*. (Bhoj. ≈ H. *Pankhā*). ‘Fan’.

Line 5. *Gaj motī*. It is a kind of large pearl (MCG, s.v.). The reference to a pearl necklace may have a deeper meaning. As explained by Das Gupta and Maciszewski the loss or scattering of pearls, precious jewels for Indian women, can symbolise the loss of virginity and innocence (Maciszewski 2007: 165).

¹¹¹ Upādhyāya 1999: n. 17 p. 227.

4. *Sāmājīk caitī*: social aspects

This section brings together Bhojpuri *caitī*-s generally described as *sāmājīk* (‘social’) since they present different themes related to various social aspects and phenomena. Child marriage, the difficult condition of women with a migrating husband, family relationships, and scenes of everyday life in rural villages are some of the most recurring subject matters.

A27 हमरो जे होखेला गवनवाँ हो रामा¹¹²

1. हमरो जे होखेला गवनवाँ हो रामा ||१||
2. तोहरे कारनवा || टेक ||
3. आमा तोहरो कुबेली बोलसु ए रामा |
4. ननदी पारे गारी हो रामा ||२||
5. जेठ गोतिनिया हो रामा, बोले बिरही बोलिया |
6. तोहरे कारनवा ए रामा, तोहरे कारनवा ||३||
7. हमारो जे होखेला गवनवाँ ए रामा |
8. तोहरे कारनवाँ ||४||

1. My *gaunā* happens, *ho rāmā*,
2. because of you. *Ṭek*
3. Your mother insults me, *e rāmā*.
4. The sister-in-law utters bad words, *ho rāmā*.
5. The brother-in-law and his wife, *ho rāmā*, uttered sarcastic words.
6. Because of you, *e rāmā*, because of you.
7. My *gaunā* happens, *e rāmā*,
8. because of you.

This *caitī* resembles, to a great extent, folk songs built on the theme of the *gaunā* ceremony performed at a young age¹¹³. Furthermore, the lyrics portray the bride taunted by the in-laws and the indifference of her husband.

¹¹² Upādhyāya 1990a, n. 184 p. 414.

¹¹³ See Ch. III, 2.4.

A28 रामा बारहो बरिस के हमरो उमरिया हो रामा¹¹⁴

1. रामा बारहो बरिस के हमरो उमरिया हो रामा |
2. तब पियवा भागेला पुरुब बनजिया हो रामा ||१||
3. तब पियवा
4. रामा गवना कराइ पिया घर बइठइले हो रामा |
5. कइसे के, आँगाना बहारबी हो रामा ||२||
6. कइसे के
7. रामा आँगाना बहरइत अइले परदेसिया हो रामा |
8. कइसे से; जोबना छिपाइबि हो रामा ||३||
9. कइसे से
10. रामा पिया परदेसिया, देवर घर लइका हो रामा |
11. केकरा से; कहबि दिल के बतिया हो रामा ||४||
12. केकरा से

1. *Rāmā*, I was only twelve years old, *ho rāmā*.
2. When my beloved went to the East for trading, *ho rāmā*.
3. When my beloved...
4. *Rāmā*, when my *gaunā* was performed, my beloved kept me at home, *ho rāmā*.
5. How shall I sweep the courtyard, *ho rāmā*?
6. How...
7. *Rāmā*, if he comes from a distant land, while I am sweeping the courtyard, *ho rāmā*,
8. how shall I hide my chest, *ho rāmā*?
9. How...
10. *Rāmā*, my beloved is in a distant land, my younger brother-in-law at home, *ho rāmā*.
11. To whom shall I tell the secret of my heart, *ho rāmā*?
12. To whom...

This composition offers a picture of the social reality of women living in rural areas of North India. Alongside the motif of a migrating husband leaving for the ‘East’ to seek his fortune,¹¹⁵ we find the character of the *devar*, the younger brother-in-law as the only potential confidant who can console the abandoned young protagonist.¹¹⁶

Line 8. *Joban*. Literally meaning ‘chest’ (Skt. *yauvan*); it can also metonymically mean ‘youth’.

¹¹⁴ Upādhyāya 1999: n. 23 p. 231.

¹¹⁵ Cf A8, A32, B24.

¹¹⁶ See Ch. III, 3.2.

A29 आहो रामा मोर पिछुआरवा रे नीलवा ले पेड़वा, हो रामा¹¹⁷

1. आहो रामा मोर पिछुआरवा रे नीलवा ले पेड़वा, हो रामा |
2. नील में के; चुनरी रँगाद हो रामा ||१||
3. नील में के |
4. आहो रामा चुनरी रँगवात में भइलीं गरमिया हो रामा |
5. रसे रसे; बेनियाँ डोलवलीं हो रमा ||२||
6. रसे रसे |
7. आहो रामा बेनिया डोलावत में मुरुकेला बहियाँ हो रामा |
8. पटना से बइदा बोलाद बलमुआ हो रामा ||३||
9. पटना से |
10. आहो रामा बइदा त माँगेला साठि रुपैया हो रामा |
11. धीरे धीरे मोहर भजाँव बलमुआ हो रामा ||४||
12. धीरे धीरे |
13. आहो रामा मोहर भंजावत में निकलेलि अंखिया हो रामा |
14. मोर मेहरिया; भइल जीव के जंजालवा हो रामा ||५||
15. मोर मेहरिया |

1. *Āho rāmā*, in the courtyard, there is a plant of indigo, *ho rāmā*.
2. Dye my veil with indigo, *ho rāmā*!
3. With indigo...
4. *Āho rāmā*, in dyeing the veil, it was hot, *ho rāmā*.
5. Gently, I began to wave the fan, *ho rāmā*.
6. Gently...
7. *Āho rāmā*, in waving the fan, I strained my arm, *ho rāmā*.
8. Oh lover, call a *vaidya* from Patnā, *ho rāmā*!
9. From Patnā...
10. *Āho rāmā*, the *vaidya* asks for seven rupees, *ho rāmā*.
11. Reluctantly, my beloved exchanged the gold coin, *ho rāmā*.
12. Reluctantly...
13. *Āho rāmā*, in exchanging the gold coin, my eyes popped out, *ho rāmā*.
14. My wife troubles my life, *ho rāmā*!
15. My wife...

This *caitī* presents the social issue of the dire condition of women in villages of rural areas in Purvanchal and, generally, all North India. Alongside the ironic image of an indifferent husband exasperated by his wife's complaints, there is the voice of an afflicted woman.

Line 6. *Beniyā*. 'Fan'.

Line 7. *Bhajaṁvā* (≈ H. *bhunānā*). 'To exchange'.

Baidā. (≈ H. *vaidya*). An Ayurvedic doctor.

Line 12. *Nikaleli aṅkhiyā*. Hyperbole. 'The eyes pop out' since the husband is nagged by his wife's persistent complaint.

¹¹⁷ Upādhyāya 1999: n. 29 p. 236.

A30 रामा गवना कराइ सइयाँ घर बइठइले¹¹⁸

1. रामा गवना कराइ सइयाँ घर बइठइले |
2. अपने गइले उ परदेसवा हो रामा ||१||
3. हमरा के छोड़िके |
4. रामा सगरे चइत चितवत बीति गइले |
5. नाहिँ लिखले चिठिया चपठिया हो रामा ||२||
6. हमरा के छोड़िके |
7. रामा जब रे चइत बीति गइले हो रामा |
8. तब चिठिया त अइले हो रामा ||३||
9. हमरा के छोड़िके |
10. रामा अब तुहु अइल माजा कुछुओ ना पइब |
11. बीति गइले सगरे चइतवा हो रामा ||४||
12. हमरा के छोड़िके |
13. रामा अइसन उमरिया हमार माती में मिलवल |
14. लोगवन के जीव तरसवल हो रामा ||५||
15. हमरा के छोड़िके |

1. *Rāmā*, after performing the *gaunā*, my lord left me at home.
2. Alone he went to a foreign land, *ho rāmā*.
3. After leaving me...
4. *Rāmā*, the entire month of Cait has passed in waiting.
5. He did not even send a letter or message, *ho rāmā*.
6. After leaving me...
7. *Rāmā*, when Cait passed, *ho rāmā*.
8. A letter came, *ho rāmā*.
9. After leaving me...
10. *Rāmā*, now that you have come, there is no fun.
11. All of Cait has passed in waiting, *ho rāmā*.
12. After leaving me...
13. *Rāmā*, you reduced to dust such an age of mine!
14. The life of people is pain fraught, *ho rāmā*.
15. After leaving me...

This is another *caitī* focused on the social motif of a lonely lovesick woman pining for her beloved who has abandoned her and left for a distant land. As far as the metrical structure of the composition is concerned, it is worth observing that the *tek* does not consist of the repetition of the last line of *sthai* but is indeed an autonomous line.

Line 4. *Citavat* (\approx H. *citavnā*). Literally it means ‘to look’, ‘to gaze’. I have translated it as ‘waiting’ to convey the idea implicit in the action of staring off into space or fixing the gaze upon the horizon in waiting to see the lover returning.

¹¹⁸ Upādhyāya 1999: n. 30 p.237.

Line 13. *Aisan umariyā*. ‘Such an age’ refers to youth.

Mātī meim milaval. (\approx H. *maṭī rulnā*). Lit ‘to make [it] mingled with, reduced to the dust’.

A31 आरे में धनि बारी हो, गवने न जाइबि रामा¹¹⁹

1. आरे में धनि बारी हो, गवने न जाइबि रामा ||१||
2. में धनि बारी हो |
3. आरे गवने में जाइबि, पर सेजिया न सोइबि रामा ||२||
4. में धनि बारी हो |
5. आरे सेजिया पर सोइबि, पर सइयाँ से न बोलबि रामा ||३||
6. में धनि बारी हो |
7. गवने ना जाइबि रामा, में धनि बारी हो ||

1. *Āre*, such a young wife am I, I will go not for *gaunā*, *rāmā*.
2. Such a young wife am I...
3. *Āre*, for *gaunā* I will go but I sleep not in the bridal bed, *rāmā*.
4. I am such a young wife...
5. *Āre*, if in the bridal bed I will sleep, I speak not to my lord, *rāmā*.
6. Such a young wife am I...
7. I go not for *gaunā*, *rāmā*, for I am young.

This *caitī* is centred on the social issue of child marriage. The *tek* presents a complaint of the young female protagonist and denounces a common social practice.

Line 1. *Bārī*. Besides ‘young’, it could also mean ‘innocent’ (MCG, *s.v.*).

Gavne na jāibi. The performing of the *gaunā* ceremony implies that the new bride moves to the in-law’s house.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Upādhyāya 1999, n. 31 p. 237.

¹²⁰ See Ch. III, 2.4

A32 रामा संग ही के सखि सभ भइली लरकोरिया हो रामा¹²¹

1. रामा संग ही के सखि सभ भइली लरकोरिया हो रामा ।
2. हमरा कोखि, अगिया लगवल हो रामा ॥१॥
3. हमरा कोखि ।
4. रामा बेरी हि बेरी तोहि बरजत रइलीं हो रामा ।
5. जनि जाहु; पुरुब बनिजिया हो रामा ॥२॥
6. जनि जाहु ।
7. रामा पुरुब देसवा में बसे बंगलिनिया हो रामा ।
8. हरि लीहें; तोर मन; सुरति दिखाइ हो रामा ॥३॥
9. हरि लीहें ।
10. रामा बारहो बरिस पर चिठियो ना भेजे हो रामा ।
11. कइसे काटबि; चइत दिन चंचल हो रामा ॥४॥
12. कइसे काटबि ।

1. *Rāmā*, all the *sakhī*-s had a son, *ho rāmā*.
2. You set my womb on fire, *ho rāmā*.
3. My womb...
4. *Rāmā*, again and again, I have forbidden you.
5. To go to the eastern region for trading, *ho rāmā*.
6. I have forbidden you...
7. *Rāmā*, in the eastern region, dwell Bengali women, *ho rāmā*.
8. Showing their [beautiful] faces, they will capture your heart, *ho rāmā*.
9. They will capture...
10. *Rāmā*, even after twelve years, he has not sent a letter, *ho rāmā*.
11. How will I spend the ephemeral days of Cait, *ho rāmā*?
12. How will I spend...

Line 1. *Larkoriyā* (Bhoj.). ‘Woman who has a son’.

Line 5. *Pūrub*. The ‘eastern region’. It alludes to Bengal and Assam.¹²²

¹²¹ Upādhyāya 1999: n. 32 p. 238.

¹²² Cf. A8, A28 and B24.

A33 आहो रामा हम तोसे पूछेलीं, ननदी सुलोचनि हो रामा¹²³

1. आहो रामा हम तोसे पूछेलीं, ननदी सुलोचनि हो रामा |
2. तोहरो पिठिया; धूरिया कइसे लागल हो रामा ||१||
3. तोहरी पिठिया |
4. आहो रामा बाबा के दुअरवा गाचेला नेटुअवा हो रामा |
5. भितिया सटल, धूरि लागल हो रामा ||२||
6. भितिया सटल |

1. *Āho rāmā*, I have asked you, oh sister-in-law Sulocani, *ho rāmā*.
2. How did your back cover with dust, *ho rāmā*?
3. Your back...
4. *Āho rāmā*, at my father's door a Neṭua man is dancing, *ho rāmā*.
5. I leaned on a wall, and I got dusty, *ho rāmā*.
6. I leaned on a wall...

This *caitī*—different from the majority of other compositions—presents an unusual portrayal of village life in rural areas, animated from time to time by the performances of itinerant artists.

Line 1. *Sulocani*. Although in folk songs of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar the *nanadī* is an ever-present addressee, it is rather unusual to find her called by name.

Line 4. *Neṭuā*. The term *Neṭuā* indicates a man from the homonymous caste, traditionally of bards, balladeers, performers, and acrobats that used to wander from village to village in North India.

¹²³ Upādhyāya 1999: n. 16 p. 226.

5. Literary or *sāhityik caitī*

This section comprises compositions that can be described as ‘literary (*sāhityik*) *caitī*-s’ penned by different authors including Bhārtendu and Bulākī Dās.

5.1 Bhārtendu Hariścandra’s *caitī*

Along with *kajrī*-s, Bhārtendu Hariścandra composed a few *caitī*-s in Braj bhāṣā that were published in his several journals.¹²⁴

The two compositions presented below, imbued with the author’s Vallabhaite devotion, are centred on the theme of the *virah*.

A34 मोसे सेजिया चढलि नहिं जाई हो रामा¹²⁵

1. मोसे सेजिया चढलि नहिं जाई हो रामा ॥
2. पिया बिनु साँपिन सी डसै बिरह रैन ।
3. छिन छिन बढल विथा तन सजनी
4. कटत न कठिन वियोगक रजनी
5. बिनु हरि अति अकुलाई हो रामा ॥

1. I cannot go to bed, *ho rāmā*.
2. Without my lover at night the serpent of *virah* bites me.
3. I am attacked again and again, my pain grows in my entire body, oh friend!
4. The night passes not, in the wearisome distress of separation.
5. Without Hari I am in great distress, *ho rāmā*.

¹²⁴ See Ch. V, 4.3.1.

¹²⁵ Jain 2012: n. 45 p. 86.

A35 फूलन लागे नवल गुलबवा¹²⁶

1. फूलन लागे नवल गुलबवा
2. भौरा रे बौरान्यो लखि बौर |
3. लुभायो उतहि फिरत मदरान्यो
4. जात कहूँ नहिँ और ||

1. The new roses have begun blossoming,
2. the black bee has become mad.
3. Lustfully it turns and flies all around,
4. it did not go anywhere else.

This composition is inserted in a *caitī* anthology (Jain 2012), although clear markers of the genre are absent. The inclusion could be motivated by the depiction of elements typical of springtime

This *caitī* is built on the image of the black bee (“*bhaumrā...baur*”, line 2), that here is a metaphor for “an inconstant lover, hovering from flower to flower to drink their nectar. In folk songs it also serves as a messenger between separated lovers.” (Vaudeville 1986: 125). The black bee is rich in symbolic meaning in *sant* tradition and Indian literature in general.¹²⁷ From a devotional perspective, it is the symbol of the soul longing to taste the sap of the ultimate experience. In *sant* poetry, it often indicates the *jīva* entangled in the sensual pleasures (*lobh*) or the mind unstable like a humming bee, and thirsty for divine love. Lastly, the humming of the black bee in *nāth* and *sant* songs and *hatha yoga* texts in general is related to the *anahad nād* (Skt. *anāhata-nāda*), the ‘unstruck’ inner sound heard during the yogic practice.

¹²⁶ Jain 2012: n.46 p. 86.

¹²⁷ See B30.

5.2 Bulākī Dās' (*ghāṅṭo*) *caitī*A36 रामा सासु हो ननदिया जनमवा के बैरी हो रामा¹²⁸

1. रामा सासु हो ननदिया जनमवा के बैरी हो रामा ।
2. आधी राति; कुसुम लोहन माँहि भेजे हो रामा ॥१॥
3. आधी राति ।
4. रामा गोरी गोरी बहियाँ, पतरी अँगुरिया हो रामा ।
5. कुसुम लोहत; कांट गड़ल हो रामा ॥२॥
6. कुसुम लोहत ।
7. रामा केइ मोरे काँटावा निकाले हो रामा ।
8. केइ मोरे, हरेले दरदिया हो रामा ॥३॥
9. कोई मोरे ।
10. रामा बाबा मोरे काँटावा निकाले हो रामा ।
11. सइयाँ मोरे; हरेले दरदिया हो रामा ।
12. सइयाँ मोरे ।
13. रामा दासबुलाकी चइत घांटों गावे रामा ।
14. गाइ गाइ बिरहिन समुझावे हो रामा ॥५॥
15. गाइ गाइ ।

1. *Rāmā*, mother-in-law and sister-in-law are lifelong foes, *ho rāmā*.
2. In the middle of the night, they sent me to pluck flowers, *ho rāmā*.
3. In the middle of the night...
4. *Rāmā*, my arms are white and my fingers are thin, *ho rāmā*.
5. While picking flowers, a thorn pricked my finger, *ho rāmā*.
6. While picking flowers...
7. *Rāmā*, who will remove the thorn, *ho rāmā*?
8. Who will take my pain away, *ho rāmā*?
9. Who will take my...
10. *Rāmā*, my father will remove the thorn, *ho rāmā*.
11. My lord will take my pain away, *ho rāmā*.
12. My lord...
13. *Rāmā*, Dās Bulākī in *Cait* sings *ghāṅṭo*, *rāmā*.
14. "Singing and singing, console the *virahinī*-s, *ho rāmā*.
15. Singing and singing..."

Line 10. *Bābā*. The fact that only the father of the female protagonist can 'remove the thorn' in her finger saving her from her painful condition refers to a common trope in Bhojpuri folk songs depicting the troubles of a married woman taunted by her in-laws and nostalgia for her carefree childhood days at her maternal house.

¹²⁸ Upādhyāya 1999: n. 15, pp. 225-226.

Line 13-15. *Rāmā Dāśbulākī...gāī gāī*. This verse containing the *chāp* recurs in Bulākī Dās' *caitī*-s with the variation of the subject who 'console': at times, it is the *virahinī*, at times, Bulākī Dās's wife.¹²⁹

Line 14. *Virahin*. I translated with the plural '*virahinī*-s' to convey the idea of *virah* that unites lovesick women.

Differently from the majority of the compositions analysed so far, the *tek* of this *caitī* varies for every stanza and consists of the repetition of the last sentence of each *pad*.

¹²⁹ See A37, A38, A39.

A37 ननदी का अँगना चननवा के गछिया हो रामा¹³⁰

1. ननदी का अँगना चननवा के गछिया हो रामा ।
2. ताही तर; कागवा बोलेला सुलछन हो रामा ॥१॥
3. ताही तर ०॥
4. बोके देबो कगवा हो दूध भात खोरवा हो रामा ।
5. तनी एक; सइयाँ कुसल बतलाव हो रामा ॥२॥
6. तनी एक ।
7. पिया पिया मति कह पिया के सोहागिन हो रामा ।
8. तोर पिया; लोभले बारी तमोलिन हो रामा ॥३॥
9. तोर पिया ।
10. कदितो में आपन कटरिया से मरितों जिअरवा हो रामा ।
11. मोरा आगे; उदरी के कइल बखनवा हो रामा ॥४॥
12. मोरा आगे ।
13. 'दास बुलाकी' चइत घांटों गावे हो रामा ।
14. गाइ गाइ; कुन्द कुँवरि समुझावे हो रामा ॥५॥
15. गाइ गाइ ।

1. In the courtyard of the sister-in-law, there is a sandalwood tree, *ho rāmā*.
2. At its top, the crow utters beautiful words, *ho rāmā*.
3. At its top...
4. Oh crow, I will give you milk in a bucket and rice in a bowl, *ho rāmā*.
5. Give me just some good news from my lord, *ho rāmā!*
6. Just some...
7. Oh, you married woman! Do not say "love, love", *ho rāmā!*
8. Your young beloved is obnubilated by the passion for a greedy young woman, *ho rāmā!*
9. Your young beloved...
10. I will draw my dagger and pierce my heart, *ho rāmā*.
11. My lord! It told me about the second wife, *ho rāmā*.
12. My lord...
13. Dās Bulākī in Cait sings *ghāṅṭo*, *ho rāmā*.
14. "Singing and singing, console Kundkumvari, *ho rāmā*.
15. Singing and singing..."¹³¹

This *caitī* by Bulākī Dās is structured as a dialogue between the *nāyikā* and a crow bringing the unpleasant news that the protagonist's husband is in the company of another woman.

Line 4-5. *Boke debo...batlav ho rāmā*. The crow (*kāgvā*, Bhoj., *kāg*, H.) in Indian folklore and literature is considered a messenger and omen-bringer: it is the announcer of a coming

¹³⁰ Upādhyāya 1999: n.21, p. 229.

¹³¹ Cf. A36, 38, A39.

guest or visitor. In this case, the crow does not bring the good tidings that the *proṣitabhartṛkā-nāyikā* was expecting. The practice of feeding crows with rice and milk or *piṇḍa* (cooked rice balls) stems from the Hindu belief that these birds are the souls of ancestors.

Line 8. *Bārī* ‘young’.

Line 11 *Uṛhrī*. Second wife. Another term for a rival in love.

Line 11. *Āge*. Oblique case of *āgā* (H.) meaning ‘lord and master’ (MCG, *s.v.*).

Line 13-15. *Dās Bulākī...gāi gāi*. Cf. A36, A38, A39.

Line 14. *Gāi gāi...gāi gāi*. *Kundkuṃvari* is the name of *Bulākī Dās*’ wife. The entire *ṭek* appears in several *caitī*-s composed by the author. Here the composer’s wife symbolises all the lovesick *nāyikā*-s tormented by the thought that their beloved is with another woman.

A38 छोटी मुटि ग्वालिनी सिर ले मुटूकिया हो रामा, चली भइली¹³²

1. छोटी मुटि ग्वालिनी सिर ले मुटूकिया हो रामा, चली भइली |
2. गोकुला सहर दहिया बेचन हो रामा, चली भइली |
3. एक वन गइली, दुसरे बने गइली, रामा तीसर बने
4. कान्हा मोर धरेला अँचरवा हो रामा, तीसर बने |
5. छोंडु छोंडु कान्हा रे हमारो अँचरवा हो रामा, तीसर पड़ि जइहें
6. दही के छिटिकवा हो रामा, पड़ि जइहें |
7. तोरा लेखे ग्वालिनि दही के छिटिकवा हो रामा, मोरा लेखे |
8. अगर चानन देव बरिसे हो रमा मोरा लेखे |
9. दास हो बुलाकी चइत घाँटो गावे हो रामा, गाई गाई
10. बिरहिन सखि समुझावे हो रामा, गाई गाई |

1. A little cowherdess was walking holding a jar on her head, *ho rāmā*, and she went,
2. to the city of Gokul to sell curd, *ho rāmā*, she went.
3. She went to a grove, she went to another grove and, *rāmā*, to a third one.
4. My Kanhaiyā grabbed the hem [of my *sārī*], *ho rāmā*, in the third grove.
5. Leave, leave, oh Kanhaiyā, my hem, *ho rāmā*, in the third one it fell.
6. A drop of curd, *ho rāmā*, fell.
7. For you cowherdess, a drop of curd, *ho rāmā*, for me...
8. If God made rain the essence of sandalwood, *ho rāmā*, for me...
9. Dās Bulākī in Cait sings *ghāṅṭo*, *ho rāmā*:
10. “Singing and singing, console the *virahinī* friend, *ho rāmā*!”¹³³

This *ghāṅṭo caitī* focuses on the theme of the *dān-līlā* and portrays the conventional motif of Kṛṣṇa pranking a *gopī* on her way to the market of Gokul.

¹³² Jain 2012: n. 59, p.91.

¹³³ Cf. A36, A37, A39.

A39 मानिक हमारो हिरैले हो रामा जमुना में¹³⁴

1. मानिक हमारो हिरैले हो रामा जमुना में
2. केहू नहीं खोजेला पदारथ हो रामा जमुना में |
3. ओही रे जमुनावा के चिकटि मटिया
4. चलत में पाँव बिछिलइले हो रामा जमुना में |
5. ओही रे जमुनवा के करिया पनिया
6. देखत में मन छबारइले हो रामा, जमुना |
7. तोरा लेखे ग्वालिन मानिक हिरैले
8. मोरा लेखे चन छापितवा हो रामा, जमुना में |
9. दास बुलाकी चइत घाँटो गावे
10. गाई गाई बिरहिन समुझावे हो रामा |

1. I have lost, *ho rāmā*, my jewel in the Yamunā.
2. No one, *ho rāmā*, could find this precious substance in the Yamunā.
3. *Ohī re!* The very same soft and slippery soil of the Yamunā.
4. While walking your feet, *ho rāmā*, slipped into the Yamunā.
5. *Ohī re!* Those same dark waters of the Yamunā,
6. in seeing the Yamunā, *ho rāmā*, the mind gets scared.
7. So it was written in your destiny, *gopī*, that your precious stone would be lost.
8. In my destiny, it was written that I find no peace, *ho rāmā*, in the Yamunā.
9. Dās Bulākī in Cait sings *ghāṅṭo*.
10. “Singing and singing console the *virahinī*, *ho rāmā!*”¹³⁵

This *ghāṅṭo caitī* is centred on the motif of the *virah* imbued with Kṛṣṇa *bhakti*. The anthology, from which this composition has been excerpted, reports the indication of Jat *tāl* in fourteen *mātrā*-s in which this *caitī* is usually set.

Line 1. *Mānik*. Lit. ‘ruby’, ‘jewel’. Kṛṣṇa is conventionally compared to a precious stone or even a mine.

¹³⁴ Jain 2012: 106.

¹³⁵ Cf. A36, A37, A38.

5.3 *Caitī*-s by various authors

A40 सोवत निंदिया जगाई हो रामा¹³⁶

1. सोवत निंदिया जगाई हो रामा
2. सैंया रे नंनदवां हो रामा |
3. चइत कइसे वितइबै
4. अरे मुखहू से हमसे ने बोलै
5. गरवा न लेई है लगाई हो रामा
6. चैत कइसे वितइबै |
7. अरे अइसे बालम के संगवा
8. जोबन नाहक मोर जाई हो रामा
9. चइत कइसे वितइबै |

पं० किशोरीलाल गोस्वामी

1. My lord, the sister-in-law, *ho rāmā*,
2. woke me from my slumber, *ho rāmā*.
3. How shall I spend Cait?
4. Alas! From his mouth, not even a word was uttered.
5. Nor a hug, gave he, *ho rāmā*.
6. How shall I spend Cait?
7. Alas! With such a beloved!
8. My useless youth has passed, *ho rāmā*.
9. How will I spend Cait?

Pt. Kīśorī Lāl Gosvāmī

This *caitī* by Kīśorī Lāl Gosvāmī exists in different variants and is part of *ṭhumrī* repertoire, presenting the conventional theme of the *virah* combined with the folk character of the *nanad*. The *pad-stobh* ‘*sovat nindiyā jagāī ho rāmā*’ features in several compositions of the genre and I have observed that it is particularly popular in the musical tradition of Banaras.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ Jain 2012, n 50, p. 87.

