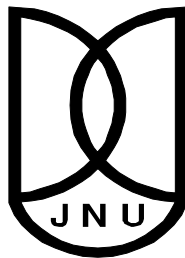# POPULARIZING AND IDENTI(TY)FYING THE FOLK:

A Study of Rajasthani Folk Songs and Music in Popular Culture and the Resultant Formations of Identities

Dissertation submitted to
Jawaharlal Nehru University
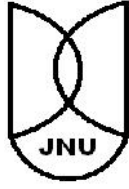in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Philosophy

by

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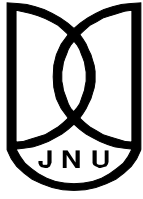### New Delhi-110067, India

Date: 18.7.2012

CERTIFICATE

This dissertation titled **"Popularizing and Identi(ty)fying the Folk: A Study of Rajasthani Folk Songs and Music in Popular Culture and the Resultant Formations of Identities"**   submitted by **Ms. Komal Agarwal**, Centre for English Studies, School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy**, is an original work and has not been submitted so far in part or in full, for any other degree or diploma of any University or Institution.

This may be placed before the examiners for evaluation for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy.

(DR. DHANANJAY SINGH)
SUPERVISOR

(DR. SAUGATA BHADURI)
CHAIRPERSON

Date: 18.07.12

<u>Declaration by the Candidate</u>

This thesis titled "Popularizing and Identi(ty)fying the Folk: A Study of Rajasthani Folk Songs and Music in Popular Culture and the Resultant Formations of Identities" submitted by me for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy, is an original work and has not been submitted so far in part or in full, for any other degree or diploma of any university or institution.

(Komal Agarwal)

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New Delhi, India

To the vibrant culture of Rajasthan and its people

Acknowledgements

The process of writing this dissertation has not only taught me the technicalities of research, but also the importance of people in one's life, and also the surprisingly significant ways in which they can contribute to your life and work.

Discussing your work with others is an extremely important part of an inquiry. It is often in the process of explaining what one is doing to a friend or colleague that the focus of one's work becomes clearer. 'Talk' is a significant practice in itself and a necessary element in intellectual work. So, before I express my gratitude for all the people I distinctly remember, I would like to thank all those people whom I cannot recall, but it goes without mention that these were people who contributed to this study in their own small ways.

I am especially thankful to my mother, and my late grandmother, who constituted my 'oral social network' for the research, for it is through their mouths that Rajasthani folk songs first made their way to my heart, touching the chords of my heart enough to lead me to research on them, and contribute to the existing scholarship in the field, in whatever small way I could.

I would take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Dhananjay Singh, without whose constant guidance and support this dissertation could never have been completed. Working under him, not only during the M.Phil program, but since my M.A. days, has always been a very valuable learning process. He has been a great source of inspiration throughout the course of writing this dissertation. Whenever I would lose faith, he would just insist that I go on. Whenever I went to him with complicated thoughts, he would make things seem slightly less complicated by channelizing my thoughts and offering his invaluable advice.

I would like to thank the other teachers of the Centre for English Studies, especially Prof. GJV Prasad. The idea of working on this 'non-English literature topic' got its first encouragement from him, when I worked under him on a related topic for a seminar course. I would also like to thank Dr. Saugata Bhaduri for always being ready to answer my queried related to my topic, for pulling me out of difficult situations, and, most importantly, for offering his course on Popular Culture. Dr. Navneet Sethi has always been very warm and motherly, and has always inspired me to take challenges in life and dream big.

Contents

INTRODUCTION

Rajasthan is the largest state of India in terms of area. It is gifted with a great history, scenic beauty, magnificent forts and palaces, colourful fairs festivals, a vibrant culture and living traditions. The desert musicians and nomadic communities of Rajasthan are, by now, known all over the world. The Langas, the Manganiyars, and the Kalbelias have widely travelled all over the world and mesmerized the audiences both in India and across the world. In addition to the songs of these professional caste performers and many more, there are numerous songs in the repertoire of Rajasthani folk music which have been circulating in different popular cultural media. Be it the extremely popular welcome-cum-waiting-cum-romantic song[1] "Kesariya Balam Avo Ni, Padharo Mhare Des", or the fondly remembered "Morni, Bagan Ma Bole Aadhi Raat Ma" from the Sridevi-Anil Kapoor-starrer *Lamhe* of the early 1990s, or the more recent "Nimbuda" from the Salman Khan-Aishwarya Rai-starrer *Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam* of the late 1990s, or the Holi-special "Holiyan Ma Udde Re Gulal" by Ila Arun, or the television soaps broadcasting snippets of Rajasthani songs and music swarming the Indian television screen today, or the team anthem "Halla Bol" of the Shilpa Shetty owned IPL team Rajasthan Royals, or the various internet archives like YouTube and social networking sites abounding in Rajasthani folk songs—it is unlikely that people who have been consuming any of these or other popular cultural media today would not have come across such famous Rajasthani folk songs or samplings of Rajasthani folk music in their everyday life. But, a million-dollar question is whether or not one should take this with a pinch of salt.

In fact, Rajasthani folk songs and music occupy a distinct position in the consciousness of the masses, largely owing to the rekindling of these folk songs different popular cultural media— cassettes, compact discs, movies, television serials, advertisements, commercials, cyberspace, and the tourism industry. Because of the multiplicity of the media, and also because they were largely transmitted orally as folk songs even within the state, the different variants and versions of these folk songs are widely in circulation in the different faces of electronic and digital media and the tourism industry. But one cannot passively take the change that is coming about around oneself without scrutinising the same in the context of larger social, political and economic forces that are working behind such transformations,

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[1] This folk song has acquired these different meanings over a period of time, because of its rendition in popular culture. This aspect will be dealt with in detail in the first chapter.

the ethics and ramifications of the same, and the larger meaning and effects that such transitions have on the individuals and the society.

In the first instance, it might be a bit disturbing to acknowledge the fact that most of the 'original' Rajasthani folk songs go 'unacknowledged'. On a visit to Rajasthan as a tourist and a domestic pilgrim,[2] it was quite discomforting to hear a group of performers in a resort in Jaisalmer introducing the song "Nimbuda" as a song from a famous Hindi movie, of which they were going to present the original. This left me pondering over such contested issues like 'folk' and 'performance', 'original' versus 're-production', 'ethics' and 'aesthetics', and 'survival' versus 'appropriation'. Perhaps the seeds of this research lay therein, perhaps that was the consideration that led me to take up the seemingly 'trivial' matter seriously, perhaps that is what set off a series of discussions and musings over the issue of "originality of a piece of art" and "the reproduction of an original artwork in the age of globalization and mass mediation," and "the marketing of 'folk' in the age of mechanical and electronic reproduction" (Bharucha 266).

Nonetheless, I should give a disclaimer at this point itself that I did not think then that this would lead me to investigate the instance at this length. Possibly, the discomforting feeling just stayed somewhere in the deepest layers of my unconscious mind. So, while it initially was dealt with in a related paper for one of the courses credited at the Centre, the topic was given its due when I decided to take it up as my research topic during the course of my M.Phil. So, the topic was expanded to take up more case studies of songs and study the various facets related to the re-invention of Rajasthani folk songs in popular culture in greater detail.

Before we get to a brief discussion of the research, I would like to briefly discuss the status of Rajasthani language in India, an issue that I have consciously evaded in the following chapters. Because the present work focuses on Rajasthani folk songs and music, I have tried my best to confine myself to a discussion of the musical aspect in the research. But a comprehensive understanding of the topic could take place only when some light is shed on the language per se.

Rajasthani was mentioned as a language for the first time by Grierson in Linguistic Survey of India in 1906. Prior to that, no one name was used for it, the names used for its

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[2] This was in the December of 2010.

different forms being regional, like Marwari, Malvi, Bikaneri, Ajmeri, Sarwari etc. Today, the five main dialects of Rajasthan are Marwari, Dhundhati, Mevati, Malvi and Bagadi. Among these dialects, Marwari, the older name of which was 'Marubhasha,' is most widespread and is a developed form of old western Rajasthani.[3] It was Grierson's work with language that essentially defined Rajasthan as a cultural region.[4] Earlier scholars had classified the languages spoken in Rajasthan as dialects belonging to Western Hindi. Grierson saw the dialects of Rajasthan as distinct from Western Hindi and worthy of being considered a separate language. He used the term Rajasthani, "literally the language of Rajasthan, or Rajwada, the country of the Rajputs", to identify the five major dialects and their numerous variations spoken over much of Rajputana Province (Lodrick 17).

However, it might be important to note that till date, Rajasthani is not recognized as an official language, although it is recognized by the Sahitya Akademi as a literary language (Lodrick 17). In June 2011, Rajasthani language was included in the list of International languages in the White House Presidential Appointment Procedure. The latest Linguistic Survey of India of the state of Rajasthan (2011) also identifies seven dialects of Rajasthani which have been extensively surveyed (22). In spite of all these recognitions that Rajasthani enjoys as a language, the debate over the inclusion of Rajasthani in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution has been going on for almost a decade now. Recently, a proposal has been placed in the Parliament for the same, which will be considered in the Monsoon session of the Parliament (Lok Sabha: Synopsis of Debates). Whether Rajasthani language gets official status as a scheduled language or not remains to be seen, but it is an undeniable fact that the 'folk' music of Rajasthani does not need any introduction or recognition. It has already made its mark not only in India, but in different countries of the world.

According to Kasbekar, India is a nation of music lovers, and music is a central feature of most forms of mass entertainment; also noting that India is one of the world's biggest consumers of music (16, 22). The domain of culture is contested, dynamic, and symbolic. The folk songs and folk music of a particular culture is an intrinsic part of that culture. Cultural performances do not happen in a vacuum. They are always associable to

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[3] Taken from the extract of Dr. Girijashankar Sharma's research paper quoted in *Kurjan* 24/4.

[4] This should not be taken to mean that this is the only way one can approach Rajasthani culture. Rajasthani culture extends beyond the limits imposed by language, and into the folk life, art, customs, rituals, traditions, architecture, history—in short, the lived world of the people of Rajasthan. It should be seen, to use Lodrick's phrase, as a "subjective, experienced region" which, in turn, leads to the construction of a regional Rajasthani identity.

some scientific, biological or functional need. In the context of Rajasthan, folk songs have always assumed a very significant position in the society and among the people of Rajasthan. Folk songs in Rajasthan are not only related to life-cycles like birth, marriage and death, and to different festivals, but are also part of the tradition of professional singing done by some performing caste musicians like the Langas, the Manganiyars, the Bhatis etc. The latter practice is peculiar to Rajasthan, in that the professional caste musicians are patronized by different castes, which continues till date. The relationship between the patrons and their musicians is mutual—while it is almost obligatory for the patrons to sustain their musicians, the musicians also consider that their first responsibility is towards their patrons rather than the organizers of stage performances (so much so that they would even turn down offers worth huge sums of money or breach contracts if they are invited at their patron's house).

With globalization and the liberalization of the economy, there were various changes that came about in the patterns of performances of the professional caste musicians as well as other folk singers and performers. The folk music of Rajasthan gained in popularity with new markets opening up with the coming of the satellite television, a corresponding growth in the music industry and the advertising industry. Tourism, already a good source of revenue in the state, also expanded with the state government as well as various private agencies entering the fray. With the development in electronic media, new media, and communication technologies, the demand for, as well as the supply of Rajasthani folk music in popular culture registered a sharp increase. However, women, who were the composers, singers and performers of most of these songs in the rural societies are conspicuously absent from the stage.[5] Most of the performance forms have men cross-dressed as women, and the world of singing is almost completely usurped by men.

These are some of the changes in the economy and the society which will be interrogated in the ensuing discussions. Along with these, questions of authenticity and reproduction, tradition and contemporaneity, orality and recording, community and individuality, authorship and intellectual property rights, archiving and survival— issues which one has to invariably indulge with and negotiate when one is dealing with an area such as this—will be investigated during the course of the research. At the same time, no such project can be successfully accomplished without the actual case studies of the transformation that happens when a folk song travels from the genre of the folk to that of the popular. So, in

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[5] With a few exceptions, like Bhanwari Devi and Rukma Bai, among a few others.

studying the the oral culture, the performance culture, and the changing landscape in the context of the two, the study will illustrate all the issues and debates that it undertakes with the help of illustrative examples.

"Questions of cultural identity and difference are being spatialised in new ways in the context of flows of global capital and migration, and can no longer be seen as fixed and located to a specific time and place" (Gray 24). The study of Rajasthani song-texts and their re-invention in popular culture also accords a centrality to the audience, the 'consumers' of the end products (that is, Rajasthani folk songs and music in popular culture) in the entire 'circuit' of culture. Music is actively constituted within society and at the same time, it constitutes the society. It enables some kind of intra-cultural and cross-cultural communication, also, meanwhile, leading to the production of meaning for the different types of audience—Rajasthanis, non-resident Rajasthanis, Indians, the India diaspora, and foreigners. This construction of meaning is seen in the formation of different types of identities. The ones that deserve a detailed discussion in the present study are community identities and 'musical identities'. These questions about the nature of the relationship between identity and subjectivity have primarily been carried out in relation to an understanding of the interpretation, consumption and use of Rajasthani folk music as it exists in popular culture.

This is roughly the roadmap of the present research. In so doing, I hope that it comes somewhere close to the method of cultural studies as outlined by Paul du Guy et al. in *Doing Cultural Studies: The Story of the Sony Walkman* (1997). He suggests that to study an object or text culturally, "one should at least explore how it is represented, what social identities are associated with it, how it is produced and consumed, and what mechanisms regulate its distribution and use" (qtd. in Harrington and Bielby 11).

The present study also becomes a study of performance, which, in the words of Stuart Blackburn, is what happens to a text in a context (qtd. in Bharucha 8). As Schechner notes, the performance process can be understood as a negotiation among four parties: sources, producers, performers, and partakers (qtd. in Bial 263). All these parties have been discussed in great detail in the present study. Understanding performance is critically important in an age when the world's economic, social, cultural, and ideological systems are increasingly interconnected and interdependent. As globalization brings cultures around the world into

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contact with one another, traditional notions of identity and community have become both more complex and less stable (Bial 321).

The study also seeks to defy the general 'misplaced' assumptions that are made about music studies, and tries to define alternate ways of studying music cultures. These assumptions are pointed out by Cook:

> There is . . . a nexus of interrelated assumptions built into the basic language we use of music: that musicianship is the preserve of appropriately qualified specialists; that innovation (research and design) is central to musical culture; that the key personnel in musical culture are the composers who generate what might be termed the core product; that performers are in essence no more than middlemen, apart from those exceptional interpreters who acquire a kind of honorary composer's status; and that listeners are consumers, playing an essentially passive role in the cultural process that, in economic terms, they underpin (Cook 17).

The body of existing work in the area mostly centres on the folk songs and musical traditions of Rajasthan. There are studies which document or/and investigate the folk performing arts, the patronage of music in Rajasthan, and the preservation of 'folk' musical traditions, focussing on the different areas of Rajasthan.[6] There is no such work, in my knowledge, which studies the renditions of Rajasthani folk songs and music in popular culture, and very little scholarship on the effects of the various factors involved in the transformation of Rajasthani folk songs and music in popular culture.[7] Also, there is scant or no research probing the question of identity in the context of such transitions of Rajasthani folk songs in popular culture, and how it may lead to construction of different as well as a unitary identity for different types of audiences and spectators. Thus, this work is a contribution to the project identified by McCarthy et al., of "rewrit[ing] the rubrics of . . . [cultural studies] in relation to the formation of new diaspora and global identities (xxi). By exploring this uncharted terrain, the study seeks to contribute to existing scholarship in the area of Rajasthani folk songs and music and the various lenses through which they can be studied.

