

TOWARDS AN AESTHETICS OF KATHAK DANCE

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INTRODUCTION

This is an essay in understanding Kathak dance, and its viewpoint is mainly aesthetical. I begin directly by posing a question. What is Kathak?

1. The various approaches:

Kathak like all our other arts, is a part of Indian culture. And it is by no means quite unhelpful to say so. For though it does not directly furnish any detail, the remark can be made to deliver the idea that a Kathak dancer is quite true to tradition if he dances items of a devotional nature, or builds upon themes drawn from our epics and mythology. Yet, for the sake of understanding we need more detailed answers; and this, in turn, requires that we break up the question itself into the following two enquiries:

- A. What does the word 'Kathak' itself mean?
- B. What is the nature of those facts which the word 'Kathak' is taken to signify?

The first approach may be said to be linguistic. It opens by asking what the meaning of the word itself is, without immediately considering actual dance. The second approach is different. It bases itself on those facts of dancing which are actually called Kathak. I seek, however, only to distinguish the two, not at all to suggest that they can be kept apart for long. In fact, when we turn to study the content that is called Kathak, we at once find it needful to see if what is *in fact danced* as a particular item really squares with the *meaning of the name* or title it bears.

Nor do I wish to hold that the two viewpoints distinguished are the only ones possible. A ready answer to our question, what is Kathak, can also be:

it is a distinct style of classical Indian dance. Such a way of speaking is of course quite general. But it is useful, for it hints at the need to consider Kathak also from the viewpoint of what our classical dance is taken to be in general—say, as covering both *nritta* and *nritya*, or as using common themes from our epics and mythology—and not merely in the limited context of its own distinctive idiom. Moving farther, we may even find it needful to consider the matter from the viewpoint of what is meant by viewing dancing in general as art. So, to the viewpoints first suggested the following may be added:

C. Comparative

D. Aesthetic.

The last of these, it seems, has here to be used limitedly. In ancient India, as we know, dance was regarded as an integral part of *Sangeet*, that is, as vitally related to both vocal and instrumental music. Therefore, out of the many arts open to aesthetical study in general, we have to concentrate, in our treatment of Kathak, on *gaayan* and *vaadan* as allied forms of art. I may add that the use of one inclusive word, *sangeet*, for both (vocal-instrumental) music and dance is not without reason. There is an element that they all share. It is *laya*, or musical duration regulated either with the help of beats, or merely subjectively as in *alaap* of the *dhruvapada*-singers, with an eye on effects of variform beauty.¹

In our concern with Kathak in this essay, however, its own nature as an art has to be given more thought than what it shares with music. This emphasis, therefore, may here be explained.

2. How is Kathak 'occurrent'?

To begin with, dance is an occurrent art. Works of painting and sculpture are not normally heeded during the course of creation. But dancing we follow as it is done. This is, however, true of music as well. How is then dancing occurrent distinctively? It is so, I answer, because the *maatras* which mark and measure the flow of *laya*, their varying relation to the latter, and the flow itself—thus characterized—with its numerous changes of pace and passage, and its variety of effects: in short, the whole fabric of calculative, beat-measured rhythm,—all this determines Kathak dance more thoroughly than the kinds of our music. With *alaap* of the *dhruvapad*-singers there is no rhythmic accompaniment; and *alaap*, as we know, may dominate a whole recital. In Kathak dance, on the other hand, rhythm is marked and kept all along, except in the opening *vandanaa* where it takes the form of dancing a *sloka* that is not, as a rule, set in any *taal*. Again, whereas the unbroken musical background provided by the *taanpoora* to a vocal recital is essentially² melodic, the support lent to Kathak by the *lahraa* and the *thekaa* is primarily rhythmic.

There is another way to bring out the relative dominance of rhythm in our dance. In a practice session, a carefully tuned *taanpoora* is just as essential for the vocalist as on the occasion of a public performance. What the Kathak dancer, on the other hand, needs imperatively in *rayaaz* is *a thekaa of sure step, not one that sounds sweet*. As compared to vocal music, therefore, Kathak is *taal-pradhaan*. It is only as contrasted with a solo *tablaa* or *pakhaawai* recital that our dancing may be said to be distinctive because of its emphasis on *ang* or the grace of bodily bearing, for the simple reason that no bodily feature is in any way a constituent of rhythm.

Yet, it may be said that *just as* our classical singing is *svara-pradhaan*—there being no *taal* present in *alaap* of *dhrupad* style—Kathak is *ang-pradhaan*, in so far as whereas *taal* (we have seen) may here be absent, as in *vandanaa* that is the dancing of a *sloka*, bodily bearing has to be winsome in dance all along.

To sum up, proper *ang* is as inexorable a requirement of good dancing as is sweet *svara* in the case of singing. Both have to be there *all along* in their individual realms.³ But if *svara* be contrasted with *taal*, not with *ang*, *taal* or regulated movement must be said to be more important for Kathak than *svara*. And this is so, not only because there is no singing with many Kathak items, but because—as I hope to bring out later—in the vocal compositions that are apt for Kathak dance, rhythm is a more important feature than in the case of compositions that are meant for singing alone.

Three more points may be made in respect of the occurrent quality of Kathak as an art-form:

First, because as an occurrence a Kathak recital is marked by succession of parts or patterns, the question is natural as to the precise *order* in which the various items are to be danced. The problem is of special significance here; for whereas in our classical vocal and instrumental music the order of the content of a standard recital is fairly set—say, as *vilambit-drut*, *sthayi-antara*, or as *alaap*, *jhala* and *gatkari*—in the region of Kathak no such fixity obtains even in respect of the very opening items, *thaat* and *aamad*, either of which may provide the beginning of a recital without laying it open to the charge of incorrect procedure.

Secondly, if due notice is taken of its different parts or items, the quality of Kathak dance must be said to be not merely occurrent, but self-completing. A good recital, here, is not a mere sequence of simple units or mere shapeless fragments, but a complex richness of such parts as are themselves wholes individually. This is partly because every item of Kathak dance is required to conform to the cyclic quality of rhythm, or to complete itself at the *sama*, and partly because the different constituents of dance—such as the character of *bols* and the individual impact of the two feet on the floor, *ang* and the

details of thematic content—are all (in principle) expected to cohere for the sake of effect. Though it comprises distinct items, a good Kathak recital, I repeat, does not *appear* as a mere string of mere snatches of dance. That its various items are too brief to work up an *atmosphere* is a quite different matter. Nor is the charge that an average Kathak recital lacks continuity the same as the protest that its various items have no inner design.

Thirdly, because of their individual self-completeness and identifiable character, the various items in a Kathak recital enjoy unique freedom to be thematic *or* merely rhythmic, to highlight *laya* or *taal* in any of its numberless features, say, waywardness, amplitude or involute quality. This is why an average Kathak performance is both representational *and* merely formal. No single set of criteria is enough for assessing its excellence. But one requirement that everything in Kathak must always meet is, I aver, that of inner shape and articulation.

What I have just now said should, however, be dealt with at some length. The question of proper criteria for evaluating Kathak recitals is important today, for critical review of dance recitals has become a fairly regular activity of our Press. It is aesthetical too, if—as is being freely done—aesthetics be regarded not only as the philosophy of Art and Beauty, but as a systematic examination of the problems that face art criticism. In itself, however, the question of right criteria is a very big one; and I have to defer it to a later stage of enquiry.

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Its concern with the problems of criticism is, however, not the only feature of present day aesthetics. We have also to heed the viewpoint of existential phenomenology which emphasises facts of aesthetic experience. The use of this approach in our treatment of Kathak would make for reflection as follows:

A. Our dance and phenomenology:

How does Kathak appear distinct from the other styles of our classical dance? I answer here thus:

The basic stance is here different from that in the other styles. It is perhaps safe to say that in Kathak alone does it have an alert, sideway quality (बांकापन); Again, Kathak seems to be freer than, say, Bharata Natyam where the various items are danced fairly similarly by different dancers.⁴ Dancing which comprises only pre-fixed and thoroughly rehearsed compositions may well be able to work up an intense atmosphere, but it cannot appear spontaneous. In Kathak, we know, even the opening *vandanaa* and *thaat* are danced differently by different performers. Further, in *tatkaar*

at least there is visible room for improvisation. And the appearance that something is *being created* here and now is helped also by occasional bouts of rhythmic give and take between the danseuse and the drummer, specially in moments of *jagah dikhana*.⁵ A good Kathak recital strikes us as more creatively occurrent than essays in other styles. Here, indeed, the danseuse has the freedom and the leisure to *appear revelling* in the willed *waywardness* of rhythmic work. And this is quite in keeping with the best in our music. We never think highly of the Hindustani vocalist who merely reels off prefixed *taans*

I must add that the phenomenological viewpoint—or that of dancing as it in fact seems—has got to be kept in mind also in choosing what is really suitable for the various Kathak items.

Thus, a *lahraa* may seem quite well-composed from the merely musical point of view, but if its *sama* is placed at some note in the *mandra saptak*, in actual dancing it is likely to appear lost in the sound of the drums; it will not be quite audible to the dancer who is not always very close to the drummer; and it cannot therefore serve as a wholly good *lahraa* in actual dance. Again, vocal compositions which are very good in themselves will not in fact *seem* so in dance if they do not admit of variety and beauty of *ang* and *abhinaya*, or if they tend to overpower the music.

Finally, the rhythmic compositions that form the repertoire of a good Kathak dancer are, of course, expected to be well designed. But, and this is again how the phenomenological viewpoint is of relevance to us, they should *appear* self-completing, and not merely grammatically whole in conforming to the *sama*, when they are actually danced. Such semblance occurs, I may add, where the danseuse imparts a *gradually increasing intensity* to the *bols* that mark, say, three or four *matras* immediately preceding the advent of the *sama*; and where she seems quite still for a while when the *sama* has been attained. On the other hand, the semblance in question suffers if the flow of *laya* between the completion of a pattern and the beginning of the next one is sought to be clearly indicated by a lingering movement of the hands or arms, or otherwise.

B. Kathak as art:

But, one may wonder, is any *aesthetical* approach relevant to Kathak? Is Kathak dance art at all?

I say 'yes' at once, and I argue the matter thus, by showing how Kathak shares the basic features that are commonly, if not quite unquestionably, ascribed to all art.⁶

Art, we agree, takes us away from our everyday concern with things,

and offers instead its own inner world as an object of contemplation and disinterested delight. Further, what it comprises is no mere jumble, not even a juxtaposition of elements, but such a harmonious blend of the various that it is well-nigh impossible to determine the precise measure of the contribution of each to the import of the whole.⁷

Now, truths such as these are quite easily traceable in a good Kathak recital, and even in the essentials of this dance-form:

Thus, to begin with, the body of the danseuse does not here seem simply what it does in everyday life. It is transfigured, carefully adapted to the ends of dance. Our word for the body so adapted is *ang*. And when the role of *ang* in dance is said to be pivotal, what is meant is that the artist has to meet two conditions that are inter-linked: first, that the dancing figure should look winsome all along; and secondly, that it should never lapse into mere everyday bearing. The first would require the artist to avoid free use of representations of such gods and goddesses in, say, *vandanaa* as do not look good to the eye (as *Durga*, for instance); and the second, to remain specially careful in respect of posture during those moments of inactivity that separate the completion of a pattern from the beginning of another, or while waiting to re-enact in dance an intricate pattern being played by the drummer as a kind of friendly challenge.

The break-away from daily life is effected quite early by *thaat* with which a Kathak recital often begins.⁸ As for the rhythmic patterns, they are not (as a rule) meant to copy anything in life; and there is an element of make-believe even in the basic *bols* of *tatkaar*, in so far as we see hardly any *literal* difference between येई on the one hand, and ता, आ as danced, on the other. *Nritya*, it is true, has to build upon themes taken from the everyday world. But here, too, the Kathak has to eschew straying from the realm of art to that of mere life. This can be done in three ways at least:

First, the gait of the *taal* being used and the moment of its *sama* may not be hid for too long in *abhinaya*. (I need hardly add that its rhythm—as accompaniment and constituent—is what quite distinguishes dance from movement in daily life).

Secondly, *all* the elements of a situation from life being danced may not be represented. Thus, in presenting a *panghat-ki-gat*, the dancer need not portray, by distorting his face, the (actual) strain of pulling up an overfull bucket from the well. If such restrictions are not heeded, dancing will forthwith lose its basic abstraction as art, cease to engage our imagination and will only seem amusing to the knowledgeable.

Finally, whatever is taken for treatment from life should be shown with such loving care for detail, such delicate etching of line and movement with

fingers and arms, and, what is more, with such a definite and expressive use of glances and bodily turns that contemplative attention may yet remain glued to what is *shown on the stage*, instead of moving away, due to lack of visual charm, to what it *indicates in life*. If thematic items are danced in the manner here suggested, the representational element will only help us follow what is danced, not drive us away to matters extra-aesthetic.