¹³⁷ See, for instance, the renderings by Siddeshwari Devi (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GlQy54BnHrw>), Girija Devi (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t6aapeGxrmM>), Begum Akhtar (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7x0u4Tvh0k>) and Shubha Mudgal (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iWfP9wIirD8>). Accessed July 10, 2021.

A41 काहे अइसन हरजाई हो रामा¹³⁸

1. काहे अइसन हरजाई हो रामा
2. तोरे जुलुमी नयना तरसाई हो रामा |
3. सास ननद मोका ताना देत हई |
4. छोटा देवरा हँसि के बोलाई हो रामा |
5. मोरा सैया मोरा बात न पूछै
6. तड़पि तड़पि सारी रैन गँवाई हो रामा |
7. नाजुक चुनरी रंग में बोरो
8. बला जोबनावा कइसे छुपाई हो रामा |
9. 'शाद' पिया को दूँढन निकसी
10. गलियन गलियन खाक उड़ाई हो रामा ||
सैयद अली मुहम्मद 'शाद'

1. Why my lover is this way, *ho rāmā?*
2. Your eyes are like tyrants, *ho rāmā.*
3. Mother-in-law and sister-in-law taunt me.
4. Younger brother-in-law makes fun of me, *ho rāmā.*
5. My lord does not ask me anything.
6. Tossing and turning I spent the whole night, *ho rāmā.*
7. Drench with colour my delicate wrap!
8. How can I hide my bosom, *ho rāmā?*
9. Śād says "To find the beloved
10. I searched alley for alley, and I went mad, *ho rāmā"*

Saiyad Alī Muhammad 'Śād'

This *sāhitiyik caitī* by Saiyad Alī Muhammad Śād combines the folk theme of the taunted young wife with the leitmotif of *virah*.

Line 7. *Nājuk...boro*. This line is reminiscent of *horī* songs.

Line 8. *Jobanāvā* (Bhoj. ≈ H. *joban*). 'Bosom', 'youth'. In this occurrence, I opted to translate 'bosom' relying also on the meaning of the previous line.

¹³⁸ Jain 2012, n.51 p. 88.

B. *Kajrī*

*“My heart is pining without Hari, Sāvan rains heavily.
Clouds have come in the roaring sky, all around peacocks scream.
In the dark night the rain patters, my heart is frightened.”*

(B31)

1. *Dhunmuniyā*

In this section two *dhunmuniyā* compositions by Premghan taken from his 1913 anthology *Kajlī Kādambinī* (abbreviated *KK* in the footnotes), are presented as significant examples of this style of *kajrī*.

B1 दुनमुनियाँ की कजलियाँ¹³⁹

1. हरि हो—मानो कहनवां हमार, बजाओ फिर बाँसुरिया ।
2. हरि हो—गावत राग मलार, बजाओ फिर बाँसुरिया ॥
3. हरि हो—वर्षा कै आइलि बहार, बजाओ फिर बाँसुरिया ॥
4. हरि हो—छाये मेघ दिसी चार, बजाओ फिर बाँसुरिया ॥
5. हरि हो—जमुना बढी जल धार, बजाओ फिर बाँसुरिया ।
6. हरि हो—लखि न परत जाको पार, बजाओ फिर बाँसुरिया ।
7. हरि हो—मोर करत किलकार, बजाओ फिर बाँसुरिया ।
8. हरि हो—दादुर रट दिसि चार, बजाओ फिर बाँसुरिया ॥
9. हरि हो—झूलो हिंडोरा संग यार, बजाओ फिर बाँसुरिया ।
10. हरि हो करिके प्रेमघन प्यार, बजाओ फिर बाँसुरिया ॥

Dhunmuniyām kī kajliyām

1. *Hari ho!* Listen to our Kanhaiyā, again play the flute!
2. *Hari ho!* Sing *rāg* Malhār, again play the flute!
3. *Hari ho!* Outside it rains, again play the flute!
4. *Hari ho!* All around clouds have spread, again play the flute!
5. *Hari ho!* Yamunā rises with flood, again play the flute!
6. *Hari ho!* The bank [of the river] is not in sight, again play the flute!
7. *Hari ho!* The peacock screams, again play the flute!
8. *Hari ho!* The frogs croak all around, again play the flute!
9. *Hari ho!* Sway on the swing with the friend, again play the flute!
10. *Hari ho!* Love for Premghan, again play the flute!

¹³⁹ *KK*, p. 55.

B2 मोहिँ टेरत है बलबीर बजी बन बाँसुरिया¹⁴⁰

दूसरी

1. मोहिँ टेरत है बलबीर बजी बन बाँसुरिया |
2. सुनि बढत मनोज की पीर बजी बन बाँसुरिया ||
3. चलु बेगि जमुनवाँ के तीर बजी बन बाँसुरिया |
4. सखियन की भई जहाँ भीर बजी बन बाँसुरिया ||
5. जहाँ सीतल बहत समीर बजी बन बाँसुरिया |
6. किलकारत कोकिल कीर बजी बन बाँसुरिया ||
7. घन प्रेम कि प्रेम जँजीर बजी बन बाँसुरिया |

Second

1. Kṛṣṇa bids me come out; in the forest plays the flute.
2. Listening [to it] heightens my torment; in the forest plays the flute.
3. Moving swiftly to the bank of the Yamunā; in the forest plays the flute.
4. Oh, friend! Where there is a crowd of *sakhī*-s, in the forest plays the flute.
5. Where a cool breeze buffets, in the forest plays the flute.
6. The koel and the parrot chorus; in the forest plays the flute.
7. Premghan says: "Love is a chain". In the forest plays the flute".

As the majority of Premghan's compositions, these two texts are inspired by the figure of Kṛṣṇa as the Divine Lover depicted in a typical monsoon scene set in the forest of Vrindavan.

The musicality of the text is marked by the end-rhyme in '-iyā' and is further enriched by the internal rhyme in '-īr' (*balvīr/pīr/tīr/bhīr/samīr/kīr/jañjīr/adhīr*).

Line 1. *Balbīr*. One of Kṛṣṇa's epithets, literally meaning 'the Powerful' (the term '*balavīryā*' is found in the *Mahābhārata* meaning "possessing strength and heroism", MW, s.v.).

Line 4. *Sakhiyan...bhīr*. Here I have interpreted '*bhaī*' as a vocative ('oh friend').

Line 7. *Ghanprem*. The order of the two terms forming the conventional *chāp* 'Premghan' has been reversed (anastrophe) to stress the word '*prem*' repeated immediately afterwards to create a pun.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

2. *Daṅgalī kajrī*

B3 चाट रही चक्छू से चकोरी कोरा कटोरा चाँदी का¹⁴¹

सवाल गीत

1. चाट रही चक्छू से चकोरी कोरा कटोरा चाँदी का ।
2. भरा हुआ लब है अमृत से बोरा कटोरा चाँदी का ॥ टेक ॥
3. लगाएगा क्या कोई उसे जो बड़ा अनल से लगा हुआ ।
4. ढालेंगे किस सांचे में जो छीर सिन्धु में ढला हुआ ।
5. ताब से सूरज तपाएगा क्या तर करै उसे जो तला हुआ ।
6. चुराएगा क्या चोर उसे वह खुद चोरों का बला हुआ ।
7. उड़नः मेले के महफ़िल में घूमै चहुं ओरा कटोरा चाँदी का ॥

Question song

1. The *cakorī* is licking an empty silver bowl with a hungry eye.
2. It is filled with *amṛt* the silver enamelled bowl. *Ṭek*
3. If one is [already] set aflame by a big fire, may any other fire burn him?
4. How could one pour in a pot the milk that has been poured in the ocean?
5. When the sun will burn with its heat, may another burn he who has been already burned?
6. What thief can rob he who has been already robbed by thieves?
7. *Uṛan*: In the *mahfīl* of the fair, the silver bowl roamed around.

This *daṅgalī kajrī* revolves around a philosophical debate on devotional themes prompted by the symbolic image of a bowl passed from hand to hand. The *savāl gīt* is entirely built on a series of rhetorical questions that remain unanswered in the *javāb gīt*.

Line 1. *Cakorī*. In folk songs of Uttar Pradesh, the image of the *cakor* is frequently found as the basis of comparison for describing Kṛṣṇa who gazes at the moon, deeply in love with it. However, in this *kajrī*, the female *cakor* may stand as a metaphor for a *gopī*.

Kaṭorā. The bowl, made of silver and longed for by the *cakorī*, recalls the moon.

Line 4. *Chīr sindhu*. Read ‘*kṣir sindhu*’. It may be a reference to the *kṣirābodhi*, also called *kṣīrod* or *kṣīr sāgar* the ‘Ocean of milk’ churned (*samudra manthan*) by *deva*-s and *asura*-s to obtain the *amṛt*, the ‘nectar of immortality’, quoted in the second verse as well. This line, as the entire composition, has to be interpreted on a devotional level. It hints at the condition of someone who has attained *mokṣa*, absorbed into God, like a drop of water that merges with its source, the ocean.

Sāñc. It refers to the *ghaṭ* (or *kumbh*), a jar or clay pot. This symbolically rich word is recurring in *sant* and *nāth* poetry and can be traced back to the *Upaniṣad*-s. It is a metaphor of the psychophysical individuality that illusorily limits the only reality of *ātman-Brahman*. In the most common version of this metaphor, instead of the water of

¹⁴¹ Bismillāh 2000: 16-17.

the ocean, we find the *ākāś*, the all-pervading space, that only illusorily can be contained in a pot. In Advaita-vedānta, the space inside the pot and the external one stand for the identity of *ātman* and *Brahman* that can be realised by the wise man when he ceases to identify himself with the ‘pot’. The image of the body-mind as a vessel is frequent in tantric texts as well.

Line 5. *Talā huā*. The literal meaning of *talnā* is ‘to fry’. I have translated ‘sunburnt’ to preserve the semantic field related to the sun. This line describes the state of the devotee that has been ‘burnt’ by the love for God, symbolised by the sun.

Line 6. *Curāegā...bolā huā*. Here the allusion is to the condition of someone who has freed himself from his ego.

B4 लटका हुआ अधर में है एक लाल कटोरा सोने का¹⁴²

जवाब गीत

1. लटका हुआ अधर में है एक लाल कटोरा सोने का |
2. ललित प्रथत पाया शंकर खुशहाल कटोरा सोने का || टेक ||
3. नहीं बेद न पुरान में ना कुरान में इसका बरनन |
4. ना यह कटोरा जमीन में ना यह रहता यार गगन |
5. नशा जिसका दुनिया के कारीगर ना पाये मित्रन
6. नशे में एक दिन शिवशंकर ये पारबती से लगे कहन |
7. उड़न: लिया प्रथम सक्ती से तेरे यह लाल कटोरा सोने का ||

Answer song

1. In mid-air, there is a precious golden bowl.
2. The first one was the joyful Śaṅkar to receive the golden bowl. *Ṭek*
3. Its description is not in the *Veda* nor the *Qur'an*.
4. This bowl is not on the earth nor in the sky, my friend.
5. Such intoxication no one can produce, no artisan in the world can give it shape, my friend.
6. In a state of inebriation one day Śiva said this to Pārvatī.
7. *Uṛan*: This precious golden bowl of yours he took for the first time from Śaktī.

Line 1. *Adhar*. The term indicates “the space between earth and sky: mid-air; empty or intervening space” (MCG, s.v.). Another possible translation suggested by this context could be ‘lower lip’. However, I have translated ‘*adhar*’ as “in mid-air” based on the statement in the fourth line (“This bowl is not on the earth nor in the sky”). The golden bowl—whose description cannot be found “in the *Veda* nor in the *Qur'an*”—is not tangible but is clearly a metaphor.

Lāl. I interpret ‘*lāl*’ in the sense of ‘precious’. The term, having the first meaning of ‘red’, means also ‘dear’ or ‘beloved’.

Line 2. *Khuśāl*. It could also be an adjective referring to ‘*kaṭorā*’; in this case, a possible translation would be ‘the bowl of joy’.

¹⁴² Bismillāh 2000: 16-17.

Kaṭorā. The precious golden bowl, the fulcrum of the composition, is rich in metaphorical connotations. It symbolises the state of mystical inebriation, the divine intoxication deriving from the ineffable experience of the absolute.

Line 7. *Liyā*. Here the subject 'he' is implicit, and I interpret it as referring to Śiva.

B5 मुख महादेव की भाई¹⁴³

उडान

1. मुख महादेव की भाई,
2. सुनलो आज जरा कविताई
3. गलती होय तो करना माफ यही है अरज
4. हमारी | पति संग°
5. डमरू डिमीक डिमीक डीमकाते त्रिपुरारी
6. हो सवालिया, लेके चले बरियतिया ना टेक |
7. छोहरी मरी साथ में उनके राग रागनी गावें
8. भूत प्रेत मुरदा की खोपड़ी लेके खुब बजावें,
9. कि गावें सब संघतिया ना |
10. मिलके साइत सगुन क गाना कि गावें
11. सब संघतिया ना ||१||
12. महादेव के गले बीच सोहे विषधर का माला
13. बैलके ऊपर बिछाके बैठे शिवशंकर मृगछाला
14. कि देवता देखे सुरतिया ना |
15. अपने दिल में खुशी मनावें, देवता देखें
16. सुरतिया ना ||२||
17. बम भोले कि बरात सजके दरवाजे पर आई,
18. देख दसा गौरा की माता दिल में बहुत घबराई
19. कि पीटें आपन छतिया ना |
20. डर के मारे करैं न परछन, पीटें आपन
21. छतिया ||३||
22. कोई सूरत से विवाह भइलै शिवाजी सेंधुर
23. नउलै महादेव कहें महादेव तब असली रूप
24. देखउलैं, भई अचरज की बतिया ना |
25. कहने लगे सभी नर नारी, भई अचरज
26. की बतिया ना ||४||

¹⁴³ Nirāle 'Helāle Hind': 8-9.

Urān

1. Fool brother of Mahādev!
2. Today, listen for a moment to my poems!
3. If there will be any mistake, forgive me!
4. This is my request.
5. Tripurārī is beating the *damru*.
6. Eh questioner! [Śiva] is off to [his] *barāt*. *Ṭek*
7. Dead girls are in his company, they are singing *rāg* and *rāginī*.
8. Ghosts and spirits are cavorting joyfully with skulls of corpses.
9. All the fellows are singing.
10. Together the fellows are singing a song of good omen,
11. all the fellows.
12. The neck of Mahādev is adorned by a necklace of a serpent.
13. Śiva Śaṅkar is sitting on a deerskin on the back of the ox.
14. Gods are looking at the faces [of people in the *barāt*],
15. They are happy in their heart; gods are looking
16. at the faces.
17. The adorned *barāt* of Śiva reached the door,
18. Seeing the situation, the mother of Gaurī became restless,
19. She beats her breast.
20. Out of fear, she will not perform the rite of *parach*, she beats
21. her breast.
22. And yet the wedding took place, Śiva *jī* brought the *sindūr*.
23. Upon saying “Mahādev, Mahādev”, he manifests his true form.
24. “What a wonder!”
25. Men and women started saying: “What
26. a wonder!”

This *mirzāpurī daṅgalī kajrī* presents a lively folk depiction of the episode of god Śiva’s wedding procession, a theme featured in Bhojpuri songs, especially *vivāh gīt*-s (wedding songs). The composition is sung in a *dhun* typical of the genre of *birah*, very often performed in *daṅgal*-s.

Line 1-4. *Murkh...bāī*. The opening lines of the composition clearly suggest that the composition is a *daṅgalī kajrī* in the form of *savāl-javāb*.

Line 5. *Tripurārī* (Tripurāri). An epithet of Śiva as the destroyer of the three towns (*tripura*) of the *asura*-s built by the architect Maya (Zimmer 1972: 185-186).

Damru. The small two-headed drum is one of typical Śiva’s attributes.

Ḍimīk...ḍīmakāte (≈ H. *ḍugḍugāna*). In the English translation, the onomatopoeia reproducing the sound of the drumbeat is lost.

Line 6. *Savaliyā* (‘questioner’). It refers to the member of *akhārā* who asked the question in the *daṅgal*.

Bariyatiyā. (≈ H. *barāt*) In Hindu weddings, the procession accompanying the groom to the venue of the ceremony.

Line 7. *Choharī marī*. *Choharī* (≈ H. *chorī*). The reference to ‘dead girls’ is unclear.

Line 8. *Bhūt, pret*. Ghosts and spirits.

Line 11. *Viṣḍhar*. The snake is Vāsuki, a *nāga* king.

Line 13. Here we find a typical iconographic depiction of Śiva.

Line 17-19. When the *barāt* approaches, Pārvaṭī's mother, Menā is eager to see how handsome her son-in-law is. When she sees Śiva coming riding his bull Nandī in his typical *yogī* attire, wearing a tiger-skin and a snake for a necklace, with ashes smeared all over his body and matted hair locks, she becomes upset at such a shocking vision, starts crying and cursing everybody responsible for her daughter's marriage to Śiva. This song could have been inspired by the episode of Śiva's wedding procession as narrated in *Rāmcaritmānas* (I, 91-102) and in Puranic sources, such as the *Śiva-purāṇa* (*Rudrasaṃhitā, Pārvaṭī-khaṇḍa* III, 39-48).

Bam bhole kī barāt. This is also the name of the ritual procession held—especially in North India—on the evening of Mahāśivarātri by devotees celebrating the wedding anniversary of Śiva and Pārvaṭī.

Parach. A preliminary rite to marriage in which a bridegroom is blessed by an *ārtī* ceremony (MCG, *s.v.*). For the disappointment, Menā resolves not to bless Śiva.

2.2 *Daṅgalī sāmājīk kajrī*

B6 कोई नहीं है सुनने वाला किसान औ मजदूरन के¹⁴⁴

1. कोई नहीं है सुनने वाला किसान औ मजदूरन के
2. अनपढ़ बेसहूरन के ना |
3. मजदूर-किसानों का कहना हम अपनी कमाई खा न सके |
4. दिन-रात खटीं हम जांगर से भर पेट मकाई खा न सके |
5. जग में होला खूब हँसौवा, है खेती का काम बझौवा,
6. झौवा लाड-फाँद के ऊपर करून के |
7. काना-कोतर-सूरन के, अनपढ़ बेसहूरन के ना ||

1. No one listens to farmers and workers,
2. illiterate and rude.
3. Workers and farmers say: “Despite working hard day and night,
4. we can’t get enough grain to fill our stomachs.
5. The world ridicules us and we are trapped in the work in the fields.
6. We must lift the bale,
7. we, disfigured-faced illiterate and rude”.

This Bhojpuri *kajrī* sounds like a protest song voicing the social discontent of farmers and workers. It indeed denounces the wretched condition of lower oppressed classes and the lack of attention by society to their plight.

Line 6. *Jhauvā* (Bhoj.). It is a bale of hay or dried bunches of grass that are usually stored in a barn.

¹⁴⁴ Bismillāh 2000: 17.

3. *Kajrī*: the *varṣā ṛtu*

3.1 Description of the monsoon season

In this section, *kajrī*-s featuring the tropes of the rainy season are presented. The second part of the paragraph brings together a few song texts built on the link between the natural landscape and the state of mind of the lyrical subject, tormented by the pangs of *virah*.

B7 बरिसे लागल भगवनवा; बरखा खूबे होला ना¹⁴⁵

1. बरिसे लागल भगवनवा; बरखा खूबे होला ना | टेक
2. रात में बरिसे दिनहू में बरिसे; बरिसे लगले ना ||१||
3. बरिसे लागल °
4. बादल गरजे, बिजुरी चमके; दम-दम दमके ना ||२||
5. बरिसे लागल भगवनवा; बरखा खूबे होला ना |

1. It rains, oh God; it pours! *Ṭek*
2. It rains at night, as well it rains in the day, it rains.
3. It rains...
4. Clouds roar, the lightning flashes vigorously
5. It rains, oh God; it pours!

¹⁴⁵ Upādhyāya 1999: n. 8 p.163.

B8 मेरो राजा के बगइचा लहरदार बा¹⁴⁶

1. मेरो राजा के बगइचा लहरदार बा |
2. लागल दिल हमार बा ना ||१||
3. एगो मन्दिर हम बनइबों |
4. ओमें शिव शंकर के बइठइबों |
5. पूजा करे खातिर पुजारी तइयार बा ना ||२||
6. लागल दिल हमार बा ना | टेक |
7. एगो बगीचा हम लगइबों |
8. बेला, चमेली के फूल रोपइबों |
9. फूल लोही खातिर मालिनी तइयार बा ना ||३||
10. मेरो राजा के बगइचा लहरदार बा |
11. लागल दिल हमार बा ना |

1. My king's garden waves in full bloom.
2. I feel delighted.
3. I will build a temple.
4. I will consecrate it to Śiva Śankar.
5. The *pujārī* is ready to perform the *pūjā*.
6. I feel delighted.
7. I will plant a garden.
8. I will plant *belā* and jasmine flowers.
9. The gardener is ready to pluck the flowers.
10. My king's garden waves in full blossom.
11. I feel delighted.

Line 1. *Lahradār*. Adjective, literally meaning 'wavy'. I have rendered it with the phrase 'waves in full blossom' to convey the idea of flowers and leaves stirred by the cool breeze of Sāvan.

Line 3. *Ego* (\approx H. *ek*). 'One', 'a'.

Line 4. *Belā*. The flower of *belā* (Arabian jasmine, *Jasminum sambac*). 'Camelī' and 'belā' are the names of varieties of jasmine.

Line 9. *Mālinī*. The gardener (in the feminine form here) can be the female protagonist herself who is speaking in the third person.

¹⁴⁶ Upādhyāya 1990a: n. 186 p.400.

B9 जनिया मति खोलु खिरिकिया अइली सावन की बहार¹⁴⁷

1. जनिया मति खोलु खिरिकिया अइली सावन की बहार |
2. सावन महिनवा में बड़ी धुधेड़ी; लेइ जइहें उड़ाई ||१||
3. जनिया मति खोलु°
4. पुड़ी, मिठाई अवरु कचौड़ी, जनिया लेके अइबों ना |
5. जनिया मति खोलु खिरिकिया, अइली सावन की बहार ||

1. Darling, do not open the window, Sāvan breeze blows!
2. In the month of Sāvan, the wind blows strongly; it will make you fly away!
3. Darling, do not open...
4. I will take *puṛī*, sweets and *kacaurī* and come, oh darling.
5. Darling, do not open the window, Sāvan breeze blows!.

This Bhojpuri *kajrī* represents an exception to the genres since it features the words of the distant lover addressing her beloved adumbrating a promise that he will come to her soon.

Line 4. *Puṛī...kacaurī*. Culinary specialities typically associated with the monsoon season. Relishing these snacks when it is raining outside is considered one of the best pleasures to enjoy during a summer downpour.

¹⁴⁷ Upādhyāya 1990a: n. 225 p. 299.

3.2 *Kajrī* and *varṣā ṛtu* as the backdrop of the *virah*

B10 पिया तजके हमें गइले परदेसवा ना¹⁴⁸

1. पिया तजके हमें गइले परदेसवा ना |
2. गये हमसे करके घात सुनऽ सौतिन के साथ
3. नहीं भेजले जबसे गइले सनेसवा ना ||
4. नहीं कल दिन रात जब से चढल बरसात
5. कब अइहैं मोहे एही बा अन्देसवा ना ||
6. झींगुर बोले झनकार सुनके पपीहा पुकार
7. गोइयाँ बढी गाइले जिया में कालेसवा ना ||
8. गोरिया कहे समझाय, बलमा से दीह मिलाय
9. रूपन नाही तो हम धरबै जोगिन भेसवा ना ||

1. My lover left me and went abroad.
2. Listen, he deceived me and went away with the rival!
3. Since he left, he did not send a message.
4. There is no peace day and night since the rainy season has come.
5. When will he come, this is my doubt, my anxiety.
6. The crickets chirping spoke, hearing the call of the cuckoo.
7. Oh friend, the pain has grown and filled my heart.
8. A beautiful woman said: “Make him understand, let me re-join [my] beloved,
9. otherwise, I will dress as a *yoginī*”.

Line 6. *Papīhā*. In line with a general trend in literature and music, I have translated *papīhā* simply as ‘cuckoo’. Specifically, this bird is the pied-crested cuckoo (*Clamator Jacobinus*) whose call reminds the heroine of her beloved causing her to pine¹⁴⁹.

Line 9. *Ham dharbai joginī*: The meaning of the sentence is “I will embrace the ascetic life”. The *virahinī* who wants to renounce a mundane life for an ascetic existence, being tired of the sufferings caused by the distance from her lover or by his indifference, is a common trope found in *caitī* and *kajrī*.¹⁵⁰ A variation on the theme sees the beloved/husband determined to become a *yogī* with the female protagonist following in his footsteps.

¹⁴⁸ Jain 2014: n. 10 p. 177.

¹⁴⁹ See Ch. III, 2.3.

¹⁵⁰ See Ch. III, 2.2 and 3.3.

B11 घेरी घेरी आवे पिया कारी रे बदरिया¹⁵¹

1. घेरी घेरी आवे पिया कारी रे बदरिया
2. दैवा बरसे हो बड़े बड़े बून
3. बदरिया बैरिन हो |
4. सब कोई भीजेला अपने भावनवाँ
5. मोरा पिया हो भीजे परदेस
6. बदरिया बैरिन हो |
7. दुलहिन हो रानी चिठि लिख भेजे
8. घर बहुरहु हो ननद जी के भाय
9. बदरिया बैरिन हो |

1. Oh, lover, black clouds have gathered, overspreading everywhere.
2. Large raindrops fall,
3. clouds are my foe.
4. Everybody delights in being drenched at home,
5. My beloved is drenched in a foreign land.
6. Clouds are my foe.
7. The bride wrote and sent a letter:
8. “Come home, brother of my sister-in-law!
9. Clouds are my foe”.

Line 1. *Gherī gherī āve*: I have tried to convey the iterative sense by translating with ‘overspreading everywhere’.

Line 8. *Nanad jī ke bhāy*. As already noted,¹⁵² according to Indian custom, a wife is not supposed to call her husband by name. Thus, the periphrasis for ‘husband’, mentioning the sister-in-law, is a constant presence in *kajrī*.

¹⁵¹ Jain 2014, n. 12 p. 77.

¹⁵² See A6. Cf. B26 and Ch. V, 2.

B12 अरे रामा उठी घटा घनघोर¹⁵³

1. अरे रामा उठी घटा घनघोर
2. बदरिया कारी रे हरी |
3. कोनो दिसा से घन घहराने
4. कहाँ बरस गये मेह || बदरिया...
5. अगम दिसा से घन घहराने
6. पच्छिम बरस गये मेह || बदरिया...
7. जिनके पिया परदेस बसत हैं
8. अँसुअन भीजै गुलसारी || बदरिया...
9. जिनके पिया परदेस बसत हैं
10. छाई महल अँधियारी || बदरिया...

1. *Are rāmā*, heavy clouds have risen and overspread,
2. dense and black, *e harī*.
3. From a corner [of the sky] dense clouds roared.
4. Where did rain fall? Clouds...
5. Dense clouds roared in the far reaches [of the sky].
6. Rain has fallen in the West. Clouds...
7. She whose beloved leaves abroad,
8. her tears have soaked all the roses. Clouds...
9. She whose beloved lives abroad,
10. darkness has pervaded her palace. Clouds...

This composition is generally rendered in a semi-classical style and is found in *ṭhumrī* repertoire.

¹⁵³ Jain 2014: n. 13 p. 78.

B13 बादल बरसे बिजुली चमके, जियरा ललचे मोर सखिया¹⁵⁴

1. बादल बरसे बिजुली चमके, जियरा ललचे मोर सखिया |
2. सइयाँ घरे ना अइलें पानी, बरसान लागेला मोर सखिया ||१ ||
3. सब सखियन मिल धूम माचाओ मोर सखिया |
4. हम बैठी मनमारि रंग, महल में मोर सखिया ||२||

1. Clouds rain, light flashes, my heart aches, my friend.
2. My lord did not come home; it began to rain, my friend.
3. All the *sakhī*-s rollick, my friend.
4. I sit in the palace in a state of desire, my friend.