A wide spectrum of research materials have been consulted for the study. The primary texts consulted for the study are select Rajasthani folk songs and music, and their corresponding renditions in different popular cultural media. I will first list the son-texts that I have studied. The one Rajasthani folk song that I have started off with is "Kesariya Balam", which is sung in Raag Mand, and its various renditions in popular culture to the extent that

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[6] It should be indicated here that the folk musical tradition of Rajasthan is rich and varied, and differs as we move across the state.

[7] The last two chapters of Bharucha's text may, however, serve as the starting points for such a study.

the song has assumed new, previously unknown meanings. Some other famous Rajasthani folk songs are "Morni Bagan Ma Bole", "Morya Achcho Bolo Re", "Mor Bole Re", "Nimbuda", "Ghoomar", "Gorband", "Gangaur", "Holiyan Me Ude Re Gulaal", "Pallo Latke", "Chandiyo Dhukho De Diyo", "Halariyo", "Hichki", "Mehndi", "Panihari", "Saawan Ro Hindoldo", "Choti Si Umar", and the rekindling of these into popular culture (more than one, in some cases). Coming to popular cultural texts, I have studied a few compact discs manufactured by Veena,[8] which have these songs and others in their collections, *The Colourful Music of Rajasthan* (with a CD and a DVD) being one of the most important ones amongst them.[9] *Rajasthan: A Musical Journey*, a compilation of the original folk versions of some of the most famous Rajasthani songs, has been an important point of departure for the study. Two CDs of traditional Rajasthani wedding songs, *Banna*, sung by Rajasthani folk singers have also been studied.[10] A few devotional songs and their renderings in popular music videos have also been studied.

In addition, some performances, or rather, performative texts which have been studied are *The Manganiyar Seduction*, the cultural programme *Padharo Mhare Des* organized by Rajasthan Sanskritik Manch of JNU, and the live performances at Rajasthan International Folk Festival (RIFF) organized in the year 2011. Additionally, the music of the movie *I Am Kalam* has been an interesting case study. Some title tracks and episodes of a few television serials have also been referred to. Shilpa Shetty's IPL team anthem "Halla Bol" is another case study. There are three books which have served as primary texts: Rustom Bharucha's *Rajasthan: An Oral History: Conversations with Komal Kothari*, Vijaydan Detha's *Geeton Ki Phulwari [Garden of Songs]*, and Vijay Verma's *The Performing Arts of Rajasthan: A Handbook.* In addition to these, a couple of interviews and 'site-search' also constitute the range of primary material for the study.[11]

The secondary texts which have been consulted for the study are varied. Two documentaries which serve as secondary source material are Sushil Bhandari's *Kālbeliā: A*

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[8] Incidentally, I also happened to buy some pirated CDs, the names of which have been listed in footnote no. 40 of the second chapter.

[9] Refer to bibliography for the specifics of the same.

[10] The two CDs are separate collections of traditional wedding songs by Langas and Manganiyars. The project was conceived by renowned ethnomusicologist Komal Kothari, who worked extensively in the field of Rajasthan folk culture, especially folk music.

[11] For details, refer to the respective sections in the bibliography.

Gipsy Group and Jill Nicholl's *The Lost Music of Rajasthan.* They provide a deeper insight to the present study. A lot of books, articles, web-posts, journalistic articles in the popular press, and reports have been studied for the present study.[12] It is only appropriate that I mention the works that were integral to the study. For a study of Rajasthani music and culture, Komal Kothari's article "Mahila Loka-Geeton Ki Prakriya Evam Prishthabhumi" "[The Performance and Background of Women's Folk-Songs]", Jayasingh Niraj and Bhagwatilal Sharma's *Rajasthan Ki Sanskritik Parampara [Cultural Tradition of Rajasthan]*, Kishore Singh's *Golden Rajasthan*, and *Constructions* (Vol. I of *The Idea of Rajasthan: Explorations in Regional Identity*) by Karine Schomer et al. proved to really helpful for the study.

Regarding Cultural Studies and how to go about conducting research in cultural studies, Michael Ryan's *Cultural Studies: An Anthology* and Ann Gray's *Research Practice for Cultural Studies: Ethnographic Methods and Lived Cultures* came as eye-openers. For a study of popular culture, some seminal texts that helped me improve my understanding of the concept of popular culture and its relations with globalization and modernity are John Fiske's *Understanding Popular Culture*, John Storey's *Cultural Studies and the Study of Popular Culture: Theories and Methods* and *Inventing Popular Culture: From Folklore to Globalization*, C. Lee Harrington and Denise D. Bielby's *Popular Culture*: *Production and Consumption*, Morag Schiach's article "A History of Changing Definitions of the Popular", and Joli Jensen's article "Popular Culture: Asking the Right Questions."

Walter Benjamin's essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" provided the concept of 'aura', which is of prime importance to the study. In the field of music studies, the texts by Ranade proved to be of great help, especially in understanding music from the vantage point of India. Moreover, Nicholas Cook's *Music: A Very Short Introduction*, and *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction* by Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert, and Richard Middleton enhanced my appreciation and critical understanding of music.

Understanding dense concepts like globalization, modernity and culture is not a child's play. However, these concepts became comprehensible because of Arjun Appadurai's *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Appadurai and Carol A. Breckenridge's introduction "Public Modernity in India" (to Breckenridge's *Consuming Modenity: Public Culture in Contemporary India*), and Sudeep Dasgupta's introduction

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[12] See bibliography.

"Whither Culture? Globalization, Media and the Promises of Cultural Studies" (to his *Constellations of the Transnational: Modernity, Culture and Critique*). On technology and new media, Jon Stratton's "Cyberspace and the Globalization of Culture", Baudrillard's "The Work of Art in the Electronic Age", and Manuel Castell's *The Rise of the Network Society* proved to be excellent resources.

The complex understanding of Indian economy and culture was made possible by Gurcharan Das's *India Unbound: From Independence to the Global Information Age*, Peter Manuel's *Cassette Culture: Popular Music and Technology in North India*, K. Moti Gokulsing and Wimal Dissanayake's *Popular Culture in a Globalized India*, Asha Kasbekar's *Pop Culture India! Media, Arts and Lifestyle*, and Kamala Ganesh and Usha Thakkar's *Culture and the Making of Identity in Contemporary India.*

While not claiming mastery in these fields, the present research is, nevertheless an interdisciplinary research located at the intersection of several fields and subjects, namely cultural studies, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, psychology, economics, semiotics, reception aesthetics, media studies, music studies, mass communication, tourism studies, global studies, and ethnic studies. The methodology adopted for the study is multipronged. The approach employed in the research is an amalgamation of ethnographic and autoethnographic,[13] comparative methods in cultural studies involving the textual study of a lot of Rajasthani folk songs, both in their folk versions and popular cultural versions, along with performative analysis. While this work aspires to empirical objectivity, I admit that it might have traces of my own personal interests, preferences, and ideological perspectives.

The research is a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches. In the category of the qualitative methods, a wide research which mostly includes accessing the music archives for Rajasthani folk songs, along with library and archival consultation of secondary materials, attempting to do a comprehensive reading of the various socio-political and economic factors that influence the transmission of folk songs into popular culture, has been carried out. This has been combined with intensive fieldwork entailing collection of folk versions of songs as encountered in folk festivals and cultural evenings, combined with interviews and group discussions, involving frequent rounds of reflection and mediation over

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[13] In using the autoethnographic mode, I am only complying with Ann Gray's point of view: "[A]s researchers, our own experience of everyday life and culture is regarded not as a hindrance or something which might sway or bias our research, but something which should be acknowledged and employed in our intellectual work." (Gray 27-28).

the data collected. The research has also taken recourse to online ethnography, which involves online research sites and strategies, online research relationships and online presence.

The first chapter of the study is an objective analysis of Rajasthani folk songs and their renditions in popular culture. In that sense, it can be taken as a textual, aural, and visual study of the 'texts' of Rajasthani folk songs, both in folk and popular culture, and the changes that are brought about in the song when it is packaged into popular culture. The chapter also investigates the differential values placed on old and new creations, or, to be more precise, on 'authentic folk' music and 'reproduced popular' music in the context of Rajasthan, trying to examine the criteria which validate a cultural, artistic, or musical product as authentic. In so doing, the chapter will also, in a larger framework, examine what is truly 'popular' in this age which is acted upon by different agents. The chapter will also investigate questions of authorship, the persona of the composer and the performer in folk culture, intellectual property rights, and the patronage of music in Rajasthan.

The questions of production and circulation of Rajasthani folk music in popular culture will form the focus area of the second chapter. The mass-media, and the more recent electronic and digital media function as a major shaping influence for popular culture. The study will focus on the social stratification and economic organizations that form the background of (and are not instrumental in) the transformation of folk songs into popular 'folk' songs. The effect of the advertising and tourism industry on 'production' and 'dissemination' of Rajasthani folk songs in popular culture will also be examined in detail. It also works towards emphasizing the various producers in the chain of transformation of folk culture into popular culture and how they influence the production of meaning at the end of the receiver or consumer, thus also investigating how these factors give rise to consumerism.

The third chapter deals with the reception and consumption of Rajasthani folk songs and music in popular culture. This chapter will try to unearth how and what do popular culture forms, viz-a-viz folk culture, in this case, Rajasthani folk music, come to mean for individuals or social groups. It focuses on the process of cultural consumption, the moment of reception in musical experience, and how the audience or consumers are engaged in generation of cultural meanings. This chapter will argue that Rajasthani folk music leads to the creation of a unitary identity as well as community identities. The chapter will see how music evokes collective experiences and sensibilities, thereby leading to the immersion of the

audience in aesthetic delight and aids the process of identification with the music and with the spectators.

CHAPTER ONE

NOMADIC MELODIES: TRACING THE TRAJECTORY OF RAJASTHANI FOLK SONGS AND MUSIC FROM FOLKLORE TO POPULAR CULTURE

Any mention of the marvel called Rajasthan is bound to instantaneously evoke two things in one's mind: the colourful state of breathtaking forts and palaces; and the lilting melodies and awe-inspiring musical performances of Rajasthan. These, coupled with many other factors,[1] can be taken to constitute what one can call, Rajasthani culture, or the culture of Rajasthan. The primary focus of this research is the musical aspect of Rajasthani culture, which is, without doubt, the life-breath of the 'living' culture of Rajasthan. This chapter would undertake a textual study of Rajasthani folk songs and music, as well as their re-production in popular culture, in the process, introducing the categories of 'folk' and 'popular culture'. It will become clear as one proceeds that any such discussion would inevitably involve dealing with issues of authenticity, reproduction, and hybridity; community versus individual authorship; performance, copyright and dissemination; archiving as opposed to commercial productions of music; and, in the specific context of Rajasthan, the traditional system of patronage extended to the professional caste musicians of Rajasthan. These are some of the issues that this chapter will seek to dwell upon, locating itself in the domain of Rajasthani folk songs and music and their renditions in popular culture, while primarily trying to unearth the changes that occur when a folk song or folk music is rendered in different popular cultural media.

Defining the Categories: 'Folklore' and 'Popular Culture'

A discussion of the sort undertaken cannot proceed without clarifying the basic categories being dealt with here. To begin with, one has to clarify that there are no easy definitions to these 'seemingly simple' categories. There have been lots of debates and conflicting

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[1] The factors that can be seen as comprising a particular culture, which is generally defined as 'an entire way of life', are the clothing, food habits, occupational and housing patterns, mannerisms, norms, symbols, rituals, religion, values, beliefs, language, art, music etc.

'estimations' of the terms,[2] and for the purpose of this study, only those readings of the two categories have been chosen which tie up with the overall theme of the work.

To start with, Alver's definition can give us a preliminary understanding of the term 'folk'. He notes that in modern folkloristics, the term 'folk' is used almost synonymously with the term 'group', taking recourse to Alan Dundes: "The term 'folk' can refer to *any group of people whatsoever* who share at least one common factor. It does not matter what the linking factor is – it could be a common occupation, language or religion – but what is important is that a group formed for whatever reason will have some traditions which it calls its own" (qtd. in Alver 46). Another related, arguably misleading, factor associated with the term 'folk' are 'primitive'. This relegates the term 'folk' or 'folklore' to anything that exists in the past. But as the study will show, 'folk' is a category that can exist in the present, and that does not necessarily have to do with staticity. The 'folk' or 'folklore' is something that is constantly in flux, constantly incorporating newer elements, and hence very difficult to pin down to something concrete, fixed, historical, or related to antiquity.

Moving on to the category of popular culture, Storey holds that although the term popular culture can be articulated to carry a range of different meanings, what all these have in common is the idea of *popularis* – belonging to the people (Storey, *Inventing* xii). In a similar vein, O'Sullivan et al. maintain that "Popular Culture is 'of people in general, for people in general; well liked by people in general . . . ." (qtd. in Gokulsing and Dissanayake 2). Thus, it might be lead us to think that to be made into popular culture, a commodity must also bear the interest of the people (Fiske 23).

Morag Schiach also proceeds along similar lines, but adding the all important category of "accessibility" of popular culture by "the lay man": "'[t]he popular' is that which is well liked by a number of individuals, or that which is accessible to the lay man" (33). However, he takes recourse to the Oxford English Dictionary to trace the changing definitions of the word 'popular', also pointing out to the discretionary power of the people and the institutional aspect of popular culture, nuances which most of such definitions miss out. He writes:

> [T]he word 'popular' applied to governments, legal actions and social structures, but there is still another set of meanings of the word which refer to texts, language, argument, and forms of

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[2] It is a conscious choice to have used the word 'estimation' instead of 'definition' to highlight the fluidity and the debatable understandings of the categories.

knowledge to . . . 'cultural forms'. Here, 'popular' refers to a cultural form which is 'intended for ordinary people', whether in terms of accessibility, of mode of address, or of the facts of reception. (27)[3]

Schiach notices, in this range of meanings, a "shift[ing of] the emphasis from social power to individual choice and taste . . . [and] no reference to institutions, or to the facts of cultural production" (33).

In this regard, Fiske gives a comprehensive picture of popular culture. He highlights the duality that is characteristic of popular culture: "Popular culture in industrial societies is contradictory to its core. On the one hand it is industrialized—its commodities produced and distributed by a profit-motivated industry that follows only its own economic interests. But on the other hand, it is of the people" (23). Olick's observation also adds to these characteristics of popular culture. He is of the opinion that the term popular culture has been used to designate a particular form of common culture that arises only in the modern period. Popular culture in this account is distinct from both folk culture and high culture: unlike the former, it is mass-produced; unlike the latter, it is mass-consumed (44).

The origins of the academic study of popular culture can be located in Richard Hoggart's *Uses of Literacy* (1961), which treated popular culture as connected to lived experience, in contrast to material circulated by the mass media, while assuming that mass mediation alters or transforms cultural worthiness. (Jensen 91). But Jensen himself refuses to acknowledge a sharp distinction between cultural forms and cultural worlds, suggesting that "we are what we watch, listen to, spend time with" (91). Thus, popular culture can be understood as "a self-evident aspect of modern and postmodern life, as a familiar 'horizon of experience' and as a medium for the creation of personal life. It is through popular media and cultural resources . . . that many people specify their identities. . . ." (Niederer and Winter 688)

As might be clear by now, there are a lot of unending elements and debates surrounding the term 'popular culture'. In this regard, one can refer to Mukerji and Schudson, who make a very useful assertion when they advance that "[we] will sidestep a great many terminological disputes with the inclusive claim that popular culture refers to the beliefs and

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[3] It may be worthwhile to mention that the meaning of the term changed from being a political, legal term, to being associated with the lower strata of the society, and then shifted to being associated with culture. But it is important to note that it got caught in the high culture versus popular culture distinction, moved to having a negative connotation, and then finally became something more positive and glorified in contemporary times.

practices, and the objects through which they are organized, that are widely shared among a population" (qtd. in Harrington and Bielby 2).