Nor is the inner disposition of elements any less important in Kathak than in any other art. This I may develop as follows:

First, the *ang* is to blend not only with (a) the meaning of the theme but with (b) the varying accentuation or flow of rhythm, and the auditory character of its *bols*. The former need is quite common knowledge. But the latter is a subtler requirement. It is met instinctively by those whose minds are deeply imbued with the sense of *laya*, and is not consciously realized by all those who profess to know Kathak dance. To illustrate, when the basic *bols* are being danced, the eyes may tend to turn heavenward where the syllables are त्ता and, आ and so be true to the phonetic openness of the syllables; and the look may quite aptly droop where this character is replaced by the gently self-gathering quality of येई. I have here in mind what Sri Lacchu Maharaj actually did, with remarkable effect, in the All India Kathak Dance Seminar held at Jaipur in 1969.⁹ But, in a simpler way, the requirement in question is met even by average dancers. Thus, where the syllable to be danced is त्राम or त्रैवड, they do manage to produce some semblance of the heard character of the *bol* (say) by using two hands above the head to work up the effect of bloom or sparkle, or by regulating footwork suitably.

Or, as is borne out in the dancing of beautiful, little *tihayis* and bits of footwork by Birju Maharaj—which he often does quite early in the recital, may be immediately after the opening invocation—*ang* may be manifest as *the direct attuning of the gestures in accordance with the varying manner of the movement of rhythm. Here, the intentional avoidance of a rhythmic stress is also visible joy (or mischief) suffusing the dancer's visage; and the completion of a dainty pattern danced itself brings about an upward, finalizing flourish of the hand.*¹⁰ The gestures, in such cases, are not codified *mudras*; and *ang* is the body as responding to the feel of rhythm. The bodily expression, here, is of course identifiable, but it is inwardly affirmed and plastic, not rigidly set.

I may add, in passing, that 'feeling' in Kathak means not only individual, discernible emotions—which *are* its meaning in the context of *abhinaya* in thematic items—but one's *feeling for* rhythm, the ability to attune oneself with its changing manner of movement. The aesthetic, here, gains from manifest sincerity; it is no mere rightness of execution; and expression, as aptness of bodily change, is quite without effort or purposing.

As for the footwork, the intensity of the impact of each foot on the floor

has to match the heard character of the *bols*, so that तिन and धिन may be not merely used in the recitation of a pattern, but seem (respectively) light and heavy in footwork itself.

Secondly, care should be taken to ensure that the *laya* at which a pattern (to be danced) is recited does not disfigure, and is thus not ill matched with, the normal character of a *bol*. Thus, if a pattern employing *bols* like डुरन, मुरन is recited at a pace that is too slow for them, डुरन will tend to be heard as डूरन which would be plainly an outrage upon the true character of the syllable. The same error is committed when the *laya* chosen for *parhant* is so slow that the syllable गदिगिन gets caricatured into an elongated (ग, अ, अदिगि, अ, अन). The norm here is that a syllable's own character (its धर्म, as we say) is not to be ignored in choosing a particular rhythmic pace for the dance. We must remember that our rhythm is a fabric not of mere beats, but of beats christened and distinguished as *bols*. It is true that orthodox Kathaks at times display patterns the recitation of which proceeds as mere *counting*,— that is, as 1, 2, 3, 4; and expressly ask us to attend to them. But this is, to my mind, a mere irrelevance. What is in fact here achieved can be done better with the aid of *bols*.

Thirdly, in the case of Kathak, the norm of inner cohesiveness calls for:

A blending of meaning, expression and rhythm, say, in a rich thematic composition which often takes the form of song;

Adaptation of accompanying music to the needs of dance; and finally,

Proper inter-linking of the various items danced, so that the whole recital may seem unified, and no mere string of disconnected items.

All this demands close thinking on the details of Kathak; and this will be duly done when we turn to discuss the relation of music to Kathak dance. Here, I may only bring out the problems and lines of enquiry implicit in the problems listed.

Where dance seeks to vivify the content of a song *abhinaya* is necessary. But this may be needed to bring out either the simple (cognitive) meaning of words—as when a pitcher is indicated by an appropriate use of hands over the head—or the emotional character of the situation (say, *vijoga*) depicted in the song, making for dancing which is *expressive*.

At this point a question may be put with regard to the role of rhythm. I find it difficult to say that rhythm is *as such* expressive.¹¹ But it can certainly add to the expressiveness of dancing. Thus, if the words to be danced are (say) : डगमगे, धरती डोले the requisite suggestion of imbalance will be easier to work up if, along with the right kind of *ang* (which word does not cover

footwork)¹² the rhythm as marked by the feet is made to flow not in the even manner of 1, 2, 3, 4 but unevenly (say) by accentuating the fourth beat in an asymmetrical stretch of: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.¹³ It indeed seems possible to heighten the expressiveness of dancing by using the different *jatis* of *laya* as helpful elements.

Here, however, I think of another problem. No one would think of objecting to the use of *jatis* in Kathak. But where we speak of the overall *inner* cohesiveness of Kathak, as I am doing at the moment, is it proper to pay attention to *music*? Is music in any way *integral* to Kathak? To questions such as these, my answer is as follows:

Even if we omit, for the present, vocal compositions that are freely used in dance, music may be said to be inseparable from Kathak. For, first, the *lahraa* which is here ever present—not only marks the pace and extent of a rhythm, but is itself a musical line in a *raag*, and is required to be tuneful. Secondly, at least on the occasion of a public performance, the right *tabla* is, as a rule, carefully tuned. Thirdly, and *this* is not commonly realized, even the proper recitation of a pattern demands regulated rise and fall of voice, so that, as a rule—and specially if it occurs *between* two beats—the *offbeat* of a cycle has to be spoken at a higher pitch.

The objection, therefore, can only be to the *kind and extent* of music in Kathak. Putting it briefly, the music here should seem adapted to the needs of dance, rather than as dominating the latter; and, what is more, it should never be used to camouflage, say, the dancer's own deficiency in respect of rhythmic accuracy and footwork. How one can meet these requirements in fact will be brought out later when we turn to discuss the relation of Kathak to music.

C. Art, its material and autonomy:

Should it still be contended that in taking the help of music other than that provided by the *lahraa* Kathak loses its autonomy as a distinct art, my reply would be ready and take two forms.

Positively, I would say with Mrs. Langer, what makes an art really autonomous is that it has its *own* primary creation, principles of construction, and criteria of evaluation.

Negatively, I would contend that the autonomy of an art is not necessarily tempered by incorporating material from the other arts; and that such intake may even enrich the art in question, provided what is taken is duly relieved of its alien character.

The positive aspect of the matter can be taken up only after we have brought out the essential nature of whatever we find in the region of Kathak

dance today, by way of both content and accompaniment. And at present I may only argue for my negative contention that the distinctness of an art does not in essence depend on the sameness of the material it uses. The material of rhythm is almost wholly of one kind, but this does not make its autonomy more manifest than that of drama which builds upon diverse arts. The dramatic art indeed cannot be denied its title to artistic individuality merely because it makes use (where it does) of music and poetry.

Nor does it seem possible for long to keep one art quite apart from the others. It is true that, except in respect of motion picture and literature, the modern period has been one of signal dedication to the purist ideal. The spheres of painting, sculpture, music, architecture *and dance*,—all bear witness to this. Isadora Duncan began by seeking to free the human body from the shackles of the traditional ballet, and by proclaiming the body as a potent source of expressive communication. Working powerfully in the same direction, Mary Wigman and Rudolf von Leban (at first) openly rejected story, psychological narration and even music as inimical to the 'purity' of dance. But it must be forthwith added that most of the 'modern' dancers in America have now abjured the aesthetics of purism and have returned to a much more inclusive conception of dance. Martha Graham has by no means been indifferent to the importance of the bodily medium, but she has abandoned her early purism 'in favour of symbolism, narration, and lately, poetic narration as accompaniments.'¹⁴

To turn to vocal music, our own *alaap* of the orthodox kind is indeed the model of pure music; it is free from both language and rhythm. But, here, I would add, first, that in spite of its undoubted excellence as music, *alaap* is, as a rule, followed by a *dhruvpad* or *dhamaar* which both have a text and are rhythmically organized; and, secondly, that in the evolution of our music the *alaap-dhruvpad* form has been largely replaced by the emergence of *khyal* which, in its *vilambit* manner, seeks to provide both for the roominess of *alaap* and the organized and articulate quality of rhythm. I do not wish to suggest that, merely because of this, *Khyal* is superior to *alaap-dhruvpad*. For, in our actual experience of art, which of its two given forms (in fact) seems superior would depend upon what the individual artistes are able to make of each form; and in so far as no limit can be put to the creative ability of an artist, it is never safe to hold that an art using diverse materials is necessarily superior to the one that uses homogeneous material. Moreover, it is also a mark of creative excellence if an artist is able to make much out of scanty or simple material.

On the other hand, it would be wrong to deny distinctness to *Khyal* as a form of music merely because it couples tones with language which is the distinctive medium of *literature*. For, the *khyals* composed by our Ustads of old are not heavily loaded with language; the use of words is here sparing and

a mere prop for melodic values, so that they never disturb us by seeming to have more of verbal meaning than of *sur*.

I must also here reckon with an important argument of the purists. They contend that each art should attempt only what it can do *best*, or what is distinctive of it; and that *this* is determined by the specific nature of its medium.¹⁵ This line of argument leads them to reject narration and psychological representation in painting because these, they believe, can be done much better by literature; and also poetic recitation in dance because the distinctive medium of dance is body, not language.

D. The autonomy of Kathak:

Now, confining myself in the main to (*Kathak*) dance, I here think it necessary to rejoin as follows:

What is here the medium used? Obviously, the body. But, do its expressive possibilities in dance depend on the body *as such*, or on the body *as used*? Clearly, on the latter. Did they depend on the body *alone*, the role of the dancer's own skill and imagination in creating the dance would be only secondary; and it would perhaps be impossible—which it is not—to create a beautiful dance out of a figure without physical charm. We are constrained to say that what here counts is the body *as used*. But the moment we decide to consider the medium *along with the plastic stress of the artist's own creative skill*, it becomes impossible to say what a medium cannot do with distinction by way of expression, and to fix what can be done *better* by one medium than by another. Such comparing is impossible also because the expressiveness of any two arts is not of the same kind. An 'object' is in fact expressive because it engages attention by impressing sense and imagination *in specific ways*; and it is this specificity which (in part) lends a distinct character to expressiveness. Thus, to keep to *dance and literature*, would any literary account quite capture the *look* of twinkling mischief in a skilled Kathak's eye portraying the pranks of Krishna as a child or the visible abandon and effusiveness of a *holi* being danced? Meaning, we may note, is more directly perceived in bodily behaviour than anywhere else. "Gait, posture, smile... and the like—all incarnate a meaning which is easily read off. One *sees* fear in the eyes, and embarrassment in the sharply averted glance."¹⁶ And what, I ask, would be the (merely) literary parallel of the common Kathak spectacle that the *same figure* changes, in a trice, from an irresistible Krishna into Radha's veiled blushes?

So, because of the *distinctiveness* of the way it is here done, there can be no real bar to story telling in Kathak. The only requirement, I repeat, is that narration has to subserve the interests of dancing. From this point of view, I may add, such patterns are here obviously appropriate as relate directly to bodily grace and expressiveness, such as the *Kavitta* beginning thus: दूरात

मटकत, अंरा फरकत. But themes of even quite different kinds are freely attempted by Kathaks in the expressional part of their repertoires. A good specimen of such items is provided by the traditional practice of bringing out, in terms of expressive gestures, the *bhavas* of *thumris*—sung as accompaniment—the text of which abounds in such references to outer fact as *panghat* and ‘blocking the way’. Today, some of the more venturesome Kathak exponents have been admired for dancing out meaningful compositions, comprising words that are clearly reflective,¹⁷ such as the following:

शब्द, अंग एक रूप
एक ज्योति उभय रूप

I conclude, therefore, that it is wrong to protest against the incorporation of meaningful text and music compositions in a Kathak recital. The autonomy and individuality of an art rest not on a rigid exclusion of media which dominate other arts, but on their proper assimilation, so that they may only enrich the fabric of the art in question, without seeming to dominate it. I may add that where dancing is accompanied by mellifluous singing, the Kathak has naturally to concentrate on beautiful *ang* and *chaal*, that is, on what music does not and cannot itself provide.