Line 1. *Bādal barse*. In an attempt to remain faithful to the original Bhojpuri text, I opted for a poetic translation keeping ‘clouds’ as the subject of the phrase.

Line 4. *Manmāri raṅg*. I read *manmāri* as *manmānī* (Brbh. *manmāna/manmānā*) meaning ‘desire’ and *raṅg* as ‘condition, state’.

¹⁵⁴ Upādhyāya 1990a: n. 222 p. 198.

4. *Kajrī*: the motif of *bhakti*

This section is dedicated to *bhakti kajrī* and includes compositions based on religious and devotional motifs, from both the *saguṇ* and *nirguṇ* tradition.

4.1 Krishnaite *kajrī*

B14 स्याम नहिं आये आई स्याम बदरिया¹⁵⁵

1. स्याम नहिं आये आई स्याम बदरिया |
2. छाई चारिउ छोर देखौ कारी अँधिरिया |
3. चमकै रहि रहि बइरिनि बिजुरिया
4. सन सन सन सन चलत बयरिया |
5. तलफत इत ब्रजभान दुलरिया
6. अँसुअन भीजत धानी चुनरिया |

1. The Dark One did not come, have come the dark clouds.
2. Look at the black darkness spread all around!
3. Lightning flashing again and again is my foe.
4. The wind blows and whistles.
5. Here the darling pines for the sun of Braj.
6. Her green veil is wet with tears.

This composition can be described as a semi-classical *kajrī* and is often part of *ṭhumrī* repertoire presented during the monsoon. The text, built on the semantic field of ‘darkness’, plays on the multiple shades of meaning of the word ‘*syām*’.

Line 1. *Syām...syām*. *Syām* has the equivalent in the Hindi word ‘*śyām*’. The dental sibilant replacing the palatal indicates a trend typical of eastern Hindi. Here the same word *syām* is used with two different grammatical functions, creating a kind of pun (antanaclasis) built on an analogy that can be only partially rendered in English translation. In the first occurrence, the term refers to a title of Kṛṣṇa known as Śyām—“dark-complexioned”—whereas in the latter the word is used as an adjective referring to the dark colour of the rain clouds.

Line 2. *Kārī aṁdhirīyā*. Literally ‘black darkness’ (pleonasm). The English translation cannot render the different ways of expressing the word ‘black’.

Line 3. *Rahi rahi*. The connotation of a continuous action conveyed by the iteration of ‘*rahi*’ has been rendered—even though without the same effectiveness with the repetition of the English adverb ‘again’.

Line 4. *San...san*. In the English translation, the onomatopoeia that reproduces the sound of the wind is lost. The figure of sound is particularly effective in rendering the image of a mighty rushing wind since ‘*san san*’ could also mean ‘quickly’.

¹⁵⁵ Jain 2014: n. 2 p. 74.

Line 5. *Dulariyā* (diminutive \approx H. *dulārī*). Translated as ‘darling’, it refers to Rādhā longing for Kṛiṣṇa.

Brajbhān: I understand the term *brajbhān* as a title of Kṛiṣṇa, ‘sun of Braj’ (from Skt. *bhāna*, ‘sun’, ‘light’).

Line 6. *Dhānī*. Green is associated with the spring, and it is the colour of the garments worn by *nāyikā*-s of *kājri*-s in Sāvan.

Cunariyā (\approx H. *cunrī*, *cunnī*), a wrap or a veil used as an accessory in women's apparel.

B15 पिया नाहीं आये भावावाँ, अरे सावनवाँ¹⁵⁶

1. पिया नाहीं आये भावावाँ, अरे सावनवाँ |
2. गौना ले आये घर बैठाये,
3. आप गये मधुबनावाँ, अरे सावनवाँ |
4. दिन भर बैठी मैं आँख बिछाये
5. राति मैं देखौं सावनवाँ, अरे सावनवाँ |

1. My lover did not come home, eh Sāvan!
2. After the *gaunā*, he brought me home and left me.
3. You went to Madhuban, eh Sāvan!
4. All day I sat waiting in vain.
5. At night I saw him in my dreams, eh Sāvan!

Line 2. *Gaunā*. The Hindu ceremony taking place after marriage in which the bride is brought from her parental home to her husband's. It is a recurring theme in semi-classical musical genres, especially in *caitī*.¹⁵⁷

Line 3. *Madhuban*. It is the locality where Kṛṣṇa plays the *rās-līlā* with Rādhā and the *gopī*-s, identified with today's Nidhivan in Vrindavan, near Mathura.

¹⁵⁶ Jain 2014: n. 11 p. 77.

¹⁵⁷ See Ch. III, 2.4.

B16 करूँ कौन जातन अरी ए री सखी¹⁵⁸

1. करूँ कौन जातन अरी ए री सखी
2. मोरे नयनों से बरसे बादरिया |
3. उठी काली घटा से बादल गरजे
4. चली ठंढी पवन मोरा जिया लरजे |
5. थी पिया मिलन की आस सखी
6. परदेस गये मोरे साँवरिया |
7. सब सखियाँ हिलडोलवा झूल रहीं
8. खाड़ी भीजूँ पीया तोरे आँगनवाँ |
9. भर दे रे रंगीले मनमोहन, मेरी खाली पड़ी है गगरिया |

(फ़रुखाबाद)

1. What should I do, oh *sakhī*?
2. From my eyes clouds rain.
3. Black dense clouds rise and roar.
4. A cool wind blows, my heart trembles.
5. I wished I met my lover, oh friend,
6. [but] my beloved has gone to a distant land.
7. All the *sakhī*-s are swaying on the swing,
8. Standing in your courtyard, becoming drenched.
9. Oh charming Manmohan, fill my water pot that is empty still.

(Farūkhābād)

This *kajrī*, usually sung in *ṭhumrī* style, is indicated in Jain's anthology as originally from Farrukhabad. The protagonist is a lovesick *gopī* addressing her confidante.

Line 1. *Arī e rī*. These *varṇ stobh*-s are very often found in *ṭhumrī*; while in written poetry these-filler words function only as literary devices, when sung they become charged with emotive connotations.¹⁵⁹

Line 2. *More nayanom...bādarīyā*. This poignant metaphor juxtaposes the eyes of the *nāīykā* full of tears to the monsoon clouds heavy of the rain.

Line 9. *Manmohan*. One of Kṛṣṇa's epithets, meaning 'the charming one'.

¹⁵⁸ Jain 2014, n. 14 p.78.

¹⁵⁹ Ch. VII, 1.

B17 कहवन्हि किसुन जो के भइले जनमवा रामा¹⁶⁰

1. कहवन्हि किसुन जो के भइले जनमवा रामा |
2. काँहावा बाजत बा बधया ए हरी ||१||
3. मथुरा में किसुन जी के भइले जनमवा रामा |
4. गोकुला में बाजत बा बधैया ए हरी ||२||
5. कंस महलिया से निकले रानी पूतना
6. चलि भइली नन्द के महलिया ए हरी ||३||
7. बालका उठाई रामा छतिया लगवली |
8. दुनो छतिया जहर लगवली ए हरी ||४||
9. ननद महलिया से निकलेली जसोदा रानी |
10. बड़ भाग निकले मोर कन्हैया ए हरी ||५||
11. सोनवा से चनिया रामा दिहली दछिनवा |
12. पूतना के भेजली देस दछिन ए हरी ||६||

1. Where Kṛṣṇa is born, *rāmā*,
2. there felicitations resonate, *e harī!*
3. In Mathurā Lord Kṛṣṇa was born, *rāmā*.
4. In Gokul felicitations resound, *e harī!*
5. From Kaiṁsa's palace came queen Pūtanā.
6. She went to Nanda's mansion, *e harī!*
7. She lifted the boy and put him to her breast.
8. Both her breasts were full of poison, *e harī!*
9. From Nanda's palace came out queen Yaśodā.
10. [and said] "My Kṛṣṇa is very lucky! *E harī!*"
11. He made, *rāmā*, a *dakṣiṇā* of gold and silver.
12. He sent Pūtanā to the southland, *e harī!*"

In this *kajrī* is described the well-known episode of the *rākṣasī* Pūtanā narrated in several Sanskrit Hindu texts including the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, *Viṣṇu-purāṇa*, *Harivaṁśa*, and Hindi *Prem-sāgar*. The demoness sent by the evil king Kaiṁsa to kill the infant Kṛṣṇa took the guise of a beautiful young woman and tried to breastfeed the god with poisoned milk, but she was eventually killed by him.

Line 12. *Des dachin*. The 'southland' is the reign of Yama, the god of death.

¹⁶⁰ Upādhyāya 1999: n.3 p. 159.

B18 सोने के थाली में जेवना परोसलों; जेवना ना जेवे¹⁶¹

1. सोने के थाली में जेवना परोसलों; जेवना ना जेवे ।
2. राजावा लागल फूल को तोसक; मुझको हवा खिला दो ना ॥१॥
3. हवा खिला दो, सहर घुमा दो, रजवा बेसरि गीरे मधुवन में,
4. मुझको हवा खिला दो ना ॥२॥
5. झांझर गडुवा, सुराही के पानी; पनिया न पीये ।
6. राजावा झूला लागे मधुवन में; मुझको झूला झुला दो ना ॥३॥
7. झूला झुला दो, सहर घुमा दो, राजावा बेसर गीरे मधुवन में,
8. मुझको हवा खिला दो ॥४॥

1. In a golden plate I served the food; [but] he does not eat.
2. Oh king, I spread flowers upon the bed; give me the air!
3. Give me the air, take me for a walk to the city! Oh king, my nose-ring fell in Madhuban,
4. Give me the air!
1. I brought water in a jug, a perforated water-pot, [but] he does not drink.
2. Oh king! A swing is hung in Madhuban; push me on the swing!
3. Push me on the swing, take me for a walk to the city! Oh king, my nose ring fell in Madhuban.
4. Give me the air!

This *kajrī* and the following present a variation on the folk theme indicated by the opening *pad stobh* ‘*sone ke thali main jevnā paroslom*’¹⁶² recurring in multiple Bhojpuri *lok gīt*-s.

Line 2. *Rājāvā* (≈ H. *rāj*). Vocative addressed to the husband of the *nāyikā*.

Havā do. A literal translation would be ‘feed me with air’. As made clear by the following sentences (*sahar ghumā*) the woman is longing for some freedom and requesting her husband to bring her away from the pressure she experiences within the household.

Line 3. *Besari* (≈ H. *besar*). “A small heavy nose-ring” (MCG, *s.v.*).

Line 5. *Garuvā*. Water-pot. *Surāhī*. A clay jar with a long narrow neck. Different words are used in the text to describe a water-vessel.

¹⁶¹ Upādhyāya 1990a, n. 220 p. 296.

¹⁶² See B19, B22, B24, B25.

B19 सोने के थाली में जेवना परोसलों; जेवना ना जेवे¹⁶³

1. सोने के थाली में जेवना परोसलों; जेवना ना जेवे ।
2. जेवना जेवें राधिका प्यारी; साथे गिरधारी ॥१॥
3. चनन के पीढई रेसम के डोरी; झूलना ना झूले ।
4. झूलवा झूलें राधिका प्यारी, साथे गिरधारी ॥२॥
5. फूलवा हजारी के सेजिया डसइ लों, सेजिया ना सोवे ।
6. झूलवा झूलें राधिका प्यारी, साथे गिरधारी ॥३॥

1. In a golden plate I served the food; [but] he does not eat.¹⁶⁴
2. The lovely Rādhikā eats the food with Giridhar.
3. On a sandalwood seat, a silk rope; he does not swing.
4. On the swing sways the lovely Rādhikā with Giridhar.
5. Thousands of flowers were spread on the bed, [but] he does not sleep in the bed.
6. On the swing sways the lovely Rādhikā with Giridhar.

This composition—which contains elements of a *jhūlā*—presents a *nāyikā* who complains about her lover's indifference and manifests her envy for the happiness of the divine couple of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

¹⁶³ Upādhyāya 1990a, n. 221 p. 297.

¹⁶⁴ See B18, B22, B24, B25.

4.2 *Nirguṇī kajrī*

B20 सुगना निकल गइल पिंजड़ा से; खाली पड़ल रहल तसबीर¹⁶⁵

1. सुगना निकल गइल पिंजड़ा से; खाली पड़ल रहल तसबीर | टेक
2. केहु रोवे, केहु मलि मलि-धोवे; केहु पहिनावे चीर ||१||
3. सुगना °|
4. चारि जना, मिलि खाट उठवले; ले गइले गंगा तीर ||२||
5. सुगना °|
6. फूकि फाँकि के कोइला कइले; कोमल भइल सरीर ||३||
7. सुगना °|

1. The parrot left the cage; only [its] image is lying. *Ṭek*
2. Someone cries, someone rinses and cleanses the dead body, someone clothes it.
3. The parrot...
4. Four people together lift the palanquin; they take it to the bank of the Gaṅgā.
5. The parrot...
6. Burnt [and] reduced to a piece of coal; the body has become soft.
7. The parrot...

This *nirguṇī kajrī* features an unusual theme for the genre: death and the condition of the body and soul (*ātmā*) after it.

Line 1. *Sugnā ...piṅṅrā*. The metaphor of parrot/soul (*jīvātman*) and the cage/body is recurring in *nāth* and *sant* poetry. It is especially found in Kabīr and *Padmāvat*, the medieval Sufi poem by Jāyasī. It is also an integral part of *jogī* repertoire.¹⁶⁶ As pointed out by Henry, a typical image found in *nirguṇ bhajan* is “the parrot that remains in the forest of fruitless trees because it does not realize that they are fruitless, that the reality which appears so promising will ultimately deliver nothing—it is false or illusory” (Henry 1988a: 184).

Line 2-4. *Kehu rove*. The fact that “someone cries” leads back to *jogī* songs in which, along with the subject-matter of the description of death, the portrayal of the reaction of relatives to a loss is found (Henry *Ibid.*).

Mali mali. (≈ H. *malnā*), ‘to massage’, ‘to rub’. In these lines, we find a depiction of the funeral rituals of *antyeṣṭi*. After death, the body is washed, cleansed and *vibhūti* (ash), *caṇḍan* (sandalwood paste) or turmeric (*haldī*) are applied to the forehead. The body is then shrouded in a white sheet, taken to the cremation ground (*śmaśān*) by relatives and friends, and placed on a pyre that is generally set near a riverbank, a *ghāṭ* or any body of water.

Line 6. *Phūki...koilā*. The reference to the body reduced to a piece of coal clearly hints at the ephemeral and transitory nature of physical existence and the eternal becoming which characterises the phenomenal reality of the *saṃsāra*.

¹⁶⁵ Upādhyāya 1999b: n. 9 p. 163.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. Henry 1988a: 183.

5. *Sāmājīk kajrī*: social aspects

The *kajrī*-s grouped into the following section offer a picture of some aspects of the traditional society of North India. The most recurring themes deal with family dynamics, the role of women within patriarchal families, and the plight of child marriage.

B21 कइसे खेले जइबू

The following composition *Kaise khele jaibū* is a particularly popular *mirzāpurī kajrī* existing in several versions, sung both in a semi-classical and folk style, and characterised by different *antarā*-s or *pad*-s. This *kajrī* is attributed a literary value, as proven by its inclusion in the *Hindī sāhitya koś* (1958).¹⁶⁷

B21.1 कइसे खेले जाइबी हम सावन में कजरिया¹⁶⁸

1. कइसे खेले जाइबी हम सावन में कजरिया |
2. अब बदरिया घेरि अइले ननदी | टेक
3. तू त चललू अकेली, तोरा संग न सहेली;
4. गुण्डा घेरी लीहें तोहि के डगरिया ||१||
5. बदरिया घेरी अइले ननदी |
6. कतना जना खइहें गोली, कतना जइहें फँसिया; डोरी
7. कतना जना पीसहें जेलखाना में चकरिया ||२||
8. बदरिया घेरी अइले ननदी |¹⁶⁹

1. How can I go and play *kajrī* in Sāvan?
2. Now clouds have spread all around, oh sister-in-law. *Ṭek*
3. So, you go alone, no friend by your side.
4. A rogue will waylay you.
5. Clouds have spread all around, oh sister-in-law.
6. [In the presence of such allure] how many men will be struck by bullets? How many will be hanged in the street?
7. How many will go to jail and work at the grinder?
8. Clouds have spread all around, oh sister-in-law.

Line 1. *Kajariyā badariyā*. This verse plays on the multiple meanings of the word ‘*kajariyā*’ that indicates both *kajrī* as a song-genre and the black colour of the clouds during Sāvan.

¹⁶⁷ Varmā 1958 s.v. ‘*kajrī*’.

¹⁶⁸ Upādhyāya 1999, n. 4 p. 160.

¹⁶⁹ A lively folkish rendition of this *kajrī* by Malini Awasthi is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQb3DvBmSMg&list=RDVuuCxKvWlyo>. Accessed July 10, 2021.

B21.2 कइसे खेले जइबू सावन में कजरिया¹⁷⁰

1. कइसे खेले जइबू सावन में कजरिया,
2. बदरिया घेरि आइ ननदी
3. तू त जात हउ अकेली, कोइ संगे ना सहेली
4. गुण्डा छेकि लेइहें तोहरी डगरिया
5. बदरिया...
6. एक त सावन की अँधेरी, बदरा, घेरी बेरी-बेरी
7. छूजे चमके लागी बैरिन बिजुरिया
8. बदरिया घेरी...
9. कइली सोलहो सिंगार बदरा दिहलस बिगार
10. भींजे गैले गोरी धानी रे चुनरिया, बदरिया घेरि आइ ननदी
11. कैसे खेलब हम कजरिया, मोरी भीजी रे चुनरिया
12. ननदी ताना मारे कहिहें फुहरिया, बदरिया घेरी...

1. How can you go and play *kajrī* in *Sāvan*?
2. Clouds have spread all around, oh sister-in-law.
3. So, you go alone, no friend by your side.
4. A rogue will waylay you.
5. Clouds...
6. Such is the darkness of *Sāvan*, clouds, again and again, have spread.
7. Besides, lightning, my foe, began flashing.
8. Clouds spread...
9. The cloud spoiled the sixteen *śṛṅgār*-s.
10. It wet the green veil of the maid. Clouds spread...
11. How can I go and play *kajrī*? My veil is wet.
12. The sister-in-law, tauntingly, said this salacious thing. Clouds spread...

Line 9. *Solah śṛṅgār*. The concept of sixteen ornaments essential for woman beauty¹⁷¹ seems to have crystallised between the XI and XV centuries, although it can be traced back even earlier (Bhatnagar 2004: 29) and included embellishment from tip head to toe like earrings, makeup (such as *kājal* and *sindūr*), necklaces, bangles, and rings.

¹⁷⁰ Kapūr 2016: 129.

¹⁷¹ For an exhaustive description of the *solah śṛṅgār*-s see Bhatnagar 2004: 21-32.

B21.3 कैसे खेलन जइहो, सावन मा कजरिया¹⁷²

1. कैसे खेलन जइहो, सावन मा कजरिया
2. बदरिया घिर आई ननदी |
3. तू तो जात है अकेली, तोरे संग ना सहेली
4. छयला घेर लइहै तोरी डगरिया
5. बदरिया घिर आई ननदी |
6. तोरा देखे मुखड़ा गोरा, तोरे घर के सौ सौ फेरा
7. कैसे लम्बी लम्बी बाँधी पगड़िया
8. बदरिया आइ ननदी |
9. जब तू चलीहै नाचत गावत
10. लच लच अपनी कमर लाचकावत
11. तोरे बिछुवा बजे सारी बजरिया
12. घिर आइ ननदी |
13. कितने डगर फाँसी चढ़ गए
14. कितने गोली खाकर मर गए
15. कितने पीसत होइयन जेल मा चकरिया
16. बदरिया घिर आई ननदी ||

1. How can you go and play *kajrī* in the month of Sāvan?
2. Clouds have spread all around, oh sister-in-law.
3. So, you go alone, with you no friends by your side.
4. [Heaven forbid] someone harasses you on the way!
5. Clouds have spread all around, oh sister-in-law.
6. In seeing your fair face, someone will circle your house a hundred times,
7. to see how you wrap your long turban.
8. Clouds have spread all around, oh sister-in-law.
9. You walk dancing and singing.
10. Your waist weaves to and fro again and again.
11. Your toe-ring clinks throughout the market.
12. Clouds have spread all around, oh sister-in-law.
13. [In the presence of such allure] how many men will be hanged in the street?
14. How many will be struck by bullets?
15. How many will go to jail and work at the grinder?
16. Clouds have spread all around, oh sister-in-law.

The present version of this *kajrī* has been rendered in a semi-classical style by the famous Pakistani *gazal* singer Feroze Akhtar. The vocalist introduces only one variation to the present text, found in the third *pad* where, in the second repetition of the strophe, the narration switches to the first person: the personal pronoun ‘*tū*’ is replaced by ‘*main*’ and, consequently, the verb is conjugated in the first person (*caliūm*), and the adjective

¹⁷² My transcription is based on a performance in an informal context (Banaras, 2019).

'*more*' takes the place of '*tore*'. These variations inspire further interpretation, prompting one to think that the singer identifies with the woman protagonist.¹⁷³

Line 11. *Bichuvā*. The ring worn on the big toe; a distinctive mark of a married woman.

Line 14-15. *Kitne golī...cakariyā*. The sister-in-law is so charming and attractive that men would go insane for her and break the law.

¹⁷³ A recording of this rendition is available online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lqXF_OZ1ug4. Accessed July 10, 2021.

B22 अरे बाबा बहेला पुरवैया, अब पिया मोरे सोवे ए हरी¹⁷⁴

1. अरे बाबा बहेला पुरवैया, अब पिया मोरे सोवे ए हरी | टेक
2. सोने के थाली में जेवण परोसलों;
3. सइयाँ जेवले आधिराति, देवर बड़ा भोरे ए हरी ||१||
4. चाँदी के लोटा में पानी परोसलों;
5. सइयाँ पियेले आधिराति, देवर बड़ा भोरे ए हरी ||२||
6. चुनि-चुनि कलिया सेजिया दसवली;
7. सइयाँ सूतेले आधिराति, देवर बड़ा भोरे ए हरी ||३||
8. लँग खिली-खिली बिरवा लगवलीं;
9. सइयाँ चाभेले आधिराति, देवर बड़ा भोरे ए हरी ||४||
10. अरे बाबा बहेला पुरवैया, अब पिया मोरे सोवे ए हरी ||

1. Oh! The east wind blows, now my beloved sleeps, *e harī. Tek*
2. In a golden plate, I served the food.
3. My husband ate late at night, my younger brother-in-law [ate] at sunrise, *e harī*.
4. In a silver pot, I served water.
5. My husband drank at late night, my younger brother-in-law [drank] at sunrise, *e harī*.
6. I plucked flower buds and made the bed.
7. My husband slept late at night, my younger brother-in-law [slept] at sunrise, *e harī*.
8. I applied cloves and prepared a roll of *pān*.
9. My husband chewed late at night, my younger brother-in-law [chewed] at sunrise, *e harī*.
10. Oh! The east wind blows, now my beloved sleeps, *e harī*.

This composition presents a third variation on the theme ‘*sone ke thālī main jevnā paroslom*’ (‘In a golden plate I served the food’).¹⁷⁵ Here the special bond between *devar* and *bhābhī* is adumbrated, the younger brother-in-law being the only one in the family showing empathy for and attention to his sister-in-law. Furthermore, it should be noted that the *devar-bhābhī* relationship might involve a mutual sexual attraction.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ Upādhyāya 1999: n. 5 p. 161.

¹⁷⁵ See B18, B19, B22, B25.

¹⁷⁶ See Ch. III, 3.2.

B23 रुनझुन खोल ना केवड़िया; हम विदेसवा जाइबो ना¹⁷⁷

1. रुनझुन खोल ना केवड़िया; हम विदेसवा जाइबो ना | टेक
2. जो मोरे साइयाँ तुहु जइब विदेसवा; तू विदेसवा जइबो ना |
3. हमरा भइया के बोलाद; हम नइहरवा जइबो ना ||१||
4. रुनझुन खोल°
5. जो मोरे धनिया तुहु जइबू नइहरवा जइहू ना |
6. जाताना लागल बा रुपैया; ओतना देइ के जइहू ना ||२||
7. रुनझुन खोल°
8. जो मोरे बाबा घरवा रहनीं; ओइसन करके दीह ना ||३||
9. रुनझुन खोल°

1. Open the door, I go to a foreign land. *Ṭek*
2. Oh husband! Go to a foreign land, you go to a foreign land!
3. I will call my brother; I will go to my maternal home.
4. Open the door...
5. Oh wife! Go to the house of your mother, you go to the house of your mother!
6. Give back all the money that I spent and go!
7. Open the door...
8. Give me back the body that I had [when I was] at my father's house!
9. Open the door...

¹⁷⁷ Upādhyāya 1999: n. 7 p. 162.

B24 सासु के दाँत रे बतीसी; बहू का बाँही गोदना¹⁷⁸

1. सासु के दाँत रे बतीसी; बहू का बाँही गोदना |
2. ससुर जेवना ना जेवले; मोर नीहरें गोदना ||१||
3. जाहु हां जनीतीं ससुर, नीहरब तू गोदना |
4. ससुर नाहीं रे गोदइतो; आपन बाहीं गोदना |

1. On mother-in-law's teeth, [there is] *batīsī*; on daughter-in-law's arm, a tattoo.
2. Father-in-law does not eat the food; he stares at my tattoo.
3. If I would have known, father-in-law, that you would stare at my tattoo!
4. Oh father-in-law! I wouldn't have got my arm tattooed.

This Bhojpuri *kajrī*—as the vast majority of *lok gīt-s*—exists in different versions and offers a glimpse into the relationship between the young bride and her in-laws. Here the father-in-law, who should be protective in his authoritative role, is pictured as a treacherous and lascivious man.

Hari S. Upadhyaya in analysing this song explains that the correct translation of the text should be “The mother-in-law has a set of thirty-two teeth” (Upadhyaya 1967: 74) and argues that it is likely that such a text originated from a misinterpretation by singers who confused the words ‘*batīsiyā*’ (a kind of powder) and ‘*batīsī*’ (thirty-two). On the other hand, Kṛṣṇadev Upādhyāya points out that the word ‘*batīsī*’ is mentioned in several folk songs and refers to a type of *missī*, a cosmetic powder used to stain the teeth or lips black.

Line 1. *Godnā*. The tradition of tattooing was common in North India and prominent in Bihar and Awadh. It used to be primarily motivated by religious beliefs and mark rites of passage among lower castes, especially in rural areas. Traditionally women used to get tattooed three times in their life: before and after puberty and after marriage when in their husband's house (Singh 2015: 18). It is interesting to note that among low caste communities, women used tattoos as a form of protection against the wandering eyes of upper-caste men.

¹⁷⁸ Upādhyāya 1990a, n. 223 p. 298.

B25 सोने के थाली में जेवना परोसलों; जेवना ना जेवे¹⁷⁹

1. सोने के थाली में जेवना परोसलों; जेवना ना जेवे ।
2. हरि मोरा चलले बाँगाला ॥१॥
3. दरजी बेटवना चोलिया सियवली; डिठिया जनि लगाऊ ।
4. मोके लरिका रे गदेलवा; हरि छोडि गइले ना ॥२॥

1. In a golden plate I served the food; [but] he does not eat.
2. My lord went to Bengal.
3. The boy of the tailor sewed my blouse; he set eyes on me.
4. I have a baby, oh boy; my lord left me and went away.

This *kajrī* features the fourth variation presented in the current work on the theme ‘In a golden plate I served food’.¹⁸⁰ In this case, the *pad stobh* introduces the motif of a young woman left alone with her child by a migrating husband who went to Bengal in search of fortune.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹ Upādhyāya 1990a: n. 224 p. 299.

¹⁸⁰ See B18, B19, B22, B24.

¹⁸¹ Cf. A8, A28, A32.