However, the view of popular culture presented in this work is informed by Rao and Walton's observations about culture. Hence, it might be relevant to quote them at this juncture:

> Culture is concerned with identity, aspiration, symbolic exchange, coordination and structures and practices that serve relation ends, such as ethnicity, ritual, heritage, norms, meanings and beliefs. It is not a set of primordial phenomena permanently embedded within national or religious or other groups, but rather a set of contested attributes, constantly in flux, shaping and being shaped by social and economic aspects of human interaction. (qtd. in Gokulsing and Dissanayake 9)

It should suffice to further the observation that popular culture both reflects and shapes broader social forces (Harrington and Bielby 6, authors' emphasis deleted). The fluidity involved in the concepts of both folk culture and popular culture is heightened by Storey's claim that the study of folklore produced not only a concept of popular culture as folk culture, it also helped to establish the tradition of seeing ordinary people as masses, consuming mass culture (*Inventing* 15). It will be demonstrated in the following chapters that this is clearly not the case. The 'people' are never 'passive consumers' but 'active agents' making meaning in whatever is offered to them in the name of 'folk' or 'popular' culture.

On this note, it will be beneficial to leave this discussion here and move on to a deliberation of folk music and popular music, or music in popular culture.[4]

The Oral and the Aural: The Categories of Folk Music and Popular Music

Folk music, more than any other category, closely and inherently represents a specific culture. It is the aesthetic expression of a society, which does not require any training or pre-requisites. It is collectively composed, passed down across generations without any one person laying claims of authorship. In this sense, one can safely assume that folk songs are a

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[4] It might be useful to clarify that the 'popular music' or 'the music in popular culture' that is being referred to here, and in the immediately ensuing section, is the one that has its roots in 'folk music', that is, music which is inspired in terms of lyrics or melody or other related elements by the latter.

result of, to use Toynbee's term, a result of "social authorship".[5] It is the spontaneous expression of a group, and hence, almost intrinsic to a society.[6]

Ranade maintains that "[f]olk music is meant for the entire body of an organised human group bound by specific cultural ties, indicating commonality of language, geographical location, social convention and so on; it emerges, circulates and lives as their expression ("From Sankara" 54). Elsewhere, he observes that folk songs, by virtue of being articulations of the collective psyche, outlive generations, addressing themselves to the societal mind and not to individual spirit (*Essays* 10). Verma also emphasizes the fact that the inseparability of folk music from folk life, and of folk musicians from folk audience explains the innate character of all folk music (Verma B-1).

Like folklore, folk songs or folk music should not be seen as something pristine or dated. Like culture, folk music is 'undatable', and it is rather absurd to describe it as old or new – and in that sense it is always contemporary (Ranade, *Essays* 11-12). Moreover, folk tradition is mostly, if not always, connected to orality. Especially in the context of India, Ranade reminds that "oral tradition spreads over a wide range: from music to medicine and from philosophy to actual judicial practices", calling it "the living cultural force" (*Music* 5, 24).

Oral tradition appears to influence folk music in some specific ways. Folk songs can enjoy a state of continuous creation because of the oral tradition.[7] Writing down of compositions is not altogether avoided, but a low premium is placed on written versions. The fact of not having definitive editions, in a way, encourages changes as well as distortions (Ranade, *Essays* 10). However, the fact remains, as Ranade maintains, that the largely unwritten tradition of folk music and a near-total reliance on memory is largely responsible, among other factors, for the changes that folk songs and folk music undergo over time. Traditional art and musical forms survive, and easily adapt to changes precisely because of their flexibility. For example, folk music accommodates changes in language, articulation,

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[5] Toynbee 110.

[6] Prakash Detha, an exponent of Rajasthani music and culture explains in *The Lost Music of Rajasthan* that all the successive generations of folk performers learn by 'just being there', in fact that is how "hundreds of songs they memorize", thus enabling the transfer of knowledge and music from one generation to another (sic).

[7] Since Rajasthani folk songs were mostly transmitted orally, they have always already been open to incorporating changes and to adaptability (Meghwal, Personal Interview).

composition-technique and size of the body of songs in circulation etc. while transmitting the corpus across peoples, generations and places (13).

Explaining how a folk song enjoys continuous creation as an entity, Ranade writes: "Many times a 'new' folk song merely presents an edited, modified or an altered version of song/s already in existence – if not in wide circulation. Folk songs continue to be in societal repertoire only after they are processed by the group according to its felt needs. Stanzas are therefore added to or dropped from prevailing songs" (*Essays* 9). In this context, referring to Ramanujan's concept of folklore as a 'self-travelling' genre can prove to be particularly relevant to the discussion at hand. Ramanujan holds that "*folklore items*, like many other sorts of items in cultural exchange, are *autotelic*, that is, they travel by themselves without any actual movement of populations" (536, emphasis mine). This explains why neighbouring languages and regions have a large stock of shared folk materials, and why sometimes, melodies may migrate independently of cultural groups to which they originally belong. One may come across near-identical melodies irrespective of distances, dissimilar texts traditions, which Ranade, perhaps appropriately calls 'wandering melodies' (*Essays* 13).

This serves to explain why the folk melodies of Rajasthan are popular in the neighbouring states of Haryana, Punjab, and parts of Madhya Pradesh. In a broader context, it also explains why one usually comes across 'folk' music in popular culture. Very often, as the chapter will proceed to demonstrate, popular music derives its form, content, melody, or lyrics from folk music. However, before entering that terrain, one should provide a functional definition of popular music, even though it is characterized by fluidity in meaning. Popular music, in addition to being 'popular', has a connection with the media, which distinguishes it from other genres and conditions its production, dissemination, meaning, and, in often subtle but significant ways, its style.[8] Thus, popular music is that music which is widely disseminated by the media. However, as Connell and Gibson maintains, there can be no formal definition of popular music. They also specify why:

> [T]he 'popular' not only involves cultural products (CDs, music videos, concert performances) that are numerically or financially successful in different countries, but constitutes the whole realm within which tastes come and go, the social contexts in which 'fans' emerge with distinct cultural attachments to a sound or artist, and the human spaces that are created for the enjoyment of music (5).

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[8] The impact of media on popular culture or popular music will be discussed at length in the following chapter.

Although most of the categories dealt with in this research defy a concrete definition, one is still entrusted with the task to provide some critical assumptions made about them. However, one can notice a distinct difference between folk music and popular music. Alexander notes that compared with popular arts which enjoy large audiences, fine and folk arts appeal to smaller segments of the production (124). Certainly, this holds true of folk songs also. Moreover, folk songs are impromptu performances, while popular music is generally characterised by infinite iterability.

Additionally, one can also suggest that while folk songs are products of generally anonymous and community authorship,[9] the same songs, when performed in popular culture, acquire the dimension of individual authorship.[10] In that sense, folk music become historicized categories, while popular music is ahistorical. Also, folk performances are highly bound by their context—regional, religious and linguistic, while in the case of popular music, even folk songs become highly fluid genres, freely floating, without any particular context whatsoever. However, the crucial difference that comes about in the case of Rajasthani folk songs is that most of the 'popular' Rajasthani music is sold under the label of 'folk Rajasthani music'.[11] On this note, one can now move to introduce Rajasthani folk songs and music.

Rajasthani Folk Songs and Music: An Introduction

The corpus of oral tradition in Rajasthan is probably the largest in the country.[12] Rajasthan is without doubt, not only the most colourful, but also the most musical state of India.[13] Each region of Rajasthan has its own distinctive style of folk entertainment and musical instruments, songs and music, which sometimes overlap, as in the case of neighbouring regions, or some songs and melodies which almost all the people of Rajasthan have adopted and improvised.

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[9] In folk music, community and collectivity are the controlling agents in the conception, performance, propagation and communication of the emotional content of the songs.

[10] That is to say that in the case of the latter, they get attached with the name of a particular performer, folk or otherwise, which leads to the entire debate over copyright or intellectual property rights.

[11] The discrimination between 'folk/authentic/traditional' music and 'commercial/inauthentic/contaminated' music is something that the performers of folk music, organizers of folk festivals, staunch believers of 'folk' music, or self-appointed guardians of folk musical traditions believe in. Of course, this might be the case with other folk musical traditions also.

[12] K.S. Singh, Foreword, Part 1: xvii.

[13] K.C. Maloo, the owner of Veena Music, cassette manufacturers that mostly deal with Rajasthani music, informed that there are 35,000 listed Rajasthani songs with his company, adding that there are many more, the number of which is difficult to predict! (Telephone Interview).

The music of Rajasthan stands as a testimony to the fortitude of the people of Rajasthan, who braved the adverse environmental conditions to create for posterity the image of Rajasthan as a colourful land of mellifluous music. Kishore Singh, in *Golden Rajasthan*,[14] reminds his readers, at the very outset, of "the very real heroism and tenacity of a people who tamed their hostile environment creating beauty from the rock and sand of barren lands and developing a code of living that was as implacable as the desert in which they lived" (11).

Before proceeding any further, the contribution of Komal Kothari in the discovery, preservation, and promotion of the rich folk forms and cultural heritage of Rajasthan has to be acknowledged.[15] Or, to put it differently, one can say that since any research on the folk music of Rajasthan (or, for that matter, any other cultural aspect or Rajasthan) has to, as a matter of necessity, rely on his extensive field work on the cultural aspects of Rajasthan, the present study on Rajasthani folk songs and music takes the knowledge documented by Komal Kothari as its point of departure.

Sharma has rightly outlined the role of the renowned ethnomusicologist Komal Kothari in the survival of Rajasthani folk songs and music to this day. She writes:

> They [Rajasthani folk songs and music] would have remained inconspicuous to the outside world had not Komal Kothari, a great connoisseur of folk arts, discovered their talent. Realising that this oral tradition might go extinct if no steps were taken to preserve it, he documented the art and the artists and thanks to his efforts, a group of artists rose to fame and the melodious voices of the Thar began to enthral audiences far and wide. For the first time, the Langas and the Manganiars stepped out of the boundaries of their villages to sail across the globe. (8)

Komal Kothari recalls that the unconscious process of thinking about folk songs started in the year 1953 (in Detha 11, translation mine). Later, he was appointed as the secretary of Rajasthan Sangeet Natak Akademi in 1958. Now, he had to primarily engage in work related to music. He decided that he would collect the folk-instruments of Rajasthan and detailed information of the same.[16] These instruments were only played in the villages and were not available in the marketplaces. Komalda explains that in those days, tape-recorders were not

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[14] A graphic narrative of the land of Rajasthan, almost designed to look like a more sophisticated version of a tourist guidebook.

[15] For a comprehensive account of what Komal Kothari did for the conservation and advancement of Rajasthani folk music and folk culture, one can talk to any of the previous scholars who have worked on Rajasthani culture or any musician from the state—young or old, or, read Mridul (2004), all of whom sing praises for him or highlight his singular pioneering role in the popularity of Rajasthani culture, music and dance across the world.

[16] He has worked extensively in the musical traditions of Rajasthan, especially of the Manganiyars and the Langas of Western Rajasthan.

available for ordinary people.[17] Thus, he decided to transcribe the folk songs sung by women. This was the first time that these songs were being written down, which gave birth to the written versions of folk songs (in Detha 14, translation mine). Later on, in collaboration with his friend, Vijaydan Detha, the famous writer from Rajasthan, he laid the foundation of Rupayan Sansthan, an institute of folkloristic research and documentation,[18] which is engaged in preserving and nurturing the cultural heritage and the living traditions— traditional folklore, folk music, and performing arts; ethno-architecture, festivals, fairs, ceremonies, rituals, costumes, and ornaments—of the people of Rajasthan (Dutt 450).[19]

The entire process of writing down the songs drew Komalda's attention to the fact that singers of folk songs never memorized the songs. Resultantly, the structure, sequence of lines etc. changed as many times the song was sung. Even new lines would get added or omitted. Sometimes, to maintain the rhyme, even meaningless words were used (in Detha 14-15, translation mine). Thus, this serves to reiterate the point made earlier that even Rajasthani folk songs, like all other folk songs, are constantly in flux, and should not be seen as fixed entities.

Folk songs of Rajasthan can be divided into two categories: one group of songs are sung by the people, mostly women, on family occasions like birth and marriages, festivals and celebrations. The most popular of folk songs are generally parts of ceremonies like birth, marriage, festivals, and even *vrat katha*-s.[20] The other category of songs are sung by professional caste musicians who used to sing for their patrons,[21] and even do, but with time, even these folk songs have become an intrinsic part of the repertoire of Rajasthani folk

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[17] I am making a conscious departure from the standard academic norm of referring to people by their last names in the case of Padmashri Komal Kothari because of the sense of respect, affection, and gratitude I developed for the efforts of the guardian of Rajasthani music and culture during the course of my research, and I am told that this is what almost everyone, including the folk artists lovingly called him. I would not have thought of embarking on this journey had it not been for the insight I got from decades of field work that he carried out, which have been effectively summarized and analyzed in Bharucha's *Rajasthan: An Oral History: Conversations with Komal Kothari*, and the ready availability of folk songs and other related information at Rupayan Sansthan.

[18] In order to capture artistic expressions in their traditional milieu, Rupayan was conceived for the rural area and established in a village Borunda, but has now shifted to Jodhpur in the premises of Komalda's house itself.

[19] Of late, the institute has also entrusted itself with the task of providing new avenues of creativity, means of livelihoods, and business and trade opportunities to the artists, so as to ensure that even as the legacy is carried forward, such innovations and business ventures contribute to the sustenance of the artists and the preservation of the heritage, while also guarding the traditional vitality of the culture of Rajasthan.

[20] Stories, generally with some religious intent or moral message, which are recited among the Hindus, mostly among women, when they are fasting to seek the blessings of a particular deity.

[21] The system of patronage of music in Rajasthan has been dealt with at length below.

songs.[22] Put differently, in the former, people sing privately, for themselves and their families or relatives; in the latter, musicians sing for others, generally their patrons and the public. However, in both the categories, a common factor is the contextuality and the age-old emotional content embedded in them.

Komalda also brings to light a very important observation which emerged out of his field research. He explains that in comparison to men, women have more folk songs in their repertoire. It is the prerogative of women to sing songs on births and the occasion of wedding, most of the festivals and celebrations and in family gatherings. Men mostly sing on Holi, in some religious fairs or in *jaagran*.[23] In comparison to women, men have lesser number of songs and still fewer occasions to sing them. But this is not the case in a tribal society where men and women sing and dance together (in Detha 15, translation mine).[24] Another noteworthy point is that women are also the composers of these traditional songs. So, one can find an enormous mass of the thoughts, emotions, faith, beliefs and assumptions of women through these songs (in Detha 37, translation mine).

Another unique feature of women's songs that Komalda drives home is that there are no audiences for women's songs except in occasions such as wedding or birth in the family. Since women's songs are sung in a group, the listeners are the women themselves, which, according to Komalda, is indicative of the fact that there is no show of artificiality in such songs (in Detha 38-39, translation mine). Elsewhere, he also points to the importance of the refrain in women's songs, which, very often, run into entire stanzas, which are repeated over and over again, with perhaps only one word or line changed, which makes it easier for women to follow the song and sing it together (Bharucha 159).