I may here add that emphasis on the creative synthesis of diverse materials is as clear a feature of the history of art as the effort to bring out new expressive possibilities in the use of a single medium. Kathak is no exception to this. It is true that whereas the Jaipur school has sought to make greater use of long and intricate rhythmic patterns—and has emphasized fluency and virility of manner—the Kathaks of Lucknow have paid more attention to the *expressiveness* of look, posture and gait. But it is as much a fact that today many Kathak dancers refuse to confine themselves to any one school, though they may draw upon the content of all the *gharanas*, and freely seek to blend rhythmic with expressional values in compositions of very meaningful language.

If it be asked as to what in fact makes Kathak a distinctive style of classical Indian dance, I would reply by pointing to its following features.¹⁸

First, it admits of patterns which show *varying accentuation* of rhythm by the feet.

Recitation of rhythmic patterns *by the dancer himself* is here an important feature. This is, in part, justified by the fact that it enables the audience to identify the varying accentuation of footwork. In such recitation, I may add, care may be taken to include—and invite attention to—such sonant differences of accent (say, between तक् and तक्) and sonant effects (say, of elongated *dhwani* in धिनननन) as are to be executed very subtly or merely

suggested in footwork. For instance, some semblance of the syllabic resonance (or *ध्वनि*) I here speak of is worked up by following a firm foot-stroke with a flowing bending of the knee. The getting of audience attention to such sonant details would not be so easy if *parhant* is done by the drummer. Besides, if the dancer himself does *parhant* now and then, he will find it easier to remain all along the focus of attention. But care is to be taken to ensure that recitation is well knit with the total dancing, so that the recital may not grow flacid.

Mention may here also be made of *tatkaar* or pure footwork which emphasizes the rhythmic movement only of the feet, without of course letting the *ang* grow clumsy.

Finally, Kathak is distinguished also by the attempt which its older masters sometimes make to bring out the significance of a (*thumri*-) theme in terms of *abhinaya* in a sitting posture.

This is almost a counterpart of *tatkaar*. For, whereas in *tatkaar* the upper part of the body hardly does anything, here in the treatment of *thumri* it is the feet that remain almost wholly quiescent. But, it must be remembered that whereas in *tatkaar* the *ang* has got to remain comely, in the *bhava-pradarshan* that distinguishes *thumri*-dancing, the toes of the feet keep indicating the accent of the *sama*.

Here, in passing, a question may be faced with regard to *thumri* presented in the way just referred to. What is its place in the order of the total recital, in fact and in principle? So far, where it *at all* formed a part of the programme, *bhava-pradarshan* on the floor has been, as a rule, the last item,¹⁹ perhaps with the purpose of reminding the viewers that the original purpose of a Kathak was to do story telling. But, does it seem consistent for a *dance* recital to end with an item that makes so little use of the feet? I would answer in the negative. But my *argument* here would be mainly pragmatic. A *thumri* on the floor may be all right for a small *mehfil*, but the remoter rows of people in a big hall will find it difficult to follow such *abhinaya*.

It is not, however, enough to *distinguish* Kathak from the other styles of our classical dance. We have also to do some thinking about its own inner content; for our understanding of its basic concepts is as yet quite indeterminate, and this not only adds to the discomfiture of the pupil who sees (say) *thaat* being done quite differently by the rival *gharanas*, but prevents the critic from giving a solid basis to his write-ups. Hardly *any* clear and sustained writing is available on the subject, and so, as I set out to determine the basic concepts of Kathak, I have to make my approach comprehensive; it has to be a blend of the lines of enquiry outlined in the very opening of this essay, and also to heed the requirement of the inner orderliness of a recital.

E. The basic concepts:

1. *Vandanaa*

Today, it is common to see a Kathak dancer opening his recital with an invocation (*vandanaa*). This clearly agrees with the emphasis put by us, traditionally, on God-realization as the destiny of all artistic pursuit, though one can only wonder how, if at all, our arts *today* conduce to this goal. It may be added that the practice of beginning an enterprise after invoking the blessings of Lord Ganesh still holds in the lives of the more orthodox of our countrymen. So, it is quite in consonance with our cultural traditions to start dancing Kathak with a *vandanaa*.

But, can a Kathak recital be said to be incomplete or untrue to norms if it does *not* begin with a *vandanaa*? I fear I must answer this question in the negative. Specially when they had to dance in courts, some of our greatest Kathaks of the past would often begin with a *thaat* or *salaami*; and it has *not* been the normal practice so far to hold them guilty of an impropriety merely because they left out *vandanaa*. Further, the overall character of an average Kathak recital today is so frankly sensuous or merely rhythmic that an invocatory opening would hardly seem congruous with the total dancing. A good opening is not that which merely precedes everything else. It should help us anticipate the basic character of all that is to follow. I am not suggesting that if one begins with *vandanaa*, items portraying ordinary human love cannot also appear in the dance. What I mean only is that if we insist on making invocation compulsory as a beginning, the dominating effect of a recital cannot be allowed to seem sensuous. So, I conclude, until we are able to amend the present content and temper of a Kathak recital, *vandanaa* cannot be fixed as the necessary way to open. That an item merely conforms to the external dictates of a cultural bias is one thing; that it makes for the inner compactness of a recital is quite another. I attach greater value to the latter. But, where the net effect of the recital is expected to be one of high seriousness,—say, by means of incorporating some items of quiet and dignified charm or ones that are frankly devotional—a *vandanaa* would be an ideal opening. This in fact explains my own struggling attempts, for the last ten years or so, to add to the measure of dignity in the content of Kathak, largely by availing of meaningful themes and the *dhruvapaad-dhamar* forms of our vocal music.

Where it is not perfunctory, a *vandanaa* can indeed be of great help. It works up a serious atmosphere, so necessary for *classical* dancing; facilitates inner attunement, making for the suggestion—so rare today, because of overmuch emphasis on pleasing the audience—that the dancer is lost in the dancing; is (therefore) forthwith able to invite and hold viewers' attention to the details of what is presented; and, what is more, enables the dancer himself to turn to the succeeding items in a quiet and reverent way. And just

because it aims at all these ends, a *vandanaa* cannot be danced at too quick speed. As for the element of *abhinaya* that is bound to figure here, it should of course be *and seem* inwardly affirmed.

There is one more purpose which a *vandanaa* can be made to subserve. The Kathak style is not too rich in respect of beautiful postures. This defect may be partly remedied by composing such invocatory items as build upon images of gods and goddesses. I must add, however, that not every deity looks winsome to the eye. For sheer visual beauty, Saraswati is here preferable²⁰ to Durga; but much, of course, depends upon the individual artistry of the dancer.

From the viewpoint of the occurrent quality of Kathak as an art-form, another remark may here be made. *Vandanaa* is marked by narration and expressiveness. *Thaat*, on the other hand, is free from these elements. So in occurring after *vandanaa*, *thaat* is likely to seem all the more formal by virtue of contrast. *Vandanaa* is therefore a possible means to highlight the nature of *thaat*. Here, however, care is to be taken in changing the invocatory music into a *lahraa* for *thaat*; and also to ensure that the *vandanaa* is not studded with so much of postural beauty and expressiveness that the items that follow may seem quite dwarfed.

We may also give some thought to the possible *kinds of vandanaa*. Broadly speaking, they may take two forms: free, expressional dancing with a *sloka* that is set in a *raag* but not in any *taal*; and the regulated depiction in dance of the theme of a composition that is also rhythmically organized. I prefer the latter kind. For, first, it succeeds in establishing, instead of merely suggesting, the right kind of atmosphere; and secondly, it seems better able to draw *and hold* onlookers' attention. What is more, it can invest the whole subsequent dancing with an obvious orderliness. But this I must clarify:

The basic elements of dance are: *laya*, *taal ang* and *abhinaya*. All these would be there, as a blend, in the *vandanaa* of my choice. And thereafter, as we turn to the following items, each of these elements will seem highlighted individually. Thus, *thaat* will emphasize *laya* and *ang*, not expression and rhythmic variety. *Aamad* will pay more attention to rhythm; and *Chaal*, to the manner of gait. I can here strengthen my argument by citing a parallel from an allied art. According to the more respectable kind of orthodox practice, a *tabla* solo recital opens with the composition known as *peshkar*; and this builds upon almost all the syllables that are used in *tabla* playing.²¹

But, I repeat, the kind of *vandanaa* I am advocating should not be too rich and elaborate. If a question be put as to the precise degree of *vilambit* that is achievable in, or proper for a *vandanaa*, I would say that the matter depends partly on the individual skill of the dancer himself—it being common knowledge that most of even our better known Kathak dancers today do not

quite relish *vilambit* of the deeper kind; and partly on the nature of the rhythm chosen, *sool taal* (for instance) being naturally inapt for every slow treatment.

There is yet another question that calls for attention. What is to be the musical form of the *vandanaa as composed*? Could it be a *Keertan*? There are some who would here answer affirmatively;²² and their argument could be that an invocatory *Keertan* can work up the right kind of devotional atmosphere *and also seem gripping*.²³ Now, I certainly admit that the very opening item should not appear cheerless; but a *Keertan*, I protest, does not seem classical in idiom, and is therefore unsuited to open an exposition of Kathak dance²⁴ which is obviously one of our classical styles. I would, therefore, prefer a *dhruvapaad*. More detailed comments in this context will be made in a later section of the essay.

2. *Thaat*

In respect of *thaat* I may reflect simply as under:

a. Of the presentation of *thaat* we speak in two ways: ठाट बांधना and ठाट नाचना. The words underlined at once give us the clue that the item in question includes both posture and movement.

b. As for posture in a *thaat*, we can safely make two simple remarks. Negatively, it should not encroach on the idiom of the opening items of our other, classical dance styles. In other words, it should seem quite different from the Orissi *tribhangi* and from *arahmandi* which distinguishes Bharata Natyam. Positively, the *thaat* posture may either show the two hands, bent at elbows, uniting to make a diagonal; or, the right hand may be positioned to suggest Krishna's *mukut*, and the left to appear resting gently on Radha's shoulders.

c. Movement has here to be soft and reposeful. This is needful to draw viewers' attention to the details of what is presented. *Vilambit*, we may note, is also the opening manner of our classical music recitals, vocal or instrumental.

d. As for the details of a *thaat* as danced, the general requirement is that the flow of *hastachaalan* and its pauses should conform to the formal character of the *bols* being used. Thus the flow of येई as heard calls for a similar free movement of the arms; and the terminal तअतता has to bodily appear as a stilling of the flow. On the whole, a *thaat* as danced should strike us as gentle and self-possessed, but of course not weak or hesitant.²⁵

e. By way of determining its essential nature, it may be noted that *thaat* builds upon the following basic elements of dance: beauty of *ang*, which

has to be kept throughout the recital; and *laya* or regulated flow, which is different from the beat marks (*zarabs*) that turn it into *taal*, is here suggested by sinuous movements of eyebrows, wrists, neck and waist. Language and emotional expression are here both missing; and their absence quite distinguishes a *thaat* from a *vandanaa*.

f. In so far as it is often the very first item—and is, in any case, presented quite early in the recital—the syllables used in *thaat* should be the basic ones of dance.

I now feel enabled to list the essentials of a *thaat* succinctly as follows:

Thaat is (in many cases) the first²⁶ entirely formal item of a Kathak recital. The materials it emphasizes are the very essentials of dance: *ang*, *laya* and the primary syllables. And the manner it builds upon them is one of gentle blending, not that of variform permutation. So, no one element here appears to jut out of the whole, or to dominate the rest; and the whole-form never suffers. Visually, a *thaat* (of the kind I take to be ideal) is a movement that seems unhindered, gentle and gliding; and yet upgathered, so that the overall suggestion is one of dancer's creative attunement and restraint rather than one of display and effusiveness. In relation to the arms, the visage here looks a little framed, though by no means enclosed. Further, in so far as it aims at a quite gentle blend, a *thaat* needs no other accompaniment than a *thekaa-lahraa* twosome, soft and sweet, but dependable in *laya*. It is not easy to make the most of such leanness of manner and material. But, when it appears in the *thaat* of an artist of right training and long experience, the dancing can quite enthrall the knowledgeable in spite of its austerity, or rather because of it.

In its present form, however, the above characterization of *thaat* is hardly quite intelligible, much less acceptable; and I think it necessary to make some additional remarks thereon:

First, I do not categorically say that *thaat* is everywhere the wholly formal opening of a recital; for, as will be argued later, it is sometimes necessary to begin with an *aamad*, rather than with a *thaat*. If, however, *thaat* is preceded by a *vandanaa*, it would not at all upset what I here say about *thaat*; for, in so far as it has the content of verbal meaning and expressiveness, *vandanaa* is by no means merely formal, and *thaat* clearly remains as the first item that is wholly formal.