B26 कि अरे रामा हीरा जड़ी संदूक¹⁸²

1. कि अरे रामा हीरा जड़ी संदूक
2. मोतिन की माला हे हरी |
3. सोने के थाली में जेमना परोसा
4. रामा हे रामा,
5. कि अरे रामा जेमों ननद जू के भइया
6. तुम्हारे परें पैया हे हरी |
7. सोने के गडुआ गंगाजल पानी
8. रामा हे रामा,
9. कि अरे रामा पियौ ननद जू के भइया
10. तुम्हारे परें पैया हे हरी ||
11. पान पचीसी की बिरवा लगाई
12. रामा हे रामा,
13. कि अरे रामा रचौ ननद जू के भइया
14. तुम्हारे परें पैया हे हरी |
15. फूलानवारी री के सजा लगाई
16. रामा हे रामा,
17. कि अरे रामा सोबौ ननद जू के भइया
18. तुम्हारे परें पैया हे हरी |

1. *Ki are rāmā*, in the inlaid diamonds box,
2. there is a pearl necklace, *he harī*.
3. In a golden plate, I served the food,¹⁸³
4. *rāmā he rāmā!*
5. *Ki are rāmā*, the husband's sister-in-law's brother ate it.
6. I touch your feet, *he harī*.
7. In a golden pot, there is the water of the Gaṅgā,
8. *rāmā he rāmā!*
9. *Ki are rāmā*, sister-in-law's brother drank it.
10. I touch your feet, *he harī*
11. I folded a *pān* roll with twenty-five spices.
12. *rāmā he rāmā!*
13. *Ki are rāmā*, sister-in-law's brother's lips are red stained.
14. I touch your feet, *he harī*
15. In the grove, I prepared a bed adorned with flowers,
16. *rāmā he rāmā!*
17. *Ki are rāmā*, sister-in-law's brother slept.
18. I touch your feet, *he harī*.

¹⁸² Jain 2014: n. 1 p. 74.

¹⁸³ See B18, B19, B22, B24.

Line 1, 5, 9, 13, 17. *Ki are rāmā*. Line 4, 8, 12, 16. *Rāmā he rāmā*. The word ‘*rāmā*’ contained in both the *śabd* and *pad stobh*-s—constituting respectively the first half and the entire verse—is usually considered a marker of the genre of *caitī*. I argue that its insertion in Bhojpuri *kajrī*-s conveys a folk flavour and is simply motivated by metrical and musical reasons.

Line 2. *Motin*. The reference to a pearl necklace can have a symbolic value. In poetics, pearls symbolise purity and chastity (Maciszewski 2007: 165).¹⁸⁴ The fact that the precious pearl necklace is kept in a box inlaid with diamonds might allude to the marital devotion of the female protagonist.

Line 5. *Nanad ke bhaiyā*. ‘Sister-in-law’s brother’. This expression can be interpreted as a periphrasis for ‘husband’ in its meaning of “auspicious form of reference on a wife’s part” (see MCG, *s.v.*), considering the traditional context in which there is a taboo in calling the husband by name.¹⁸⁵ According to another possible interpretation, the sister-in-law’s brother may refer both to the *devar* (husband’s younger brother) who is often present in *kajrī* and folk songs or to a *baṛa bhāī*, an elder brother-in-law. The former hypothesis seems to be less convincing since the *bhābhī* has not prescribed obligations to take care of her *devar* and look after his needs, as she must do with other relatives, especially with the other male family members, including the elder brothers-in-law (Roy 1992:109). In this case, the gesture of touching the feet (*caran sparś*) is a mark of respect towards the elder brother.

Line 13. *Racau*. The verb ‘*racnā*’ means “to make a stain (as betel on the mouth)” (MCG, *s.v.*). In this occurrence, the lips would be the implicit subject of the sentence. The verb means also ‘falling in love’, thus a possible translation could be ‘the sister-in-law’s husband fell in love’. This composition likely plays on the ambiguity epitomised in the two-fold meaning of the verb.

¹⁸⁴ See A26, line 5.

¹⁸⁵ See A6, B11.

6 *Rāṣṭrīya kajrī*: nationalism

This section brings together compositions inspired by nationalist sentiment and the voicing of desire for an independent India. Especially during the first half of the XX century, *kajrī*-s acted as a means for political propaganda and sung during *daṅgal*-s, public gatherings or, as in the case of texts penned by renowned authors, published in journals, booklets, and pamphlets.

B27 जो पिया बनिहें रामा देसवा लागि जोगिया¹⁸⁶

1. जो पिया बनिहें रामा देसवा लागि जोगिया |
2. हमहू बनि जइबों तब जोगिनिया ए हरी ||१||
3. देसवा के नदिया रामा सोइबो अरू जगइबो |
4. देहिया में रमइबों भल भभुतिया ए हरी ||२||
5. जहवाँ जहवाँ जइहे रामा हमारो रावल जोगिया |
6. सथवा सथवा डोलबि भरले झोरिया ए हरी ||३||
7. भूखिया पिअसिया रामा तनिको ना लगिहें |
8. बजर बनाइबि आपन देहिया ए हरी ||४||
9. घरवा घरवा जाई रामा करबि उपदेसवा |
10. सुफल बनाइबि हम जिनिगिया ए हरी ||५||

1. If my beloved, *rāmā*, will become a *yogī* for the country,
2. I will become a *yogini* [too], *e harī*.
3. For the country, *rāmā*, I will sleep or wake up,
4. I will spread ashes on my body *e harī*.
5. Wherever my husband *yogī* will go, *rāmā*,
6. I will pack my bag and go, [too] *e harī*.
7. For the country, *rāmā*, I will not suffer from hunger nor thirst,
8. I will make my body as hard as diamond *e harī*.
9. I will go from house to house, *rāmā*, preaching.
10. I will make my life fruitful, *e harī*.

In this *kajrī*, the *nāyikā* is depicted as a national heroine, ready to become a *yogini* and give up everything for the sake of her country.

¹⁸⁶ Upādhyāya 1999: n.1 p. 155.

B28 सावन भदउआ बरिसतिया के दिनवा रामा¹⁸⁷

1. सावन भदउआ बरिसतिया के दिनवा रामा |
2. बैठि के चरखवा घरवा कातबि ए हरी ||१||
3. अपने त कतबों अवरु सखिया से कतबों |
4. गाँधी के हुकुमवा हम मानबी ए हरी ||२||
5. खोलि देबि घरवा में चरखा इसकुलवा |
6. सब के हम चरखा सिखाइबि ए हरी ||३||
7. अपने नगरिया हम त करबि सुरजवा |
8. देसवा में अलख जगाइबि ए हरी||४||

1. Sāvan and Bhādom are the months of rain, *rāmā*.
2. Sitting at home, I will sit at my spinning wheel, *e harī*.
3. I will spin alone, and my friends will spin by themselves.
4. I will keep the promise of Gāndhī *jī*, *e harī*.
5. I will open a spinning school at home.
6. I will teach everyone to use the spinning wheel, *e harī*.
7. I will establish *svarāj* in my city.
8. In the country, I will call on God, *e harī*.

This composition—similarly to the previous one—depicts a patriotic female protagonist determined to follow and spread the Gandhian message. In the opening line, the seasonal reference identifies the text as belonging to the genre of *kajrī*. The motif of the deserted woman sitting alone at home, surrounded solely by her friends, is reshaped to portray a patriotic heroine who, through her work at the spinning wheel (*carkhā*), will contribute to the fight for independence and *svarāj* (‘self-rule’). Here, it is worth noting the influence exerted by *carkhā gīt-s*, folk songs performed during hand spinning and centred on the main subject-matter of the *carkhā*. The folk flavour is enhanced by the song’s lilt marked by the repetition of the *pad stobh* ‘*e harī*’ in alternate lines.

Line 5 *Carkhā iskulvā, surajvā. Svarāj*. The principle of ‘self-governance’ was promoted by Gandhi through the foundation of voluntary work organisations and educational institutions.

¹⁸⁷ Upādhyāya 1999: n. 2 p. 155.

B29 चरखा कातो मानो गाँधीजी की बतिया, बिपतिया कटि जइहैं ननदी¹⁸⁸

1. चरखा कातो मानो गाँधीजी की बतिया, बिपतिया कटि जइहैं ननदी
2. रुई चरखा तू मँगवाओ, अब तो तनिक न देर लगाओ ।
3. पावो जब फुरसत, तब कातो दिनवाँ रतिया ॥ विपतिया ० ॥
4. करौ सूत जो तैयार, ले जाओ स्वदेश भंडार ।
5. बेच के पइसा लेके खाइब दूनो रतिया ॥ विपतिया ० ॥
6. चरखा को चरखा मत जानो, एको चक्र सुदर्शन मानो ।
7. करिहैं स्वतन्त्र भारत इसमें यही सिफतिया ॥ विपतिया ।
8. गान्धीजी ने यही विचारा, चरखा दुनिया भर का रखवारा ।
9. कहते गोपाल चरखा चलि है, दुशमन देख देख के जलिये ।
10. गावैं मटरू मिल जा भारत के कुल जातिया ॥ विपतिया ० ॥

1. Spin and remember Gāndhī *jī*'s teachings, adversities will be endurable, oh sister-in-law!
2. Get the cotton and the spinning wheel, now do not hesitate!
3. When you have the possibility, spin night and day.
4. Spin the thread and when it is finished bring it to the *svadeś bhaṇḍār*.
5. With the money from the sale, you will eat day and night. Adversities...
6. Do not consider the spinning wheel [just] a spinning wheel; see it as the unique Sudarśana wheel.
7. Let us set India free, this is the very quality [of the spinning wheel]. Adversities...
8. Gāndhī *jī* thought this, [that] the spinning wheel is the protector of the world.
9. Gopāl says: "The spinning wheel moves, the enemies burned instantly".
10. Maṭarū sings: "Join the family of the Indian nation". Adversities...

This *kajrī*, envisioned to voice the desire for an independent India, is imbued with patriotism emphasised by the intertwining of sacred and secular symbolism.

Line 4. *Svadeś bhaṇḍār*. *Svadeś bhaṇḍār*-s are clothing stores selling homespun and handwoven cotton cloth called *khādī*. They were established during the *svadeśī* movement as part of the campaign to popularise the *svarāj*. *Khādī bhaṇḍār*-s are still popular today all over India.

Line 6. *Sudarśana cakra*. As the name suggests (literally meaning 'disk of auspicious vision'), it is a spinning disk-like weapon, one of the *āyudh*-s ('weapons') of Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa, and Rām. The *āyudh*-s, personified and worshipped like deities in *vaiṣṇava* environments, have a very rich symbolic meaning. Here the choice of referring to such a weapon is due to the analogy with the spinning wheel and, at the same time, to the inherent power of such a tool. The *carkhā* became the symbol of the *svadeśī* and non-cooperation movement led by Gandhi who took up the spinning wheel himself, encouraging Indians to weave their own cloth to reach self-sufficiency from Britain. Thus, the *carkhā*, loaded with political symbolism, became the emblem of freedom and Independence. The paronomasia *carkhā/cakra* is particularly effective from a phonic and allegorical point of view.

¹⁸⁸ Agravāl n.d.: n. 145 p.85.

Line 10. *Maṭarū*. Since this *kajrī* is penned by Gopāl, the inclusion of the *chāp* ‘Maṭarū’ in the line following the author’s name suggests that this is a *daṅgalī kajrī*. This hypothesis could be confirmed by the social, political theme of the composition and by the title of *śāyr* accorded to the composer and indicated in the anthology.

7.1 Bhārtendu Hariścandra's *kajrī*

The following section comprises *kajrī*-s composed by Bhārtendu Hariścandra, originally published in his anthology *Vārṣāvinod* (1890) and included in some *kajrī*-s collections and literary journals.

7.1.1 Krishnaite *kajrī*

B30 मथुरा के दसवाँ से भेजलें पियरवाँ रामा¹⁸⁹

1. मथुरा के दसवाँ से भेजलें पियरवाँ रामा ।
2. हरि हरि ऊधो लाए जोगवा की पतियाँ रे हरी ॥
3. सब मिली आओ सखी, सुनो नई बतियाँ रामा ।
4. हरि हरि मोहन भए कुबरी के संघाती रे हरी ॥
5. छोड़ि घर बार भसम अब लगाओ रामा ।
6. हरि हरि अब नहिँ ऐहें सुख की खानी रे हरी ॥
7. अपने पियरवा आब भये हैं, पराये रामा ।
8. हरि हरि सुमत जुड़ायो, सब घाती रे हरी ॥

1. From the town of Mathurā send the darling, *rāmā*.
2. *Hari, hari!* Udho has brought a letter of the *yogī*, *re harī*.
3. Come all together, *sakhī*-s! Listen to the news, *rāmā*!
4. *Hari, hari!* Mohan has become Kubjā's companion, *re harī*.
5. Leave the house, now spread your hair with ash, *rāmā*.
6. *Hari, hari!* Now that joy-filled mine is no more, *re harī*.
7. Our darling has become of another, *rāmā*.
8. *Hari, hari!* Find solace: everything was deceit, *re harī*.

Line 1, 7. *Piyarvām*. Diminutive of 'piyā'. I have translated it as 'darling' to keep the nuance of the term of endearment.

Line 2. *Udho* (\approx *Uddhav*). Kṛṣṇa's friend and counsellor—who is Brhaspati's disciple—Uddhav is a central character in the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* and is especially important in vernacular literature since the XIV century when the Marathi *Uddhava-gītā* (based on the *Uddhava-gītā* corresponding to *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* XI, 7-29) was composed. The *Uddhava-gītā* contains the Kṛṣṇa's teachings to Uddhav. Interestingly, semi-classical compositions generally feature a specific focus on a well-known episode of Uddhav's story. After conquering Mathura and killing Kaiśa, Kṛṣṇa requests his loving devotee to go to Gokul with a message for Nanda, Yaśodā, and the *gopī*-s who were suffering for his absence. Uddhav consoles first Nanda and Yaśodā (*Bhāgavata-purāṇa* X, 46) and then the *gopī*-s (X, 47) with philosophical arguments. Specifically, when Uddhav meets the *gopī*-s, they express to him their resentment for being deceived by Kṛṣṇa who—like a bee (*bhramar*) once having drunk the nectar abandons the flower—has deserted the milkmaids after enjoying the pleasure of union with them. The distressed *gopī*-s complain

¹⁸⁹ Agravāl n.d.: n. 3 p. 2.

about being abandoned to a bee passing-by that, due to its black colour, reminds them of Kṛṣṇa. In response, Uddhav explains that the *viraha* is only apparent since Kṛṣṇa is actually ever-present, being the eternal *Brahman* underlying their very existence, as their own *ātman*. This narrative of the black bee is known as *bhrammar gīt* (‘songs of the bee’) and became the subject-matter of Braj bhāṣā poems, such as those by Sūrdās and Nanddās (McGregor 1973: 49). In particular, the *Bhrammar gīt* that is an integral part of *Sūrsāgar* reached extraordinary popularity. The *gopī*-s depicted by Sūrdās represent archetypal *virahinī*-s remaining inconsolable because of Kṛṣṇa’s absence, whereas in the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, they accept Uddhav’s teaching.

It is important to note that songs featuring Uddhav form the group of *Uddhav gīt*-s (not to be confused with the above-mentioned *Uddhava-gītā*) centred on the love in separation and sung during the monsoon.¹⁹⁰

Line 4. *Mohan*. Title of Kṛṣṇa as the ‘charming’ or ‘infatuating One’.

¹⁹⁰ See Ch. V, 6.

B31 हरि बिन जियरा मोरा तरसै, सावन बरसै घानाघोर¹⁹¹

1. हरि बिन जियरा मोरा तरसै, सावन बरसै घानाघोर ।
2. रुमझुम नभ बादर आए, चहुँ दिसी बोले मोर ॥
3. रैन अँधेरी रिमझिम बरसै, दडपै जियरा मोर ।
4. बैठ रैन बिहाय सोच में, तड़प तड़प हो भोर ॥
5. पावस बीत्यो जात, श्याम अब आओ भवन बहोर ।
6. आओ श्याम उर सोच मिटाओ, लागो पैयां तोर ॥
7. हरिजन हरिहिं मनाय (हरिचंद) विनय करत करजोर ॥

1. My heart is pining without Hari, Sāvan rains heavily.
2. Clouds have come in the roaring sky, all around peacocks scream.
3. In the dark night, the rain patters, my heart is frightened.
4. I spend the night sitting in thought; in restlessness, morning comes.
5. The rainy season has passed, now come Śyām, return home, come Śyām, sweep away the pangs of my heart!
6. Guide your steps here.
7. Haricand, the devotee of Hari, worships only Hari and prays to Him with folded hands.

Line 7. As in the majority of Bhārtendu's *kajrī*-s presented here, the last line, besides introducing the *chāp*, features the author as a Kṛṣṇa devotee that identifies with a *virahnī gopī*.

¹⁹¹ Agravāl n.d.: n. 4 p. 2.

B32 चलो सघन कुंज श्याम गावैं कजली¹⁹²

1. चलो सघन कुंज श्याम गावैं कजली ।
2. बहै शारद समीर झुकि आई बदरी ॥
3. मेघा गरजि गरजि, नभ करि रहे शोर ।
4. धुनि कोकिला सुहाई, बन बोल रहे मोर ॥
5. देखो चहुँदिशि श्याम, घटा श्याम रही छाया ।
6. बरसै रिमिझिम मेघा, सुख बरनि न जाय ॥
7. कुंजन डाल के हिंडोला, सखी नाचैं सब गाय ।
8. हम तुम झूलैं मिलि, सखि पेगिया झूलाय ॥
9. सुनि प्रिया के वचन श्याम उठे हरषाय ।
10. प्रिया डाल गले हार, चले अति हरषाय ॥

1. Let us go to the dense forest, Śyām sings *kajlī*.
2. The autumn wind blows and brings clouds.
3. Clouds thunder and the black sky roars.
4. The voice of the koel charms, in the forest the peacock cries.
5. Look all around, Śyām, dense dark clouds spread [everywhere].
6. Drizzle from the clouds, joy cannot be described.
7. From the branch of the arbour, a swing is hung, *sakhī*-s dance and sing.
8. We swing together; a *sakhī* pushes the swing.
9. Listening to the lover's words Śyām is delighted.
10. Throwing a garland on the beloved's neck, he proceeds joyfully.

Line 5. *Śyām...śyām*. The entire verse plays on the pun built on the double meaning of the word *śyām* as an epithet of Kṛṣṇa and as an adjective meaning 'dark'. Therefore, the first half of this line could also be translated as "Look all around [there is] darkness". Here, I opted to interpret '*śyām*' as an apostrophe to Kṛṣṇa, reprised at line 9.

¹⁹² Agravāl n.d.: n. 5 p. 3.

B33 बिजुरी चमकि चमकि चमकि डरवाये¹⁹³

1. बिजुरी चमकि चमकि चमकि डरवाये,
2. मोहि अकेल पिय बिनु जानि |
3. बादर गरजि गरजि अति तरजै,
4. पँच-रँग धनूहीं तानि |
5. मोरवा बैरी कडखा गावैं,
6. मनमथ बिरद बखानि |
7. पिय हरिचनद गरें लगि मारत,
8. जियाओ अरज लेहु यह मानि |

1. The lightning flashing again and again is frightening.
2. The beloved has gone without me, leaving me alone.
3. The clouds roar again and again and greatly scare me.
4. An arrow of five colours stretches [in the sky].
5. The enemy peacocks shout exultant songs.
6. Manmath rejoices.
7. Haricandra embraces the beloved: "Give me life, I am dying!
8. Take my prayer and fulfil it".

Line 1, 3 *Camki camki camki. Garji garji*. In the English translation, the iterative effect and onomatopoeias are lost. I attempted to convey the idea of a repeated action with the phrase 'again and again'.

Line 4. *Pañc raṅg dhanuīm. Dhanuṣ* (H.) means 'bow'. It can be read as a metonym for arrow, since the number 'five' may refer to the five flower-arrows shot to lovers by Manmath, mentioned in line 6. On the other hand, it is unusual to find a reference to Kāmdev in monsoon scene descriptions, since the god of love is usually associated with spring.

Line 5. Peacocks are defined as 'enemies' since their singing exacerbates the sense of loneliness of the heroine that without her lover cannot enjoy the beauty of the monsoon.

Line 6. *Manmath*. Another name of Kāmdev.

¹⁹³ Miśra 2016: 15.

B34 मोहि नंद के कँधार्ई बेलमाई रे हरी¹⁹⁴

1. मोहि नंद के कँधार्ई बेलमाई रे हरी |
2. बहे पुरवाई औ बदरिया झूकि आई रामा,
3. कुंज में बुलाई वृजराई रे हरी |
4. बँसिया बजाई सुनि सखि उठि आई रामा,
5. सब जुरि आई रस बरसाई रे हरी |
6. मिलु उर लाई प्यारी जपय को लुभाई रामा,
7. नाहिँ 'हरिश्चन्द्र' पछताई रे हरी ||

1. The beloved Kanhaiyā has beguiled me, *re harī*.
2. The Eastern breeze is blowing, clouds have gathered, *rāmā*.
3. In the grove, the king of Braj is calling, *re harī*.
4. Listened to the flute, the *sakhī*-s have woken and come, *rāmā*,
5. all together; it is raining *ras*, *re harī*!
6. Meeting in the heart, he beguiles the darling *rāmā*.
7. Hariścandra says: "I am no longer in distress", *re harī*.

Line 3. *Baṁsiyā* (≈ H. *baṁsī*). 'Flute'.

¹⁹⁴ Miśra 2016: 16.

B35 हरि बिनु बरसत आयो पानी¹⁹⁵

1. हरि बिनु बरसत आयो पानी ।
2. चपला चमकि चमकि डरवावत,
3. मोहि अकेली जानी ।
4. रात अँधेरी हाथ न सूझै,
5. मैं बिरहिन बिलखानी ।
6. 'हरीचन्द' पिय बिनु बरखा में,
7. हाथ मींजि पछतानी ॥

1. Without Hari rain has come.
2. Lightning flashing again and again frightens me.
3. Consider that I am alone.
4. I cannot even see my hands in the darkness of the night.
5. I, *virahinī*, pine.
6. Harīcand says: "Without my lover during the rainy season,
7. I wring my hands in anguish".

This *kajrī*, as well as the following one, outline a portrait of the emotional state of *virahinī* affected by the monsoon landscape. The rainy season is not pleasant, rather it sharpens the pangs of the lovelorn *nāiykā*.

Line 2. *Caplā*. 'Lightning' (BSK, s.v.)

Line 5. *Bilkhānī* (≈ Brbh. *Bikhāna*). 'To pine', 'to weep' (BSK, s.v.).

¹⁹⁵ Jain 2014: n. 53 p. 94.

B36 घर में कड़ी पछितात गुजरिया¹⁹⁶

1. घर में कड़ी पछितात गुजरिया |
2. अब लगी श्याम सुँदर नहीं आए,
3. दुखदाइनि भई रात अँधेरिया |
4. बैठत उठत सेज पर भामिनी,
5. पिय बिन मोरी सूनी अटरिया |
6. 'हरीचन्द' हरि के आवत ही |
7. बसि गइ मोरी उजरी नगरिया ||

1. At home, the cowherdess is wide awake with pangs.
2. Handsome Śyām has not come yet;
3. the dark night brings anguish.
4. The enamoured woman lies down and wakes up.
5. Without my lover the bedroom is empty.
6. "When Hari will come,
7. my desolate town will be inhabited" Harīcand says.

Line 7. *Ujrī nagāriyā*. The 'desolate town' is a recurring metaphor for the heart of the *virahinī*.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁶ Jain 2014: n. 55 p. 94.

¹⁹⁷ See A1, A12.

B37 मोहि ननद के कन्हार्इ बिल्माई रे हरी¹⁹⁸

1. मोहि ननद के कन्हार्इ बिल्माई रे हरी ।
2. वहै पुरवाई औ' बदरिया झुकि आई रामा,
3. कुँज में बुलाई ब्रजरार्इ रे हरी ।
4. बँसिया बजाई सुनि सखी उठि आई रामा,
5. जुरि आई रस बरसाई रे हरी ।
6. माधवी भी जाई जिय अति हुलसाई रामा,
7. कजरी सुनाई मनभाई रे हरी ।
8. मिलु उर लाई प्यारी पिय को लुभाई रामा,
9. नाहिँ हरिचंद पछताई रे हरी ॥

1. Kahnaiyā, the son of Nanda, has entangled me, *re harī*.
2. The east wind blows and the clouds descend, *rāmā*.
3. The king of Braj called me to the grove, *re harī*.
4. He played the flute, in hearing it the *sakhī* awoke and came, *rāmā*.
5. Jurī came and made *ras* rain, *re harī*.
6. Mādhvī joined and made the heart rejoiced, *rāmā*,
7. singing [this] *kajrī* and the mind was delighted, *re harī*.
8. May I meet him in my heart! The lover charmed the beloved, *rāmā*.
9. Harīcand is no longer in distress.

Line 1, 3. *Nand ke kanhāī, brajrāī*. Titles of Kṛṣṇa.

Line 5-6. *Jurī...Mādhvī*. Apparently, they are *gopī*-s' names.

¹⁹⁸ Jain 2014: n. 56 p. 95.

7.1.2 *Sāmājīk kajrī*: social aspects

B38 गंगा में चहुँ और से दिपहिँ दीप लखात¹⁹⁹

1. गंगा में चहुँ और से दिपहिँ दीप लखात |
2. सो सुरसरि छिपयो, जल नहीं नेकु दिखात |
3. आनि परत धुनिकान में, मधुर सुरन के संग |
4. तैसे ही कहुँ बजी उठत, सारंग राग मृदंग |
5. कबहुँ जुगीड़ा, नाच के, लेत बेसुरी तान |
6. आप हिलत, बाजो हिलत और हिलत जलजान |

1. All around [afloat] in the Gaṅgā votives are seen.
2. So many boats cover the river, [that] the water invisible!
3. Tunes drift to the ear, along with sweet melodies.
4. At the same time somewhere the sound rises, the melody of the *sāraṅgī* and *mṛdaṅg*.
5. Sometimes *jogīrā*-s dance and play a dissonant note.
6. He shakes, the player shakes and the boat shakes.

In this composition, Bhārtendu describes the Buḍhvā maṅgal melā of Banaras, as is made clear also by the reference to the singing of *jogīrā*-s, typically associated with spring and related to the genre of *caitī*. Curiously, this text is found in *kajrī* collections. However, the lack of specific genre markers facilitates the inclusion of this composition in the repertoire of different (literary) genres.

Line 5. *Jugīrā* ≈ *jogīrā*. A type of Bhojpuri folk song sung during *vasant*, at the time of Holi.²⁰⁰ Sometimes *jogīrā*-s are sung by men dressed as women (also called ‘*jogīrā*-s’).

Line 6. *Jaljān* ≈ *jalayān*. ‘Boat’, ‘vessel’.

¹⁹⁹Tivārī 2014.

²⁰⁰See B25.

B39 टूटै सोमनाथ कै मंदिर केहु ला न गोहार²⁰¹

1. टूटै सोमनाथ कै मंदिर केहु ला न गोहार |
2. दौरो दौरो हिंदू हो सब गौरा करें पुकार |
3. की केहु हिंदू कै जनमल नाहीं की जरि भैलैं छार |
4. की सब आज धरम तजि दिहलैं भैलैं तुरुक सब इक बार |
5. केहु लगल गोहार न गौरा रोवैं जार बिजार |
6. अब जग हिंदू केहु नाहीं झूठे नामैं कै बेवहार ||

1. The temple of Somnāth crumbles, no one is listening.
2. Run, run [to help] all Hindus, Gaurī is calling!
3. Is there anybody born Hindu? Are they reduced to ashes?
4. Has everyone abandoned his *dharmā*? Have they all become Muslim at once?
5. No one heard the call, Gaurī cries bitterly.
6. Now in this world, there is no true Hindu, they are only lying for the namesake.

The temple of Somnath, located in today Gujarat, is considered to be the first among the twelve *jyotirlinga* temples, and has been destroyed several times by Muslim invaders and rebuilt thereafter. This composition by Bhārtendu likely refers to the installation of Deogar gates at the tomb of the Turkic ruler. In 1842, after the *Proclamation of the Gate* by Ellenborough, it was ordered that the sandalwood gates from the tomb of Mahmud of Ghazni were to be restored to Somnath from where they were believed to have been stolen after the first plundering of the temple in 1204.