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[22] For a detailed discussion of the various classifications of the same, see Niraj and Sharma (2010).

[23] A Hindu religious occasion consisting of all night worship of a particular deity, where the devotees of the deity worship her all night by singing her praises and her prayers, normally led by a single person along with a chorus who acts as a lead in the singing of prayers.

[24] This observation by Komalda explains my observation at RIFF 2011 that among all the folk performers I met in Mehrangarh Fort (and I suppose I could not meet all), I could only find one group of tribes called Kathuria in which men and women were performing together (women were singing and dancing to the accompaniment of folk instruments played by men). All the other groups of musicians or performers from different castes (not tribes) that I met had cross-dressers, where men themselves impersonated women for dancing or performing. One reason for this is the social hierarchy that exists in various castes in Rajasthan, which does not allow a woman to dance or perform in public (one must keep in mind the fact that most of these performing communities belong to villages, and are lower castes, having their own hierarchies of gender). This is clearly not the case in tribal societies where men and women perform together.

Sadly enough, the rich tradition of women's songs was mostly relegated to the four walls of a house or the precinct of their own community. Komalda notes that after independence, many professional performer castes barred their womenfolk from singing in public or family occasions (in Detha 21, translation mine). But he also draws attention to the fact that women sing their own versions of 'folk' songs in public concerts and recitals on radio programmes. But on the whole, as far as my observation goes, it is mostly men who perform on stage in India and abroad, with a few exceptions like Bhawari Devi or Rukma Bai, who, compelled by circumstances, have fought societal restrictions to perform in public.[25]

Komalda explains further that the cross-fertilization of different rhythmic patterns across musical traditions is not an easy task, and therefore, the possibilities of transmission from one tradition to another are restricted. Yet, one can borrow songs across musical groups. Today, for instance, a number of the popular songs sung by the Langas and Manganiyars in public forums come from the Kalbelia repertoire, which are mostly sung by Kalbelia women. Significantly, the Kalbelias themselves never sing any song that originates with the Langas or Manganiyars, though they have no problem in taking back their compositions with some stylistic changes. So there is some give-and take across groups, at the level of individual songs (sic) (Bharucha 233).

The Movement of Rajasthani Folk Songs and Music into Popular Culture

Having discussed Rajasthani folk songs and music in detail, one can now move on to a discussion of the phenomenon of the renditions of Rajasthani folk music and folk songs in popular culture.[26] Komalda was the first person who brought the traditional performers out of their patrons' arena and onto the stage. Rajasthan's vibrant performing arts were highlighted

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[25] Bhawari Devi was a Bhopi who used to perform the epic poem *Pabuji Ki Phaḍ* with her husband, the Bhopa, as a part of the ritualistic performance of the same, which can only be performed by a couple known as Bhopa-Bhopi. But when she lost her husband, she started singing other Rajasthani folk songs in public to feed a family of 22 people. Last year, she tasted popularity at the Edinburgh Festival also. On the other hand, Rukma Bai, a physically challenged woman, has been singing for a few decades now, and is the first Manganiyar woman musician who started performing in public (her two sisters also started performing on stage after her). Needless to mention, both of them had to face strong opposition from their respective societies. She sang the Rajasthani classic "Kesariya Balam" for Shubha Mudgal's *Mann Ke Manjeere*, released by Virgin Records (Khurana, "The Voice" 19; Personal Interview with Meghwal).

[26] To keep a track of all the manifestations of Rajasthani folk songs and music in popular culture is a Herculean task, and I do not claim to have undertaken an exhaustive study of the same. I have confined myself only to cases that came my way by way of memory, internet searches, a close study of a few Rajasthani music CDs; discussions with family and friends; and field and telephone interviews.

on a large scale in the course of cultural festivals from the mid-1980s.[27] The music of Rajasthan is now well-known all over the world. With the popularity of Rajasthani folk songs and folk music, and certain technological, economic, and political changes that swept India and the world,[28] one did not have to wait for long to witness Rajasthani folk songs and music making their appearance in popular culture.

In the first few efforts that Komalda made to familiarize Rajasthani people with their own cultural and musical traditions way back in the 1950s was to persuade Rajasthani folk singers to sing for the radio. For the first time in 1955, Noor Mohammad Langa, the father of Hayat Khan Langa, sang along with Gavri Bai on AIR Jaipur. Before Noor Mohammad was recognized as having immense musical potential by Komalda, music was just his means of recreation; he used to sit outside his house after a hard day's work as a menial labourer and sing to his family, and one of these days, he caught Komalda's attention. That was the beginning of a long association, and a very fruitful one indeed.[29]

Komalda is aware that as a matter of social necessity, there has been a tendency to make folk-music more consequential and put it to use in an impressive way, as a result of which folk-music is endowed with the task of shouldering this new responsibility (in Detha 40, translation mine). In Bharucha's *Rajasthan: An Oral History*, Komalda expresses concerns over the nationalization and internationalization of Rajasthani folk music in relation to 'festival culture', intellectual property rights, and the cassette industry (14).

Bharucha draws attention to the fact that "there is a sharp divide between 'folklore' and 'popular culture', which is 'commercially produced, in a standardized form, for mass consumption, with an emphasis on individual authorship'" (267, author's emphasis deleted). However, Komalda and his institute, Rupayan Sansthan,[30] have always believed in helping traditional arts flourish, but not by compromising on the essence of their 'folk' element, not with the 'mass audience' or 'commercial gain' in mind, but by encouraging and participating in 'creative alliances'. At the same time, what tops the priority list of the institute is

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[27] K.S. Singh, Foreword, Part 1: xxiv

[28] A critical analysis of these changes has not been undertaken here. They have been discussed at length in the second chapter.

[29] Personal Interview with Hayat Khan Langa, a Rajasthani folk artist by profession. Also, Hayat Khan is the head of the Song and Drama Division at the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Jodhpur.

[30] Now run by Komalda's son Kuldeep Kothari after his demise.

"*humaare maadhyam se Rajasthan dikhna chahiye*" ("through us, people should get a glimpse of Rajasthan").[31]

The institute and its staff have always provided the traditional folk artists with platforms, both national and international, where the musicians could display their talent before the connoisseurs of art and music. Komalda illustrates:

> One of our most serious and sustained interactions with an international group has been with Zingaro, the internationally renowned equestrian theatre directed by the French director Bartabas. The idea was to use Rajasthani folk singers for his forthcoming production *Chimère* (1994) . . . [T]he production that was supposed to continue for a year was on the road for three consecutive years. It was a big hit. (Bharucha 249-50)

The popularity of another such venture, *The Manganiyar Seduction*, "a dazzling, 67-minute long audio-video spectacle", can be gauged from the global resonance of the production. Till November 2011, "the show ha[d] played in more than 50 countries – and always to standing ovations" (20-21). Dixit ascribes the reason for this to the fact that "[w]hen traditional folk music meets contemporary theatre, the result is [bound to be] an unforgettable experience" (20)

The Manganiyar Seduction was first created for the Osian Festival in Delhi in 2006 by contemporary Indian theatre director Roysten Abel. The following description about the show can be found on Abel's web page:

> The concept creates a dazzling union between the Manganiyar's music and the visual seduction of Amsterdam's red light district. The sets are a combination of the Hawa Mahal and the Red light district of Amsterdam . . . 43 musicians are seated in 36 red-curtained cubicles arranged in four horizontal rows one on top of the other; and the concert begins when a single cubicle lights up and the first singer begins his song. Soon another cubicle lights up and then another, thus creating a dramatic and astounding build-up of musical instruments and voice as young men, . . . children and the elderly of the Manganiyar community take you into a world which is even beyond yours or their own. The [n]ormal practice is to take and use music for theatre but here Roysten reverses the process and uses theatre to create magic in music.

As Abel puts it, "It [*The Manganiyar Seduction*] takes you into a whirlwind of emotions through music and since it's audio-visual, it ends up being experiential" (qtd. in Dixit 21). In fact, so enthralling and moving was the experience of the first performance itself at the Siri Fort Auditorium during the Osian Festival that Ravneet Kler, Avirook Sen, Ankur Malhotra, and Ashutosh Sharma teamed up to start Amarrass Records, their own record label to

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[31] Personal Interview with Kuldeep Kothari.

promote folk music all across the world, *The Manganiyar Seduction* being their first release (Dixit 21). The magnanimity of *The Manganiyar Seduction* is attested to by Ashutosh Sharma, "It's got versatility, vocal and instrumental versatility . . . it's a luxury listening experience, not something you can listen to for four minutes and move on to the next track" (qtd. in Dixit 21)

Thus, the above cases illustrate that the intermingling of different cultures, in which both the cultures maintain their unique essence, can serve as a source of enormous creativity and dynamism. Sometimes, even the hybridization of culture becomes the basis of some of the most original work.

A significant project that Amarrass has been working on is field recordings for which the founders travelled across Rajasthan to listen to and record the musicians playing traditional music in their own environment. A praiseworthy case in point is the fact that these recordings, released as *Meetha Bol*, capture their music in its purest form, done as they are in settings where musicians are most comfortable and free, unlike studio production of folk music or re-recordings of folk music by professional singers (Sareen 3).[32] In fact, the website of Amarrass also has few samples of folk artists and their music, and artists can be booked for the events on the website too (Sareen 3). This is the kind of success and popularity, attained not by compromising on one's traditional folk repertoire, but adding to it by means of improvisation and cultural exchange comprises the vision of guardians of Rajasthani folk music, which is starkly opposed to that of people who organize 'International Folk Festivals', luring people from all over the world and doing brisk business in the name of conservation and promotion of Rajasthani folk performers and their music.[33]

While researching in an extensive area like popular culture, one might sometimes come across interesting cases. While researching on the present topic, an exciting discovery was the article on the Jaipur Kawa Brass Band, which "wowed audiences" with their 'hybrid' mix of Rajasthani folk, jazz and The Beatles at the Olympics Torch relay (Daftuar 2). Hamid Khan, the founder of the band, proudly claims: "We mix melodies using Indian tunes and foreign influences. We want our listeners to know that, while we are traditional and love our

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[32] Amarrass has released three albums of Rajasthani folk music titled *The Manganiyar Seduction* (Nov. 2010), *Mitha Bol* (Sep. 2011), and *Banko Ghodo* (Feb. 2012).

[33] The latter aspect will be discussed in the next chapter.

roots, we are open to other art forms; foreign or Indian" (Daftuar 2). In fact, the home page of the band's website flashes these two lines the moment one opens it:

> Who has never enjoyed the frenzy of a brass band?
> No marriage without a brass band in India!

This address, as also the fact that the website records only the overseas performances of the band in its 'Previous Performances' column, provides testimony to the fact that the website is created to create a grandeur around the band, both for the foreigners as well as the Indians.

Case Studies: The Changing Landscape of Oral Culture and Performance Culture in the Context of Rajasthani Folk Songs and Music [34]

In the current scenario in music, as Ranade points out, many different forms and genres flourish. There is a large volume of mass-mediated popular music, which is commercially profitable. This includes film music, fusion music like Indipop, and devotional music, in all of which borrowings and mixings are accepted, even celebrated (Ganesh 25-26). Added to these is the recent trend of using folk songs and music in regular or special episodes of TV serials[35] and uploading songs and videos on the internet. Nowhere are these changes more obvious than in the case of Rajasthani folk songs and music, which have constantly been used in popular culture.

The analysis in this section mostly bases itself on the archives of Rupayan Sansthan for the folk versions of Rajasthani folk songs, and the investigation of the same in such popular cultural media as cassettes and CDs, devotional music, film music, music videos, TV serials, advertisements, internet archives like YouTube and MP3Hungama, and the tourism industry. The songs investigated are generally the most popular of Rajasthani folk songs that any average Indian from the Hindi-speaking belt will be able to readily recognize. The genres of Rajasthani folk songs that are dealt with are the popular ones (not belonging to any specific community but ones that have been adopted by most of Rajasthan as 'their' songs), songs that accompany dance, *bhajans* or devotional songs, and songs of festivals, household ceremonies and weddings, to name a few.

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[34] A few cases have not been highlighted in this chapter, but the following one. Additionally, there may be some overlapping of examples in the next chapter.

[35] There has been a recent trend in TV channels to garner a lot of viewership by frequently broadcasting special episodes of longer duration, showcasing a spectacle comprising singing, dance, and melodrama (one such special episode (16 May 2012) that I can recall is the hype around the lead character of the soap *Balika Vadhu* getting awarded by the fictional Chief Minister of her state, Rajasthan, and her dancing to "Ghoomar" a folk Rajasthani song, and Shubha Mudgal's Rajasthani song "Rangleeo Mharo Dholna" on the occasion).

Responding to Bharucha's question as to how has the cassette industry affected folk music in musical terms, Komalda explains: "When we think of folk songs musically, there are two things that essentially matter: the text and the melody. Very often we find cassettes where the melodies of old folk songs have been retained, while the text has been changed, if not entirely substituted by a new text" (280). He also adds that the marketing people decide these changes (281).[36]

Before moving on to specific cases, some general patterns of change ought to be highlighted. It was largely observed that the tone and timbre of folk versions of songs are more rustic in their tonality, while the recorded ones for CDs and DVDs have a much more refined voice. There is also a noticeable shift in the use of more female singers to sing traditional folk songs which were generally sung by folk musicians who were men. Perhaps the commercial versions cash on female voices more than they do on male voices. The use of musical instruments varies: the folk versions use more of folk instruments,[37] with may be a relatively recent addition of the harmonium, while in the re-produced versions, there is widespread use of new electronic musical instruments. Moreover, the melody, lyrics, and the meanings of the songs get altered with different time and context, more importantly, the variegated intentions of the manufacturer, producer, or director. In certain cases, Hindi and other language words (mostly Haryanvi and Gujarati) get added along with different uses and the motives behind them.

There definitely is improvisation whenever the folk song travels in time and space,[38] so much so that even if the same folk singer sings the same song twice, there is a noticeable improvisation in the different renderings. In fact, the two versions of the song "Kesariya Balam" by Allah Jilai Bai herself, one each in the two Audio CDs that form the collection *Allah Jilia Bai* (2011) by Veena Music can serve as an ideal example in this regard. There are significant changes that can be perceived in the two versions by the same singer over a period

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[36] The pervasive influence of the media and the market, as we will see in the next chapter, have a very significant role to play in the transmission of folk songs in popular culture.

[37] I found out that most of the folk instruments used by the folk performers of Rajasthan are either percussive or aerophone.

[38] Improvisation in folk musical traditions of Rajasthan has been welcomed by almost all the proponents of Rajasthani folk music. Kuldeep Kothari said that while improvisation is welcome, there should not be much experimentation with folk instrumentation, the semi-classical style, and the vocabulary of original Rajasthani folk songs (Personal Interview). K.C. Maloo also said that while he has been monitoring the rehearsals of singers (who undergo a rigorous training session under a music director for 15-20 days before the actual recording of the song) at his studio to keep it as close to the original folk song as possible, improvisation is still welcome (Telephone Interview).

of time. Improvisation is not so unwelcome, as is the view of Komalda, Kuldeep Kothari and K.C. Maloo.[39] In addition, the music used is generally not that of folk instruments. This can be seen as a clear move for increasing the market. However, one cannot rule out the fact that studio recordings demand a certain kind of music to be used, which is why a lot of instrumental music and orchestra is used.