Secondly, though *aamad*, *tatkaar* and rhythmic patterns as such are also quite formal, the way I have characterized *thaat* makes it quite distinct from them all. In a *thaat* duly done the *ang* is upgathered (or स्मित); but in an *aamad* it is स्फुरित or tends to open up, and to grow quite articulate. As for *tatkaar* and rhythmic patterns, neither of them is dominated by that

visible framing of the visage which, I have said, distinguishes *thaat*. Again, they seem to *emphasize* rhythm, its variety, subtlety and liveliness. In *thaat*, on the other hand, what we find is the easy passage of *laya*; and as I have said, here no element appears outstanding.

Thirdly, where I speak of the *essentials* of dance, I mention only *ang*, *laya* and the primary syllables; and do *not* include *abhinaya*. Here, I must add, I go more by the evidence of fact than by any thought of norms. The fact indeed is that some Kathak recitals are lacking in *abhinaya*; or do just a little of it, and perfunctorily; but, at least in *thaat* and some *gats*, *ang* is taken care of; and the basic *bols* are there at least in *tatkaar* and *thaat*.

Finally, the suggestion of self-display—or of showing something to the audience—can be more easily minimal in *thaat* than anywhere else in a Kathak recital. It is, in this context, helpful to realize that in public performances *thaat* is perhaps the only item which is not accompanied or preceded by *parhant* which always aims directly at drawing onlookers' attention.

All this discussion of *thaat* is still, however, incomplete. We have yet to reckon with some practical aspects of the matter :

If it asked as to how big a *thaat* should be, two answers may be given. First, the matter cannot be exactly decided in abstraction; for, much would here depend on the consideration as to how long the distinctive idiom of *thaat* can be preserved in actual dancing, and this would in fact turn on the skill of the individual dancer which is obviously a highly variable factor. Secondly, if we decide to go by the meaning of ठाट नाचना as against ठाट बांधना relatively big *thaats* would seem permissible. But even these, I insist, should conform to the two essential requirements of a *thaat*; first, the employment of the basic *bols* of dance *alone*, and secondly, a restricted use of rhythmic turns, so that the *thaat* presented may still be quite distinct from rhythmic patterns. I have here in mind those Kathaks whose *thaats* are full of rhythmic variety and splendour, and even inclusive of some *bols* that are not really the basic ones of dance. My own view is that the dancing of such *thaats*, just for the sake of parading ones mastery over rhythm, is as wrong from the viewpoint of proper effect as the singing of such *vilambit sthayis* by highly literate singers as are too full of meaningful words, and do not therefore permit the use of those formal graces in the *sthayi* which alone can invest them with the requisite suggestion of roominess.

Besides, in so far dancing has to be done on the floor, in a given length of time, and before audiences of varying size, the question of the precise choice of a *thaat* has also to be looked at from these practical angles. Here, it is easy to see that if the stage is big—and the audience too, a large one—a small, soft *thaat* just in the middle of the stage will not be effective. The gentle movements of wrist and eyebrows will hardly be visible to those

many onlookers who are not quite close to the stage; and covering only the very mid of the stage will only heighten the huge emptiness around, and so look odd. Therefore, in such a situation it would be feasible to do *thaats* that are relatively lively, bold and cover a fair part of the stage. This may also be necessary where the duration of the recital is less than full, and the dancer has to prepare himself quickly for spirited dancing, say, the immediately following *aamad* and the subsequent rhythmic patterns.

But, I hasten to add, the fact that a *thaat* loosens the limbs, and so serves a practical purpose too is not a part of the aesthetic nature of *thaat*. This is quite as definite as the truth that their tonic effect on the throat has nothing to do with the aesthetic character of *taans* in *Khyal*-singing. It is of course a fact that whereas in a *thaat* the danseuse *explores* the body through micro-movements, in dancing *aamad* she explores space. Yet in our concern with Kathak *as art* not only is this fact to be *not* regarded relevant, but our very way of talking has to eschew words that bespeak a mere utilitarian concern with facts, such as 'explore'. An athlete often makes movements which visibly loosen his limbs before lifting a weight, but their value is purely instrumental; it lies simply in what they make possible, — the lifting of the weight; *they are not as such meant to be attended to*. But, in a *thaat* the dainty movements of the *various* parts of the body are themselves a part of the dance to be contemplated. And as to the inadequacy of 'explore' to what is actually *seen* being done in dance, it should be even clearer as we turn to *aamad*.

3. *Aamad*:

According to the order that I would like a Kathak recital to take, *thaat* is followed by *aamad*. But the order is by no means inexorable; *thaat*, in some cases, has to *follow aamad*. Much here depends upon some matters of fact. If the dancer has to enter a large stage when the audience is already seated in the hall, the way he enters will be naturally visible to people. He cannot therefore approach the stage merely walking in the everyday manner. The incoming must have a visual appeal; it has got to be dancing; and, in so far as that which highlights spirited movement across the floor is only an *aamad*, not a *thaat*, the first item will here be *aamad*. On the other hand, if the dancer is already positioned at the centre of the stage behind the curtain, and is to be seen by the audience only when the curtain is lifted, he is free to begin with a *thaat*.

So, an *aamad* can, and often does *follow thaat*. But if this is so, we cannot obviously define *aamad* as the item which *opens* Kathak dance. On the other hand, it is just as easy to realise that *aamad* brings out the occurrent, dynamic character of dance *more clearly* than a *thaat* as such can. I admit that *thaat* too is not without movement; but I would forthwith point out that here the gentle movement of the wrists and the eyebrows is not easily perceptible—in any case, one has to try to see it; and that, further, the way the legs work

is quite gentle. An *aamad*, on the other hand, is unmistakably lively; and it itself seems so to the onlooker. Indeed, whereas in a *thaat* properly done the dancer seems to be not only creating, but at once losing himself in the dance, an *aamad* is clearly exhibitivite in character. The former, so to speak, shows the artist getting attuned for the dancing; the latter is a flowering (not really beginning) of dancing for the audience. *Ang*, in the former, is स्मित; in the latter, it is स्फुरित.²⁷ As for the syllables to be employed in an *aamad*, they have to be, essentially,²⁸ the basic ones of dance. I insist on this because an *aamad* either opens the recital; or, if it comes at the second place, is the first clear expression of the occurrent and rhythmically²⁹ organised character of *Kathak* dance. On the other hand, in so far the *ang* here appears to effloresce—and the dance, to grow more articulate—an *aamad* should, and it often does, employ one or two such *bols* as may enliven the dancing with moments of bloom or sparkle by virtue of their very phonetic quality, say, *bols* like त्राम and वडुधा. But these *bols*, I forthwith add, have to be so used that they may only seem to heighten by contrast, not to dominate, the character and effect of the basic *bols*. This indeed seemed to be so in the first *aamad* presented, as a specimen, by Birju Maharaj in the 1977 Seminar on presentation in *Kathak*.

Further, and now (till the end of the para) I build upon the specimen *aamads* presented—and comments made thereon—by some of the artists who participated in the Seminar just referred to, an *aamad* on the one hand preserves (a measure of) the leisurely character of *thaat*—in so far as the flowing, wavy movements of the arms are retained—and, on the other hand, it paves the way to the variety and brilliance of the items to come.³⁰ As for movement in *aamad*, I may say that it assumes many more directions than it does in *thaat*; here it is forward-backward, sidelong and diagonal, and can even be manifest as a pronounced and backward bending of the figure from the waist.³¹ The use of *chukkurs*, in the specimens presented, was very sparing; which, I think, is only proper, for they do not work up the suggestion of roominess in space which an *aamad* aims at.

What I would like to emphasize, however, is that in no case did *aamad* seem merely a case of movement in space. Specially while watching the hands in the *aamads* presented by Birju Maharaj I got the impression that space was being deftly scooped or sliced.³² *Moving in space or exploring it is one thing; sculpting in space, quite another. And there is no reason why if a work of sculpture can be said to organize the space around it, the literally dynamic art of dancing should be regarded as mere movement 'in' space.*

I now feel emboldened to make a summary comparison of *aamad* and *thaat*:

An *aamad*, like *thaat*, is a wholly non-thematic item. But here the basic *bols* of dance may be punctuated with some other syllables; and these

variants, along with the quicker movement of the legs and the clearly various directions that the movement takes, lend to *aamad* a liveliness that is missing in *thaat* where the emphasis is on inner attunement and serenity. The overall suggestion of *ang* in an *aamad* is one of lively self-unfoldment; in *thaat*, so to speak, the body seems gently to test, transfigure and attune itself for subsequent work. Finally, whereas the emphasis in *thaat* is on *laya*, micro-movements of the body, and on gliding passage, here (in *aamad*) it is on *taal*, vigorous employment of the whole body, and on discreteness and emphases of beats. Yet, we must remember, an *aamad* is not quite removed from *thaat* and is distinct from rhythmic patterns by virtue of its employment not only of the basic *bols* of dance (by and large), but also of a flowing, unrestricted movement of the arms. In doing a 'thaat', we may say, the dancer slips gently into the dance. An 'aamad', on the other hand, is the emphatic advent of the dance itself. There is another way in which the pattern called *aamad* squares with the meaning of the name it bears; it is the first well-defined and sharp access to the *sama* that we find in a Kathak recital. In *thaat*, as we know, the *sama* is quite gently touched, though by no means unsurely.

F. Content and Form of Kathak:

In our treatment of *thaat* and *aamad* so far we have thought it necessary to distinguish the aesthetic from the non-aesthetic. We have also spoken of whole-form and of the blending or accentuation of elements. The avowed emphasis of the essay is also on the aesthetic. So, some thought may be now given to at least one key aesthetical problem in relation to Kathak. I choose the question of the organization or form and content of a Kathak recital. It is certainly a question of importance, for today we often complain that the *content* of an average Kathak recital is deficient in expressional and dignified items, and that whatever items are presented lack proper *interlinking*, so that the entire recital seems a mere succession of disconnected bits.

I also see, however, that the *non-aesthetical* aspect of the matter cannot, in practice, be ignored. For, the *what* and the *how* of an actual recital both, in part, depend on the duration of the recital and the size of the audience. In a brief recital many items cannot be presented; so the content gets limited. And, as already pointed out, where the auditorium is full and big, bolder items may have to be preferred to the dainty ones. Further, because of the limited time allowed, the change-over from the music of one item to that of the next has here to be very quick, yet effective; and this would call for greater attention to the details of the inner *organization* of a recital.

a. Content:

Now, turning first to content, I may make the following points:

1. Whether a recital is of standard duration or not, both thematic-

expressional *and* purely rhythmic items should be presented. *Tatkaar* or pure footwork has got to be there, if only because it is the easiest way to identify the style of dancing as Kathak. At the same time, if theme and expression are wholly left out, the dancing would be open to two criticisms. First, it would not at all square with the derivative meaning of 'Kathak'. Secondly, it would only encourage the popular misconception that Kathak is nothing but rhythmic acrobatics.

2. Further, in the case of a fully length recital, care must be taken to include some such items too as may serve to bring out the creative possibilities implicit in the Kathak idiom. But, and this is important, creative experiments here have throughout to keep to the distinctive Kathak manner and to *Hindustani* music. How exactly this can be done will be partly brought out later.

3. Freer use may be made of such patterns as build upon the *basic bols* of Kathak dance, and are not too intricate in form; and, from the viewpoint of *ang*, of such compositions as admit of a fuller employment of the person of the dancer. We must realize that it is the body which is the distinctive material of dance-rhythm, *bols* and expression beingt here in *tabla*-playing and vocal music as well; and that, just as a painter may be admired for his effective use of the different shades of a colour³³—and the poet, for the magic he creates out of his words—similarly a dancer too is to be complimented if he is able to turn his whole body, in dance, into postures of varying beauty. It is true that in watching a dance a knowledgeable person does not notice the dancer's figure *as such*, but it is no less undeniable that the aesthetic apprehension of an object of art is impossible without close attention to its perceptua.

4. Again, it is essential that items are chosen with an eye on variety. We have to bear it in mind that, as occurrent, a dance is created *by the dancer and for a present audience*; and that if the onlookers do not *appear* to be interested, their visible indifference may sicken the dancer's own zeal to draw upon his creative resources. To keep off such dual loss of interest the content of Kathak has to avoid monotony, and to make use of newer themes, different *rasas* and rhythms of both odd and even stretches of beats. What is more, some such compositions too should be danced as enrich and relieve rhythmic work with postures and *abhinaya* of telling beauty and expressiveness.

5. So far I have spoken largely of the dancer alone. But one cannot ignore the aspect of 'accompaniment'. Here, however, a distinction may be made. The *lahraa*-player too is an—'accompanist', but not quite in the same way as the *tabla*-player. The task of the former is only to keep indicating the extent and the pace of rhythm quite steadily, without of course straying from *sur*. It is doubtless a very basic function, but not as multiple as that of the drummer. The latter marks rhythm as a matrix, duplicates patterns with the

dancer simultaneously, *and also* indulges, at times, in bouts of rhythmic rivalry with the dancer. 'Accompaniment' as providing support is one thing; as rejoinder or as the issue of a challenge, it is quite another, *and is perhaps distinctive of Kathak as a classical dance-form*. Now, to highlight the latter, the dancer should also cover some passages of *jugalbandi with the drummer*.