Line 1. *Ṭūṭhai somnāth kai mandir*. A clear reference to the plundering.

Line 3. *Char* (\approx H. *kṣār*). ‘Ashes’. The consonant cluster ‘*kṣ*’ is phonetically simplified by assimilation, in the palatal sound ‘*ch*’ according to a trend typical of eastern Hindi and a musical convention.²⁰²

Line 4. *Taji dihalaim* (\approx H. *tyāg karnā/denā*). ‘To leave’, ‘to abandon’.

Turūk (\approx *turk*), ‘a Turk’, ‘a Muslim soldier’ (MCG, *s.v.*). The term is recurring in Kabīr and *sant* songs to indicate Muslims. Even today it happens to hear in common language the term ‘*turk*’ to designate Muslims.

Line 5. *Rovaim jār bijār* (\approx *zār ronā*, ‘to weep bitterly’, MCG, *s.v.*). I have interpreted ‘*bijār*’ as a euphonic intensifier of ‘*zār*’.

²⁰¹ Miśra 2016: 16.

²⁰² See Ch. VII, 1.1.

7.2 *Kajrī*: the motif of *virah*

B40 सवान घन गरजे रे बालमुवाँ²⁰³

1. सवान घन गरजे रे बालमुवाँ
2. हमारे बलमवा बिदेसवा छाये
3. कोई नहीं बरजे रे बालमुवाँ |
4. कहत 'छबीले' छैल पति राखो
5. तनिक मोरी अरजे रे बालमुवाँ |

1. Sāvan clouds roar, oh beloved.
2. My beloved has gone to a foreign land.
3. No one has stopped [him], oh beloved!
4. Chabīle says: “Take care of my handsome husband.
5. This is my small request, oh beloved!”.

Line 3, 5. *Barje-arge*. Internal rhyme.

Line 4. *Chabīle*. It is the pen name of a *ṭhumrī* composer. His identity is unclear, but evidence suggests that he lived in Banares in the first half of the XX century. It is interesting to note that the insertion of the *chāp*—meaning ‘handsome’, ‘foppish’—enriches the text with a further nuance of meaning.

²⁰³ Jain 2014: n.3 p. 75.

B41 जिन जइयो सदी मोरे राजा तू बजरिया में²⁰⁴

1. जिन जइयो सदी मोरे राजा तू बजरिया में |
2. सवत तोहे लेइहें बोलाय
3. चढि जइहो मोरे राजा तू नजरिया में |
4. सावन की बहार मारे बिरहा कटार
5. तरसइहो मोरे राजा तू बजरिया में |
6. लागी तोरी आस कहे मानो 'देविदास'
7. रहि जाओ मोरे राजा तू अटरिया में |

1. Do not go always to the market, oh my king!
2. The rival will call you.
3. You will be captivated by her eyes, oh my king!
4. The beauty of Sāvan has hurt me with the dagger of *virah*.
5. I will long for you [when you will be] at the market, oh my king!
6. "Hear me, I yearn for you!
7. do remain in [my] bedroom, oh my king!" Devīdās says.

Line 1, 3, 5, 7. *More rājā tū*. The vocative/apostrophe occurs in combination with the alternate rhyme (*bajariyā/najariyā/bajariyā/aṭariyā*).

Line 2. *Sāvat* (≈H. *sautan*, *saut*). The female protagonist has always the nagging doubt that her lover is in the company of another woman.

Line 6. *Kahe...Devīdās*. As per the literary convention, the insertion of the *chāp* is functional to the composer's identification with the *virahinī*. The pen name Devīdās suggest the *śakta* orientation of the poet.

²⁰⁴ Jain 2014: n. 6 p. 76.

7.3 Krishnaite *kajrī*

B42 हमें ना भावे यारी रे साँवरिया²⁰⁵

1. हमें ना भावे यारी रे साँवरिया |
2. अबके छैलवा से निबहत नाहीं
3. रहत दिन चारी रे साँवरिया |
4. यारी करत जिया सब सुख पावे
5. छुटत लागे खारी रे साँवरिया |
6. कहत 'छहबीले' पिरीतिया की सजनी
7. नयनवा कटारी रे साँवरिया |

1. I dislike friendship, oh Dark One!
2. As of now, I cannot continue with [this] handsome.
3. Stay with me [only] for four days, oh Dark One!
4. When he becomes a friend, the heart finds happiness.
5. When he leaves, it gets distressed, oh Dark One!
6. Chabīle says: “The eyes of the mistress of love
7. are like daggers, oh Dark One!”.

Line 1. *Sāmvariyā* ≈ *sāmvāliyā* ≈ *sāmvā*. Lit. ‘dark-complexioned’.

Line 5. *Chuṭat lage*. I have translated it as “it gets distressed”, where “it” refers to “*jīyā*”, the heart (in this line ‘*jīyā ko*’ is implicit).

²⁰⁵ Jain 2014: n. 4 p. 75.

B43 अइले सवनवाँ घरे नाहीं रे सजनवाँ रामा²⁰⁶

1. अइले सवनवाँ घरे नाहीं रे सजनवाँ रामा
2. हरी हरी देखे बिन तरसे मोर नयनवाँ रे हरी |
3. हमके भुलैले अइसे भइले निरमोहिय रामा
4. हरी हरी जाय बसे कुबरी के भावनावाँ रे हरी ||
5. रतिया अँधेरी घेरि बिजुरी चमके रामा
6. हरी हरी गरज सुनावेला गगनवाँ रे हरी ||
7. कहेले 'जगेसर' पियवा नहीं घरे अइले रामा
8. खाई बिख तजब परनवाँ इ हरी ||

1. Sāvan has come, the house is not adorned, *rāmā*.
2. Without seeing Hari, my eyes pine, *re harī!*
3. So he forgot me, he became so insensitive, *rāmā*.
4. *Harī, harī!* He went to the house of the hunchback woman, *re harī!*
5. At night darkness spreads, lightning flashes, *rāmā*
6. *Harī, harī!* You can hear the thunder roaring in the sky, *re harī!*
7. Jagesar says: "My beloved did not come home, *rāmā*.
8. I will drink poison and die, *i harī*".

Line 4. *Kubrī* ≈ *Kubrī*. Lit. "a hunchback woman" (MCG, s.v.). The reference here is at *Kubjā*, the hunchbacked woman beautified by Kṛṣṇa.²⁰⁷

Line 8. *Tajab paranvām*: lit. 'the breath (*prāṇa*) will leave me', i.e., 'I will die'.

B44 नाहीं मनो बतियाँ तोहार मिठाबोलवा²⁰⁸

1. नाहीं मनो बतियाँ तोहार मिठाबोलवा |
2. तोरी मुँह देखे की पिरितिया सँवलिया,
3. कसके करेजवा हमार मिठाबोलवा |
4. 'रसिक किशोरी' रस बस इत आवत,
5. नित नित करत करार मिठाबोलवा |

1. He did not heed your words, oh soft-spoken One!
2. Looking at your face, I fell in love with you, oh Dark One!
3. You bound my heart, oh soft-spoken One!
4. Rasik Kiśorī fell in the power of *ras*.
5. Day by day strengthen it, oh soft-spoken One!

Line 4. *Rasik Kiśorī*. The pseudonym of the author is built on the wordplay between *ras* and *rasik*. *Kiśorī* means 'young woman'. The composer identifies with a *gopī* experiencing the *ras*.

²⁰⁶ Jain 2014: n. 7 p. 76.

²⁰⁷ See A13, line 9.

²⁰⁸ Jain 2014, n. 57 p. 95.

B45 बरसै बदरिया सावन की, सावन की मन भावन की²⁰⁹

1. बरसै बदरिया सावन की, सावन की मन भावन की |
2. सावन में उमग्यो मेरे मनवा, झनक सुनि हरि आवन की ||
3. उमड़ घुमुड़ चहुँ दिशि से आयो, दामिनि दमकै झर लालन की |
4. नन्हीं नन्ही बूँदन मेघा बरसै, शीतल पवन सुहावन की |
5. मीरा के प्रभु गिरधर नागर, आननद मंगल आवन की ||

1. Rain falls from the clouds of Sāvan enchanting the heart.
2. Sāvan enraptures my mind, listening to the tinkle of Hari's arrival.
3. The dear One came with the gathering of the clouds, the lightning flashes.
4. Tiny raindrops fall from the clouds; a gentle cool breeze blows.
5. The Lord of Mīrā is Giridhar Nāgar, his arrival is auspicious and blissful.

This *kajrī* is attributed to Mīrābāī and presents the conventional imagery dear to the poetess. This *pad* is found, with hardly any variation, in some editions of *Mīrā Padāvalī* (e.g., Mīrābāī 1969: 173).

Line 1. *Kī, kī*. The repetition of the postposition *kī*—at the end of every verse—creates an effective sound effect functional to the rhyme scheme.

Line 2. *Jhanak*. The clink or tingling sound announcing the arrival of Kṛṣṇa is a trope recurring in Mīrābāī's *pad*-s.

Line 4. *Śītāl pavan suhāvan*. The image of a 'cool gentle breeze' is another element associated with the coming of Kṛṣṇa.

²⁰⁹ Agravāl n.d.: n. 144 p. 85.

7.4 *Śaiṣa kajrī*

B46 गंगा मातु तुम्हारी माया, कर दो हम पर दाय़ा ना²¹⁰

1. गंगा मातु तुम्हारी माया, कर दो हम पर दाय़ा ना |
2. भूल चूक माफ़ कर रखो, भक्तन पर साया ना ||
3. पापिन को सुर धाम, भेजकर निर्मल काया ना |
4. ज्ञान मिला जो होत प्रातः निस गंगा नहाया ना ||
5. ध्यान किया जिसने इसको, जैम नहीं सताया ना |
6. शिव की जटा-जूट में जल, तुम्हारा लहराया ना ||
7. भजन आपका सीताराम के मन भाया ना || टेक ||

1. Mother Gaṅgā yours is *māyā*, have mercy on us!
2. Forgive our mistakes, and give your pardon, protect your devotees.
3. Send the sinners to the divine abode with a pure body.
4. Finds knowledge he who bathes in the Gaṅgā day and night.
5. He who meditates on the Gaṅgā, Yama does not him.
6. You wave in the water on Śiva's matted hair.
7. This *bhajan* pleases the mind of your Sītārām. *Ṭek*

Line 7. *Bhajan...na*. It is difficult to establish whether *bhajan* here refers generically to the practice of *bhakti* or the musical genre. I opted for the interpretation of *bhajan* in the sense of devotional song, although the meaning of the sentence is not entirely clear. After all, in modern Hindi, and already from the *sant*-s, the meaning of *bhajan* has narrowed down and general simply indicates the chanting of the praises of God, the singing of his names, and his qualities (Caracchi 2017: 279).

²¹⁰ Agravāl n.d.: n. 143 p. 85.

7.5 Amīr Khusro's *kajrī*

B47 अम्मा मेरे बाबा को भेजो जी कि सावन आया²¹¹

1. अम्मा मेरे बाबा को भेजो जी कि सावन आया |
2. बेटी तेरी बाबा तो बूढा री कि सावन सावन आया |
3. अम्मा मेरे भैया को भेजो जी कि सावन आया |
4. बटी तेरा भाई तो बाला री कि सावन आया |
5. अम्मा मेरे मामा को भेजो जी कि सावन आया |
6. बेटी तेरी मामा तो बाँका री कि सावन आया |

1. Ma, send my father, Sāvan has come!
2. Daughter, your father is old, Sāvan has come!
3. Ma, send my brother, Sāvan has come!
4. Daughter, your brother is a child, Sāvan has come!
5. Mom, send my uncle, Sāvan has come!
6. Daughter, your uncle is crooked, Sāvan has come!

This *kajrī* is traditionally attributed to Amir Khusro. However, the parallelism marking the strophic structure—with the simple alternation of the relatives involved in the celebration of the coming Sāvan—represents a typical pattern of folk songs.

²¹¹ Jain 2014: n. 69 p. 100.

7.6 Premghan's *kajrī*

The following section contains translation and analyses of *kajrī*-s extracted from Premghan's 1913 anthology *Kajlī Kādambinī*. An attempt has been made to offer a sample of the variety of *kajrī*-s composed by the author in different languages, including Urdu, Braj bhāṣā, Hindi in its variants of Khaṛī and Paṛī bolī, and various stylistic registers.

The compositions presented below preserve the original wording, punctuation, and headlines used by Premghan.

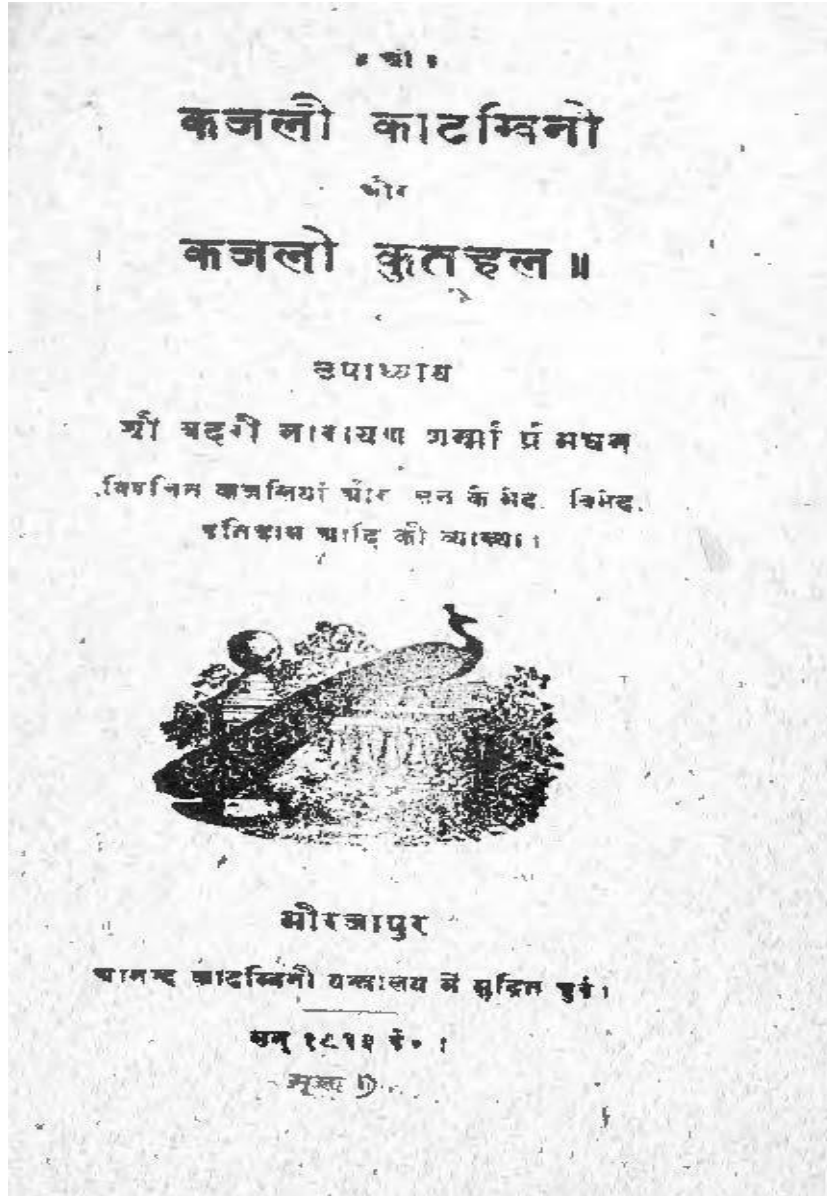


Fig. 4. The cover of *Kajlī Kādambinī* by Premghan, published in Mirzapur, in 1913 (source: microfilm, Universitätsbibliothek, University of Tübingen).

B48 झूले की कजली²¹²

1. झूलन कालिंदी के कूलन झूलन चलिये नन्दकिसोर ॥
2. वृन्दावन कुसुमित कदम्ब कि कुंजनी नाचत मोर ।
3. कूकत कोइल, चहँकट चातक, दादुर कीने रोर ॥
4. सरस सुहावन सोवन आयो, घहरत घिरि घन घोर ।
5. अँधियारी अधिकात, चञ्चला चमकी रही चित चोर ॥
6. मन भाई छाई छबि सों छिति हरियारी चहुँ ओर ।
7. लहरावत द्रुम लता चलन पुरवाई पवन झँकोर ॥
8. चलौ उतै जनि बिलम करौ मन ठानत हठ बरजोर ।
9. पिया प्रेमघन ! बरसावहु रस दै आनन्द अथोर ॥

Kajlī of jhūla

1. On the bank of the Kalindī, there is a swing, the young son of Nanda went to swing.
2. Vṛndāvan is all-blossoming; the peacock dances in the grove of *kadamb* trees.
3. The koel cries, the cuckoo sings, the frogs croak.
4. The charming and pleasant Sāvan has come. The roaring clouds spread thunder.
5. Darkness looms, lightning flashes, oh heart-stealing Kṛṣṇa!
6. The mind-pleasing greenery spreads splendidly all over the earth.
7. Trees and creepers wave when gusts of eastern wind blow.
8. Do not hesitate to go there, my heart urges me.
9. Premghan [says]: “Oh clouds! Give the abundant nectar of joy!”.

This composition is interestingly labelled as ‘*jhūle kī kajlī*’; however, elements typical of *kajrī* are predominant in the imagery reminiscent of *kṛṣṇa bhakti* and centred on the tropes of the monsoon

Line 9. *Barsāvahu*. This Braj bhāṣā term signifies clouds as ‘bearers of rain’.

Ras...ānand. In this instance, I have opted to translate *ras* as ‘nectar’. *Ānand* is the infinite joy, bliss and beatitude derived from experiencing the Divine.

²¹² *KK*, n. 21 p. 9.

B49 आई क्याही भाई भाई दिल को ये प्यारी बरसात²¹³

उर्दू भाषा

1. आई क्याही भाई भाई दिल को ये प्यारी बरसात ॥
2. घिरकर अब्र-सिया: ने बनाया इसकाँ दिन औ रत ।
3. अजब नाज़ अन्दाज़ दिखाती बिजली की हरकात ॥
4. छाई सब्ज़ी ज़मीँ पे गोया बिछी हरी बानात ।
5. खिले गुले गुलशन, क्या लाई कुदरत है सौगात ॥
6. शुरू रक्से ताऊस हुआ सह्रा में, शोरि नग़मात ।
7. गातीँ झूला झूल झूल कर नाज़नीन औरत ॥
8. चलो सैर को साथ जानि-जाँ मानो मेरी बात ।
9. बरस रहा है “अब्र” प्रेमघन गोया आबि-हयात ॥२५॥

Urdu

1. Oh brothers, has the rainy season dear to the heart come?
2. The clouds, spreading all around, have made day and night the same.
3. The flickering of lightning shows a strange winding course.
4. The greenery spreading on the soil is like a soft green cloth stretched out.
5. In the garden blooming with roses, what has nature brought as a gift?
6. The peacock has started dancing, with a charming sound.
7. The gentle woman sings swinging on a swing.
8. Come, let us go walking, darling, listen to my words!
9. ‘The Cloud’ Premghan [says]: “it is like it is raining the water of life”.

The characteristic sound of Urdu renders the language of these three compositions particularly melodious and musical. The perfect rhyme further enhances the rhythmic texture.

Line 8. *Jani jan*. Feminine for ‘darling’.

Line 9. *Abr Premghan*. The last line—including the *takhallus*—lends itself to different interpretations arising from the pun built within the semantic field of the word ‘cloud’. The term Premghan—literally meaning ‘cloud of love’—is taken up by the Urdu word ‘*abr*’. The identification of the author with a cloud lends itself to multiple interpretations: it can refer to the awareness that Premghan himself had about the role of the intellectual; it can also be viewed in a devotional perspective, in line with *kṛṣṇa bhakti* orientation, and thus the rain would be the symbol of the pouring love of the devotee. Lastly, it might simply represent a poetic conceit functional to the insertion of the author’s signature.

²¹³ KK n.25 p.10

B50 गैरों से मिल मिल कर मेरा क्यों दिल जिगर जलाते हो²¹⁴

दूसरी

1. गैरों से मिल मिल कर मेरा क्यों दिल जिगर जलाते हो ॥
2. क़सम खुदा की साफ़ बता दो क्यों शरमाते हो ।
3. यार प्रेमघन “अब्र” मज़ा क्या इसमें पाते हो ॥

Second

1. Why do my heart and my mind burn when he meets others?
2. Swear, tell me clearly, why do you feel ashamed?
3. Premghan, ‘the Cloud’ [says]: “What [kind of] fun is there, oh friend?”.

This second Urdu *kajrī* presents an unusual structure, extremely concise, with rather obscure content. It seems to be a monologue where Premghan himself takes the role of the *virahinī*. Such a literary convention can be interpreted as an expression of *kṛṣṇa madhuriyā bhakti*, in which the devotee experiences the Divine as a lover, therefore identifying with Rādhā or a *gopī*.

B51 वारी वारी जाऊँ तुझ पर दिलबर जामी सौ सौ बार²¹⁵

तीसरी

1. वारी वारी जाऊँ तुझ पर दिलबर जामी सौ सौ बार ।
2. दिखा चाँद सा चिहरा मत कर तीरे निगाह के वार ॥
3. इस बोसे के लिये सताते हो करते तकरार ।
4. खूब प्रेमघन अब्र मिले तुम हमें अनोखे यार ॥

Third

1. I will offer myself to you, Charming One, my protector, hundred times.
2. You showed me your moon-like face; do not shoot the arrows of your glance!
3. You torment and hassle me for this kiss!
4. The Premghan, ‘the Cloud’, says: “I found in you a beautiful unique friend”.

Line 2. *Cāṃd sā ciharā*. The moon-like face is a prominent recurring *upamā* (simile) to describe a charming beauty. Here the lover—although not explicitly mentioned—is Kṛṣṇa who is the moon for the *gopī*-s that like *cātak* birds subsist only upon moonlight beams.

Tīre nigāh. Eye symbolism is often of crucial importance in Krishnaite literature and the texts of semi-classical genres, especially in *ṭhumrī* and its related forms. Magriel and du Perron have perfectly described the role of Kṛṣṇa’s bewitching gaze: on the one hand, its mesmerising magnetism casts a spell on whoever makes eye contact with the god; on the other, it is “transcendentally penetrating” (Magriel and du Perron 2013: 186) as aptly expressed by the metaphor of piercing arrows.

²¹⁴ KK n. 26 p. 10.

²¹⁵ KK n.27 p.10.

B52 ऋतु आई बरखा की नियराई कजरी²¹⁶

तृतीय भेद

1. ऋतु आई बरखा की नियराई कजरी ॥
2. सब सखियाँ सहेलिन मचाई कजरी |
3. लगीं चारो ओर सरस सुनाई कजरी ॥
4. नभ नवल घटा की छबि छाई कजरी |
5. पिया प्रेमघन! आवो मिल गाई कजरी ॥

Third type

1. The rainy season has come, near is [the *tīj* of] *Kajrī*.
2. All the *sakhī*-s have enjoyed *kajrī*.
3. Everywhere is heard poignant [songs of] *kajrī*.
4. The charm of heavy new clouds overspread the sky, *kajrī*.
5. Premghan [says]: “Come beloved! Has arrived *kajrī*”.

This composition is centred on the multiple meanings of the word ‘*kajrī*’ that marks each verse: in the first and second line, it refers to the *Kajrī tīj*, in the third and last verse to poignant *kajrī* songs and, in the fourth line, to the black colour of the heavy clouds of *Sāvan*.

²¹⁶ *KK* n. 29 p.11.

B53 सजकर है सावन आया, अतिही मेरे मन को भाया²¹⁷

नवीन संशोधन

नागरी भाषा

अर्थात् खरी हिन्दी, अथवा खड़ी बोली

1. सजकर है सावन आया, अतिही मेरे मन को भाया ।
2. हरियाली ने छिति को छाया, सर जल भरकर उतराया ।
3. फूला फला बिटप गरुआया, लतिकाओं से लिपटाया।
4. जंगल मंगल साज सजाया, उत्सव साधन सब पाया ।
5. जुगनू ने तो जोति जगाया, दीपक ने समूच दरसाया ।
6. झिल्लीगन झनकार मचाया, सुर सारंगी सरसाया ।
7. घिरि घन मधुर मृदंग बजाया, तिरवट दादुर ने गाया ।
8. नाच मयूरोँ ने दिखलाया, हर्षित चातक चिल्लाया ।
9. सखियों ने मिलि मोद मनाया, दिन कजली का नियराया ।
10. पिया प्रेमघन चित ललचाया, झूला कभी न झुलवाया ॥

New revision

Urban language

i.e., standard Hindī or Khaṛī bolī

1. The month of Sāvan has come all adorned and delighted my mind.
2. The greenery has covered the ground; water showering from the sky has filled the pond.
3. Trees are loaded with flowers and fruit, entangled with creepers.
4. The forest is auspiciously decorated; everyone has found a way to celebrate.
5. The firefly has awakened the light, and the lamp has made everything visible.
6. The crickets chirp, the *sāraṅgī* plays wonderful music.
7. Dense clouds make a sweet drumroll of *mṛdaṅg*; the frog sings a *tirvaṭ*.
8. The peacocks show their dance; the joyful cuckoo shouts cheerfully.
9. *Sakhī*-s have met and frolicked; the day of *Kajlī* [tīj] is approaching.
10. Premghan [says]: “My heart yearns for the beloved; my swing has never been pushed [by him]”.

This *kajrī* appears under the wording “*nagrī bhāṣā*” and “*khaṛī bolī*” and, indeed—unlike many other compositions by Premghan—features a language less Sanskritised compared to the overall complex lexicon usually preferred by the author. All the typical natural elements enhancing the beauty of the rainy season are portrayed in these lines that

²¹⁷ KK n. 34 pp. 13-14.

are reminiscent of the Sanskrit *ṛtu-varṇana* genre. The adherence to clichés and formulas of poetic grammar associated with the monsoon is further reinforced by the presence of the *virahinī* longing for her beloved. Particular emphasis is conveyed by the rich synesthetic imagery evocative of the *rīti* poetic style.

On a phonic level, the composition is particularly dense with alliterations, internal and end-rhymes, both built on the syllable ‘-yā’.

Line 7. *Ghir ghan madhur mṛdaṅg bajāyā*. The *mṛdaṅg* (or *mṛdaṅgam*) is a two-headed drum—primarily used in Karnatak music—having a characteristic deep timbre. For this reason, through synaesthesia, clouds are personified and described as playing a sweet drumroll-like sound, skilfully rendered with the onomatopoeia.

Tirvaṭ dādur ne gāyā. If clouds are *mṛdaṅg* players, frogs are singers. Here, frogs are personified, their croak likened to the sound of a musical ornament. The *tirvaṭ* is a kind of *tarānā* i.e., a rhythmic vocal composition using abstract, meaningless syllables (*śuṣka-akṣar-s*) set in a medium or fast tempo. Amir Khusro (1253-1325) is generally credited with its invention.

Line 9. *Din kajlī*. The ‘day of *kajlī*’ is the *Kajlī tīj* (on *śrāvāṇa kṛṣṇa pakṣā tṛtīyā*).²¹⁸

²¹⁸ See Ch. IV, 1.

B54 पिय परदेसवाँ छाये रे—मोरी सुधिया बिसराय²¹⁹

तृतीय विभेद

स्थानिक ग्राम्य भाषा

अर्थात् बिखरी हिन्दी अथवा पड़ी बोली

Third type

Local rural language

i.e., 'decayed' Hindi or *Paṛī bolī*

1. पिय परदेसवाँ छाये रे—मोरी सुधिया बिसराय ॥
2. सूनी सेजिया साँपिन रे—मोरा जियरा डँसि डँसि जाय ॥
3. सब सजि साज पिया कै रे—ननदी छतियाँ ले लगाय ॥
4. रसिक प्रेमघन को किन रे—सौतिन लीनो बिलमाय ॥

1. My beloved settled in a distant land; he forgot to remember me.
2. On the empty bed a she-snake; she bites my heart again and again.
3. I was all dressed up for my beloved; the sister-in-law embraced me.
4. [Premghan says]: "Why not the passionate Premghan?". The rival keeps him waiting.