The case of a Rajasthani folk song which deserves an elaborate discussion here is the evergreen, ever-usable *Kesariya baalam avo ni, padhaaro mhaare des.* This Rajasthani folk melody is evocative of Rajasthan any and every time it is played. What makes this song stand a class apart from its counterparts is the unimaginable number of contexts and media in which this song has been put to use. The song features in a movie as old as *Nanhe Jaisalmer*, and as recent as *I am Kalam*, as a song of a beloved waiting for the return of her missing husband in the movie *Dor*, and at the rise of the moon on the occasion of *Karva Chauth* in the serial *Balika Vadhu* on the channel Colors. In fact, the serial *Kesariya Balam Avo Hamare Des* on the channel SAB derives its name and title track from the folk song.

The song has been composed in Rāga Mānḍ, which gets its name from Marwar, the Jodhpur region. The folk version of the song taken in the study has been sung by the lady who is credited with composing the song, Allah Jilai Bai, and the one used here was recorded on Spool way back in the year 1971 by Rupayan Sansthan. The original voice is a delight to listen to, and stands out of the crowd of all the performers or singers who have adopted the song as the trademark Rajasthani folk song that has now come to belong to all. The lack of sophistication in the song can be discerned at the point in the song when Allah Jilai Bai clears her throat, a practice which would not lead to people raising their eyebrows back in 1971 when the folk song was first recorded, since folk performers were not bound by rules of refinement or adornment in those days.

Any random search on websites from which one can download songs for free, like *mp3hungama.com* lists five different versions of the song when one types in "Kesariya Balam", *YouTube* lists 1,250 results, and the Google search engine comes out with 990,0000 results (of course many of which might be not even be related to "The Rajasthani Folk Song"!). But even a cursory glance at the figures stand as a testimony to the popularity of the song in its own right.

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[39] Komalda's views on improvisation as desirable and acceptable can be found in Bharucha's book, the latter two held similar views at the time of the interviews that were conducted with them.

Many professional playback singers (some of them born in Rajasthan) have also rendered the song in their voices. The famous Pakistani *ghazal* singer Mehdi Hassan's concerts almost always featured *Kesariya Balam*, the timeless Rajasthani ode to the vastness of the desert (Salam 1).[40] Like Hassan, another renowned *gazal* singer, Jagjit Singh also hailed from Rajasthan, and he made an appearance in Manisha Agarwal's music album *Padharo Mhare Des*, where he sang 'Aoni Padharo Mhare Des'. Of course, both the singers added their tinge of improvisation to the classic melody of the desert, keeping it as close to Classical music as possible.

Similarly, it is noteworthy that Rahat Fateh Ali Khan and Sonu Nigam chose to open the special episode of *Chhote Ustaad* (2010) Folk Special on the channel Star Plus with the song "Kesariya Balam", and they improvised the song, adding their creativity to the songs in terms of tone and timbre. In a similar vein, the Rajasthani folk artist Swaroop Khan, a contestant of Indian Idol 5, also set the standards higher by his innovative, and not just improvised singing of "Kesariya Balam" on the stage of Indian Idol. All these relatively new generation of singers made an indelible impression on the audience with their spontaneity, coupled with tradition.

The list of professional singers who have sung the song seems to be almost endless: Seema Mishra who recorded the song for Veena Music (and whose recording of this song is exemplary in its closeness to the original folk version of Allah Jilai Bai),[41] and relatively recent artists like Richa Sharma and Sowmya Roah—all improvise the song, although among these, the effort of Seema Mishra is laudatory for keeping the song as close to Allah Jilai Bai's original as possible.

Symbolic changes have also occurred in the meaning associated with the original folk. It has almost become customary for performers to start their programme by singing "Kesariya Balam Avo Ni, Padharo Mhare Des", with the song acquiring the meaning of a welcome song rather than a song of *viraha* (longing for one's lover), which is its original content and intent. Meghwal explains that the song was sung in the royal courts by professional singers like

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[40] Hassan was born in Luna in Rajasthan.

[41] The song by Seema Mishra appears in the CD *Gorband: Popular Songs of Rajasthan* by Veena. In a telephone interview, Mishra, who sang for Veena Music for eight consecutive years, admitted to the fact she tries to stick as close to the original Rajasthani folk song as possible both in terms of lyrics and melody. However, the term 'original folk version' is itself shrouded in doubt, because one does not know 'which' original is Veena Music referring to.

Allah Jilai Bai, on behalf of the queens, entreating the king to come to her instead of going to the other queens.[42]

The song is played in the background on the occasion of Karva Chauth,[43] in the serial *Balika Vadhu*, and the song of longing for the husband gets transformed into a song of waiting for the moon to come out, and celebrating the appearance of the moon on the sky, which marks the end of the fast that married women observe for their husbands.

The names of most of the cultural programs organized by or for the people of Rajasthan, like the one organized by the Rajasthan Sanskritik Manch in Jawaharlal Nehru University in the year 2011, is generally *Padharo Mhare Des.*[44] The programme at JNU opened with Jamali Devi singing "Kesariya Balam," accompanied by "the world renowned *khartal*-player" Bablu Khan Langa and others. Needless to mention, Jamali Devi sung the song with her own improvisation. The performance, since it was expected showcase a miniature Rajasthan and the culture of the state, featured classic performances that have almost become synonymous with Rajasthan: *Ghoomar*, *Bhawai*,[45] *Kachhi Ghodi*,[46] *Kalbelia* dance, puppetry, and a couple of performances by students of JNU on Rajasthani folk numbers and DJ, which played a mix of film hits, Rajasthani folk numbers and Punjabi folk songs.

A number of Rajasthani folk songs have been appropriated in Bollywood, with change in the lyrics, melody, use of instruments, and language. They sometimes also come to change the tone, timbre, and meaning of the original Rajasthani folk. Some classic examples have been discussed below.

The critically-acclaimed Anil Kapoor-Sri Devi starrer movie *Lamhe* (1991) directed by Yash Chopra, which "had exceptional music", borrows the lyrics as well as the melody of

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[42] Polygyny was an accepted social norm in the old days.

[43] An annual one-day festival celebrated by Hindu and some Sikh women in North India, in which married women fast from sunrise to moonrise for the safety and longevity of their husbands ("Karva Chauth", par. 1)

[44] The influence of the tourism industry in bringing about this metamorphosis will be illuminated upon in the following chapter.

[45] The Bhawais used to be a hereditary community of entertainers, proficient in singing and acting alike. Now, the *bhawai* folk theatre of Rajasthan is more or less extinct. However, the element of acrobatics has been adopted by a number of performers who present as *bhawai* various feats like balancing of glasses or pots on the head, dancing on a sword or on shards of glass and so on to the accompaniment of music (Verma D-7).

[46] The Rajasthani version of the Dummy-Horse dance, which is performed in many parts of India. The dancers, all men, dressed like bridegrooms, come riding horses, which are made of bamboo, paper and cloth. It is mostly performed at the time of marriage-ceremony (Pal 93; Verma D-8).

the song "Morni Baga Ma Bole" from the Rajasthani song of the same words, "Morni Baga Ma" and "Moriya Achho Bolyo Re."[47] This song is particularly interesting with respect to language games, because in the film, Ila Arun sings a portion of the song in a purely Rajasthani dialect drawing on the original folk version, and then Lata Mangeshkar sings the same lines in a mixture of Hindi and easy-to-catch Rajasthani. Moreover, the picturization of the song, with Ila Arun as well as Sri Devi, clad in Rajasthani *ghagra* and jewellery, against a backdrop of sand dunes, bonfire, and the moon, is intended to leave a spell of mysticism, desire, and sensuality on the viewers and listeners. This is an early example of how an aura of exoticism and desire is cast not only around Rajasthani folk music and folk songs, but also around the state of Rajasthan and all its cultural aspects. Infact, such was the visual effect and popularity of the song in the movie that Veena Music decided to picturize the original folk song in the year 2007 (in their cassette titled *Gorband* Vol.6) in a similar setting as that of the song in the movie (reproduced in the cassette *Colourful Music of Rajasthan*).

Similarly, the folk song "Mor Bole Re" sung by Bhoongar Khan and Saddeeq Khan is another song which sounds very much like the folk version of "Morni Baga Ma" and the folk song "Moriya Achho Bole Re". In most probability, all these folk songs derive their words (with slight variations) and tunes from each other. In yet another song "Mor Bole Re" form the Audio CD of Veena (*Colourful Music of Rajasthan*), we find the lyrics as well as the tone completely different from the folk song of Bhoongar Khan and Saddeeq Khan, although the opening line of both the songs is same.

In a nutshell, this entire construction of songs (folk or popular) around *mor bole* (peacock sings) or *morni bole* (peahen sings) proves to be a very interesting case study. Even though the debate around which song derived its lyrics or/and tune from which cannot be easily resolved, what this debate certainly points out is the fact that folk songs are very difficult to date or pin down in terms of originals and adaptations. Moreover, the debate informs that a peacock or peahen, almost a symbol of Rajasthan, is a recurring motif in Rajasthani folk songs, art and architecture, even so in the popular adaptations of Rajasthani folk songs.

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[47] The Wikipedia Page describes the music of the movie, one schedule of which was shot in Rajasthan, as "exceptional". Naturally then, Chopra might have thought of using the repertoire of Rajasthani folk music to his own needs ("*Lamhe*", par. 1-2)

The folk song "Nimbuda" by Gazi Khan and Lune Khan, which features in the movie *Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam* by Sanjay Leela Bhansali is a classic example of a reverse case of infringement of copyright.[48] The folk version of the song that has been referred to in this study is rendered in male voice, with folk instruments and simplicity of tone complementing the song, while the reproduced copy of the song in the box office blockbuster has been sung by Kavita Krishnamurthy and Karsan Sagathia with a lot of improvisation. There is marked difference in the folk version of Samander Khan and group of the same song in Veena's recording of folk songs, *Kesariya Banna*. To add to the list, Swaroop Khan's version on the stage of Indian Idol 5 has also been improvised a great deal. This shows how the same song is improvised by different folk singers every time it is sung, hence testifying to the dynamicity of folk music.

There is a certain affinity between the concept of the song "Kabootar Ja" from the blockbuster movie Salman Khan-Bhagyashree starrer *Maine Pyar Kiya* (1989) directed by Sooraj R. Barjatya and the Rajasthani folk song "Kabutar Ja Saajan Re Des" (a popular version, a duet between a male and a female singer, of which can be found in the DVD *Colourful Music of Rajasthan*). In both the songs, a lady asks the *kabutar* (pigeon) to deliver her message to her lover/husband who is far away. Although there is no source which could confirm whether the Rajasthani song served as an inspiration for the same, but one cannot rule out the uncanny similarity between the lyrics that Asad Bhopali wrote for the film song and the content of the Rajasthani folk, more so because the latter has been in circulation in the folk song repertoire of Rajasthan in different versions, where a *kurjan* instead of the pigeon used to be the messenger for the people,[49] especially the womenfolk, who were generally left behind in the desert, waiting for their husbands' return from distant lands.

In a similar vein, the folk song "Kurjan"[50] sung by Sumar Khan, Allaudin, and Noor Mohammed appearing in *Rajasthan: A Musical Journey* is in male voices and maintains a

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[48] Discussed at ease below

[49] The local name for the Demoiselle Cranes, migratory birds from South Western Europe, Black Sea, Poland, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, North and South Africa and Mongolia, which migrate to parts of Rajasthan and make the comfort of Northern Thar their home during the winter months. They represent the faraway lands of their origin for the native Rajasthanis. The Rajasthani woman is filled with longing for her spouse, who has gone to foreign lands in search of occupation. The overwhelming emotions take recourse in music and thus are born the Kurjan songs of the region. She entreats these charming birds to look for her beloved in the alien lands and to guide him home safely. ("Kurjan", par. 1-2)

[50] The song tells the story of a woman who wants to send a message to her husband, who is away. She asks the 'kurja(n)' (it is said that the bird used to carry messages for people long before the postal system was evolved)

rhythm and is better suited to express *viraha*, which is clearly different form the song "Supno"[51] in Veena's *Colourful Music of Rajasthan*, which is sung in a female voice (perhaps better suited to the theme of longing of a woman who dreams that her husband has returned from foreign land) has moments of grief and happiness interspersed,[52] which does not render the perpetual agony of a woman at the prospect of separation from her lover/husband as poignantly as the folk version does (even with the added effect of the video shot by Veena). Again, the same song has been rendered in a completely different rhythm by the folk singer Allah Jilai Bai (Audio CD-2 of *Allah Jilai Bai*), and the intensity and melody of the song just stays with the listener, unlike in the case of the Veena production.

The song "Choti Si Umar, Parnai O Babosa", which is sung at child-marriages in the rural areas of Rajasthan,[53] has been appropriated in movies like *Bandit Queen* (1994) directed by Shekhar Kapur, and in the title track of the top-rated serial *Balika Vadhu* on the channel Colors, which has almost become viral in the form of ringtones. In both the movie as well as the serial, the story is based on a girl child being married off by her family, and the trials and tribulations she has to face as a result, leading one to become the 'Bandit Queen', and the other to become the *sarpanch* (an elected head of the village)[54]. Following the prevailing popularity of the serial, recent recordings of the song with dramatized videos abound on *YouTube*.

In fact, the latest addition was a video uploaded on *YouTube* by fans, or rather, "the video response to a particular episode of Satyamev Jayate broadcasted on May 20, 2012. The issue was about the 'Dowry System' prevailing in India. This song in this video is not about 'dowry' in particular but it about a daughter telling her father that she is going to miss her father a lot. And the most precious thing a father can give in a marriage is his daughter" (sic)." This clearly shows the popularity of the song,[55] and that the song has acquired a

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to carry the message and holds out a promise of priceless gifts to him. The *kurja(n)* soars into the sky and wings its way to the master, who returns home the next morning (Pal 93-94).

[51] Used interchangeably with the song "Kurjan".

[52] The expression of happiness probably sneaks in at moments in the song when the woman imagines that her husband is back and hence it is a moment of gaity.

[53] Meghwal clarifies the fact that though child-marriage is not legal, but in villages, where literacy levels are extremely dismal, child-marriage is prevalent, and usually, girls are married off before they turn 18 (Meghwal, Telephone Interview).

[54] In the case of the latter, that is, the TV soap *Balika Vadhu*.

[55] The popularity of the song is affirmed by two factors—one that is widely in circulation in the new media like the internet and as mobile phone ringtones, and two, that it is appropriated by audience in their own unique

different meaning from being a song expressing the woe of a girl-child getting married as a child, to becoming a song expressing the anxiety of any girl getting married. And sometimes, as is the case here, although people can access songs from new media like the internet, they cannot really fathom the actual meaning of the song, as is evident in the comment on the song by the person who uploaded it. Nevertheless, as long as the interpretation by a non-Rajasthani (or, for that matter, even a Rajasthani person) is innocuous and does not damage the meaning of the song, it does not become something that is uncalled for.

In the movie *I am Kalam* which was recently released, there are numerous instances of Rajasthani folk song and music, such as a Kalbelia song, and many other snippets of Rajasthani music as different themes in the movie like Chhotu's (the protagonist's) village theme, palace theme, tragedy theme etc., not to forget the musical melange that happens in a Rajasthani village with people playing different Rajasthani and modern-day instruments, with Chhotu playing the *khartal*.[56]

Taking a look at the 'popular' Rajasthani folk songs that have gradually made their mark in popular cultural media, one notices, first and foremost, the variety of media, melodies, content, videos, and connotations in which the these songs appear.