Yet, I think it necessary to repeat, it would be wrong to undervalue the part played by the *lahraa*-player. For it is *his* steadiness in respect of keeping rhythm which props not only the dancing, but the drummer's own frequent abdication of *thekaa* in favour of patterns some of which may be a very subtly wayward challenge to the dancer's hold over rhythm. And it is a clear defect of our present day 'critical' reviews of Kathak recitals that they hardly ever make a mention of the rhythmic character of the *lahraa* unless it is very unsteady.

6. I now turn to the question as to what may rightly be made the last item of a Kathak recital. Today, it is commonly *tatkaar*. But I do not think this is the ideal way to end a recital. In spite of its undoubted importance, rhythm is only one of the basic elements of Kathak: others are, we have seen, *ang* and expressiveness. It is true that a Bharata Natyam recital often ends with a *tillana*; and an exposition of Orissi, with *mokshya* or *natangi* which are both dominated by rhythm, and are to be danced at a lively pace. But it is no less a fact that a presentation of Bharata Natyam may be rounded with a *varnam* or *natnam-adinar*; and one of Kuchipudi, with *tarangam*, all three of which are rich blends of *nritya* and *nritya*. Further, some Bharata Natyam experts of today end their dancing with a *mangalam* which is essentially a kind of salutation to God, the teacher, and the audience.

My own suggestion in respect of Kathak may be prefaced with some preparatory remarks:

I do not think it proper to end a Kathak recital with a climatic item, for no one in the audience would like his enjoyment to be abruptly cut short when it is at its highest. Nor should the finale, on the other hand, be tame and insipid, a downright anti-climax. I suggest that the penultimate item be made climactic, and that the terminal dance itself, so organized and presented that it may seem lucid and soothing. It could be a brief and simple thematic composition, danced in *madya laya trital*, easy to follow, incorporating a measure of *ang*, expression and a quite gently ordered, but perceptible access to the *sama*, achieved (let us say) through a natural and clearly indicative employment of the offbeat; and entitled, say, *samaapan* and dedicating, by the very meaning of its text, the entire recital to the Lord. Such an item will be a manifest indication that the dancing is coming to a close, *and welcome as a return to poise after the exciting quality of the preceding item*; invest the recital with a clear measure of self-completeness, by almost lending a frame to it if it began with *vandanaa*; at once provide the requisite godward orienta-

tion, so typical of our traditional approach, to the recital if it did *not* open with *vandanaa*; and lastly be a *distinctive* acquisition of Kathak dance.

b. Form:

By 'form' I here mean not the mere *manner*, but the inner *organization* of a Kathak recital. The two words are not quite identical in meaning. I admit that when we speak of the clarity of a recital, the reference may well be to *both* manner and artistic form, for clarity of details is doubtless an attribute of form as well, due accentuation of the *bols* as danced being an essential part of the very meaning of the formal individuality (or *shakl*) of patterns in Kathak. But, when we compliment a danseuse on the poise (इत्मीनान, चैन) of the ways he dances, the reference is *only* to her manner, *not to the form of the dance*.

In the case of a whole Kathak recital, however, form as inner organization has two distinct meanings: the inner orderliness of the individual patterns or compositions *and* the outer inter-linking of the different items presented in the unity of the recital. The former will be dealt with also when I turn to discuss the relation of Kathak *to music*. Here I want to dwell on form mainly as the overall unity of the recital. Before, however, I begin doing so it seems needful to outline a popular objection to Kathak dance:

The complaint here is that within a Kathak item, as also between the various items of a recital, continuity is deficient. There is an overall lack of 'atmosphere'; no spell is worked up. Here, in such complaints, the emphasis is on the ideal of integrated rendering, as against the tendency to present Kathak as a mere succession of disconnected items.

Now, how can this need for greater continuity and richer integration in Kathak be actually met? I forthwith develop my answer as follows :

1. To begin with the question of continuity *within* an individual item, one point may be at once made. If continuity be regarded as continuity of *movement*, dancing should be slow. It is only where the movement unfolds itself slowly and uninterruptedly that the eye can easily follow it and *find* it continuous. So, if we want more of continuity in Kathak, we have to make free use of items of flowing, gliding passage. Today, however, very few Kathaks present compositions employing slow *body-movement*. The rhythm-cycle is of course sometimes made to move in the true *vilambit* manner, and then the feet too move with due leisureliness. But, I ask, how many items (barring *thaat*) do we find in Kathak which show the *ang* or bodily bearing unfold or modulate itself in movements of slow, serene beauty that we may not merely watch, but follow in attunement? The clamour today is for *tayaari*—for vigour and fluency. We are yet to see it clearly that there can be effective parallels in Kathak for truly reposeful singing or playing in the region of

music; and that, partly by exploiting the more serious forms of our vocal music, it is possible to create new Kathak items where the *ang* may seem to compose and unfold itself dreamily, say, in the manner of a Bismillah Khan *meend*, so tranquil in passage, so free from the ruffle of accents.

2. Continuity, however, is not a feature of movement alone. We freely speak of the continuity of a theme or mood. Now, where the theme is rather long, some variety too is called for, so as to provide against boredom. One way to secure such variety is to use different *raagas*. The rhythm may persist unchanged; the mood too may remain the same, and make itself felt in a recurring refrain; and only the individual verbal images in the body of the text may vary, along with proper changes of music.

3. It is indeed needful to remember that continuity does not necessarily mean simplicity or uniformity. In the context of art, it is really a call for cohesion, and is quite compatible with diversity. The demand here simply is that the various elements of a Kathak item should all appear organized, and mutually adapted. These elements mainly are: the dancer's figure on the one hand, and some kind of music, on the other. The second element, the music, includes (or may include) the following: a song or some other meaningful text—may be *sloka*; the character and extent of the rhythm-cycle; the form or the flow of music, and the purely formal, euphonic character of the rhythmic syllables as recited or danced. Now, if all these elements be kept in mind, the proper organization or inner continuity of a Kathak item would mean that the *ang* or bodily bearing is made to correspond, generally, *not only* to the rhythm-cycle and the meaning of the song (if any) but to the formal character of '*bols*' or syllables of rhythm and *to the manner of the movement of music*—to the way it flows, upward or downward, straight or meandering.

Here, I may use a distinction which I regard necessary: the one between *dancing to music* and *dancing the music itself*. If the *lahraa* is going on, and the danseuse executes a rhythmic pattern, her *main* concern is only the *sama*; she has nothing to do with the way in which the *lahraa* flows. This is dancing *to* music—dancing merely to the accompaniment of music. A great part of our rhythmic work in Kathak is merely of this kind—dancing to music.

Dancing the music itself would mean dancing out *the meaning or the formal character of music*. Now, if the music is not a song—say, if it is a *taraanaa*—dancing the music itself would still be a relevant idea. It would mean trying to dance according to the manner in which the music itself turns and sparkles, flowers or fades out.

My point is here clear. Either do not employ music at all, or if you do, respect it. Make it contribute to dance what it can. It is simply absurd to enlist a *sarod*-player, a flutist; and then to make them all perform so vigorously—along with the heavy stamping of hoofs miscalled footwork—that no detail

is manifest, no accent perceivable, no intelligence exercised, and no real critical evaluation possible. Here, the audience only responds uproariously to a booming, buzzing mass of confusion. What, I ask, is the point in employing the plaintive strains of a flute in the *taar* unless the danseuse herself here proceeds to etch out a line of slender beauty, may be with fingers or with the figure entire, gracefully upgathered?

4. So far we have been considering the question of continuity *within an individual Kathak item*. Attention may now be given to the demand for continuity *between* the various Kathak items. The need, in my view, can in part be met as follows:

First, we may so regulate music that the last strain of the first piece may seem to take us quite naturally, yet definitely, to the opening musical phrase of the next item. (How this is in fact to be done will be brought out later).

Secondly, the various Kathak items may be so serialized that a composition may seem demanded as a foil by the immediately preceding one, exactly as white is suggested by black, or left by right. To put it more concretely, if a composition presenting Krishna as a lover is followed at once, but skilfully, by another that portrays him as a mighty warrior, the two may appear not merely opposed, but *complementary to each other*. Much here depends, I repeat, on the regulated manner of transition. If such care is taken, a slow piece coming at once after a quick one will seem quite acceptable, rather than abrupt. We must remember that the *literal* selfsameness of a *lahraa* is one thing, and the *apparent* continuity of the items of a recital, quite another.

The integrated appearance of a recital depends also on the quality of 'accompaniment'. This aspect of the matter will be dealt with presently, as we turn to a discussion of Kathak and music.

G. Kathak and music³⁴

Here, of course, a key point of discussion is provided by the distinction, we have already drawn, between *dancing to music*—as when the *lahraa* and the *thekaa* are the only forms of music employed, and the dancing is required simply to conform in general to the rhythmic extent marked and kept—and *dancing the music itself*, as when the danseuse makes an attempt to bring out, through *abhinaya*, the verbal meaning of the song, or to adapt the bodily or rhythmic manner of dancing to the flow and turns of music—an attempt which, to illustrate, prohibits a *regressive* movement on the stage when an *aaroha taan* is being sung by the vocal accompanist.

But music in a Kathak recital is also found as *changes in raaga, taal* mood and form. Changes in mood cover such variations as the replacement

of a *viyoga-sringaar* composition with a *samyoga sringaar* one; and those of form are manifest, say, in the sequence of a *taraanaa* upon a *dhruvapad*. It is, in my view, important to give some thought to these inter-item changes; for, as I have earlier said, by regulating transitions with care the charge of discontinuity against a Kathak recital can be, to some extent, met.

Nor is the question of music compositions irrelevant to Kathak. My considered view is that we can raise the content of dignity and *abhinaya* in this dance-form by making free use of sober and stately *dhruvapadas* and *dhamaars* with a meaningful text.

In sum, the different constituents of a Kathak recital which I want to discuss under the present heading are: *lahra*, *tabla*-accompaniment, changes of music *between* two adjacent items, and music compositions. It may seem that we already know what excellence is respect of the first two of these, and that therefore thinking is necessary only with regard to the remaining two. But I protest that, though many dancers may be already *using* good *lahraas* along with their dancing, hardly anyone has *reflected* on the requirements of a good *lahraa*. Nor have we given conscious thought to the character of those rhythmic patterns with which the *tabla*-player could helpfully begin his 'accompaniment' with the dancer. So far we have only preferred steadiness and fluency in *lahraas* and drumming; but this, I insist, is hardly enough.

Lahraa:

Here, again, I may proceed piecemeal:

a. Another word used for what serves a parallel function (with solo *tabla*) is नगमा. But what *this* word directly suggests is melodiousness. On the other hand, what seems demanded by the word लह्रा as such is a wavy continuity. Such closeness to words is, of course, not enough to determine what exactly a *naghmaa* and a *lahraa* do in the context of art. They both indicate and keep a chosen pace and compass of *laya*. Steadiness is their common need, and this is what distinguishes them alike from what the word धुन signifies. We never use with *dhun* some words that freely go with *lahraa* and *naghmaa*: say, कायम करना, गाढ़ना. Yet, in spite of what the two words share, it is easier to derive from *lahraa* (than from *naghmaa*) the requirement that the musical line should not be played at so slow a pace that the very flow of *laya* may seem to disappear. And the demand seems specially apt in the context of dance. The dancer has to manage not merely rhythm, but *ang* and *abhinaya*; and the latter, I may add, can make quite heavy demands on the intellect where the text is subtle. The drummer's task is relatively limited; and he can give more attention to the counting of beats than the dancer. The latter needs a line the cyclic character of which is a little easier to grasp, which means that the movement towards *sama* cannot be very tardy; and he wants the line to be so played that attunement with

taal may be helped by the flowing quality of *laya* (as manifest in the *lahraa*), freeing attention, to an extent, from the task of *counting beats*. It is, in this context, perhaps true and needful to suggest that (in the past) the demand for excessively slow dancing has been mostly made by those Kathaks who have moved towards dance from the side of *tabla*. In any case, the fact is undeniable that if a *lahraa* is played too slowly, its flowing character disappears, and one feels entangled, rather than helped in the task of locating and holding onto the *matras*. What is worse, the *lahraa* so played does not *seem* shapely.

c. On the other hand, the *lahraa* as played (for the slower items) should seem steady as the basic structure of a *vilambit gat* in instrumental music. For the quicker dances, the *lahraa* has of course to be duly stepped up in pace, but it should neither have the involute design that characterizes some *drut gats* nor smack of *gat kaari* or variations upon the basic musical line. For all accompanists, I insist, the cardinal requirement is that they should do nothing that is likely to distract the dancer's attunement with the dance.

d. This at once suggests another feature of a good *lahraa*. Its own inner design should be winsome, though simple. For, it has to be played, without a break, as long as the dancing lasts; and if it does not grip attention, the musician is likely to stray into flirtatious variations which, we have said, the *lahraa* should avoid.

e. From the viewpoint of the ideal that all 'accompaniment' is to be of help to the dancer, I even find it possible to make some points of detail in respect of the inner design of a *lahraa*:

First, if it is meant for dancing at slow speed, a *lahraa* should cover a fair extent of the musical scale, exhibiting *aaroha* and *avaroha* quite clearly. This will be of help to the dancer in unwinding and upgathering *ang*. A *lahraa* traversing but a few notes of the scale may be good enough for a solo *tabla* recital; but it is not so for a dancer in case he is mindful of *ang*.