This *kajrī*—composed in the language described as 'local' and 'rural' or, better, 'corrupted' and 'decayed' (*paṛī bolī*)—presents all the features of a *virah gīt*: the female protagonist as a *proṣitabhārṭṛkā-nāyikā* deserted by her lover who is in a foreign land, the empty bed, and the rival in love. The 'rustic' overtones are suggested by the language as well as by the insertion of the *varṇ stobh* 're' dividing the verses into two units marked by the rhyme and by the presence of the *nanadī* as interlocutor.

Line 1. *Chāye*. (≈ H. *chānā*. 'to spread', 'to cover', 'to settle'). The choice of the verb '*chānā*' embodies the idea that the subject is a cloud. This line intimates an implicit comparison between a cloud dispersing and the elusive lover. After all, the pen name itself of Premghan ('cloud of love') plays on the juxtaposition of these two images.

Line 2. *Sāmpin*. A she-snake. It could refer both to the biting snake of the *virah* or—it seems the most appropriate interpretation here—to the *sautan*, the rival with whom the beloved is entertaining abroad.

Line 4. *Rasik Premghan*. The inclusion of the *takhallus* preceded by the adjective '*rasik*' prompts one to think that the '*piyā*' addressed to in this composition is not a generic lover but Kṛṣṇa. Furthermore, the last verse suggests that the rival keeps Premghan himself waiting for his Lord. It should be kept in mind that the author as Kṛṣṇa *bhakta* identifies himself with Rādhā or one of the *gopī*-s to experience the *madhur ras*. In this sense, Premghan is no different from the lovelorn protagonist.

Kin. (Brbh. 'why not?'). It might refer to the fact that no one can console Premghan whereas the female protagonist is embraced by the sister-in-law who, in this *kajrī*, takes on the role of the confidante usually played by a *sakhī*.

²¹⁹ KK n. 35 p.14.

B55 आए सखी सवनवां रे—सैययां छाये परदेस²²⁰

दूसरी

1. आए सखी सवनवां रे—सैययां छाये परदेस ॥
2. उस बेदरदी बालम रे—नाहीं पठावे सन्देस ॥
3. उमड़े अबतौ जोबना रे—नाहीं बालापन को लेस ॥
4. हेरबै पिया प्रेमघन रे—धरि जोगिनियां कै भेस ॥

Second

1. Sāvan has come, oh *sakhī*! My lord settled in a foreign land.
2. So cruel is my beloved! He does not send any messages.
3. My youth slips away; not [even] a hint of childhood remains.
4. Premghan [says]: “I will look for my beloved; I will wear the dress of a *yogini*”.

The second *kajrī* in ‘local rural language’ is a reprise of the previous one, presenting the same structure and formal features. Moreover, it exhibits motifs typical of *thumrī*, and tropes dear to Mīrābāī’s imager, built on the *virahinī* protagonist who, waiting in vain for her beloved to come back from a foreign land, resolves to take on the ascetic’s garb. A folk flavour is conveyed by the motif of the fleeting youth of the lovelorn protagonist.

²²⁰ *KK*, n.36 p.14.

B56 सैयाँ अजहूँ नाहीं आय! जियरा रहि रहि के घबराय²²¹

नवीन संशोधन

1. सैयाँ अजहूँ नाहीं आय ! जियरा रहि रहि के घबराय ॥
2. घिर घन भरे नीर नगिचाय | बरसैँ, पीर अधिक अधिकाय ॥
3. दुरि दुरि दमकै दामिनि धाय | मोरा जियरा डरपाय ॥
4. सोही हरियारी छिति छा़य | बिच बिच बीरबधू बिखराय ॥
5. मोरवा नाचै हिय हरखाय | पपिहां पिया पिया चिल्लाय ॥
6. कर पग मेंहदी रंग रँगाय | सूही सारी पहिरी सुहाया ॥
7. सखियां झूलैँ कजरी गाय | मैं घर बैठि रही बिलखाय ॥
8. झिल्लीगन झनकार सुनाय | दादुर बोलैँ रोर मचाय ॥
9. पिया प्रेमघन ल्यावो, हाय! अब दुख नाहीं सहि जाय ॥

New revision

1. My lord has not come, still now! My heart is fearful, again and again.
2. Clouds heavy of rain have gathered. It rains, the pain grows more and more.
3. In distance, lightning is flashing. My heart is scared.
4. Beautiful greenery covers the earth. In the middle, red-lac insects.
5. The peacocks are dancing, my heart is rejoicing.
6. On the hands and feet, the dye of the henna colours. I wore a red *sārī* and adorned myself.
7. The *sakhī*-s swung and sung *kajrī*; I sit at home sobbing.
8. I have listened to the chirping of the crickets. Frogs croak and make noise.
9. Premghan [says]: “Beloved do come! I cannot bear the pain anymore”.

Line 2. *Barsaim pir*. An alternative translation, that will not require to imply the verb ‘grows’ for the subject ‘pain’, could be ‘it rains pain more and more’.

Line 3. *Sūhī*. Adjective for bright red or saffron-coloured (MCG, *s.v.*). I have opted for the first meaning since a red *sārī* hints at wedding as much as do henna decorations on hands and feet.

Line 4. *Chitī chān*. Covering the earth. *Bīrbadhu*. (\approx H. *bīrbahūṭī*). Red-lac insects are a typical element of the depiction of the rainy season, the *indragopa*-s already found in Sanskrit *kavyā*.²²²

Line 7. *Suhī sārī*. The red *sārī* is the typical bridal attire. The image of the female protagonist dressed to meet her lover (*vāsakasajjā-nāyikā*) is a trope of Sanskrit poetry and drama.²²³

Line 8. *Bilkhāya*. The verb *bilkhnā* means ‘to make (someone) sob’ and ‘to be distressed’ (*Ibid.*).

²²¹ *KK* n. 37, pp. 14-15.

²²² See Ch. III, 2.3.

²²³ See Ch. III, 2.1.

B57 जैसो तू त्यों प्यारी तिहारी, लगी भली यारी रे साँवलिया²²⁴

ब्राजभाषा

अर्थात् अखरी हिन्दी वा पड़ी बोली

1. जैसो तू त्यों प्यारी तिहारी, लगी भली यारी रे साँवलिया ॥
2. कारे कान्हर के हित कुब्जा, बिधि नै सँवारी रे साँवलिया ॥
3. ज्यों चरवाहो तू त्यों चेरी, वह दई-मारी रे साँवलिया ॥
4. राधा रानी सँग नहिँ सोहैं, मीत मुरारी रे साँवलिया ।
5. प्रेम प्रेमघन सैम जन पाय, होय सुखकारी रे साँवलिया ॥

Braj bhāṣā

i.e. 'final' Hindī or Paṛī bolī

1. You are as lovely as is the friendship with you, oh Dark One!
2. For the mercy of black Kṛṣṇa, destiny beautified Kubjā, oh Dark One!
3. Like you, shepherd, so that maidservant is stricken by fate, oh Dark One!
4. Queen Rādhā without the friend Murārī is not glowing, oh Dark One!
5. Premghan [says]: "I succeeded in knowing love and became a bestower of joy, oh Dark One!"

This *kajrī* perfectly locates itself in a Krishnaite idiom. Kṛṣṇa is qualified with his traditional epithets: *sāṃvaliyā* and Murārī ('killer of the *asur* Murā') and is remembered for one of the most popular episodes of his life: the encounter with hunchbacked Kamsa's maidservant Kubjā. Being an ardent devotee, she is turned by the god into a beautiful woman.²²⁵

Line 2. *Kare Kānhar* (≈ H. *kale Kanhaiyā*). 'Black Kṛṣṇa'.

Bidhī (≈ H. *bidh*). 'Destiny', 'fate'.

Saṃvārī (≈ H. *saṃvārṇā*). The first meaning of the verb is 'to prepare', 'to fashion'. I opted for the translation 'to beautify' leaning towards the secondary meaning of the verb, i.e., 'to improve'.

Line 4. *Rādhā rānī... sāṃvaliyā*. The reference to the sadness of Rādhā in the absence of her beloved may hint at the doubt that Kṛṣṇa is in the company of the now beautiful Kubjā.

Sohai. (≈ H. *sohanā*), 'to shine', 'to look beautiful', therefore, 'to glow with beauty'.

Mī (≈ H. *mitr*). 'Friend'. I interpret '*mitr Murārī*' as the subject of the sentence and the negation '*nahim*' as referred to the preceding word '*saṅg*' to mean 'without'. Therefore, here another negation referring to the verb is implicit.

Line 5. *Saim*. (≈ H. *sab*), 'all'.

²²⁴ KK n.49 p.19.

²²⁵ See A13, line 9.

B58 सुनि सुनि सैययां बतियां²²⁶

द्वितीय विभेद

डेवढ

1. सुनि सुनि सैययां बतियां,
2. जियरा हमार डरै ! जियरा हमार डरै ना !
3. सावन मास चलन कित चाहत, करि छल बल कि घतियां;
4. जियरा हमार डरै ! जियरा हमार डरै ना !!
5. नहिँ बीतत बालम बिन बरखा, की अँधियारी रतियां;
6. जियरा हमार डरै ! जियरा हमार डरै ना !!
7. पिया प्रेमघन घन घिरि आये, सूतो लगकर छतियां;
8. जियरा हमार डरै ! जियरा हमार डरै ना !! ||

Second type

*Devarh*²²⁷

1. Listening to your words, my lord!
2. My heart gets scared! My heart gets scared!
3. Where did the desire go in the month of Sāvan? Only the deceit of your tricks [remains]!
4. My heart gets scared! My heart gets scared!
5. Without the beloved, the dark nights of the rainy season are not passing.
6. My heart gets scared! My heart gets scared!
7. Premghan [says]: “Oh beloved, clouds have gathered, my heart is wounded”.
8. My heart gets scared! My heart gets scared!.

Line 5. *Barkhā* (≈ Brbh. *barṣā*, Skt. *varṣā*). ‘Rainy season’, ‘rain’.

Line 7. *Piyā* (‘lover’). It could also be read as a vocative referred to ‘Premghan (‘‘Oh beloved Premghan’’). Therefore, according to this interpretation, the speaker here is addressing the author as if he was a *sakhī*.

Premghan ghan. The wordplay created by the onomatopoeic repetition of the syllable ‘*gh*’ is completely lost in the English translation.

²²⁶ *KK* n. 117 pp. 50-51.

²²⁷ In the context of folk music, the term ‘*devar*’ indicates the repetition of the *tek* or the *urān* or even an extempore expansion of the song by adding a *pad stobh* (see Tivārī 1980: 267).

8. Contemporary *kajrī*

Kajrī, as analysed so far, proves to be a highly versatile and diversified genre, intersecting different styles: its extreme flexibility has ensured its existence across time and space. Recent developments of the genre as a predominantly literary form show two main trends. On the one hand, *kajrī* voiced some social and political change: several are the song texts, sung especially on the occasion of *daṅgal*-s and specific contests. On the other hand, the lyrical aspects of the genre have prevailed through the inclusion in and fusion with other poetic forms. In this regard, I could observe that a peculiar hybrid genre has emerged from an encounter with *haiku*, a type of Japanese unrhymed three-line poem originating in the XIII century and still enjoying great popularity today. *Kajrī* shares some fundamental features with this Japanese genre: both the forms depict images from nature, the seasonal reference, and their reflection on the individual perception being their *raison d'être*. Furthermore, they are brief compositions, existing as stand-alone poems characterised by an intense, allusive, and elliptical style.

In the following section, I report some compositions extracted by a small anthology entitled *Kajrī* (2018) by the Bhojpuri poet and scholar Apoorva Narayan Tiwari whom I met during my fieldwork in Banaras, in 2019. The first paragraph presents a *kajrī* on the social impact of inflation and the rise of prices of goods, such as *pān* and *bīrī*-s, widely consumed in Varanasi. The second paragraph includes some *haiku kajrī*-s penned by the same author and presenting the leitmotifs of *kajrī* framed into the stylistic format of *haiku*.

B59 पान बीड़ी खइनी पे²²⁸

1. पान बीड़ी खइनी पे छायल मंहगाई पिया,
2. महुँगाई कबले जाई पिया ना ॥ टेक ॥
3. पांच रूपईया क एगो पान,
4. खइनी बिकै पांच रूपल्ली जहान ।
5. एक रूपईया क एगो बीड़ी पिया,
6. महुँगाई कबले जाई पिया ना ॥टेक ॥
7. सस्ता भयल बाय जान,
8. कहलावे आपन देस महान ।
9. आफत बीपत में परान पिया,
10. महुँगाई कबले जाई पिया ना ॥ टेक ॥
11. दान भीख देवे पे रुपइयवा,
12. नाहिँ लेवेलन पुजारी भिखमंगवा ।
13. ई बतिया बहुतै दुःखदाई पिया,
14. महुँगाई कबले जाई पिया ना ॥टेक ॥

On *pān*, *bīrī* and *khainī*

1. *Pān*, *bīrī*-s, *khainī* have become expensive, oh love!
2. How long will this inflation last, oh love? *Ṭek*.
3. One *pān* roll [costs] five rupees,
4. one *khainī* [roll] is sold for five rupees,
5. one *bīrī* one rupee, oh love!
6. How long will this inflation go on?
7. Life becomes cheap,
8. Let us call our nation 'big'!
9. In hardship and troubles life goes on, oh love!
10. How long will the inflation go on, oh love?
11. Not even for alms, is one rupee enough.
12. Neither the *pujārī*, nor the beggar will take it.
13. This matter is very distressing, oh love!
14. How long will this inflation go on, oh love?

²²⁸ Tivārī 'Banārsī Bābū' 2018: 30.

8.1 *Kajrī haiku*

B60 बटोहिया रे!²²⁹

1. बटोहिया रे !
2. ले जा सनेसवा
3. पिया आवें ना |

1. Oh wayfarer!
2. Bring the message!
3. My beloved came.

4. दिहऽ सनेसवा
5. बलमु घर आवें
6. रे बदरा ना

4. He conveyed the message.
5. My love came home,
oh cloud!

B61 झुला झुलत²³⁰

1. झुला झुलत
2. राधा बनवारी ना
3. संगे गोपी ना

1. A swing sways.
2. Rādhā, Kṛṣṇa Baṃvārī
3. with him the *gopī*-s.

4. रास राचावें
5. कान्हा मधुबन
6. संगे राधा ना

4. Dance the *rās*
5. Kanhaiyā in Madhuban
with Rādhā.

B62 बिन सजना²³¹

1. बिन सजना
2. बैरी सवनवा ना
3. कजरिया ना

1. Without my love,
2. Sāvan is the foe,
3. oh *kajrī*!

4. घेरी आइल
5. सावनी बदरिया
6. जिया भावे ना

4. Overspread came
the cloud of Sāvan
5. pleases the heart.

Line 6. The cloud “pleases the heart” since it conventionally plays the role of the messenger.

²²⁹ Tivārī ‘Banārsī Bābū’ 2018: 48.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*: 50

²³¹ *Ibid.*

B63 कजरी तीज²³²

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1. कजरी तीज | 4. गावे दादुर |
| 2. कजरी कै दंगल | 5. पी पी पपीहा बोलै |
| 3. हो मंगल ना | 6. कजरिया ना |
| 1. <i>Kajrī tīj.</i> | 4. Sings the frog; |
| 2. The <i>daṅgal</i> of <i>kajrī</i> , | 5. 'pī, pī' the cuckoo sings, |
| 3. how auspicious it is! | 6. oh <i>kajrī</i> ! |

B64 झुलुआ झूलै²³³

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. झुलुआ झूलै | 4. घेरे बदरी |
| 2. निमिया के छँहिया | 5. दुर्गा खेलै कजरी |
| 3. देवी मैया ना | 6. इहां गुजरी |
| 1. The swing swings | 4. Clouds overspread |
| 2. The shadow of the neem tree, | 5. Durgā plays <i>kajrī</i> , |
| 3. Devī Mā! | 6. here a cowherdess. |

Line 6. *Ihām gujrī*. Implicit 'plays *kajrī*'. This line introduces a parallel with the previous line: Durgā plays *kajrī* in the sky, overspread by black clouds, whereas the cowherdess plays 'here' on the earth. Parallelism is a feature of *haiku* poetry

²³² *Ibid.*

²³³ *Ibid.*

C. Jhūlā

*“Where the swing of love sways, there is the dense delight of an invisible wealth.
Where the river has no banks, there is neither coming nor going.”*

(C9)

C1 झूलना झूले राधा प्यारी; संग में कृष्ण मुरारी ना²³⁴

1. झूलना झूले राधा प्यारी; संग में कृष्ण मुरारी ना | टेक
2. कथिके पालाना कथि के डोरी कथि के गद्दया ना ||१||
3. झूलना झूले°
4. सोने के पालाना, रेसम के डोरी; चनन के गद्दया ना ||२||
5. झूलना झूले°
6. एक ओर झूले राधिका प्यारी; एक ओर कृष्ण मुरारी न ||३||
7. झूलना झूले°

1. The lovely Rādhā sways on a swing with Kṛṣṇa Murāri. *Ṭek*.
2. What is the seat of the swing made of? What are the ropes made of? What kind of tree is it?
3. Swaying on a swing...
4. Golden is the seat, silky is the rope. Sandalwood is the tree.
5. Swaying on a swing...
6. On one side, the lovely Rādhā sways, on the other Kṛṣṇa Murāri.
7. Swaying on a swing...

²³⁴ Upādhyāya 1990a: n.6 p.161.

C2 गढ पर परेला हिंडोलवा, सब सखि झूलना जाँयं²³⁵

1. गढ पर परेला हिंडोलवा, सब सखि झूलना जाँयं |
2. हम धनि ठाढि जगत पर ||१||
3. बाट बटोहिया तूहूँ मोरे भइया पिअवा से कहिह बूझाय |
4. गढ पर परेला रे हिंडोलवा सब सखि झूलन जाँयं ||२||
5. बाट बटोहिया तूहूँ मोरे भइया धनिया से कहिह बूझाय |
6. सखि संग झूलिहें हिंडोलवा जोबना के रखिहें छिपाया |
7. आइब हमहूँ छावे मास ||३||

1. “In the fort a swing is hung, all the *sakhī*-s are going to swing.
2. I, the bride, stand on the edge of the well.
3. Oh wayfarer, you too my brother, convince my beloved!”.
4. In the fort, a swing is hung, all the *sakhī*-s go to swing.
5. “Oh wayfarer, you too my brother, convince my lady
6. to swing with her *sakhī*-s and hide her bosom!
7. In six months, I too will come”.

This Bhojpuri *jhūlā* portrays the leitmotif of the separation from the beloved with an unusual variation of, both lovers being affected by the *virah*. The request to a wayfarer to convey the love message acts as a narrative device for a dialogue between the two protagonists.

²³⁵ Simh 1964: 149.

C3 झूला धीरे से झुलावा बनवारी²³⁶

1. झूला धीरे से झुलावा बनवारी,
2. अरे साँवरिया |
3. धीरे से झुलाव, मोरा जियरा डरत है,
4. लचके कदमवा की डारी, अरे साँवरिया |
5. अगल बगल, सब सखिया झुलात हैं
6. बिचावाँ में झूले राधा प्यारी, अरे साँवरिया |
7. राधे झुलत मोरा, कृष्णा झुलावै
8. निरवत सब नारी, अरे साँवरिया ||

1. Sway the swing gently Kṛṣṇa Baṁvārī,
2. oh Dark One...
3. Sway it gently, my heart quails.
4. The branches of the *kadamb* tree sway, oh Dark One!
5. Side by side, all the *sakhī*-s swing,
6. in the middle sweet Rādhā swings, oh my beloved!
7. Rādhā swings Kṛṣṇa rocks the swing,
8. all women watch, oh Dark One!

This *jhūlā* is very popular in the area of Varanasi and is often a part of *Banāras gharānā* musicians' repertoire.²³⁷ It is usually sung as a conclusion to a *khayāl* concert, especially during the month of Sāvan to which is associated.

Line 1. *Baṁvārī*: The term '*baṁvārī*' literally means, 'that who has the garland of sylvan flowers'. It is an epithet of Kṛṣṇa derived from the Sanskrit *vanamālin*, meaning 'he who wears a *vanamālā*,' i.e., a garland made of flowers and wild herbs'. These flowers and herbs, according to *Hindī śabd sāgar* (s.v.), are *tulsī*, jasmine, cockspur coral tree blooms, *pārijāt* and lotus blooms.

Line 4. *Kadamvā* (≈ H. *kadamb*). The *kadamb* tree is traditionally associated with Kṛṣṇa's love sports. Kṛṣṇa climbed upon a *kadamb* tree after stealing the garments of the *gopī*-s who were bathing in the river Yamunā (*vastra-/cīraharāṇa*) *līlā*. Furthermore, Kṛṣṇa used to sit on a *kadamb* tree branch to play his flute and call the cowherdresses. The shade of this tree offers the best site for love encounters with Rādhā and the *gopī*-s.

²³⁶ My transcription is based on a rendition of this *jhūlā* in *rāg* Khamāj and *Kahravā tāl*, recorded in April 2016 in Banaras.

²³⁷ See, for instance, the renditions by Chhannulal Mishra (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ezfNRXjh1cQ&list=RDzefNRXjh1cQ&start_radio=1), Girija Devi (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WlwnCNSoaVM>), and Soma Ghosh (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8HcO9TVZzuQ>). Accessed July 10, 2021.

2. *Sāhityik jhūlā*

2.1 Bhārtendu Hariścandra's *jhūlā*

C4 प्यारी झूलन पधारो झुकि आये बदरा²³⁸

1. प्यारी झूलन पधारो झुकि आये बदरा |
2. ओढौ सुरुख चुनरी तापै श्याम चदरा |
3. देखो बिजुरी चमक्रे बरसै अदरा |
4. 'हरिचन्द' तुम बिनु पिय अति कदरा |

1. Clouds are hanging low, the beloved came for swinging.
2. Wear the beautiful veil! Śyām is warmed in the shawl.
3. Look, lightning flashes, it rains in Ārdrā.
4. Haricand says: "Without you, oh love, I am tremendously distressed".

Line 4. *Kadrā*. (≈ Brbh. *kādar*) 'distressed', 'frightened'.

Line 3. *Ārdrā*. Literally meaning 'wet', 'moist' and 'green', it is the name of the sixth *nakṣatra* or lunar mansion in Hindu astrology.

²³⁸ Jain 2014, n.51 p. 93.

2.2 Premghan's *jhūlā*

C5 धीरे धीरे झुलाओ बिहारी²³⁹

1. धीरे धीरे झुलाओ बिहारी,
2. जियरा हमार डरै! जियरा हमार डरै ना !! || टे० ||
3. छतियां मोरी धर धर धरकत, दे मत झोका भारी;
4. जियरा हमार डरै! जियरा हमार डरै ना !!
5. लचत लंक नहिं संक तुमै कछु, हौ बस निपट अनारी;
6. जियरा हमार डरै! जियरा हमार डरै ना!!
7. दया वारि बरसाय प्रेमघन, रोक हिंडोर मुरारी;
8. जियरा हमार डरै! जियरा हमार डरै ना !! ||११९ ||

1. Sway the swing slowly, Bihārī!
2. My heart fears! My heart fears! *Ṭek*.
3. My heart is throbbing; do not give me a grievous blow!
4. My heart fears! My heart fears!
5. You do have no concern in holding my waist; you are just an utter fool!
6. My heart fears! My heart fears!
7. Premghan [says]: "The cloud of mercy has rained". Stop the swing, Murārī!
8. My heart fears! My heart fears!

Line 1. *Bihārī*. Lit. 'sportive', 'playful'. A name of Kṛṣṇa.

Line 3. *Chatiyām*. It may be in the absolutive form, probably indicating a vocative. In this case, it is made explicit in the second part of the phrase. The *gopī* protagonist of this composition is speaking to her heart asking it not to hurt her.

Dhar dhar dharkat. The onomatopoeic sound reproducing the sound of the beating heart throbbing with emotion could be rendered only tentatively and prosaically in English and the semantic value inherent to '*dhar*' would get lost in translation. It is interesting to note the great variety of words used to express the beating of the heart.

Line 7. *Anārī* (≈ H. *anār*). 'Unskilful', 'inept', 'foolish'.

²³⁹ KK n. 119 p. 51.

C6 झूलन²⁴⁰

तीसरी

1. भैयया अजहू न आयल तोहार छोटी ननदी |
2. बरसत सावन तरसत बीता कजरी के आइल बहार छोटी ननदी ||
3. सब सखी झूला झुलें गवैं, सावन, कजरी, मलार छोटी ननदी ||
4. पी पी रटत पपीहा, नांचत मोर किये किलकार छोटी ननदी ||
5. प्रिया प्रेमघन बिन एकौ छन, नाहीं लागै जियरा हमार छोटी ननदी ||

Third

1. Until now your brother has not come, oh younger sister-in-law!
2. The rainy month of Sāvan has passed in longing; the delight of *kajrī* has come, oh younger sister-in-law!
3. All the *sakhī*-s swing on swings in Sāvan singing *kajrī* and *malār*, oh younger-sister-in-law!
4. The cuckoo cries ‘*pī, pī*’, the peacocks dancing scream joyfully, oh younger sister-in-law!
5. Premghan [says]: “My heart does not stay a single instant without thinking of the beloved, oh younger sister-in-law!”

Line 3. *Malār*. A kind of Maithili and Braj *kajrī*.²⁴¹ Malhār is the name of a group of Hīndustani *rāg*-s associated with the monsoon, the most well-known of which are *rāg* Megh and *rāg* Miyām (kī) Malhār.

²⁴⁰ *KK* n.85 p. 36.

²⁴¹ Ch.V, 6.

3. *Nirguṇī jhūlā*

The compositions included in the following section stand apart from conventional *jhūlā* song texts. In fact, except for the denominations (*hiṇḍolā*, *jhūlnā*, lit. meaning ‘swing’ and ‘to swinging’) and metaphorical allusions to the image of a swing, no elements hint at the motifs or conventional imagery characterising the genre as described so far. Furthermore, it is important to note that several *bhakti* poets set spiritual teachings and devotional themes to *dhun*-s in the shape of folk songs as in the case of *jhūlā*-s attributed to Kabīr, Bullādās, and Lakṣmī Sakhī that exhibit the special symbolism associated with the swing.

3.1 Kabīr’s *jhūlā*

The following *jhūlā*-s in Sādhukkarī bhāṣā²⁴² contain in a nutshell Kabīr’s philosophical vision expressed through highly allegorical imagery. Kabīr’s verses used to be sung and were set to specific *rāg*-s. In the case of the *hiṇḍolā*-s presented below it cannot be excluded that they were sung in the music modes that became typical of the genre of *jhūlā*.

C7 हिंडोला²⁴³

1. भरम हिंडोलना झूलै सब जग आय |
2. पाप पुत्रि के संभा दोऊ मेरु माया मांनि |
3. लोभ मरुवा विषै भंवरा काम कीला ठानी |
4. सुभ असुभ बनाया डाड़ी गहै दोनौ पानि |
5. करम पटरिय बैठिकै को को न झूलै आनि |
6. झूलै गन गंध्रप मुनिवर झूलै सुरपति इन्द्र |
7. झूलै नारद सारदा झूलै व्यास फनिन्द्र |
8. झूलै विरंचि महेस सुक मुनि झूलै सूरज चंद |
9. आपु निरगुन सगुन होय के झूलिया गोविंद |
10. छौ चारि चौदह सात इकइस तीनि लोक बनाय |
11. खानी बानी खोजि देखहु फिर न कोउरहे |
12. खंड ब्रह्माण्ड षट दरसना छूटत कतहुँ नाहि |
13. साधु संत बिचारि देखहु जीव तरि कह जाहि |
14. रैनि दिवस न चंद सूरज तहाँ तत्त-पल्लौ नाहि |

²⁴² See Ch. II, 2.1.