The song "Pallo Latke" in the folk version by Janaki and Narayani is a slow-paced song with a different refrain between two stanzas. This is in stark contrast to the speedy tempo of the reproduction of the song by Veena in *Rajasthani Tunes on Band* which almost converts it into a dance number, which was precisely the idea behind Maloo's production of this sort of a cassette.[57] What follows in such pirated versions as *Kabootar Jaa Sajan Re Des* follows the zippy music, thumping beats and dynamic rhythm of the Veena CD, only with the difference that there are lyrics in the pirated version of the song (which also, in turn, might have been copied from an existing Veena cassette or CD), as opposed to the Veena production sans lyrics. This projection of the song as a dance number is reiterated in the serial

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ways, for instance, the song being used as the source of music for the "video response" to the menace of dowry in the present case.

[56] However, *khartal* has been previously used in the song "Sun O Haseena" from the Jackie Shroff-Madhuri Dixit starrer *Sangeet* (Hayat Khan Langa, Personal Interview).

[57] In an telephone interview, Maloo clarified that his idea behind *Rajasthani Music on Band* was to reach out to and fulfill the needs of people who could not afford a band for a wedding in their home, or in cases of unavailability of band, as also of non-resident Rajasthanis who wished to dance to the rhythm of Rajasthani music in their family weddings, and, most importantly, for women who were generally not expected/allowed to dance outside their homes or in front of men.

Diya aur Baati Hum, the story of which is about a Rajasthani family, broadcast on Star Plus.[58]

"Banna Re Bagan Me Jhula Dalya" is another Rajasthani song which is a perennial favourite. The song, as it appears in *Colourful Music of Rajasthan*, is sung by a woman, whereas, the folk version "Sawaniye Ro Hindolo" is sung by male performers. Although both the songs refer to the practice of installing swings in the month of Sawan[59] to celebrate the arrival of rains, the musical notes of the folk version are based on Raag Malhar, which is clearly not the case with the recorded version by Veena,[60] and the one generally in circulation on the internet. The newer versions just pick up the concept and the lyrics, leaving aside the classical raga.[61]

There are some Rajasthani folk songs which are a part of the different dance forms of Rajasthan. Some of them like *Ghoomar*, *Gorband*, and *Kalbelia* dance are extremely popular. Among the most popular dance forms is the 'Ghoomar', which used to be a private performance by women of the home, in the inner courtyard of the house on a festive occasion. Traditionally, men of the house were denied access to the performance, though now, it is performed everywhere (K. Singh 56). This folk dance, traditionally developed by the Bhil tribe and later adopted by other Rajasthani communities, gets its name from 'ghoomna', the pirouetting which displays the spectacular colors of the flowing 'ghaghara', the long skirt worn by Rajasthani women ("Ghoomar" par. 1-2).

According to Verma, *Ghoomar* has now become the single most representative dance of Rajasthan. *Ghoomar* as seen today in popular culture (festivals and performances) is a choreographed, sophisticated form evolved for and by the women of the 'rajwaaras' or seats of feudal power, and upper and upper middle class women of urban and semi-urban settings, as well as the women of the professional musician communities engaged as entertainers in

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[58] The popularity of Rajasthani culture in contemporary society (both in India and abroad) can be gauged by the fact that this show currently enjoys the highest TRPs among all the serials on Star Plus.

[59] A month in the Hindu calendar, corresponding to the months of July-August, signifying the peak days of the rainy season in the Indian subcontinent, especially significant for the state of Rajasthan, since this is the only time the desert region actually receives any rainfall at all. Hence, it is associated with gaiety and plentitude.

[60] An old raga in Indian classical music, which is associated with the atmosphere of torrential rains ("Malhar", par.1)

[61] It might be useful to mention that Rajasthani folk musicians, especially the Langas and the Manganiyars, are well-versed in the different Ragas of Indian Classical music, using a few in their songs, while also having some of their own Ragas, found only in Rajasthan, one example of which is Raag Mand, which is found in other states of India, but has been made popular only in Rajasthan.

such seats and by such families. The extent to which modernization, globalization, and tourism can effect a folk art form is indicated in Verma's suspicion that "it seems that it [*ghoomar*] used to be danced to different songs, set to different *taalas*, before becoming a rather fast-paced, single-song stereotype, though even this latter can still be a treat to watch" (D-5). The claim is further strengthened by the folk version "Ghoomar Ramva" (Audio CD-1) by Allah Jiali Bai (in the Veena production by the same name), which is distinctly different the versions of the song in circulation today, but more akin to the rendering by Gavri Bai in terms of tonality and use of folk instruments like harmonium and *tabla.*

Another well-known dance-song is *Gorband*, which comprise songs composed about the braids and beads that are used to decorate camels, especially during fairs and festivals.[62] The folk version of the song "Gorband" recorded by Rupayan Sansthan, sung by Sumar Khan, Allaudin Khan, and Noor Mohammed, and featuring in *Rajasthan: A Musical Journey* is again an absolute treat to listen to, with folk instruments and harmonium as supplements. The folk version in Veena's *Kesariya Banna* is also memorable, sung as it is by folk performers, but this version also varies in melody as compared to the 1978 version. Contrasted to this, the packaged versions of the song in circulation practically at every place one talks of Rajasthani cultural performances, events or festivals, also featuring in different albums of Veena Music (*Rangilo Rajasthan*, for instance), is markedly different from both the folk versions in its improvisation, use of chorus, and instruments like flute and orchestra, apparently meant to render the song even more vigorous.

The Kalbelia dance, also known as the Sapera (snake-dancer community)[63] dance does not need an introduction. The extent of the popularity of this performing art form from Rajasthan can be estimated from the fact that Kalbelia folk songs and dances of Rajasthan were declared a part of its Intangible Heritage List by the UNESCO ("Kalbelia" par. 7). They are, almost without fail, found at every other cultural festival organized around the theme of Rajasthan or any tourist resort in Rajasthan.[64] They are generally invited on the occasion of festivals like Holi, and at large fairs to perform before an audience, and mostly

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[62] Literally, *gorbundh* is the ornamental necklace for a camel, made up of strings of bells or decorative beads.

[63] The Kalbelia community is a nomadic community which moves along fixed routes. Of late, some members, generally performers from among the Kalbelias have started settling on the fringes of some towns in Western Rajasthan. Komalda argues out that the Kalbelias should be considered as "the priests of snakes" rather than as "snake charmers" in the documentary *Kālbeliā: A Gipsy Group.*

[64] In fact, they feature in Tony Gatlif's *Lachcho Drom* (1993), a documentary in French, which is a movie about the Romani people's journey from north-west India to Spain, consisting primarily of music.

women are seen dancing and swirling to Rajasthani folk tunes, replicating the movements of a serpent, for entertaining tourists and masses.[65]

Now, this is not the way things have always been in these communities. A few decades ago, snakes were seen dancing to the tunes/movements of instruments like *pungi*, *been*, *morchang*, *dufli* and *dholak*, which were played by Kalbelia men. However, since the enactment of the Wildlife Act of 1972, the Kalbelias have been pushed out of their traditional profession of snake handling. Today, performing arts are a major source of income for them and they have received widespread recognition within and outside India ("Kalbelia" par. 4). Additionally, it is interesting to note that Kalbelia women, and not men are the ones performing their traditional dance. Interestingly, as Meghraj points out, the gradual replacement of snakes by women dancers dancing to the tunes played by Kalbelia men is a change that can be credited to the demands of the audience, which would prefer to see a woman dancing, rather than a man.[66]

A typical Kalbelia song "Kalyo Kood Padyo" in *Colourful Music of Rajasthan* is picturized with traditional folk dance being performed by presumably Kalbelia women in the studio, along with puppetry (another Rajasthani folk art) and a dramatized presentation of a modern day urban couple. The inherent rhythm and tempo of the song is such that it does not require many changes, which is clear in the folk versions of the songs as well as the adapted versions.

Similar differences in words, melody, tune, and use of musical instruments (folk and modern-day instruments) are found in "Panihari-I" and "Panihari-II" when we compare the same with the commercial version sold under the collection title *Ghoomar-I* by Veena,[67] which it frequently re-sells in DVD collections with other famous Rajasthani folk songs and music. The song is sung on its own, as well as gives the melody to a dance form by the same name. This dance represents the graceful movements of the girls going to fetch water from the well, and the women dancing with earthen pitchers adroitly balanced on their heads (Pal 93). The folk versions begin with the folk instruments being played at the beginning, and

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[65] Komalda explains that the costumes of the Kalbelia women do not traditionally belong to them. They have been adopted from films, which they make more and more elaborate and decorative (*Kālbeliā: A Gipsy Group*).

[66] This points out to the all important category of the audience which drives cultural production and reproduction today, and will be dealt with in fair detail in the following chapters.

[67] All the songs of *Ghoomar-1* have been reproduced in the DVD collections *Rangeelo Rajasthan* and *Dharti Dhoran Ri.*

verses opening the songs,[68] whereas the commercial version is sung by a female, with minor improvisation, combined with new musical instruments.

The phenomenon of Dandiya songs from Gujarat travelling to Rajasthan, and necessitating the conversion of some of the songs from the repertoire of Rajasthani folk music into popular Dandiya numbers is another example of the adaptability of Rajasthani folk songs and music to dance numbers. Kasbekar elaborates upon the uses of fusion music, which pervades celebrations linked to religious festivities. She cites the examples of *dandiya* and *garbo*, which are traditional forms of communal dances performed each night during the nine consecutive nights of *Navratri* celebrations.[69] She observes how in contemporary times, there are modern versions of the same traditional music to make traditions more relevant to modern-day India; the more contemporary accompaniments to the traditional rhythms make them more appealing to the younger generations (28). This trend has now crept into the community-culture and mall-culture of the metro cities of India, with more and more such places serving as the sites of organizing, what I call 'devotional dance nights' or 'socializing in the name of Dandiya nights' during the festival of Navratri.

In addition to the songs mentioned above, there are some Rajasthani folk songs which are perennially recorded and sold by Veena and other music companies selling Rajasthani folk music. Sometimes, there are marked changes in the repackaged versions of the songs, when seen through the lens of the original folk songs.

There is an entire cluster of songs in which a woman entreats her husband to get her gifts like a *chunari*[70] from Jaipur, or a *ghagra*[71] from Agra. These are all different variations of the older "Mhari Rakhri Ratan Jadai Do", with the difference that variegated objects have replaced the earlier *rakhdi*,[72] where the demand was to get it studded with gemstones. The

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[68] It is customary for the Langas and the Manganiyars, the two major professional caste musicians of Western Rajasthan, to render some couplets or *dohas* before singing the song proper (Verma C-2).

[69] According to Wikipedia, a festival dedicated to the worship of a Hindu deity Shakti/Devi, nine forms of which are worshipped during the nine nights and ten days of the festival, and the dance forms *dandiya/dandiya-raas* and *garba/garbo* are performed during all these nine days in Western India, particularly in the state of Gujarat. But now-a-days, *Dandiya Nights* are especially organized in most parts of Northern India, other major cities of the rest of India, and even by NRIs abroad.

[70] A long, multi-purpose scarf worn by Rajasthani women.

[71] A long, embroidered and pleated skirt traditionally worn by Rajasthani women, and by some even today.

[72] A specially-designed pendant traditionally worn in the parting of the hair by Rajasthani women.

melodic composition and sequence of words also vary, but the intent or context of the songs remains the same.

The 'folk' element in the folk version of "Hichki" recorded by Rupayan Sansthan is perhaps testified to by the fact that it begins with one of the singers coughing. However, after this initial distraction, this song about a woman remembering her husband in a distant land, rendered brilliantly in male voices, is really a delight to listen to, combined as it is with folk instruments like *khartal*[73] and harmonium (a relatively recent addition to folk instruments in the case of many folk performers). On the other hand, Maloo's production of the same song in *Colourful Music of Rajasthan*, even though it is rendered in a female voice, somewhere falls short of invoking the pain of *viraha* that is beautifully communicated in the folk version.

"Khadi Neem Ke Neeche" is a song about a newly-married lady standing under a neem tree, stealthily looking at a stranger, not sure if he is her husband (because it was customary for a woman not to look at her husband or other older men of the household), but it turns out that this man is, in fact, her husband. Significant variations in the tonality and the use of instruments are found when the folk version sung by Janki and Narayani that is referred to in the study is compared to the one packaged in the DVD (*Colourful Music of Rajasthan*). While the folk version is rustic in tone, the recorded version is louder and full of gaiety. Also, there is a discernible change in the instruments used. While the folk version has folk instruments, a *dholak* and a harmonium, the one recorded by Veena is accompanied by orchestra and is much faster in pace in comparison to the folk song. Furthermore, the folk version starts with an *alaap* (the prelude to singing), while the recorded version begins with a romantic verse, which does not appear in the folk version at all.

The Rajasthani folk song "Chandiyo", a song about the betrayal of a woman by a man, uploaded on *YouTube* is particularly distracting and disappointing in contrast to the folk version (in *Rajasthan: A Musical Journey*). The folk song, sung by Hema from the Kalbelia community without any music or instruments, is exceptionally moving, the story of which is one of desolation and grief, of the disappointment of a woman who was in love with a man, was as dutiful as a wife even before marriage, but was in turn forsaken, as the man suddenly

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[73] It consists of four thin, oblong pieces of wood or other material, a pair held between the thumb and the palm of each hand and rhythmically struck against each other to produce music, generally used by Langa and Manganiyar singers as musical accompaniment (Verma F-1).

absconded.[74] It was disappointing to watch the re-produced version of the song on *YouTube* (both in terms of the audio and video) after having already listened to the original folk version without any paraphernalia. Not only is the video a way too insensitive interpretation of the custom of the Kalbelia community, it also seems to me to be completely cacophonous with all the loud beats and sound technology that completely rip the essence of the song apart.

Moving into the terrain of Rajasthani folk songs sung on various occasions, ceremonies and family events, one first comes across the vast repertoire of folk songs sung on weddings. In Rajasthan, it is obligatory for some castes to invite a folk musician (for instance, the Langas and Manganiyars are called by their patrons) on the occasion of a wedding or birth in the house. These songs have been traditionally sung for the different rituals and ceremonies that take place immediately before, during, and freshly after the weddings. These songs have certain generic names, based on their association with specific rituals.

In a project conceived by Komalda, Rupayan Sansthan assisted in the launching two collections of wedding songs, *Banna: Traditional Wedding Songs*, one each by the Langas and the Manganiyars. Their vision was to give the folk performers a fair opportunity to reach out to Rajasthani as well as non-Rajasthani audiences. Joining the lead were many other commercial cassette manufacturers. With growing urbanization and consequent isolation of people from the other members of their communities, a lot of cassette manufacturers launched a series of cassettes and CDs especially for the occasion. K.C. Maloo, the owner of Veena, boasts of having launched 24 such collections,[75] and plans to bring out many more. The idea behind releasing such collections, says Maloo, is to give the people who do not have access to traditional musicians the much desired Rajasthani wedding songs, or who cannot afford to invite and then pay the musicians, an affordable bargain, and, with it, a taste of their own music, customs, and culture to non-resident Rajasthanis.

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[74] In the wandering Kalbelia community, there is a custom according to which an eligible bachelor chosen by a girl's family moves in with the family, so that the girl's family can observe him and his mannerisms and then decide whether or not to marry off their daughter to the man. In this particular song, a girl is voicing out the pain of betrayal at the hands of a man whom she loved, for whom she used to run errands, who promised her to stand by her till and through their old age (Meghwal, Personal Interview)

[75] One cannot rule out the profit motive behind such ventures.