Secondly, *lahraas* for asymmetrical rhythms should not seem mere extractions from the wholeness of symmetrical *lahraas*. The warning is essential; for, I have often found that the line chosen for dancing, say, in a cycle of 15 beats is merely a deletion of one *matra* from a popular 16-*matra lahraa*, and so quite unpleasant as a fragment. Whatever be the cycle it conforms to, a *lahraa* should be so designed as to seem a wholeness. Its form will then aid the dancer's attunement.

Thirdly, it will be added help to the dancer if, at least in the case of the larger rhythm-cycles, the *lahraa* evinces in its form a clear clue to the way to the *sama*, say, three or four beats earlier. And, of course, it would heighten the overall appeal of the line called *lahraa* if it also, by its form, lets the *raag* effloresce.³⁵

f. But however good be its own form, the actual playing of a *lahraa* calls for care, and cooperation between the musicians, if the line is played both on a *saarangi* and a harmonium. In moments and passages where the *lahraa* shows the discreteness of cut notes, the harmonium is to dominate; and where the line just glides or meanders, the *saarangi* should take over the playing. This is, however, a requirement which is already freely met by accompanists who work as a team.

Tabla-Sangati:

Here, most of what I am going to say is determined by the consideration that, in so far as he is but an accompanist, the drummer should give all help and importance to the danseuse—by means of the content and quality of playing, and by his general bearing on the stage; and avoid doing anything which might make for the opposite end or distract *our* attention from her. I insist on this, however, as the overriding consideration not merely because of the fact that the drummer is not here the main performer, but because the ideal of integrated presentation will be harmed in case he usurps attention from the dancer for long or repeatedly.

Nor is the risk here referred to merely imaginary. Today, it has become a fashion for some of our leading dancers to enlist the help of a famous *tabla*-player for the big occasion, to let him do as much of solo playing as he would like to—and not only toss up some rhythmic patterns to the danseuse as a challenge; and, in effect, to earn the largely unmerited compliment that their own hold over *taal* is immaculate merely by letting a *tabla* player of repute 'sit' as an accompanist. It is for the critics to protest against this propping of one's own claims on merit that is another's; and I here bemoan only the dissipation of effect because of the jutting of an element which should subserve, and be fused with the dance. Luckily, the vice has not yet crept into the fold of our vocal music; and this partly explains why hardly any recital of instrumental music or Kathak dance can be as *spell-binding*—which is not the same thing as being 'interesting', 'exciting', 'enjoyable'—as, say, the singing of the late Ustads Ameer Khan, and Ghulam Ali, or of Pandit Kumar Gandharva today.

Some details of the matter may be listed as follows:

(a) Negatively, the drummer should not draw onlookers' attention by playing with undue self-assertiveness.³⁶ Positively, he has to play with such sensitive responsiveness to the needs of the dancing, with such *controlled* power, and with so little resort to mere loudness that what the drumming does may seem inextricable from the whole; and the knowledgeable may admire the sweetness and the unrelenting seizure by the drums of almost all that the dancer does or suggests in respect of rhythm, rather than the loud and exciting quality of merely vigorous playing which is so popular today. I think it here

necessary to cite the words which (with some variations) were used by our expert listeners in olden days, by way of admiring the drummer: 'क्या' कहने, इसने कत्थक की एक बात नहीं छोड़ी' The emphasis used to be on unremitting adequacy to the work of the dancer; and this is, I say, demanded by the very meaning of the word संगति.

Where the danseuse just dallies with *laya* quite daintily, the drumming is also to soften forthwith, sometimes to a whisper; during pure footwork, in case she can use 'the left one' too with effect, only a soft and steady *thekaa* may be given, so that the subtle displacement of *zarabs* or accents is duly made manifest by contrast with their normal location in regular drumming; and where the dancing lacks a filling of *detail* in both *ang* and gait, as is the case in *nikaas*, the drummer is to make up the literal vacuity with a soft and quick succession of syllables. Here, indeed, when the person doing *parhant* recites only the basic *bols* of dance: ता थेई थेई तत, आ थेई थेई तत, and the danseuse executes but leisurely and simple rounds, the *tabla*-player is seen to diversify the vacant inclusiveness of the rounds in question by playing a close array of *bols* such as धाकड़ धिन्ना धिन्ना कत, तावड़ तिन्ना तिन्नाकत or even the more compact succession of the following syllables: धाकड़ धिन्ना गद्दी घिड़तक, तगेतिट किट तक तिट धिड़ान तक धा.

(b) These three requirements are doubtless duly met even today,³⁷ at least by the better Kathak accompanists, who are not necessarily the best known *tabla*-players. What is, however, still little cared for is the manner of *opening tabla*-playing when the dancer has just entered or is about to enter the stage. I may put the matter thus:

Suppose the danseuse has just finished a *vandanaa* that is not set to any *taal*, and is about begin a *thaat* in *tritaal*. Here, the drummer has to begin. But *what* is to be his opening pattern? And *how* exactly is he to play it? The question, here, is not merely with regard to the form and the content of the pattern itself, but also about the manner in which it is to be played.

Now my answer, here, can only be general and multiple:

First, in so far as its purpose is to enable the danseuse to get a clear idea of the compass and manner of the rhythm chosen—and, what is more, *to get attuned* with the rhythm—the opening pattern should be well-designed and show the *vibhags* of the *taal* quite clearly. If it builds largely upon *bols* like *dir, dir*, it may well enable the drummer to impress us with his fluency, but it will not offer the needed help to the dancer, for it will be relatively deficient in articulation or clarity of syllables.

Secondly, it should be played in a way that is, on the whole, soft and sweet, yet clearly accentuated. If it is only played vigorously, and made to end as a bang at the *sama*, it may well be able to startle lay listeners into open

applause, but it will not make for the dancer's inner attunement with rhythm. On the other hand, if the pattern is played gently and steadily, and with such skilful accentuation of its *bols* that its *shakl* or inner design is made quite manifest, the *sama* will not have to be *played loudly* at all, for the dancer (and the drummer) will be able to *anticipate it as the immanent end-point of the design, and so at once come to dwell, we may say, within the region of the rhythm*. Such playing will elicit quiet approval of the knowledgeable and help the danseuse if what is called: मिजाज बनाना.

(c) Again, the variants of the basic structure of the *thekaa* are to be played very sparingly. I think it necessary to say so because sometimes, where the cycle being played is *teentaal*, the drummer resorts so freely to what is (a little jeeringly) called नाधि बिट्टा... that the neat and soothing effect of the cycle's earlier basic form is wholly cancelled. We must remember that if the ground is wholly hid, the variants tend to seem mere amazement.

(d) What is more, it too would serve to make and keep the danseuse as the focus of onlookers' attention if the drummer (and other accompanists) look mostly at her, instead of directly at the audience. I wish we could bear in mind what they do in the West: there, the musicians, as a rule, face the danseuse.

(e) But the dancer too is not free to deal with the drummer in any way she likes. For instance, the man whose drum is a *pakhawaj* should not be made to provide accompaniment to an item where the *taal* is *Kaharwaa*; and the *saarang*i should not be invited to follow the edgy *zarabs* of *drut tatkaar*. Nor is the critic justified in chuckling disapprovingly where the drummer is not able to keep pace with a sudden variation made by the danse use in a *pre-fixed* item.

Changes of Music:

This is perhaps the most commonly neglected aspect of the way we present Kathak. I have not so far come across even a single recital where this matter could be said to have been duly attended to. Be it noted that what I here complain of is not the absence of good *lahraas* or thematic compositions, but lack of attention to the music *between* the items. And I insist that my complaint is by no means frivolous. Those who are fond of Kathak dance are, as a rule, familiar with Hindustani music as well; and though, because of the inertia of the habit of indifference somehow developed with regard to the aspect in question, they may not feel actively disturbed by random musical changes between different items, I think it safe to say that the overall appeal of a recital is bound to rise if this defect is remedied.

Competent critics are not slow to protest against 'sloppy compering'³⁷. But, is the compering that goes *along with* it closer to a Kathak recital than the

changes which occur *between* its different items? We can only say 'no'. Yet, I have not so far seen anyone complaining as I here do. This is indeed another lacuna in our critical attitudes.

Turning, now, to what can positively help us in dealing with the defect is question, let me first formulate the problem. On the cessation of an item, and by way of preparing for the next one, the change of music has to be reasonably quick—so that the audience may not get bored by lack of action on the stage—and yet decisive, without seeming abrupt or otherwise awkward. How can these ends be met? There are many ways, I answer; and which of these would work in a particular situation cannot be pre-fixed, for much would depend upon the nature of the two items, and of the terminal music of the earlier one. But, to illustrate the point, I may explain two good ways of effecting musical changes between items, I mean the ones which I suggested in the Kathak Kendra Seminars;³⁹ and which, I believe, were 'recorded' :

(a) One way is to stretch from within the musical character of the last or focal *bol* of the first composition—and so to transform it into the opening word of the next one—by decelerating its *laya*. This can make for a very apt change of music in the way I desire. Thus, if the *bol* at which the first composition—say, a *veer rasa dhruvapad* set in *raag hindol* and *sool taal*—finally attains to the *sama* is कृ (of कृष्ण), it could be forthwith, and at the same *svara* (say, *taar sa*) elongated into a leisurely enunciation of कर, and therefrom, in a gentle descending way, one could set out to sing कर सिंगार, राधा लजावे the first line of a 11-matra *kedara dhruvapada*, an essay in *sringaar* with an accent on *lajja bhava*, and with its *sama* at कर. If it is so attempted, the change from *veer* to *sringaar rasa*, and from the hectic manner of a warrior's virility to the image of an amorous blush is not merely quick and decisive, but quite free from awkwardness.

Here, in passing, I may make two comments of value:

First, a distinction may be made between '*bols* as being in *laya*' and '*laya* as being in *bols*'. When we adjust some *bols* in, say, *khand jaati*, it is a case of *bols being in laya*. But, when we say that त्रा, बड़े and कृ are sharp contrasted with धिअअन and दीअअग it is a case of attending to presence or absence of the passage of *laya within the bols*. In the one first case, *laya* is the context enveloping the *bols*; in the second, it is judged as one of their inner features.

Secondly, the कृ of कृष्ण, I may add, is admirably suited to mark the advent of the *sama*, because of its intrinsic sharpness; and the figure of Krishna, along with the flute held close to its upper part, is a perhaps a better way to accentuate the natural proportions of the body than any other image. Adapting a remark of D.W. Prall made in the context of sculpture,⁴⁰ I may

say that, in the Krishna posture, the natural slenderness of the waist in relation to the upper and lower parts of the body is heightened by the spatial relation of the flute to the chest and the head, and by the distinctive disposition of the feet.

I indeed have a definite feeling that the value attached to Krishna themes in all our dance styles is not determined wholly by non-aesthetic considerations.

(b) Another possible way to effect musical changes with beauty is to take the help of such a simple detail as the very *andaaz* of *zarabs*, that is, the manner in which the beat-marks peck the flow of *laya*. In this manner, I have found, one can switch in a thrice from a *viyoga srinagaar bhajan* to a *samyoga srinagar dhamaar*; and, as in the instance I presented,⁴¹ from *raaga puriyaa* to *hindol*.

A vital point of theory is here implicit. *Rhythm is no mere aggregation of beats, but orderly and identified movement; and there is no reason why it should be used only to make up the wholeness or extent of patterns, and not with an eye on the ease and beauty of transition.*

I admit, however, that my treatment of the matter is here quite inadequate. It is not only handicapped by the intrinsic inability of theory to seize all the details of musical practice or situations, but has clearly left out such *known* features of a Kathak recital as the shift from *vilambit* to *drut lahraa*; the cutting of a *lahraa* into half, as they say, to make very quick speed manageable; and the passage across various *raagas* within the unity of the same composition.