²⁴³ Excerpted from *Kabīr sabada* (Simh 2002: 499-500).

15. काल अकाल प्रलै नहीं तहाँ संत बिरलै जाहिं |
16. तहाँ के बिछुरे बहु कलप बीते भूमि परे भुलाय |
17. साधु संगति खोजि देखहु बहुरि उलटि समाय |
18. यह झूलिबे कि भय नहीं जो होंहि संत सुजान |
19. कहँहि कबीर सत सक्रित मिलै तो बहुरि न झूलै आय ||

Hiṇḍolā

1. The entire world comes and swings on the swing of bewilderment.
2. *Pāp* and *pun̄ya* are the two uprights and *māyā* is the top bar.
3. *Lobh* is the crossbeam, the sensual objects are the black bees. Lust is the pegs that fix.
4. Auspiciousness and inauspiciousness are the ropes grabbed by both hands.
5. Who comes to the swing and does not take the seat of *karma*?
6. The host of Gandharva-s swing, the eminent *munī*-s swing, Indra, the lord of gods, swings.
7. Nārad and Śāradā swing; Vyās and Śeṣ, the king of serpents, swing;
8. Brahmā, Maheś, and Śukhdev swing; the sun and the moon swing;
9. Govinda himself, who is *nirgun̄*, becomes *saguṇ* and swings.
10. In the six [*darśānā*-s], in the four [*Veda*-s], in the fourteen [*loka*-s], in the seven [*dvīpa*-s that added to the *loka*-s make] twenty-one, and the in three worlds,
11. in [the words of all] the Scriptures: search there, then you will find that nobody remains.
12. Be it in the [nine] *khaṇḍa*-s or in the entire universe of *brahmāṇḍa*, be it in the six *darśāna*-s, nobody escapes.
13. Oh *sādhu*-s, oh *sant*-s! Meditate and look! Once a *jīva* has waded across, where does it go?
14. Where there is no night and day, neither moon and sun, nor the *tattva*-s.
15. Where [only] a few ones reach, there is no time there, neither the absence of time nor *pralaya*.
16. Separate from there, [the *jīva*-s] for many *kalpa*-s wandered on the earth forgetting themselves.
17. Searching in the company of *sādhu*-s, you will realise that reversing yourself, you can absorb again [into the Supreme Reality].
18. If there is a wise *sant*, he has no fear of this swing.
19. Kabīr says: “If you find a perfect *sant*, you will not have to come and swing”.

This composition shows the particular symbolic meaning that Kabīr attributes to the swing: the *jhūlā* is the emblem of the condition of all living beings entangled in the *saṃsāra*, hung to the illusory support of *māyā*, swinging back and forth in the circle of existence.

My translation relies on the commentary by Jayadev and Vāsudev Siṃh (2002). This *hiṇḍolā* is also included with slight variations in *Kabīr bījak* (Siṃh 1972: 192).

Line 2. *Pāp*, *pun̄iya*. They are considered mirror opposite, the former expressing the idea of sin, guilt, and demerit and the latter of merit and auspiciousness, resulting respectively from bad and good deeds.

Lobh. It expresses the concepts of lust, greed, and avidity.

Line 7. *Nārad*. The divine *muni* storyteller, wandering musician, and great devotee of Viṣṇu.

Śāradā. A name of Sarasvatī, the goddess of the arts, music, knowledge, and speech.

Vyās. The *muni* is considered the epitomiser of the *Mahābhārata*, in which he is featured as a character. According to the tradition, he is the systematiser of the *Veda*-s and compiler of the *Purāṇa*-s.

Phanindra. He is Śeṣ or Anant, the cosmic serpent, king of *nāga*-s.²⁴⁴

Line 8. *Birañci* (≈ *Virañcī*). Epithet of Brahmā, as the divine demiurge who made the world out of the informal *prakṛtī*.

Maheś (≈ *Maheś*). Another name of god the Śiva.

Sukh. (≈ *Śukh*). Also known as Śukhdeva, this *ṛṣi* is the son of Vyās and main narrator of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*.

Line 9. *Govinda*. An epithet of Kṛṣṇa meaning ‘cowherd’.

Line 10. This line is highly symbolic since it features only a sequence of numbers referring to elements that are so common for every Hindu to extent that they do not require to be made explicit.

Chau. ‘Six’. The number refers to the six *darśana*-s, the main Hindu philosophical schools.

Cāri. The number four recalls the four *Veda*-s.

Caudaḥ. Fourteen are the *loka*-s of Hindu cosmology made of the seven (*sat*) upper worlds—including the three (*tini*) worlds of the earth (*bhūḥ*), the intermediate region (*bhuvah*), and the sky (*svah*) plus the further four above them (*mahaḥ*, *janah*, *tapah*, and *satyam*)—and the seven netherworlds or *pātāla*-s for a total of twenty-one (*ikais*).²⁴⁵

Line 11. *Khānī bānī*. Alliterative compound.

Line 12. *Brahmāṇḍa*. Lit. ‘egg of Brahmā’. It is the cosmic containing all the universe.

Dvīpa-s. According to Puranic cosmology, they are the seven concentric circular continents (lit. ‘islands’) in whose centre there is the Jambudvīpa.

Khaṇḍa. The nine regions in which the *Bhāratavarṣa* is divided. According to the Hindu cosmology, the Indian land is placed in the centre of the seven *khaṇḍa*-s. (Upādhyāya 1978: 317-341).

Line 14. *Tatt*. The *tattva*-s are the elements or principles which, evolving from the material cause or *prakṛtī*, originated all the exterior and inner world.

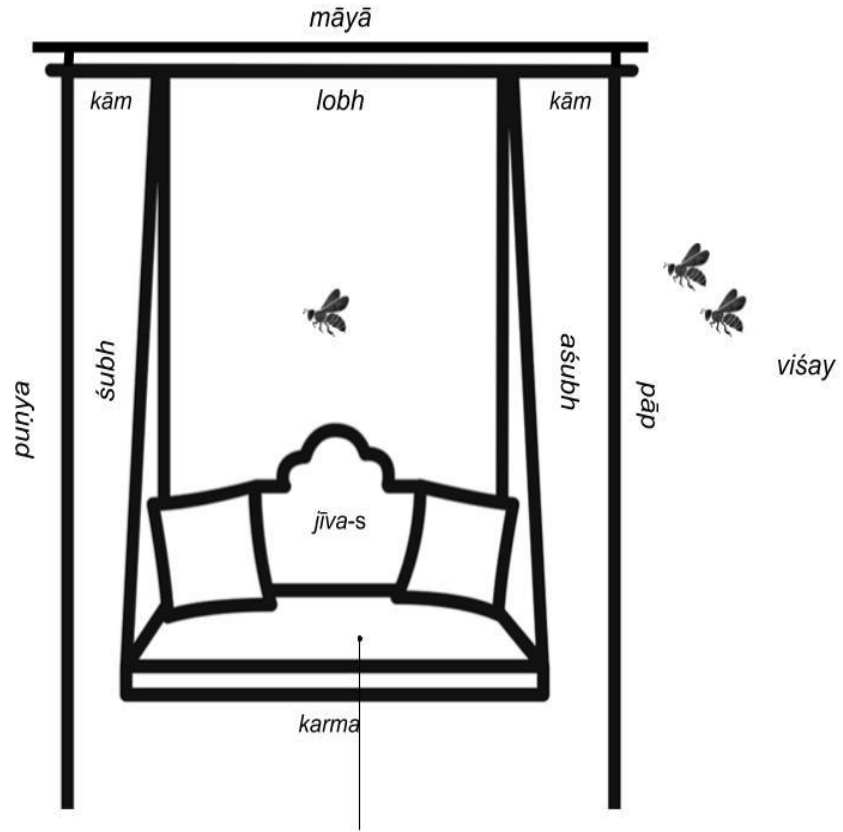
Line 15. *Pralaya*. The dissolution of the world occurring at the end of a *kalpa*.

Birlai. The term *birlā* is peculiar of *nāth* and *sant* chants and designates the restricted elite of those who, following the path of *bhakti*, gained the disentanglement from the *saṃsāra* and union with God. Further examples of the use of the term are found in *Kabīr granthāvalī* (Dās 1976, *sākhī* 24, 17) and *Kabīr bījak* (Simh 1972: 154).

Line 16. *Kalpa*. An aeon, corresponding to a day of Brahmā’s life, 1000 *yuga*-s or 4,320,000,000 human years.

²⁴⁴ See A10, line 4.

²⁴⁵ On the concepts of cosmic cycles, cosmogony, and cosmography see González-Reimann 2009: 411-28.



Gandharva-s, *munī-s*, Indra, Nārad, Śaradā, Vyās, Śeṣ, Brahmā, Maheś, Śukhdev, Govinda, six *darśānā-s*, four *Veda-s*, fourteen *loka-s*, seven *dvīpa-s*, three worlds, nine *khaṇḍa-s*, *bānī-s*

Fig. 5. The *hiṇḍolā* of Kabīr (source: Erika Caranti).

C8 हिंडोलनाँ तहाँ झूलै आतम राँम²⁴⁶

1. हिंडोलनाँ तहाँ झूलै आतम राँम |
2. प्रेम भगति हिंडोलनाँ, सब संतनि कौ बिसराम ॥टेक ॥
3. चंद सूर दोइ खंभवा, बंक नालि की डोरी
4. झूलें पंच पियारीयाँ, तहँ झूले जीय मोर ॥
5. द्वादस गम के अंतरा, तहाँ अमृत कौँ ग्रास |
6. जिनि यह अमृत चाखिया, सो ठाकुर हँम वास ॥
7. सहज सुँनि कौ नेहरौ, गगन मंडल सिरिमौर |
8. दौऊ कुल हम आगरी, जो हम झूलँ हिंडोल ॥
9. अरध उरध की गंगा जमुना, मूल कँवल कौ घाट
10. षट चक्र की गागरी, त्रिवेणी संगम बाट ॥
11. नाद विद की नाव री, राँम नाँम कनिहार |
12. कहै कबीर गुन गाइ ले, गुरगमि उतरौ पार ॥

1. The swing is where Rām swings as *ātman*.
2. The swing of the love of *bhakti* bestows peace to all *sant*-s.
3. The two uprights are the sun and the moon, the ropes are the *bañk nāli*.
4. Five beloved maidens swing where my heart swings.
5. Proceeding twelve inches [from the heart] one reaches the nourishing *amṛt*.
6. Those who have tasted this *amṛt* are considered the servants of the Lord.
7. Where *sahaj śūnya* is, is my family home; on my head is the *gagan mañḍal*
8. If we swing on the swing our two families of this and the other world will excel.
9. On the *ghāṭ* of the lotus of the *mulādhāra cakra* [originates] the ascending and descending flow of the Gaṅgā and Yamunā.
10. In the town of the six *cakra*-s is the path to the Trivenī *saṅgam*.
11. *Nād* and *bindu* are the boats, the name of Rām is the boatman.
12. Kabīr says: “Sing the Lord’s praises and you will reach the other shore through the path taught by the guru”.

In this composition, the description of a peculiar allegorical *jhūlā* is imbued with the symbolism dear to the *nāth yogī* tradition. Here the swing acquires a two-fold connotation, being both a symbol of the ‘going back and forth’ in the *saṃsāra* and the joyful aspect of the manifestation of God, the Bestower of bliss.

This *jhūlnā* fully embodies the symbolic imagery used by Kabīr and *hāṭha yoga* texts. In the town of the six *cakra*-s (the human body), Gaṅgā (*iḍā*) and Yamunā (*piṅgalā*) flow; the Name is the boatman steering the boats of *nād* and *bindu* through the rivers, sailing from the bank of the first *ghāṭ* (*mūlādhāra cakra*) until Trivenī (*ājñā cakra*), and from

²⁴⁶ Simh 2002: 432. This song is also included in *Kabīr Granthāvalī* (Dās 1976: 74, *pad* 18).

here up to opposite shore from where there is no coming back into the *saṃsāra* (Caracchi 2006: 516).

In the edition of *Kabīr Granthāvalī* by Śyāmsundar Dās, this song is set to *rāg* Gauṛī.

Line 1. ...*ātm Rām*. Rām takes up the *nirguṇ* form as *ātman*. The Rām of Kabīr is the *nirguṇ Brahman*.

Line 2. *Baṅk nāli*. Often in *sant* symbolism, it refers simply to the *suṣumnā*. Specifically, this ‘curved channel’ indicates in the terminology of *haṭha yoga* the subtle channel (*nāḍī*) linking the *sahasrāra cakra* to a cavity in the palate from where *amṛt* is emitted and from where the *yogī* who, through a specific yogic practice, is able to ‘drink’ it (Caracchi 2017: 349).

Line 4. *Pañc piyārīyām*. The image of ‘five beloved maidens’ is a metaphor for the *prāṇa* the ‘vital breath’ that, according to the mystic physiology of the *haṭha yoga*, flows in the body through the *nāḍī*-s. The five types of *prāṇa* are the *vāyu*-s (‘winds’) representing five kinds of breath, constituting the lower part of the subtle body (*sukṣmā śārira*), namely *prāṇa*, *apāna*, *samāna*, *udāna*, and *vyāna*.²⁴⁷

Line 5. *Aṅgul*. A unit of measure corresponding to a finger’s breadth. In *nāth* texts the *sahasrāra cakra* is placed at a distance of twelve *aṅgul*-s from the top of the head (*brahmarandhra*, lit. ‘the hole of Brahmā’); there, it is also called *dvādaśānta*

Line 7. *Sahaj śūnya*. Here it likely indicates the *sahasrāra cakra*, also called *śūnya cakra* or *gagan maṇḍal*. This phrase is recurrently used by *nāth*-s and *sant*-s to mean the absolute and ultimate reality as intrinsic to man as inborn (*saha-ja* lit. ‘born together’) in himself.

Line 9. *Kaṃval*. Every *cakra* is depicted as a lotus flower with a different number of petals.

Mūlādhāra cakra. It is the root *cakra* where sleeping Kuṇḍalinī lies.

Gaṅgā, Jamunā. Here the two rivers symbolise the *nāḍī*-s, *ida*, and *piṅgala*.

Line 10. *Triveṇī saṅgam*. In *haṭha yoga* symbolism, often present in *nāth* and *sant* songs, the ancient name of the city of Prāyāg—rising at the confluence of the rivers Ganges, Yamuna, and Sarasvati—is the mystic meeting point of the three *nāḍī*-s, *ida* (Gaṅgā), *piṅgalā* (Yamunā), and *suṣumnā* (Sarasvatī). Triveṇī is the ‘city’ placed in the correspondence to the sixth *cakra* (*ājñā cakra*).

Line 11. *Nād, bindu*. *Nād* is the *anahad nād* the primordial ‘unstruck sound’ causeless, not produced, all-pervading, and eternal that originated the entire universe. The *bindu* is the point of pure light in which the sound concentrates. The concentration on *nād* and *bindu* allows the *yogī* to reach the state of *samādhī*. For this reason, they are compared to boat sailing towards the experience of the absolute guided by the name of Rām, word par excellence.

Line 12. *Uttarau pār*. ‘Reaching the other shore’ is a symbol of *mokṣa*.

²⁴⁷ For an in-depth description of *prāṇa* and *vāyu*-s see White 1996: 22.

3.2 Bullā Śah's *jhūlā*

C9 झूलना²⁴⁸

१.

1. जहँ आदि न अंत मध्द है रे, जहँ अलख निरंजन है भेला ॥१॥
2. जहँ बेद कितेब न भेद है रे, नहिँ हिन्दू तुरुक न गुरु चेला ॥२॥
3. जहँ जीवन मरन न हानि है रे, अगम अपार में जाय खेला ॥३॥
4. बुल्ला दास अतीत यों बोलई, यारी सतगुरु सत सब्द देला ॥४॥

२.

1. हिँडोलना झूलना रे, जहँ अलख धनी की मौज घनी ॥१॥
2. तहँ वार पार दरियाव नहिँ, नाहिँ आवन नाहिँ जानी ॥२॥
3. अचल अमर घर बैठि के रे, मगन भयो नहिँ ख्याल अपनी ॥३॥
4. बुल्ला दास अतीत यों बोलै, उलटि कँवाल गगन आनी ॥४॥

Jhūlnā

1.

1. Where there is neither beginning, nor end, nor middle, there is the encounter with the *Nirañjan*.
2. Where there is no difference between *Veda* and *Qur'an*, neither between Hindu and Muslim, master and disciple.
3. Where nothing is lost neither to live nor to die, there is played the unreachable and limitless game.
4. The *atīt* Bullādās says: “The *satguru* Yārī gave me the true Word”.

2.

1. Where the swing of love sways, there is the dense delight of an invisible wealth.
2. Where the river has no banks, there is neither coming nor going.
3. Sitting in the unmovable eternal home, I became completely absorbed; I do not care about myself.
4. The *atīt* Bullādās says: “I have come to the upside-down lotus in the sky”

In this composition, the only explicit mention to the swing—the *hiṇḍolā* in the second *pad*—is evocative of the devotion iconically linking the earth and the sky, leading to the transcendence of any duality and, therefore, to the identification of *atmān* and *brahman*. It cannot be excluded that these verses were likely sung in the style of a *jhūlā*, set to a *rāg* and *tāl*, or simply a *dhun*, typical of the genre. Furthermore, it is to be noted that Bullādā, like other *sant*-s, composed *basant* songs (Lorenzen 1996: 162).

²⁴⁸ Bullā Saheb 1979: n. 1-2, p. 29.

This composition in Sādhukkarī bhāṣā is structured in two *pad*-s characterised by rhyming couplets, alliteration stressing the densely symbolic and metaphorical language, characteristic of *sant* poetry.

1.

Line 1. *Nirañjan*. Literary meaning ‘devoid of *añjan*’, i.e., ‘without stain’, ‘spotless’, ‘pure’. The term—particularly difficult to translate—is a designation of the absolute recurring in *nirguṇī* texts, especially in the *Kabīr granthāvalī* (Lorenzen 1996: 218).

Line 3. *Khelā*. Terms belonging to the semantic field of ‘game’—therefore an expression of the doctrine of the *līlā*—are frequent in the texts of the *sant*-s and are related to the concept of ‘*sahaj*’, the spontaneity and naturalness inherent to the absolute present in the inner self.

Line 4. *Atīt*. The appellative indicates “one who has got through or got over or beyond” (MW, *s.v.*) the worldly ties of the *saṃsāra* and achieved the ultimate liberating knowledge. *Atīt* is a synonym of *avadhūta*.

Yārī satgurū...sat śabd. Yārī Sāhab (died c. 1684) was Bullā Sāhab’s guru and first important poet of the Bhurkura lineage (Lorenzen 1996: 270). The *satguru* is the divine Master or God himself. The guidance of the inner guru becomes concrete and tangible through the guru in human form who is the visible manifestation of divine *Satguru*: the two gurus often overlay and merge. The ‘true word’ of the guru (*sat śabd*) is for the disciple the most powerful means to defeat death (Caracchi 2017: 145).

2.

Line 3. *Ghar*. The ‘house’ is both the heart, as the ideal abode of the *ātman*, and the *sahasrāra*, the ‘upside-down lotus’ which the *yogī* has to ascend to. The *Satguru* reveals himself in the ‘inner house’, in the cave of the heart (*Ibid.*)

Line 1. *Taham*. The river (*dariyāv*) referred to here is the *saṃsāra*, the cyclic flow of birth and death. Across the river—“where the river has no banks”—there is *mokṣa*.

Line 4. *Ulṭī kaṃval*. The ‘upside-down lotus’ is the representation of the *sahasrāra cakra*. The ‘thousand-petalled lotus’ is located at the top of the head.

Gagan. In *sant* and *nāth* language, the term ‘*gagan*’ usually designates the *sahasrāra*, also called *gagan maṇḍal*. Furthermore, ‘*gagan*’ can indicate the sublime state (*avasthā*) attained by the *yogī* when the *śaktī* in the form of *kuṇḍalinī* reaches the *sahasrāra*, reuniting with Śiva, the absolute bliss, transcending every duality (*Ibid.*: 245).

3.3 Lakṣmī Sakhī's *jhūlā*

The poet and *sant* Lakṣmī Sakhī (1840-1913), belonging to the *paramparā* of Kabīr, composed several poems, including *kajrī*-s, in Bhojpuri, considered as important contributions to literary production in this language. The following *jhūlā* features some themes dear to the *sant* tradition. In line with the symbolism used by Kabīr, it portrays the swing as a metaphor of the blissful experience of the ultimate reality attained by the *yogī*.

C10 लागेला हिंडोलवा से अमरपुर में²⁴⁹

1. लागेला हिंडोलवा से अमरपुर में
2. झूलेला सन्त सुजान |
3. चलु सखियन सुन्दर वर देखे
4. खोलि लेहु गगन पेहन |

1. The swing is hung in the immortal city.
2. The wise *sant*-s swing,
3. Oh *sakhī*-s! Let us go and see the handsome groom!
4. Let us open the cover of the sky!

Line 3. *Sundar var*. I interpret 'var' as a noun, meaning 'groom'. Another possible translation could be 'the very handsome one'.

Line 4. *Kholi...gagan pehan*. The 'cover of the sky'. This verse alludes to the 'opening' of the *gagan maṇḍal*, or *sahasrāra*, the last *cakra*.

²⁴⁹ Jain 2014: 62

Conclusion

In order to illustrate the multitextured character of the intermediate forms examined in this work, I have focused on texts as a privileged area in which complex and, at times, contradictory fluxes can be noted. My approach to observation is articulated from a micro-macro perspective. In other words, the lyrics represent the starting point for general remarks and for identifying conventions, recurring patterns, and constant features.

I began my discussion by problematising existing definitions of some fundamental musicological concepts in an attempt to depart from stereotypes, reconceptualise dichotomies, and stress the descriptive purpose and instrumentality of labels, provided the awareness of their implications exists.

The present study intends to enhance the understanding of music and lyrics that are yet to receive the deserved scholarly attention and would unveil some unexplored avenues of song texts. Given the scarcity of studies precisely dedicated to the forms analysed here, I documented in detail the genres of *caitī*, *kajrī*, and *jhūlā* and contextualised them first against the backdrop of Hindustani music culture and, secondly—more specifically—within the so-called ‘intermediate sphere’ in order to provide both an exhaustive description and a theoretical framework.

Through the translation and analysis of selected compositions, I have presented *caitī*, *kajrī*, and *jhūlā* as instructive examples of the extreme richness and diversification of the intermediate music sphere. For each genre, song texts related to different styles have been supplied to illustrate their polymorphism. The ‘intra-genre heterogeneity’, besides being the outcome of a process of a functional shift occurring in traditional music genres adapting to new socio-cultural contexts (Nettl 1983, Merriam 1964, Henry 1991), turns out to be paradigmatic, at a macro-level, of the fluidity of certain categories and conceptualisations in the Indic milieu. In this regard, the process of translation to be meant in its broadest sense—i.e., as ‘bringing across’, ‘transferring’, thus conveying meanings, concepts, and ideas through different media throughout time and space—has been addressed. Furthermore, given its very nature, intermediate music is fraught with tensions that require a broadening of the discourse on the entire Indian cultural landscape. Some aspects touched upon include the liminality of regional and pan-regional elements occurring as a part of a wider process of cultural transformation which is often imperceptible, especially from within the tradition. In the same light, the unfolding of various musical communities and recipients of music has been considered. Specifically,

intermediate forms in addressing a wide audience made of different social strata become a territory where opposite tendencies can be observed (Manuel 2015b).

In addition, I consider the following modern developments worthy of note. The growth of *filmī* and popular music markets—beginning in the 1980s and ‘90s—remarkably facilitated the dissemination of regional genres whose elements are likely to fuse with musical ideas typical of other music forms (Booth and Shope 2013: 14). Indeed, the genres taken into consideration in this dissertation have been mediated by new modes and contexts of entertainment. Furthermore, intermediate, and semi-classical music offer models on which new music expressions can be based. Modern and contemporary styles constantly take shape and mould themselves, enriching these forms with different themes that offer a broader scope for reflection and elaboration. The inclusion of their melodies in a number of movies confirms such a tendency and at the same time prompts a reflection on phenomena of literary, lyrical, and technological transformation. Adaptations and hybridisation of forms that were originally confined to the domain of orality into popular music have ensured their survival, liveliness, and led to their development into literary genres as well.

The essence of the music genres examined here, for more than a single reason, leads to a reflection on ways of reckoning time. As aptly stated by T.N. Madan speaking of *bārahmāsā*, “if one listens to these songs carefully, with the bent ear, as it were, they may perhaps provide insights into the structure and significance of lived experience in the Indian setting” (Madan 1986: V). Indeed, the cycle of seasons with their related festivals and rituals, the sharpness of the *virah*, the joy of anticipation in love, the feeling of an ebbing youth, and ephemerality of pleasure prompted by the lyrics offer an alternative perception of time and life: a time that is not punctuated by dates but is rather signified by the depth of experience of individuals that is at the same time a collective feeling, a sense of identity and recognition finding expression in music. The interrelation of the music forms analysed in this work with various cultural practices and phenomena is all the more relevant. The voicing of gender issues, subaltern narrative, and protest make these genres especially interesting and valuable also in the domain of both post-colonial and gender studies. Several composers, performers, protagonists, and audiences of the intermediate music were—and still are—women often from rural backgrounds that for long have been neglected by history as ‘subalterns’. Conventional motifs and theoretical frameworks, such as the picturisation of the *virah*, legitimise the expression of female desire. The longing of a lovelorn heroine lamenting her solitude becomes a medium for

raising the social issue of strife in the daily life of women and subalterns. Intermediate and, to a great extent, folk songs continuously offer new spaces and expressive possibilities thanks to their adaptive and flexible nature deeply interrelated with multifaceted aspects of life.

The function of the music as a vehicle of spiritual and philosophical teachings, their link with rituality, and their role in the debate on and between religions—from a political and nationalistic perspective as well—stresses the importance of researching marginalised musical expressions.

Finally, the wide-ranging linguistic heterogeneity of these forms—spanning from Braj bhāṣā to Bhojpuri and regional idioms—along with the variety of registers have been extensively analysed in connection with multifarious dynamics merging into music.