Rajasthani Vivaah Geet, a Veena product, is subdivided into 'Badhawa'[76] (comprising popular songs like "Sakhi Motyan Ri Lumak", "Tu Toh Chal Lichhami", "Mathe Ro Dumalo", "Heli Rang Ro Badhavo" among others) and 'Jawai'[77] (including classic numbers like "Jawai Aaya Pawana", "Pagadiyan Ra Pech" and "Dhoya Dhoya Thal", to name a few).

The wedding song "Pagadia Ra Paich" in *Banna: Traditional Wedding Songs by Langas* is a wonderful rendering, sung as it is by professional caste musicians, who earn their living by singing at weddings in the families of their patrons, sung to the accompaniment of folk instruments, thus adding to the mesmerizing aural effect of the folk number. However, the song is given a Filmi/Pop dimension in *Vivaah Geet Rajasthani* ('Jawai' CD-2), in that it is sung by a female singer, Pratibha, and accompanied by modern musical instruments, with a tinge of frivolity, thus taking away the context-bound traditional features of the song and adding to it the mood of fun and levity, in the process though, almost giving it a new avatar as a dance number. Similar shifts are apparent in the case of other Rajasthani folk wedding songs.

The folk song "Mehndi"[78] from Rupayan Sansthan Archives almost sounds like a pre-historic song when contrasted with the song "Mehndi" from *Rangilo Rajasthan* by Veena, which sounds as if straight out of a mainstream Hindi or Punjabi film, with a lot of *gana-bajana*, chorus, beats and tempo.[79] Another version of the song is "Mehndi Rang Lagi", where the general theme of *mehndi* has been converted into a Dandiya Mix, against a backdrop of Dandiya beats and sound of the Dandiya sticks, as well as a picturization of Dandiya being played in the video.[80]

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[76] Songs sung on an auspicious occasion, like the departure of the bride from her father's house, or the arrival of the new bride in her husband's house.

[77] The group of Rajasthani songs called 'Jawai' are songs of the son-in-law, generally sung by the bride's side during the marriage ceremony.

[78] Songs about the practice of women colouring their hands in intricate patterns by using natural colour extracted from the tree of the same name.

[79] I did not further elaborate on this case because I really do not know whether to lament the complete flouting of the melody of traditional folk repertoire or to celebrate a new addition to the new age wedding dance numbers which can be played before and through the actual ceremonies of weddings like Mehndi Function, Sangeet Function etc., which still bears some Rajasthani words.

[80] The video of this song was broadcasted for the show *Chirmi* on Rajasthan Doordarshan a few years ago (and still is under a different name *Taran Chai Raat*), and videos shot by Veena particularly for the show, among other videos, were taken from a friend, Preeti Sain, who is from Rajasthan and had these videos in her collection (Information about the show was given by K.C. Maloo in a Telephone Interview).

Content and melody wise, the "Halariyo" songs, sung on the occasion of the birth of a child (or rather, on the birth of a son in the family) differ from each other even in the folk versions. One can refer to the different words and melody of "Halariyo" by Allah Jilai Bai (*Allah Jilai Bai*, Audio CD-1) and the "Halariyo" recorded by Rupayan Sansthan Archives (and sung by Sadee Khan and others), for instance. One of the reasons for such changes is the fact that songs like "Mehndi", "Halariyo", "Banna" are, as mentioned earlier, generic names for a group of songs linked to a particular occasion or ritual, and there can be as many as thirty to forty songs, or even more, in each nomencalture.

"Gangaur" is a song which is sung on the festival of Gangaur which is celebrated with great enthusiasm in the state of Rajasthan.[81] The version of "Gangaur" in Maloo's *Colourful Music of Rajasthan* has a lot of modern orchestra, with a distinct sound of *ghungroo*.[82] The folk version sung by Gavri Bai (recorded in the year 1980), or by Allah Jiali Bai (in the Veena production by the same name) is sung differently, in complete contrast to the tune in which it is sung these days by most folk singers of Rajasthan, and which almost seems to have become a standardized version today. In the popular serial *Ye Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai* on Star Plus, which is shot in Udaipur, women sing the song on the occasion of Gangaur, and the rituals observed on the day of the festival are depicted in all their gaiety, culminating in all the women going to Lake Pichhhola in Udaipur, which is well-known for its Gangaur Ghat. The rhythm and tempo of the folk versions sung by Gavri Bai and Allah Jilai Bai consulted in the study is remarkably different from the versions in the aforementioned *Colourful Music of Rajasthan* and the TV serial.[83]

One cannot forget the extremely popular Holi songs that the repertoire of Rajasthan folk songs provides to the rest of India and the world. Some famous Holi numbers in Rajasthani have also been sung by professional playback singers in Bollywood. The foremost among them is Ila Arun's "Holiyan Me Ude Re Gulal" from the album *Mein Na Pehnu Thari Chunari*. The song, in Arun's typically husky and lively voice, almost adds to the colour and energy that the song, as well as the festival of Holi stands for.

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[81] It is the festival of womenfolk, who sing and worship the deity Gangaur, the unmarried ones asking for a handsome husband with brave deeds to his credit and the married ones praying for the protection and longevity of their husbands' lives. The Gangaur is much venerated by womenfolk of Rajasthan, as also non-resident Rajasthanis, as the deity is supposed to ward off evil and bring good luck to the family (Pal 95).

[82] A musical anklet made of many small metallic bells strung together, tied to the feet of Classical Indian dancers ("Ghungroo", par. 1)

[83] However, the folk versions of the two folk singers are also distinct from each other.

In fact, a lot of the songs of rituals of marriage and other such family occasions or festivals are also shown in serials. Even the CD *Rajasthani Tunes on Band*, which was launched by Veena way back in the year 1995, seems to have been launched specifically for the purpose of being played during the *baaraat*.[84]

Many Holi songs provide the tune, or even lyrics to a number of *bhajans* (devotional songs),[85] specifically those of Khatu Shyam Ji, an avatar of Krishna.[86] For example, "Holiyan Me Ude Re Gulaal, Shyam ji Ke Mandir Me" is based on the Rajasthani folk song "Holiyan Me Ude Re Gulaal", "Rang Barse Ji Khatu Ke Bhawan Mein" is inspired from the Rajasthani folk version of "Rang Barse", "Rang Mat Dare Re Kanuda, Mahro Gujar Maare Re" derives its lyrics from "Rang Mat Daare Re", and "Ayo Phaganiyo" supplies words and tune to "Ayo Phagan Melo, Babo Mahro Helo".[87]

In most of these and other cases, not only the lyrics, but even the melody of the *bhajans* is adapted from the folk versions of these Holi songs and other Rajasthani songs. Pointing out to the centrality of such songs to the devotion, *Kasbekar* has rightly pointed out:

> *Bhakti*, or devotion, constitutes an important part of Hindu religious practice, and the most natural expression of *bhakti* is singing . . [88]. In Hindu music, songs about gods, myths, folklore, legends, and festivals are all part of the repertoire . . . [which] are used both at home and large religious gatherings . . . [and c]elebratory songs and devotional music [are widely used] for specific religious festivals (27).

In a noticeable development in the 1990s, the use of traditional folk songs as raw material for pop releases remarkably increased. Kvetko observes that during this time, a new type of national popular music emerged in tandem with the liberalization of India's economy, the

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[84] The bridegroom and his procession which go to the bride's house for the wedding, singing, dancing, and making merry all through the way, with local brass bands being an essential part of the same.

[85] The leading producer of religious music in India is T-series (Kasbekar 28). However, in the state of Rajasthan, which abounds in folk and village deities, there are various local companies, including the leading Rajasthani music manufacturer, Veena Music, catering to the musical tastes of the lakhs of devotees swarming these religious centres in the state, as well as to those of nearby states of Gujarat and Haryana.

[86] In Hinduism, Khatushyamji is a name and manifestation of Barbarika, son of Ghatotkacha. This manifestation is especially popular in the Indian state of Rajasthan. Barbarika had obtained a boon from Krishna to the effect that he would be known and worshipped by Krishna's own name (*Shyam*) in the Kaliyuga era. The most important festival associated with the temple in Khatu located in Sikar district of Rajasthan is the Phalguna Mela which is organized just 3-4 days before from the festival of Holi. Barbarika's head appeared on *Phalguna Shuddha Ekadashi,* the 11th day of the bright half of the Hindu month of Phalguna. Therefore, the fair is held from the 9th to the 12th of that month ("Khatushyamji", Wikipedia page).

[87] I am grateful to my mother, Mrs. Kiran Devi, herself a devotee of Khatu Shyam Ji, for singing the *bhajans* for me over the phone, most of them from memory, and some from her books of *bhajans*, thus helping me out in identifying the lyrics and melody of the *bhajans*.

[88] All these shifts will be discussed exclusively in the following chapter.

expansion of the consuming middle class and the growth of satellite television, frequently referred to as the Hindi Pop or the 'Indipop' (111).

Music albums based on Rajasthani folk songs flooded the music world in India during the time. Ila Arun's *Vote for Ghaagra* featuring "Dilli Sahar Me Mhaaro Ghaagro Jo Ghumyo", Suneeta Rao's "Kesariya Hai Roop Mhaaro", and Shubha Mudgal's *Pyaar Ke Geet* featuring "Rangeelo Mharo Dholna" may serve as some classic examples in this regard. A general feature of most of these songs is that Hindi lyrics occur profusely in these albums, since they target a mainstream Hindi-speaking belt of the country, but yet want to sell these songs as 'folk' and 'exotica.'

There are also numerous instances where Indipop singers have used Rajasthani words and melody, mixed with modern beats and orchestra in a bid to offer something new and entertain the audience, the prime example of which is Ila Arun, who is a well-known Rajasthani folk/folk-pop singer.[89] Some of her songs like "Dilli Sahar Ma Ra Maro Ghaagro" (from the album *Vote For Ghagra* released in 1996), "Mein Na Pehnu Thari Chunri", "Resham Ka Rumal, to name a few, were instant hits. This is noteworthy because all of these songs have a mix of Rajasthani and Hindi lyrics, and a fusion of Rajasthani melody with rock music and orchestra.

Some pop-singers also borrowed from Rajasthani folk songs in terms of the entire melody in their own op albums. For instance Sunita Rao's "Kesariya Hai Roop Mharo" takes its melody from the Rajasthani folk wedding song "Dudhalio Bano",[90] which is a song describing the beauty of the all-decked up bridegroom, sung by the Langas at weddings in their patron's houses. Shubha Mudgal's "Rangeelo Mharo Dholna" from the album *Pyar Ke Geet* (1999) has quite a few Rajasthani words, and the melodic composition of her song "Nachoon Mein Saari Saari Raat", as pointed out by Mudgal herself, was exactly like "Mharo Helo Suno Ji Rama Peer", a folk song usually sung at the shrine of Rama Peer (Mudgal, E-mail).

Now, this is a particularly interesting illumination for me, because I have grown up singing *bhajans* with my family as a child, *bhajans* which were generally based on the

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[89] Wikipedia describes her as a popular Indian actress, TV personality and a Rajasthani folk/folk-pop singer with a unique, husky voice and a penchant for folk-pop fusion ("Ila Arun", par. 1)

[90] This is something I chanced upon during the course of my research, while listening to the collection *Banna: Traditional Wedding Songs* by Langas, and I am not aware of any such instance where Sunita Rao acknowledges the same.

melody of popular film songs of the times. This reverse use of melody of *bhajans* for a song in a commercial pop album was something I would never have discovered without the light cast on this particular case by Mudgal. [91] This, and Sunita Rao's "Kesariya Hai Roop Mharo" serve as examples of mainstream pop albums borrowing only melody (and not lyrics) from Rajasthani (and, by implication, other regional folk songs), sometimes even without proper acknowledgement. [92]

In terms of the videos of the re-invented folk songs, mostly shot by Veena for the purposes of its video albums, also has a lot to be studied and analyzed. However, one has to restrict oneself to providing only a summary of the observations. While watching these videos, one cannot lose sight of the fact that a lot of studio recording of actual life folk activities outside on farms, or in huts and interiors painted with Rajasthani paintings, obviously designed specifically for the purpose of recording such 'folk' songs to be sold in the market (for example in the song "Kangasiyo", *Colourful Music*) is a part of the marketing strategy to lure the customers to things 'traditional' and 'exotic'. Also, in most of the videos, a lot of folk elements like earthen pitchers, flutes etc. co-exist with modern day facilities and locales. However, a discerning audience can notice the light and sound effects, which do not go well with the 'traditional' intent of the videos.

Many snippets of Rajasthani music have been used by Indian and foreign advertising agencies to attract the audience not only from Rajasthan, but from other parts of India and the world. A recent example is the promotional song "Halla Bol" of Shilpa Shetty's IPL Team Rajasthan Royals, sung by Ila Arun.

However, there are also some 'non-musical advertisements about music' doing the rounds. On the inside cover of *Colourful Music of Rajasthan,* there is an advertisement about downloading (of course paid!) Rajasthani popular songs onto one's desktop, and also one about how to make Rajasthani Songs and *bhajans* (devotional songs) mobile dialler tones. Mobile phone companies have always vied with each other to offer hit melodies as ring tones, be they popular film songs, or folk songs played in the background of television serials. [93] On

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[91] Mudgal's acknowledgement of the same, even if it was only for the purpose of my research, is praiseworthy, and I sincerely express my indebtedness to her for the same.

[92] The issue of copyright and acknowledgement have been discussed below.

[93] Recently, someone's mobile rang with the song "Choti Si Umar" outside my hostel premises caught my attention. Needless to say, it indicates not only the popularity of the 'popularized' version of the Rajasthani folk song, but also of the television serial based on Rajasthani culture.

the flip side, the 'Rajasthani' cassette brand endorses its collection of 24 CDs of *Vivaah Geet* (Wedding Songs) and two books for the occasion of a wedding in a household, which it claims will be very helpful for "wedding of a son or a daughter, for singing-dancing (and hence rejoicing) in a wedding ceremony, for learning and understanding wedding songs, useful for playing on the wedding venue and hostels, useful for gifting on a wedding, *necessary for preserving the culture*" (Maloo, *Colourful Music*, my emphasis and translation). As if that was not enough, on the inside cover of the CD titled *Vivaah Geet Rajasthani*, there are advertisements of Travel Guide DVDs launched by Veena Music and books; on the other side of the cover, of downloading the music, video, wallpaper and mobile tunes from the website of Veena Music.

The Cassette Revolution and the Rajasthani Audience

"Yes! [P]eople do not know Lata Mange[s]hkar", claims K.C. Maloo, the owner of Veena Music. "Still there are rural areas in Rajasthan where villagers listen to local folk artists and [are] totally satisfied with them" (qtd. in Kalia 193)[94].

According to Kasbekar, India is the largest consumer of music cassettes in the world, also adding that most of the music consumed in India is "Indian— film songs, devotional music, and 'indigenized pop'" (16). In *Cassette Culture*, a study of the musical revolution unleashed by the cassette recorder in the 1980s in India, Peter Manuel uncovers the dramatic restructuring and reorientation of the music industry that resulted from a technological change in the manner in which music was produced and consumed (Kasbekar 18). If we take a look at the data that Kasbekar derives from Manuel's in-depth analysis of the cassette revolution in India, sales of film music dropped from 90 percent to less than 40 percent of total music sales, while sales in genres such as regional folk music, devotional music, and other non-film popular music grew from a negligible percentage to between 40 and 60 percent of the market (20).