Music Compositions:

Here, again, I would like to couple general remarks with illustrative references to such specific compositions of mine as have already been tried and found of use in actual dancing:⁴²

a. To begin with, a composition that is good for singing alone is not necessarily suitable for dancing as well. Specially where a *thematic* vocal composition (that is, not a mere *taraanaa*) is being attempted, the right response to dancing is not merely a matter of listening and understanding, but one of watchful *seeing*, a looking for significant postures. What is more, as is only proper, the various elements of the dance here interplay, so that the rhythmic passages that we follow get the powerful supplement of footwork and *ang*: and can be made, so to say, clear objects *for the eye*. In dancing of this kind more elements are present, and so we here have greater chance to heighten the effect of each through proper integration, than in vocal music alone. Further, it would only add to the overall effect of dancing if the beats or *bols*

of a pattern too are made to dance (at times) against their prefixed locations, instead of merely making up a whole which is danced. I, therefore, suggest that the vocal compositions meant for dancing should make freer use of (a) shapely *aamads* to the *sama* and (b) skilful shuffling of individual *bols* and beats across their obvious places than is done (or is gracefully possible) in singing. The first of these devices will heighten the effect of a movement consummating itself; and the latter, imbue the patterns with the spirit of dance.

b. But the rhythmic element itself may be subordinated, if necessary, to the ends of *ang* and expression. Here, illustrative references may be made to some of the compositions I have already presented to Kathak audiences. In the *Siva-stuti dhruvapad* the closing *tiyaa* of गंगे is so knit within the composition that it permits *ang* to suggest 'the descent of the Ganges'.⁴³

c. What is more, *taraanaas* should be so composed that the very disposition of syllables may give a clear clue to the manner of movement on the stage. (Here, again, I presented an illustrative composition, set in *raag hindol* and *pancham sawaari taal*).

Other matters of compositional detail which here deserve attention, and which again I have found exemplifiable are: ensuring sharpness of access to the *sama* through distant but parallel positioning of notes, rather than in the common way of making a pattern move visibly towards the *sama*;⁴⁴ heightening the occurrent character of the *aamad* of a vocal composition meant for dance through a very slight displacement of *zarabs*, and through a pronounced employment of *aroha* and *avaroha*; and imparting an extra tinge of tenderness to an ascending *taan* by introducing the discreteness of *zarabs* into the utterance.⁴⁵

H. Of Creation and Criticism

I now find it possible to consider some such questions in relation to Kathak as have to be put about any art-form that claims to be autonomous:

1. To begin with, what is the primary creation of Kathak as an art-form?

My answer here is readily as follows:

Kathak creates visible apparitions of occurrent flow and repose that (should) always seen winsome and are often quite expressive. A clear and pervasive strand of what is here created is its cyclic and articulated character; but, if only fitfully, the representational element can be just as manifest, and may even consist in explicating the mere manner of rhythm. What is, however, all along there is some figuration of the body and often by means of *dealing with space* variously.

I do not see how this characterization of Kathak could be said to leave out any of its essential features, but it certainly calls for some explanatory comments to which I presently turn:

a. To begin with, what Kathak creates is such 'objects' for attention as are visible and occurrent. Their being *occurrent too* distinguishes them from what we are offered in painting and sculpture; and their being not merely occurrent *but visible*, on the one hand, separates them from the moving forms of music, and, on the other hand, justifies the requirement that, however rich and effective be its musical accompaniment, the excellence of a Kathak recital is to be judged primarily on the strength of what meets the eye.

b. The flow is here occurrent. We see the figure actually moving. This is quite different from the flow of lines and curves in a painting.

c. The repose, too, that we here find is of a kind that is *made to happen*; it is not the given inertness of a statue. What is difficult to achieve in sculpture is the semblance of a dynamic quality; but what distinguishes a Kathak dancer of merit is as much the suggestion of repose as the achievement of rhythmic wizardry. What is more, the postures in a good Kathak recital are never mere absence of movement. They seem either the stilling of a flow, as when they cap a pattern of ordered movement, or suspended animation when they are about to initiate movement, as in the beginning of a *thaat*.

d. The cyclic and articulated quality of the dance of which I here speak also calls for some comments of significance:

First, in so far as rhythm is a clear feature of Kathak dance, and in so far our rhythm is cyclic, it would here be inadequate to say (with Mrs. Langer, for instance) that what is created by a (Kathak) dance recital is merely an apparition of active powers,⁴⁶ we have to add that what here meets the eye is also (by the knowledgeable) apprehended as self-completing, and that the realization of *this* aspect of the formed character of dance only requires an elementary knowledge of rhythm.

Secondly, if articulation be understood as the clarity of details *relatively to each other*,⁴⁷ the form of the dances offered in a good Kathak recital sometimes seems being actively articulated, in so far as, choosing to do a little toying with *laya*, the dancer may accentuate—with feet, or even with a meaningful nod of the head—such moments in the dancing as are not marked by syllables in the set structure of the pattern, and as they might be known to, and anticipated by the drummer.

2. What are the principles of creation that *distinguish* the Kathak style?

Here, if the question be taken as a demand (partly) for such creative principles as are not employed by our *other* styles of classical dance, I regret inability to help. But if the quest be only for the *more important* principles that determine creation in Kathak itself, I would offer the following answer, referring not only to ways which have been used so far, but (with greater emphasis) to those which, I believe in the light of my own working on them, can be used for lifting both the range and quality of Kathak :

a. Incorporation of such *bols* and words relating to drums other than *tabla* (say, *mridanga*) as may create, during dancing, an opening for new and beautiful kinds of *ang*.

This is, as we know, already in practice. The *paramelu* patterns often include words like: बाजत मृदंग and in representing them the dancer gets a chance to strike a beautiful posture.⁴⁸

b. Deep and delighted attunement with the manner of rhythmic flow.

This is a vital determinant of *improvization in respect of rhythm*. Most of the dancers present only pre-fixed patterns, and are not able to produce any new turns of rhythm simply because, in addition to their lack of ability to use feet with guarded abandon, they never get saturated with the distinctive manner or *andaaz* of the rhythm.

It seems to me that improvization in respect of *ang* and *abhinaya* is possible only when the feet are not dancing, as when the Kathak sits down to bring out the import of a *thumri*, and not when a set, thematic composition is being danced in the normal upright manner. This at once heightens the distinctive importance of *bhava-pradarshan* on *thumri* in Kathak dancing.

c. Inclusion of stately *dhruvapads* and *dhamars* in a recital as individual items. In adapting his dancing to these compositions the Kathak not only gets a chance for abstract, rather than merely representational *abhinaya*, and to bring in variety of *rasa* and posture, but directly adds to the dignity of Kathak because of the high seriousness of the very structure of these vocal forms.

3. What are the distinctive criteria for evaluating a Kathak recital?

To answer this question I find it necessary to first reflect as under:

a. For the critic who attends a Kathak dance recital, what exactly is the true object of attention and response? Is it the skill and personality of the danseuse, or the dance itself as an object of art? It may not be easy to determine what dancing as artistic creation really is. But no one should find it difficult to see that whereas the personality of the dancer is a given fact, dancing as an art has *to be created*. To respond, at any one time, only to the

personality of the danseuse is not here the right aesthetic response; for, it is directed to what is merely given, not to what is aesthetically worked up. This is not to suggest, however, that the figure of the artist is not at all to be taken into account, but only that it is never to be considered in isolation from the dancing itself. Slender, bony fingers concern the critic only in so far as they are employed to work up various effects, say, the effects of sparkle, radiation, bloom, abruptness or unfolding. The true objects of aesthetic concern here are the beauteous patterns and postures that may continue to haunt the trained onlooker's imagination for long after the physical stimulus has ceased to exist.

And of course it is clearly wrong to believe that the net impression of the remarkable stamina of a danseuse is in itself a legitimate ground for admiring her as an artiste. I have here in mind the curious attitude of some critics who have acclaimed, with untroubled confidence, a particular dancer as the King or Queen of Kathak merely because he or she has been able to dance for long hours without intermission.

b. Again, is the excellence of a Kathak recital to be judged by the number of times the performer has been complimented in terms of open clapping? Or, are we to go primarily by the ability of the danseuse to weave so effectively a dreamworld of beauty that the more intelligent and imaginative members of the audience may hesitate to disturb it by applauding audibly? As a work of art, is a Kathak recital merely a series of self-complete items or an organic whole the elements of which are but inseparable emphases?

c. A distinct and basic question arises also from the view—openly voiced by an eminent critic at the Jaipur Seminar in 1969—that Kathak is essentially a soft dance. The view may be taken as an implicit protest against the attempt to introduce (new) vigorous compositions, portraying *veer rasa*, into Kathak dance.

But what, I ask, is meant by saying that softness is inherent in Kathak? The meaning obviously cannot be that virile themes have never been presented by Kathak dancers. Ideas and incidents relating to *Kaliya Daman* and *Govardhan*, and themes from the *Mahabharata*⁴⁹ were all often danced by Kathak masters of old. Moreover, even a cursory look at a good recital by some competent artist of the Jaipur *gharana* will convince anyone that bold work is quite possible in the region of Kathak dance. In view of these considerations, what may be said reasonably perhaps only is that softer themes are *more* suited to the spirit of Kathak dance than the bolder ones. But what is, one may ask, the basis for saying so? This heightens anew the importance of the question with which this essay opened. What, really, is Kathak dance?

Now, to ensure directness, we may once again turn to the word 'Kathak' itself. It means, we have seen, one who tells a story. But a story is as free to

speak of a heroic venture as of love. How then is it proper to insist that softness of manner is inescapable or preferable for a Kathak dancer? If sculpture can be made to look lifelike and dynamic—say, by skilfully leaving the work incomplete, so that actual form may be suggested rather than realized⁵⁰—how can we deny the possibility of boldness and splendour in Kathak where movement is already a basic element?

I indeed see nothing in the elements of this style—neither in its *ang* nor in its rhythmic component—which could be said to incapacitate it for emphatic, assertive dancing. It is true that overmuch employment, by some known Kathaks, of images and situations relating to *ghoongat*, *panghat* and *chilman* has encouraged the view I am here opposing. But this is, I protest a mere aberration, and not a real clue to Kathak's original idiom. And I here draw support not merely from the general principle that *taandava* is as legitimate, even necessary in dance as the *laasya* manner, but from the practice of Kathak. Invocation to Lord Siva has been a fairly common Kathak item, and it certainly recalcitrates softness. One could say the same about *Ganeshparans*. Further, as some top Kathaks openly proclaimed in a session of the Jaipur Seminar,⁵¹ the *dhruvapada* form of our vocal music has, in the past, contributed freely to the content of Kathak; and this form, as we know, is closer to stateliness than to mere softness.⁵² I may add that my own humble attempts to get *veer rasa dhruvapads* presented in the Kathak manner have not been a failure.⁵³

We may now discuss the question of criteria. The more important of these are, in my view, as follows:

d. Accuracy, fluency and general adroitness in treatment of rhythm.

Explanatory remarks may be made on each one of these. By 'accuracy' I mean steadiness in respect of *laya*, and unerring attainment of *sama*. Fluency is here to be taken as not mere effortlessness, but *clarity* in treatment of *drut* rhythm. Both requirements are relevant to footwork. But in respect of *chukkurs* (or pirouettes) one can speak only of effortlessness. Under general rhythmic skill I include: the variform ability to fix, on one's own, the precise pace at which a specific pattern is to be danced; to hint it—quite gently, yet clearly, to the drummer—whenever an increase or decrease of *laya* is required; to dance with the support of a *thekaa* alone; to deviate, at times, from some set rhythmic accents in a spirit of joyous abandon, yet without at all faltering in lapsing to the basic *laya*-flow and in making for the *sama*; to dance rightly even with a new drummer with whom the patterns have not been rehearsed; and, finally, to withstand his subtler passages of *layakaari*, should he decide to play them as a kind of challenge to the dancer.

e. Propriety of *ang*:

This means, first, that bodily bearing should appear comely throughout,

never tend to sprawl, not even during the quickest spells of dancing or between two items; that it should not seem unduly feminine for a male dancer, or a bit too masculine in the case of a danseuse; and that it should yet grow soft and bold in response to the *laasya* and *taandava* parts of dance respectively.

f. Parity of the rhythmic and the narrative, of formal correctness and visual appeal.

Here, the suggestion is that a good Kathak recital has to pay equal attention to both *nrita* and *nritya*, and to technical accuracy and beauty of presentation. Nobody, I believe, will object to this requirement. Yet in practice, as we know, it is quite often flouted. There are some dancers who concentrate on *tatkaar* and sheer number and fluency of *chukkurs*, giving no place in their dancing to thematic and expressional items; and there are others who seek to hide indistinctness of footwork under the beauty of *ang-sanchalana*.

Formal correctness is also quite important. By it I here mean conformity not only with the essential idiom of the item being danced, but with the normal order of *prastuti* (presentation) without of course ignoring the pragmatic considerations we have discussed in that context. Such correctness enjoins, for instance, that a *thaat* should not be danced with the sprightliness of a *drut* pattern; and that, merely for the sake of eliciting applause, the recital may not be opened with a display of quick footwork.