For all the above-explained reasons, new interpretative perspectives on Hindustani intermediate music forms can represent not only a compelling investigation in a domain rather neglected by scholarly attention but can also shed light on the peculiar interplay between music and words as an enactment of complex and multi-layered dimensions encompassing, among others, literary, social, ritual, and religious meanings

Appendix

The intermediate (*thumrī*-related) genres—An overview

| Genre | Season | Months | | Main motifs | Types | Typical <i>rāg</i> -s and <i>tāl</i> -s (in [<i>ardh</i>]śāstrīya forms) | Related religious festivals |
|--------------|-----------------------------|---------|---------|--|--|---|--|
| <i>horī</i> | <i>vasant</i> spring | Phāgun | Feb-Mar | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ frolicsome play of Kṛṣṇa, Rādhā and the <i>gopī</i>-s or mundane characters smearing each other with coloured powder | <i>kaccī horī</i> <i>pakkī horī (horī - dhamār)</i> | <i>rāg</i> -s: Pīlū, Tilak Kāmod, Kāfi, Toḍī, Purvī, Bharavī, Khamāj, Kalyān, Tilaṅg <i>tāl</i> -s: Rūpak, Kahravā | Holī (from Basant pañcamī to the first Thursday after Holī) |
| <i>caitī</i> | <i>vasant</i> spring | Phāgun | Feb-Mar | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>saguṇī bhakti</i> (Ramaite, Kṛṣṇaite, śaiva, śakta) ▪ <i>nirguṇī bhakti</i> ▪ beauty of nature in the spring ▪ drowsiness (sleep and intoxication) ▪ <i>virah</i> ▪ social aspects and issues (<i>gaunā</i>, child marriage, condition of women, migrating husbands, family relationships, daily village life) | <i>khaṛī</i> <i>jhalkuṭiyā</i> <i>khāñjariyā</i> <i>ghāṇṭo</i> <i>caitā gaurī</i> (<i>ardh</i>)śāstrīya <i>sāhityik</i> | <i>rāg</i> -s: Pīlū, Des, Tilak Kāmod, Gārā, Jaijivanti, Khamāj, Kāfi, Tilaṅg <i>tāl</i> -s: Rūpak, Kahravā | Rāmanavmī Chaṭh vrat (Caitrī chaṭh) |
| | | Cait | Mar-Apr | | | | |
| <i>kajrī</i> | <i>ṛṣu varṣā</i> monsoon | Āsāṛh | Jun-Jul | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>saguṇī bhakti</i> (Ramaite, Kṛṣṇaite, śaiva, śakta) ▪ <i>nirguṇī bhakti</i> ▪ beauty of nature during the monsoon ▪ <i>virah</i> ▪ social aspects and issues (child marriage, family relations, economic crisis the conditions of workers) ▪ nationalism ▪ political commentary | <i>ḍhunmuniyā</i> <i>śāstrīya</i> <i>sāhityik</i> <i>śāyṛī</i> <i>daṅgalī</i> <i>hadīsī</i> <i>nirguṇī</i> <i>saguṇī</i> <i>sāmājik</i> <i>rāṣṭrīya</i> <i>Phaṭkā</i> or <i>karkhā</i> <i>Jotū</i> or <i>barjastā</i> | <i>rāg</i> -s: Megh, Megh Malhār, Pīlū, Tilak Kamod, Pahārī, Jhiñjhotī, Sāraṅg <i>tāl</i> -s: Tintāl, Dādrā, Kahravā | Kajlī tīj (Haritālikā tīj, būṛhī tīj or Satva tīj) |
| | | Sāvan | Jul-Aug | | | | |
| | | Bhadhoṃ | Aug-Sep | | | | |
| <i>jhūlā</i> | <i>ṛṣu varṣā</i> monsoon | Āsāṛh | Jun-Jul | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>nirguṇī bhakti</i> ▪ swings hung from trees ▪ frolicsome play of women in the rain ▪ couple of lovers/Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa swaying on swings | common <i>jhūlā</i> <i>nirguṇī jhūlā</i> <i>saguṇī jhūlā</i> | <i>rāg</i> -s: Megh, Megh Malhār, Sāraṅg (Vṛṇḍavanī Sāraṅg), Pīlū, Khamāj, Hiṇḍol <i>tāl</i> -s: Dādrā, Kahravā | Jhūlan Yātrā, Jhūlan Utsav, Jhūlan Līlā Hiṇḍolā Utsav |
| | | Sāvan | Jul-Aug | | | | |
| | | Bhadhoṃ | Aug-Sep | | | | |

Index of main characters and key motifs

In the following table, all synonyms and synonymic expressions referring to the main characters and core motifs of the song texts analysed in this work are grouped under English headwords. Each expression is followed by its derivation, meaning, and relevant references. For derivations from U., A., and P., I have followed MCG, whereas with the denomination ‘Skt.’ I have indicated words retaining their Sanskrit form (*tatsam*).

Beloved

| Words in the texts | Derivation and meaning | References |
|--------------------|---|--|
| कुँवर | (Skt.) prince | A2, A6, A23 |
| छैलवा | (Bhoj.) handsome | B42 |
| दिलबर | (P.) charming one | B51 |
| ननद जी के भाय | (H.) brother of the sister-in-law (husband) | B11 |
| पति | (Skt.) husband | B40 |
| पिया | (H.) m. beloved | A8, A10, A14, A15, A17, A18, A19, A20, A22, A28, A34, A37, A41, B10, B11, B12, B15, B16, B22, B27, B48, B52, B53, B54, B55, B56, B58, B59, B60 |
| बलमा | — | A11, B10 |
| बलमुआ | (Bhoj.) — | A19, A24, A29 |
| मिठाबोलवा | (Bhoj.) soft-spoken one | B44 |
| राजा | (Skt.) king | B8, B41 |
| राजावा | (Bhoj.) — | B18 |
| सँइया | — | A26, A30 |
| सैयाँ | (Brbh.) m. lord, lover, husband | B56 |
| सैययां | — | B55, B58 |

Cloud

| Words in the texts | Derivation and meaning | References |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| अन्न | (U.) m., cloud | B49, B50, B51 |
| घटा | (Skt.) m., dense cloud | B12, B16, B32, B52 |
| घन | (Skt.) m., cloud, cloudbank | B12, B40, B48, B53, B56, B58 |
| बदरिया | (Bhoj.) m., cloud | B11, B12, B14, B21.1, B21.2, B21.3, B34, B37, B45, B62 |
| बरसावहु | (H.) m., 'carrier of rain' | B48 |
| बादल | (A.) m. | B7, B13, B16 |
| मेघ | (Skt.) m., cloud | B1 |

Female friend

| Words in the texts | Derivation and meaning | References |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| गोइयाँ | — | B10 |
| सखी | (Skt.) female friend, confidante | B16, B30, B32, B37, B55, C6 |
| सखियन सखियां | (H.) — | B2, B13, C10 B56 |
| सजनी | (H.) — | A34 |
| यार | (P.) m. (used as f.) friend, pal | B1 |

Female protagonist

| Words in the texts | Derivation and meaning | References |
|--------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| ग्वालिन | (Skt.) cowherdess, milkmaid | A4, A39 |
| जानि-जाँ | (P.), darling | B49 |
| नाज़नीन औरत | (A.) gentle woman | B49 |
| बिरहिन | (Skt.) <i>virahinī</i> , lovelorn woman | A5, A13, A36, A38, A39, B35 |
| मेहरिया | (Bhoj.) wife | A29 |
| साँवरि साँवलि | (H.) Dark One | A19 A20 |
| सोहागिन | (Skt.) wife, married woman | A24, A37 |

Heart

| Words in the texts | Derivation and meaning | References |
|--------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| छतियां | (Brbh.) f. chest | B58, C5 |
| जियरा | (Bhoj.) m., heart | A1, B13, B31, B54, B56, B58, C5, C6 |
| जिया | (Brbh.) m, life, soul | B10 B16, B42, B62 |
| दिल | (P.) m. heart | A28, B5, B8, B49, B50 |
| मन | (Skt.) m., mind, heart | A22, A32, A39, B45, B46, B48, B53 |
| मनवा | (Bhoj.) m — | A9, A17, B45 |
| हिय | (H.) m. heart | B56 |

Kṛṣṇa

| Words in the texts | Derivation and meaning | References |
|--------------------|---|--------------------|
| कन्हैया | (Brbh.) Kanhaiyā (Dark One) | B17 |
| कहनवां | (Brbh.) — | B1 |
| कान्हर | (H.) — | A4, B57 |
| किसुन | (H.) Kṛṣṇa | B17 |
| कृस्राजी | (H.) Lord Kṛṣṇa | A4 |
| गिरधारी | (Skt.) Giridhar, lit. 'mount lifter' | B19 |
| गिरधर नागर | (Skt.) Clever Giridhar | B45 |
| चित चोर | (H.) Heart-stealer | B48 |
| नन्दकिसोर | (H.) Son of Nanda | B48 |
| बलबीर | (H.) Powerful One | B2 |
| ब्रजभान | (H.) Sun of Braj | B14 |
| मनमोहन | (Skt.) Mind/heart-charmer | B16 |
| मीरा के प्रभु | (H.) Lord of Mīrā | B45 |
| मुरारी | (Skt.) Defeater of the <i>asur</i> Murā | B57, C1, C5 |
| साँवरिया | (Brbh.) Dark One | B16, B42, C3 |
| स्याम | (H.) Dark One | B14 |
| हरि | (Skt.) Hari | B31, B35, B36, B45 |
| हरी | — | B43 |

Lightning

| Words in the texts | Derivation and meaning | References |
|--------------------|------------------------|------------|
| चञ्चला | (Skt.) f., lightning | B48 |
| दामिनि | (Brbh.) f. — | B45, B56 |
| बिजली | (H.) f. — | B49 |
| बिजुली | (B.) f. — | B13 |

Pain

| Words in the texts | Derivation and meaning | References |
|--------------------|----------------------------|------------|
| कालेसवा | (Bhoj.) m., pain, distress | B10 |
| दरदिया | (Bhoj.) m., pain, pangs | A36 |
| दुख | (Skt.) m.— | B36, B56 |
| पीर | (P.) m.— | B2, B56 |

Rain

| Words in the texts | Derivation and meaning | References |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| नीर | (Skt.) m. water, rain | B56 |
| पानी | (Skt.) m., water, rain, rainy season | B13, B35 |
| बरखा | (Brbh.) f., rain, rainy season | B7, B35, B52, B58 |
| वर्षा | (Skt.) f. — | B1 |
| बरस | (H.) f., rain | B12, B49 |
| बरसात | (H.) f., rain, rainy season | B10, B49, C6 |

Rival in love

| Words in the texts | Derivation and meaning | References |
|--------------------|------------------------|------------|
| नगिनिया | (Bhoj.) she-snake | A6, A23 |
| सवत | (Bhoj.) rival, co-wife | B41 |
| सवतिनिया | (Bhoj.) — | A16 |
| साँपिन | (Skt.) she-snake | A34, B54 |
| सौतिन | (H.) co-wife | B10, B54 |

Glossary

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| <i>abhinaya</i> | Acting through hand gesture, eye, and body movements; seated acting (opposed to dance). |
| <i>abīr</i> | Coloured powder (also called <i>gulāl</i>). |
| <i>akhārā</i> | A competing group in a <i>daṅgal</i> ; a wrestling arena or club; an organisation of <i>sadhu</i> -s. |
| <i>alaṅkāra</i> | A generic term indicating ornamentation in music and a figure of speech or rhetorical device in poetry and literature. |
| <i>āndolan (āndolitā)</i> | A type of ornamentation characterised by the oscillation of a note, similar to <i>vibrato</i> , but slower and irregular. |
| <i>antarā</i> | The second section of a musical composition in which notes in the upper register (<i>tār saptak</i>) are introduced. |
| <i>anuprās</i> | Alliteration |
| Asāṛh (Skt. Āṣāḍha) | The fourth month of the Hindu calendar corresponding to June-July. |
| Āśvin (Kvār ; Skt. Āśvina) | The seventh month of the Hindu calendar corresponding to September-October. |
| <i>bandīś</i> | A general term for a musical composition consisting of words, <i>rāg</i> , and <i>tāl</i> . |
| <i>bārahmāsā</i> | The song of the ‘twelve months’. A lyrical genre consisting of songs portraying mostly a <i>virahinī</i> ’s state of mind in the twelve months of the year. |
| <i>basant (vasant), Basant</i> | The season of spring; the name of a <i>rāg</i> . |
| Basant pañcamī | A festival celebrating the coming of spring, occurring on the fifth day in the bright half of the month of Māgh (Skt. Māgha) corresponding to January-February |
| <i>bhābhī</i> | Sister-in law; elder brother’s wife. |
| Bhādom (Skt. Bhādrā, Bhādrapada) | The sixth month of the Hindu calendar corresponding to August-September. |
| <i>bhajan</i> | A Hindu devotional song. |
| <i>bhaṇitā</i> | The formula bearing the name of the author and usually placed in the last verses of a <i>pad</i> . |
| <i>bhāv</i> | (Lit. ‘existence’, ‘being’); state of mind, emotion on which the aesthetic experience of <i>ras</i> is based. |
| <i>bīrahā</i> | Bhojpuri folksong genre. |
| <i>bīṛī</i> | Very popular, inexpensive thin hand-rolled cigarettes. |

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| <i>bol</i> | (Lit. ‘word’, ‘utterance’); lyrics, words of a song text; in instrumental music, syllable onomatopoeically reproducing a sound and indicating a pattern of musical elaboration. |
| <i>bol banāo/banānā</i> | (Lit. ‘to make words’); the elaboration of melodic phrases and words to evoke different moods and shades of meanings hidden in the text; a technique typical of <i>ṭhumrī</i> that distinguishes the homonymous style of the genre. |
| Cait (Skt. Caitra) | The first month of the Hindu calendar corresponding to March-April. |
| <i>cāñcar</i> | A type of farmers folk song associated with the sowing of crops and performed in a <i>savāl-javāb</i> format; a <i>tāl</i> of fourteen <i>mātrā</i> -s. |
| <i>cañg</i> | A kind of duff, a tambourine played in folk music (especially in the genre of <i>lāvnī</i>). |
| <i>carañ</i> | (Lit. ‘foot’); a part of a verse. |
| <i>cātak</i> | The cuckoo bird, conflated with the <i>papīhā</i> , symbol of devotion and longing. It is believed to survive only in raindrops of Svāti in the month Bhādoṃ (see <i>papīhā</i>). |
| <i>caumāsā</i> | The song of ‘four months’. A cognate <i>bārahmāsā</i> lyrical genre centred on the descriptions of the <i>virahinī</i> ’s state of mind in the four months of the rainy season. |
| <i>caupāt</i> | Two rhyming lines of verse based on a four-syllable metre, a quatrain. |
| <i>cautāl</i> | A Bhojpuri folk genre very similar to <i>horī</i> and <i>phāgu</i> and performed by men during Holī; in Hindustani art music (<i>dhrupad</i>); a name of a twelve- <i>mātrā tāl</i> . |
| <i>chand</i> | Metre; prosody. |
| <i>chāp</i> | (Lit. ‘seal’ ‘stamp’, ‘signature’); the poet or composer’s pen name (see <i>mudrā</i> , <i>mudrikā</i> , <i>bhañitā takhallus</i>). |
| <i>cīz</i> | (Lit. ‘thing’); in the context of vocal music it indicates a composition (especially in <i>khayāl</i>). Sometimes it is imprecisely used as a synonym of <i>bandīś</i> . |
| <i>cunrī (cunnī)</i> | A piece of cloth (usually red) used in <i>pūjā</i> ; a veil or wrap. |
| <i>dañgal</i> | A musical contest based on a question-and-answer ‘duel’, usually between competing <i>akhārā</i> -s. |
| Dādrā, dādrū | A <i>tāl</i> of 6 <i>mātrā</i> -s; the name of the semi-classical music genre related to <i>ṭhumrī</i> . |
| <i>darbār</i> | A royal court. |
| Dhamār | A fourteen- <i>mātrā tāl</i> especially used in the genre of <i>horī</i> . |

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| <i>dhola</i> | A double-headed, barrel-shaped drum used in folk music. |
| <i>ḍholak</i> | Barrel-drum used in folk music. |
| <i>ḍhrupad</i> | The most ancient extant genre of Hindustani art music characterised by adherence to rules of <i>rāg</i> and <i>tāl</i> ; a composition in this genre. |
| <i>dhun</i> | A folk tune, melody. |
| <i>ḍhunmuniyā</i> | A type of <i>caitī</i> : songs performed by women while dancing in a circular formation and crouched position while snapping their fingers. |
| Dīpcandī | A <i>tāl</i> of fourteen <i>mātrā</i> -s also known as <i>cañcar</i> . |
| <i>dohā</i> | A rhyming couplet. |
| <i>dvandva samās</i> | Coordinative compound. |
| <i>gaunā</i> | (Lit. ‘the act of going’); a Hindu ritual consisting of the bringing of a wife to her husband and in-laws’ home after the wedding. |
| <i>gāzal</i> | A semi-classical song genre based on the Urdu poetic form of the same name. |
| <i>gharānā</i> | Lit. ‘household’; a lineage of hereditary musicians in Hindustani art music. |
| <i>gīt</i> | Song; a pre-composed song. |
| <i>gopī</i> | A cowherdess; a milkmaid of Braj, an intimate friend of Kṛṣṇa. |
| <i>guru-śiṣya-paramparā</i> | ‘Master-disciple tradition’. In a musical context, it indicates the traditional transmission of knowledge from teacher to pupil and is equivalent to the <i>ustād-sārgīd</i> relation in a Muslim context. |
| <i>hadīth</i> | Accounts of Muhammad’s sayings, statements, and deeds; narrations about his companions and successors. |
| <i>hāsya ras</i> | The comic sentiment. |
| <i>horī</i> | An intermediate music genre and part of <i>ṭhumrī</i> repertoire related to the spring festival of Holī; a composition of that genre. |
| <i>jāgaran</i> (<i>rat jagā jāgaran, jāgratā,</i> <i>rātrijāgaran</i>) | A night vigil of celebrations in a Hindu temple. |
| <i>jalsā</i> | A gathering, social function. |
| Jat | A sixteen- <i>mātrā tāl</i> . |
| Jeṭh (Skt. Jyaiṣṭha) | The third month of the Hindu calendar corresponding to May-June. |

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|-------------------------------------|--|
| Jhap | A ten- <i>mātrā tāl</i> . |
| Jogī, jogī | A <i>yogī</i> , specifically a Nāth <i>śaiva</i> ascetic; an itinerant singer, a member of the homonymous community. |
| jogīrā (jogīrā) | A type of folk song typical of the Bhojpuri-speaking area during Holī built on wordplays, at times with obscene lyrics and featuring the insertion of the typical meaningless filler expression ‘ <i>sa ra ra ra</i> ’. |
| kaḅīr | A type of folk song, mainly in Bhojpuri, with obscene lyrics and built on wordplays and featuring the insertion of typical meaningless expression ‘ <i>sa ra ra ra ra ra ra kaḅīr</i> ’. This is also the name of some songs based on dialogues (<i>goṣṭī</i> -s) between Kaḅīr and Gorakhnāth. |
| kadamb | A type of tree (<i>Nauclea cadamba</i>) associated with Kṛṣṇa. |
| Kaharvā | A <i>tāl</i> in eight <i>mātrā</i> -s. |
| Kārtik | The eighth month of the Hindu calendar corresponding to October-November. |
| karuṇ ras | The sentiment of compassion, pathetic. |
| khāndān | Lineage, family, clan; the term is used to indicate blood-family relations. |
| khaṭkā | (Lit. ‘knock’). A type of ornamentation, similar to <i>murkī</i> , consisting of a faster attack on the main note, similar to <i>gruppetto</i> in Western music. |
| khayāl | (Lit. ‘thought’, ‘idea’). The major vocal and instrumental genre of Hindustani art music that arose in the XVIII century; a folk song in Rajasthani theatre. |
| kīrtan | Devotional Hindu song in an antiphonal style. |
| koṭhā | The courtesans’ salon. |
| koyal (Skt. <i>kokila</i>). | The Asian koel (<i>Eusynanys scolopacea</i>) whose typical call sounds like “ <i>kūk kūk</i> ”. |
| lāvnī | A folk music genre of Maharashtra and a different one in the Braj area. |
| laya | Tempo in Hindustani music; it can be fast (<i>drut</i>), medium (<i>madhya</i>), and slow (<i>vilambhit</i>). |
| līlā | (Lit. ‘Play’, ‘sport’). The divine play, or spontaneous and aimless manifestation of the universe. A dramatic representation of the deeds of Rām or Kṛṣṇa. |
| lok saṅgīt | Folk music. |

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|----------------------------|---|
| <i>mahant</i> | Head of a temple. |
| <i>mahfil</i> | An intimate gathering for music and dance performances or recital of poetry. |
| <i>malār</i> | Folk song genre of the rainy season, typical of Bhojpuri speaking areas. |
| Malhār | The name of a monsoon <i>rāg</i> . |
| <i>mañjirā</i> | A set of small hand-cymbals. |
| <i>mātrā</i> | ‘Measure’, ‘measured quantity’, and ‘metrical instant’; the single count or beat of a <i>tāl</i> . |
| <i>melā</i> | A fair, festival. |
| <i>mīṇḍ</i> | A type of ornamentation, a <i>glissando</i> that slides smoothly from one note to another. |
| Mirāsī | A caste/community of singers, musicians, and dancers traditionally Muslim. |
| <i>miśrit (miśra) rāg.</i> | A <i>rāg</i> ‘mixed’ with another <i>rāg</i> -s typical of <i>ṭhumrī</i> and <i>ṭhumrī</i> -related forms. |
| <i>mohallā</i> | A neighbourhood, quarter. |
| <i>mṛdaṅg</i> | A two-headed drum of Karnatak music similar to the <i>pakhāvaj</i> . |
| <i>mujrā</i> | A courtesans’ performance |
| <i>mukhṛā</i> | (Lit. ‘face’). The ‘identifying’ phrase of a semi-classical song; usually the first phrase of a composition leading to and including the first beat of the <i>tāl</i> (<i>sam</i>). |
| <i>murkī</i> | A type of ornamentation, a swift trill, similar to the mordent or acciaccatura of Western music. |
| Nāgapañcamī | A Hindu festival occurring on the fifth day of the bright fortnight of the month of Sāvan when snakes are worshipped. |
| <i>nanad, nanadī</i> | Husband’s sister, sister-in-law. |
| <i>nāyak</i> | The ‘hero’ or male protagonist of a poem, play, or song. |
| <i>nāyikā</i> | The ‘heroine’ or female protagonist of a poem, play, or song. |
| Nāyikā-bhedā | ‘Types of heroine’; classification of female protagonists of a poem or a play, first introduced in the <i>Nāṭyaśāstra</i> . |
| <i>pad</i> | Short poetic composition typical of <i>bhakti</i> poetry meant to be sung. |

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| <i>pān</i> | A very popular preparation made of betel nut (<i>supārī</i>) slaked lime paste (<i>cūnā</i>), cloves and other spices and wrapped in a betel leaf. |
| <i>papīhā</i> | The pied-crested cuckoo (<i>Clamator Jacobinus</i>), whose call “ <i>pī</i> , <i>pī</i> ” or “ <i>piyā</i> , <i>piyā</i> ” (terms meaning ‘lover’) reminds the heroine of her absent beloved (see <i>cātak</i>). |
| <i>paramparā</i> | Tradition, lineage, line. |
| Phāg (Phāgu , Phālg , Skt. Phālguna) | The twelfth month of the Hindu calendar corresponding to February-March. |
| <i>pujārī</i> | A priest associated with a temple and in charge of performing a <i>pūjā</i> . |
| <i>purṇimā</i> | Day or night of the full moon. |
| Purvanchal | The geographical area encompassing the provinces of western Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh where Bhojpuri is spoken. |
| <i>qavvalī</i> | Muslim (Sufi) devotional song often in a call-and-response format. |
| <i>racnā</i> | (Lit. ‘creation’) A written composition; a literary or artistic work. |
| <i>rāg</i> | Music ‘mode’ of Hindustani and Karnatak music. |
| Rāmanavamī | Spring Hindu festival occurring on the ninth and last day of Caitrā navarātri celebrating the birth of lord Rām. |
| <i>ras</i> | (Lit. ‘juice’, ‘essence’); the aesthetic experience. |
| <i>rasik</i> | (Lit. ‘relisher’); the aesthetic connoisseur, i.e., someone who possesses the discriminating taste. |
| <i>rasiyā</i> | (Lit. ‘full of <i>ras</i> ’); A type of Braj folksong genre. |
| <i>rāṣṭrīya</i> | ‘National’; in musical context, adjective referring to composition centred on nationalism and patriotism. |
| <i>rīti</i> | (Lit. ‘Manner’); ‘mannerism’ as a style of Hindi poetry of the XVII and XVIII century that emphasised the use of <i>alāṅkā-r-s</i> (ornaments), elaborate imagery, and erotic themes of <i>śṛṅgār ras</i> . |
| <i>rūpak</i> (Rūpak). | Metaphor; a <i>tāl</i> in seven <i>mātrā-s</i> . |
| <i>śabd pradhān</i> | (Lit. ‘word-based’); an attribute of folk songs and genres that accord more emphasises to the lyrics than the music. |
| Sādhukkarī bhāṣā | ‘The language of the <i>sādhu-s</i> ’, a composite vernacular combining elements of Rajasthani, Khaṛī bolī, and other dialects of the Hindi area. |
| <i>sāhitya</i> | (Lit. ‘literature’); textual element in music; verbal text of vocal composition. |

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| <i>sāhityik</i> | ‘Literary’; in a musical context, an adjective referring to compositions penned by poets or renowned authors and often existing also independently from music. |
| <i>śāhnāī</i> | A double-reed aerophone used in art and folk music in North India and played especially at weddings and festivals. |
| <i>sakhī</i> | A woman’s female friend, a confidante. |
| <i>sam</i> | The first and most important beat of a <i>tāl</i> . |
| <i>sāmājīk</i> | (Lit. ‘Social’); adjective referring to compositions centred on social themes. |
| <i>sampradāya</i> | The doctrine inheritance, the master-disciple transmission system of those established practices and the religious community professing them. |
| <i>śanta ras</i> | The mood of peace and tranquillity. |
| <i>sārangī</i> | A bowed, stringed instrument used in Hindustani music and preferred accompaniment for courtesans’ vocal performances. |
| <i>śāstra</i> | Treatise. |
| <i>śāstrīya saṅgīt</i> | (Lit. ‘canonical music’); the music codified in treatises, ‘art’ or ‘classical’ music. |
| <i>sautan</i> | Rival or co-wife. |
| <i>savāl-javāb</i> | ‘Question-and-answer’. A kind of antiphonal pattern consisting of a call and response between vocalists of competing <i>akhārā</i> -s in <i>kajrī</i> and folk genres; in Hindustani art music, it indicates an ‘exchange’ between two musicians in a duet (<i>jugalbandī</i>), typically an instrumentalist and a <i>tablā</i> player. |
| Sāvan (Skt. Śrāvaṇa). | The fifth month of the Hindu calendar corresponding to July-August. |
| <i>śāyri</i> | A piece of poetry; the practice of poetry. |
| <i>sohar</i> | Folk songs sung in North India by women at the time of the birth of a son. |
| <i>śṛṅgār ras</i> | Amatory, romantic, or erotic sentiment. |
| <i>sthāī</i> (<i>sthāyī</i>) | The first part of the composition generally consisting of notes belonging to the middle register (<i>madhya saptak</i> , excluding those higher than the upper tonic). |
| <i>stobh</i> | Chanted interjection, pause sound, filler-word. |
| <i>tablā</i> | A pair of hand drums used in Hindustani music; the higher-pitched of the two drums played with the right hand. |

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| <i>takhallus</i> | Nom de plume, pen name of poet or composer in Hindi and Urdu poetry (see <i>mudrā</i> , <i>mudrikā</i> , and <i>chāp</i>). |
| <i>tāl</i> | A rhythmic cycle in Hindustani music. |
| <i>tān</i> | Type of ornament, a rapid melodic passage. |
| <i>ṭappā</i> | Semi-classical genre originally believed to have developed from the Punjabi folk songs of camel drivers. |
| <i>tarānā</i> | Rhythmic vocal composition using abstract, meaningless syllables (<i>śuṣka akṣara-s</i>) set in a medium or fast tempo. Amir <u>Khusro</u> (1253-1325) is generally credited with its invention. |
| <i>tavāyaf</i> | A songstress courtesan who could also be a dancer. |
| <i>tek</i> | Refrain. |
| <i>thāt</i> | ‘Parent-scale’ used as a basis for the classification of <i>rāg-s</i> in Hindustani music. The systematisation in ten <i>thāt-s</i> was introduced by Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande (1860-1936) retracing the Karnatak <i>mēlakarta</i> classification. |
| <i>ṭhumrī</i> | Semi-classical vocal and instrumental genre of Hindustani music characterised by romantic lyrics and emphasis on the elaboration of poetic text rather than adherence to the rules of <i>rāg</i> and <i>tāl</i> . |
| <i>tīj</i> | (Lit. ‘third’). A Hindu festival occurring on the third day (<i>trītyā</i>) of a lunar fortnight in the rainy season. |
| Tīntāl | A <i>tāl</i> of sixteen <i>mātrā-s</i> . |
| <i>uṛan</i> | Final foot of the <i>ṭek</i> emphasised during the performance. |
| Vaiśākh (Baiśakh; Skt. Vaiśākha). | The second month of the Hindu calendar corresponding to April-May. |
| <i>varṣā ṛtu</i> | The rainy season. |
| <i>vīr ras</i> | The heroic sentiment. |
| <i>virah</i> | Love in separation; the painful condition of separated lovers. |
| <i>virahinī</i> | A woman suffering <i>virah</i> . |
| <i>vivāh gīt</i> | A wedding song. |
| <i>vrat</i> | A Hindu religious observance involving a ritual fast. |
| <i>zamzamā</i> | A ‘zig-zag’ type of <i>tān</i> consisting of a quick succession of notes. |

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