SOME PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

Finally, some thought may be given to the most pressing needs of Kathak dance today. Stray remarks have already been made in this context, but here I seek to supplement them. I may begin by listing the needs:

1. The need for a fresh treatment of the Radha-Krishna theme,
2. The need for continuity or an atmosphere,
3. The need for dancing to difficult rhythm-cycles, *without making it appear a mere mathematical exercise* and, finally,
4. The need for fresh items.

The first and the last can, in a measure, be dealt with together. As for the second, I think it necessary to repeat that continuity is to be understood not as mere lack of abruptness, but as internal organization of the diverse, and as the quality of being complementary. In respect of the third, it may be of some help to recall what I have said earlier about the true form of *lahraas*, specially

of asymmetrical ones. But here my treatment of this aspect of the matter is going to be different.

1. The need for new items can be met in at least two clear ways:
 - a. By employing, I repeat, *dhrupads* and *dhamaars*,—I mean *dhamaar as a vocal composition, and not as a mere rhythm*. These forms of vocal music are still *not commonly* employed in Kathak.
 - b. The end of novelty can be attained also by creating new compositions which present a traditional Kathak item not in isolation and as self-complete, but as the pervasive character of, or as an important element in the item.

Thus, instead of keeping to *thaat*, as a set, separate item, we may present a complete '*thaat—ang*' composition, say, a *dhruvapad*.

Of one such composition, I here deem it needful to speak in detail, Its text is clearly different from the usual Radha-Krishna theme:

राधा कृष्ण निरत करत, मन्द राति मन्द चाल
शब्द अंग एक रूप, एक ज्योति उभय रूप
राधा कृष्ण जुगल जोरी, एक प्राण दो स्वरूप

The imagery, here, is much less sensuous than it commonly is. So confluent, we are told, is the dancing of Radha-Krishna that musical sound and bodily bearing here seem but two forms of the same light; and the dancers themselves, but twin embodiments of the same spirit.

It is important to mark that the composition in question is not itself a *thaat*. But it incorporates the movements and postures of a *thaat*, and opens quite reposefully in the truest manner of a *thaat*. It presents a traditional item in a new way; and in this sense too it meets the need for new compositions. Again, in so far as the body-movement is here quite slow, at least in the beginning, the piece seems continuous, thus meeting the need for continuity within the same item. Further, during the actual dancing of this composition care is to be taken to ensure that when the word *ज्योति* moves up the scale in the manner of a *dagar taan*, the flow of music is indicated through a parallel employment of *ang*, thus making for continuity as the inner integration of the various elements of a Kathak item.

2. The need for continuity can be met partly by regulating musical changes between items in the way of which I have already spoken, and partly by balancing two contrasting, and so complementary compositions.

CONCLUSION

This, then, is a brief indication of the lines on which an aesthetics of Kathak dance could develop. Some of the many problems on which I have said very little are: imitation, abstraction and transformation in Kathak; posture as the end-term of a pattern *and* as accent in a flow; and aesthetic predicates and categories of critical analysis in the context of our discourse about Kathak. But the present effort, I hope, is not without promise. If properly pursued, it could even pave the way to a similar understanding of our other dance styles, so rich and beautiful in content, but as yet quite untreated in the manner of modern aesthetics.

NOTES

1. For a fuller grasp of this point, see my essay: 'The Concept of *Laya* in Hindustani Music' in *Indian Philosophical Quarterly* (Poona University, Poona), Vol. 1, No. 2, January '74, pp. 124-127.
2. I only say 'essentially', not entirely; for, the *taanpoora* is not only to be carefully tuned, but played *at a steady pace*.
3. This is how I interpret the following significant remark made by Sri Birju Maharaj in the Workshop on Kathak organized by the Kathak Kendra, New Delhi, in 1976 (March 26): "I believe that, just as *svara* is pre-eminent in the field of singing, so is *ang* in that of Kathak dancing."
4. I must make it clear that here I am only marking a difference, and not making any judgment at all as to the relative merit of the two styles.
5. *Jagah dikhana* is the aesthetic device of putting emphasis, by foot or (/and) a mere nod of the head, on such recesses in the fabric of rhythm as are not ordinarily expected to be emphasized.
6. Following Wittgenstein, aestheticians today often doubt if *any* property is common to all art. Some even go to the extent of saying that "properties of objects are fundamentally irrelevant to art status... (and that) arthood is a relation, not a property". Binkley in *Culture and Art*, edited by A. Mongensen and Lars, N.J., Humanities Press, 1976, p. 97.
7. This is what Mrs. Langer means by 'organic form'. See her *Problems of Art*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1957, p. 135.
8. I am here reminded of some remarks made by Mr. Sudarshan Dheer in the Kathak Kendra Seminar on Presentation (March 10-12, '77). But, many years earlier I defined *thaat* as the initial transmutation, in dance, of the merely physical into the aesthetic. See my article: 'The Role of Rhythm in Kathak Dance' in *Marg*, Bombay, Vol. XII, No. 4, September 1959, p. 49.
9. By the Rajasthan Sangeet Natak Akademi.
10. The reference, here, is to Sri Birju Maharaj's recital on 3.10.76 with which he inaugurated 'Jhankar', the Dance and Music Club of Sri Ram Bhartiya Kala Kendra, New Delhi.
11. For argument, here, see my article: 'Aesthetic Theory and Hindustani Rhythym' in *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 16, No. 3, Summer 1976, p. 259.
12. Though it does seem to cover *positioning* of the feet.
13. I did 'illustrate' and invite attention to this point in the '77 Seminar, *op. cit.*, while presenting the *veer rasa* composition (*sool taal, raag hindol*) beginning as 'चक्र धारो कृष्ण'.
14. Morris Weitz: *Philosophy of the Arts*, Russell and Russell, New York, 1964, p. 131.
15. Morris Weitz: *Philosophy of the Arts*, *op. cit.*, p. 131.
16. N. Lawrence and D. O'Connor: *Readings in Existential Phenomenology*, Prentice-Hall, Hall, 1967, p. 144.

17. I have here in mind my *thaat-ang dhruvapad* which opens as राधा कृष्ण निरत करत and which Smt. Rani Karnaa often presents.
18. This is in addition to what has been already said on the matter in the very opening of section II.
19. The Kathak Kendra Seminar of 1976 (March 24-26) too ended with such *bhavapra darshan* by Sri Lacchu Maharaj.
20. I may here make a special mention of the ivory statuette of Saraswati reproduced on p. 89 of Veronica Ions: *Indian Mythology*, Paul Hamlyn, London, Fourth Impression, 1975.
21. I owe this bit of knowledge to Prof. Sudhir Kumar Saxena, College of Indian Music, Dance & Drama, Baroda University.
22. I have here in mind the view expressed by Smt. Rohini Bhate in the 1977 Seminar, *op. cit.* Smt. Bhate is one of our better known Kathak teachers and scholars.
23. Rather than
24. I here go by what seemed implicit in a remark made by Birju Maharaj during the Seminar just referred to.
25. It would here be relevant to point out that where a dancer is nervous or immature *thaat* can easily lack the requisite measure of staidness, and so run counter to the requirement of ठाट बंधना.
26. I here wonder if it would not be better to speak of *thaat* as the *foundational* rather than as merely the *first* Kathak item. The syllables it builds upon are the basic ones of Kathak dance. Moreover, there have been some dancers of note who would like almost every pattern to end with that positioning of the arms which marks the cessation of a *thaat*. The late Nrityacharya Narayan Prasad of Jaipur *gharana* was one of these. But the requirement in question is not found to be met in the practice of Birju Maharaj. The late Pandit Sunder Prasad preferred a brisk up-turned movement of hands, quite close to each other, as the right way to *end* a pattern.
27. I owe this important distinction to Dr. Kapila Vatsyayana who used it in the Kathak Seminar on the very opening day of the 1977 Seminar, *op. cit.*
28. Why I say only 'essentially', not entirely, is clarified by what follows.
29. I here distinguish rhythm or *taal* from mere *laya*. *Tala* is *laya* as measured with the help of beats. *Such* measuring is not essential for *laya*. As I said earlier, *laya* (in vocal *alaap* of the *dhruvapad* variety) is regulated merely subjectively.
30. This is how I react to one explicit remark made by Birju Maharaj, and one interpolation by his pupil, Miss Saswati Sen, during the Seminar.
31. This was so in the specimen presented on the occasion by Smt. Manjushree Banerji, another well-known Kathak Teacher.
32. The Hindustani word would here be तराशना which is quite different in meaning from काटना.
33. See, for instance, the following remark of Roger Fry, in *Transformations* on Van Gogh's 'Sunflowers': "This is a harmony based almost entirely upon yellows. Against a pale, almost lemon, yellow background the heads of the sunflowers show as dusky masses of heavy burnished gold.... Such a use of yellow is rare in European art." Cited from L.A. Reid's *Meaning in the Arts*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1969, p. 23.
34. Throughout this Section, I draw heavily upon my paper on 'Kathak Dance & Music' presented, along with vocal illustrations, to the 1977 Seminar, *op. cit.*
35. I did try to *illustrate* how all these requirements could be met by a *lahraa*, by presenting an actual instance of a 15-matra *lahraa* in *raag bihaag* on the occasion of the 1977 Seminar, *op. cit.*
36. Or merely by sporting big rings on fingers.
37. As an instance of ideal *tablaa* accompaniment, meeting all the requirements I have so far mentioned, I could cite the one provided by the late Sri Chiranjil Lal to the dancing of his brother, the late Nrityacharya Narayan Prasad (both of Jaipur *gharana*) in Gandharva Mahavidyalaya, New Delhi, more than 20 years ago.

38. Thus, see: "Incidentally, the Centre must do something about its comperes.... But then sloppy compering is by now the rule rather than the exception at most recitals." Smt Shanta Serbjeet Singh, in *The Hindustan Times* (New Delhi) of April 24, '77.
39. Of '76 and '77, *op.cit.*
40. In his essay: 'Aesthetic Analysis' included in *Aesthetic Theories*, edited by K. Aschenbrenner and A. Isenberg, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1965, p. 450.
41. Once again, the reference is to the 1977 Seminar, *op. cit.*
42. As is by now known, the danseuse who has made *this* possible is Smt. Rani Karnaa, to whom I am therefore grateful.
43. This composition was first presented to the Jaipur Seminar, *op. cit.*, on 9.2.'69 to be precise, vocally by me *and* an accompanist, Sri Raj Kumar; and as dance, by Rani Karnaa. This year, in the Kathak Kendra Seminar, it was 'recorded' along with my other compositions.
44. Which common device is just not usable in a narrow cycle like *sool taal*.
45. This particular detail was sought to be illustrated when, incidental to my discussion of the possibility of introducing a measure of sublimity into Kathak, I invited attention to three possible ways of articulating the syllable तू in the well-known Tulsidas bhajan which opens as तू दयाल, दीन है।
46. See G.K. Langer's *Problems of Art*, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
47. This is how I would here like to adapt Langer's remark: "Music... is an articulate form... (in the sense that) its parts not only fuse together to yield a greater entity, but in so doing they maintain some degree of separate existence." *Feeling and Form*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 3rd Impression, '63, p. 31.
48. This is a common thing, but it first struck me while watching a recital of Sri Brojen Mukerji, a pleasing dancer, in Jhankar, *op. cit.*, on 17.10. '76.
49. I here feel impelled to say that once I saw a *very* effective presentation of a *gat* from the Mahabharata by Pandit Krishna Kumar (of Banaras *gharana*). That was more than 15 years ago, in a programme presented by me at the Orientation Centre of the Delhi School of Economics.
50. This was, I may add, the practice of Michelangelo. See S.K. Langer's *Problems of Art*, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-1.
51. Here, I have specially in mind Sri Hanuman Prasad of Jaipur *gharana*. He stood up to proclaim what I here speak of when a participant objected to my (re-) introduction of *dhrupads* in Kathak dancing.
52. I know that the manner of some *dhrupads* of *aaraadhanaa* is soft as dew. But, I add, it is also elevating, and so not merely soft.
53. In fact, when, as the concluding item of the '77 Seminar, *op. cit.*, Smt. Rani Karnaa had finished dancing my compositions—including two *dhrupads*, separate essays in 'bhakti' and *yeer rasas*, Sri Birju Maharaj was good enough to express open approval of the compositions.
54. This composition (set in *chautaal* and *raag chandrakaush*) was danced by Smt. Rani Karna in the Kathak Kendra Seminar of 1976; and Sri Lacchu Maharaj kindly approved of it as conforming to the true *thast* idiom. I may add that I have found it capable of working up an 'atmosphere' at once.