The cassette revolution of the late 1970s transformed the Indian music industry (Kasbekar 17). Kasbekar observes that following the cassette revolution, there was a profound change that took place in the Indian music industry. In place of the single, homogenous musical genre arose a huge heterogeneity of genres of music and music producers that targeted audiences defined by age, ethnicity, and even occupation. She adds

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[94] Source of the article titled "'Where People are Still Unaware of Lata Mangeshkar' Audio Cassette – A New Powerful Media" is The Economic Times, 7 July 1997.

that in addition to this change, another development that could be discerned was that new forms of regional music and folk songs aimed at very specific, local audiences began to emerge in local dialects in the different regions of India. Interestingly enough, to supply material for this mammoth change, old, local musical traditions that had laid dying or dormant for decades were revived. Kasbekar notes that genres such as devotional music, hitherto marginalized by the hegemony of the film song, began to acquire a more audible presence (20).

The lower costs of production enabled small-scale producers to record and market music which was aimed at specialized, local, grassroots audiences rather than at a homogenous mass market. Manuel notes that some cassettes employ purely traditional instrumentation, especially in cases where producers think their more traditional-minded listeners would disapprove of the use of modern musical instruments. Cassettes of Rajasthani folk music, according to Manuel's study, generally feature sparse and plain instrumentation – typically, harmonium and barrel drum. Rajasthanis prefer unadorned, traditional textures. (162). Manuel writes:

> For most Rajasthanis however, music continued to be apprehended through traditional media, such as professional and amateur performances at weddings and other events, and by a variety of itinerant professional music, puppetry, and theatre groups. By 1980, cassettes were beginning to have some impact. Local entrepreneurs, like Jodhpur's Chhanvarlal Gahlot and Nandu Records, began recording local performers and selling individual tapes (for around fifty rupees)to shopkeepers who could duplicate copies for customers. By 1985 an active regional cassette industry had emerged . . . Slick T-series cassettes of Marwari and Jaipur-dialect songs are bought primarily by upper-class Rajasthanis, with rural customers purchasing most of the regional product. (183-84)

An important change that came about was that because of the cassette revolution, folk songs were no longer restricted by time and space. Older folk songs were made available to audiences in far-flung areas of the country, transcending geographical distances to reach global audiences. Interestingly enough, these cassettes also served the purpose of introducing Rajasthani music to the non-resident Rajasthani audience in the country and elsewhere. Manuel quotes a small-scale producer of Marwari music in Jodhpur (in 1990):

> Before there were cassettes, so many Marwaris didn't even know what *Mand, Jhumar, Birani* were. It was difficult to attend live programs when transportation was so poor. Now, with cassettes, music has spread throughout the country – especially among the Marwari communities that are everywhere from Bombay to Calcutta. Yuki alone has several hundred cassettes which are in demand (194).

In fact, not only did the cassette (and the contemporary CD) revolution succeed in attracting people of Rajasthani descent, but from other states of India also. The increasing popularity of Rajasthani folk songs especially in the neighbouring states of Haryana, Gujarat, and Madhya Pradesh stands as a testimony to the same.

However, the two problems that the cassette industry in India is facing are large-scale piracy and free downloading (Kasbekar 16). In addition, the other forms of piracy in the music industry comprise bootlegging[95] and unauthorized mass duplication and sale of legitimate commercial recordings (30). Most importantly, Kasbekar draws attention to another form of piracy which involves the production of cover versions, which are recordings of (usually old) songs performed by new singers, but using the same tunes and lyrics as the originals (30). "Legally", says Kasbekar, "cover versions are permitted, subject to the fulfilment of certain formalities, such as permission from the original producers and payment of fees to them . . . [C]onsumers are duped into thinking they are buying low-priced originals, only to discover that the songs are being performed by different, often less familiar, singers" (30).[96] However, the silver lining in this cloud is the fact that even in the case of piracy, there is a benefit for the artists, because piracy ensures widespread distribution and sales of their music (Kasbekar 32).

This should launch us into the debate which we have been postponing for long, that is, the controversy between authenticity and reproduction in the case of folk music, and the role of 'the author'. Intricately linked to these issues are the related debates around questions of copyright and intellectual property rights in the context of Rajasthani folk songs and music.

Owning Rajasthani Folk Songs: The Debate surrounding Authorship, Authenticity, Reproduction, and Intellectual Property Rights

The study of contemporary culture is often about the loss of authenticity, with the linked assumption that authentic culture is liberating and restorative, and inauthentic culture is imprisoning and debilitating (Jensen 92-93). There is a great temptation, points Storey, to think of the local as authentic and the global as an inauthentic imposition (*Inventing* 116). Storey warns that we should be careful to avoid romanticizing the local as the organic expression of a more "real" way of life (*Inventing* 116).

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[95] the marketing of unauthorized recordings of a live performance
[96] This is exactly what happened with me. Even I happened to buy some pirated CDs from a local shop-keeper in Rajasthan, only to discover later that they were all pirated versions of some CDs of Veena productions.

In fact, if folklore is seen as a performance, as a performance in culture, then it is something that is constantly changing. Henry Bial writes:

> Performances are always in-process, changing, growing, and moving through time. Though a specific performance event may appear to be fixed and bounded, it is actually part of an ongoing sequence that includes the training of the performers, rehearsals and other forms of preparation, the presentation of the performance to a specific audience in a specific time and place, and the aftermath, in which the performance lives on in recordings, critical responses, and the memories of performers and spectators (263).

According to Benjamin, a work of art has always been reproducible in principle (218). The question of adaptation has been intimately linked to that of auterism (Roberge 241), but this does not really apply in the case of folklore and orality. Folk music, maintain Edgar and Sedgwick, "is orally transmitted between generations, within a culturally homogenous community . . . [and is] typically thought to be of unknown origin" (146). It has often been said that folk music has no beginning and no perceivable end. The remark is obviously intended to emphasise the element of continuity it enjoys. Cultural groups can rarely be firmly and exactly placed on the time and space axis. Hence, their music, that is, folk music, is also expected to flow on and become one with the life of the community; contrary to common perception, folk music does change, though selectively (Ranade, "From Sankara" 55).

Blacking, based on a previous study (*How Musical is Man?* Published in 1973), asserts that all members of a species are as capable of dancing, singing and making music, as they are of speaking a natural language. Moreover, he also observes that performing music, like speaking a verbal language, is part of the process of knowing and understanding it; it does not require a special set of capabilities, and active listening is essentially a mental rehearsal of performance, in which a person re-invents "the text". Blacking wants to drive home the fact that distinctions between creator, performer and listener are artificial (19).

"In its moment of creation," explains Vijay Verma, "it [folk music] may be the creation of a specially gifted individual but its true parent is the society, which also nurtures, preserves and transmits it" (B-1). Komalda explains, in the context of Rajasthani folk music, that among the Langas and Manganiyars, the transmitting processes are entirely different. Their transmissions are of a kind where nothing is taught, and yet something is learned (Bharucha 232). Mukhopadhyay's has rightly pointed out that "the heritage of folk arts

should maintain the character of a flowing river . . . [which] is continuously renewing itself. It should not get fossilised in the four walls of a stagnant pool" (150).

Clifford asserts that the problem lies in the fact that "[o]ld objects are endowed with a sense of depth by their historically minded collectors. Temporality is reified and salvaged as origin, beauty, and knowledge" (55). The entire fuss around authorship and reproduction stems from the fact that individuals or institutions increasingly want to 'own' folk music, a category, which, as already mentioned, is extremely volatile. Every other person seems to be claiming that he/she possesses the 'original' or 'authentic' version of a particular piece of folk song or art. As pointed out by Benjamin, the presence of the original is the prerequisite to the concept of authenticity (218). If authenticity—variously defined—is a guiding value, then underlying it is an implicit assumption of an original or earlier stage. (Ganesh 29)

Writers form widely divergent political positions saw some redemptive possibilities in popular culture. Walter Benjamin, while wary of many aspects of culture in the age of mechanical reproduction, also saw in it a liberating potential: mass-produced works were no longer enthralled to the "aura" of the original, thereby providing an escape from the jargon of authenticity (Olick 46). Unlike his contemporaries of the Frankfurt School who, in general, repudiated mass culture Walter Benjamin "exhibited great faith in the revolutionary potential of 'art in the age of mechanical reproduction,' and supported the 'politicization of art' as a response to what he called the fascist 'aestheticization of politics'" (Henderson 19).

If we are to take the argument of Benjamin seriously and critically, we can arrive at a very significant conclusion about the nature of art in general, and of folk songs and folk music in particular. Benjamin suggests that that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction[97] is the *aura* of the work of art (Benjamin 221, emphasis mine). Even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be (Benjamin 220).

It would be interesting to bring in the perspective of Jean Baudrillard's hyper-reality at this juncture. Baudrillard writes:

> [A]s Benjamin said of the work of art, you can never really go back to the source, you can never interrogate . . . a discourse about its degree of original reality. That's what I call hyper-

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[97] Added to it is the practice of electronic reproduction, which had not happened in Benjamin's time, but which sparks off the entire debate in the present context of Rajasthani folk songs. Henceforth, mechanical reproduction will be clubbed together with 'electronic reproduction', and will be referred to as 'reproduction'.

reality. Fundamentally, it's a domain where you can no longer interrogate the reality or unreality, the truth or falsity of something . . . [T]hings no longer have a reality principle. Rather a communication principle, a mediatising principle. (146)

Hence, both from the argument of Benjamin and Baudrillard, one can safely assume, arguably, that 'no original' actually exists in this mass-mediated and electronically-mediated world. Hence, the tendency of going back to the 'original' is, at best, a futile exercise. The grass is always greener on the other side. Nevertheless, the positive outcome of this seemingly 'hopeless' act of prodding the original is that it endows the audience with a 're-produced' piece of music or art, that one can obviously relish. After all, the technique of reproduction permits the beholder or listener in his own particular situation to enjoy the 'new' work of art, thus reactivating the object reproduced (Benjamin 221).

Even for the strong contenders of 'original' works or art or pieces of music, Berger has an interesting argument to offer. In *Ways of Seeing* (1972), Berger argues that copies affect our viewing of the original. They embody the image of an original, and the original becomes a physical object whose value is increased by our familiarity with the image . Berger, following Benjamin, holds that alternatively, one can forget about the quality of the reproduction and simply be reminded, when one sees the original, that it is a famous painting of which somewhere one has already seen a reproduction. But in either case the uniqueness of the original now lies in it being *the original of a reproduction*. It is no longer what its image shows that strike one as unique; its first meaning is no longer to be found in what it says, but in what it is" (p. 21, emphasis original). (qtd. in Alexander 269)

However, the entire debate can be put to a halt by Fiske's assertion in this regard, which can be particularly illuminating:

> We live in an industrial society, so of course our popular culture is an industrialized culture . . . With very few and very marginal exceptions, people cannot and do not produce their own commodities, material or cultural, as they may have done in tribal or folk societies. In capitalist society there is no so-called authentic folk culture against which to measure the "inauthenticity" of mass culture, so bemoaning the loss of authentic is a fruitless exercise in romantic nostalgia (27).

Lowell delves into the idea of a creative ferment between art and folk music. He has, very aptly, suggested that "the communal music of a folk tradition—in which everyone, and therefore no one, is the composer—serves as an abiding source of fresh material and renewal, providing distinctive intonations and rhythms, energy, local color, uninhibited passion and spontaneity" (271). In fact, the age of new media and digital technology 'complicates'

matters further. The availability of almost 'everything' on the internet, which serves both as an archive of memory (subjective) and of knowledge (objective), thus confusing the users whether the given nugget of online information belongs to the former or latter, shrouded in questions of authenticity and reliability (Hartley 158).

With the new technology at everyone's disposal,[98] the distinction between the creator and the receiver gets more and more blurred. Sanjek points out that because of computer technology, not only do the producers, but even the consumers of recorded music "possess a range of options for the recontextualization of pre-existing compositions: they can take material from one format and transfer it from a given context to another, thereby creating their own 'mixes'", driving home the argument that "the elevation of all consumers to potential creators thereby denies the composer or musician an aura of autonomy and authenticity" (244).

Some people would, however, not relent even with these set of arguments. The issue that would then be thrown into discussion are the burden of preserving 'tradition' and the critical debate about the 'survival' of 'folk' music and culture, which will be taken up for discussion in the immediately following section.

But before one proceeds, one needs to briefly review the questions of copyright and intellectual property rights in relation to Rajasthani folk songs, and the issue of acknowledgement.

Komalda explains further that since the notion of 'community' is central to almost any cultural practice, the concepts of 'authorship,' 'individuality,' 'excellence' and the likes, which are associated with intellectual property rights become problematic domains. Kothari clarifies by suggesting that "Copyright . . . does not relate to the utilization of general things which are available in any given society. . . [But any singer who has sung a particular song] can claim. . . his rights on [that] particular rendition of . . . [the] song that he has recorded at a specific place and time" (Bharucha 272). So, what the electronic media, especially films and television seem to be doing in their fresh renderings of the Rajasthani folk songs, is essentially not a violation of copyright. But sometimes, as in the case of the famous song "Nimbuda" which has been used in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's blockbuster *Hum Dil De Chuke*

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[98] Of course, by 'everyone', I mean people with access to these technologies. However, one cannot rule out the fact that everyone can 'potentially' access these technologies.

Sanam, the song was originally composed by Gazi Khan of Harwa village in Rajasthan, illuminates Komalda (287).

Komalda elaborates on this song, which can serve as a classic example of the issue of the folk performers' unawareness of issues of copyright:

> This is a very different situation," says Komalda, "from. . . reproducing traditional folk songs like *Ghoomar* or *Gorbandh*, which have been sung many times in a variety of cassettes. Whether these songs are sung 'authentically' or not . . . they have not infringed on anyone's rights. But when *Nimbuḍā* got reproduced in the film, then a lot of us felt that something was seriously wrong. . . some kind of 'authorship' is at work here, and . . . these composers have rights on their particular compositions. (Bharucha 278-79)

Komalda further elaborates on, what I call, 'reverse copyright infringment': "And now, all over the country, in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, people recognize it as a song from the film. . . Today the film song is copyrighted, so ironically, if Gazi had to sing his own song, he could be infringing this copyright" (Bharucha 286) Kothari is of the opinion that in this case, "*acknowledgement*. . . [becomes] a very important matter, especially when we are dealing with a social group that needs to be identified and recognized. . . at a time when folklore is considered to be 'dying. . .'" (Bharucha 275, emphasis mine).

However, in the opinion of Bharucha, Kothari's interviewer, this entire debate around copyright of folk performances and the preservation of intellectual property rights is an obstruction in the way of intercultural and intracultural exchange:

> The controversy around copyright and intellectual property has messed up . . . creative exchange . . . and sharing . . . if we didn't have the means of mechanical reproduction, a song would not be recorded or copied or disseminated, and the problem of violating rights would not arise. It could be argued in this regard that the very idea of copyright is alien in a predominantly oral, pre- modern culture, but with the advent of new technologies like digital recording, sampling, dubbing, and mixing, there are new problems. (274)

However, not all may seem to agree with Bharucha, at least not the people in the music industry and the government of India. The premium laid on the issue of intellectual property rights has gained recently much momentum in India, culminating in the recent amendment made to the Copyright Act of 1957 in India, which no longer allows the songwriter and music composer to reassign their rights to royalty—except to an heir or a copyright society— when a song is used in a medium other than theatrical. This is significant because earlier, music composers and lyricists would mostly give up blanket rights to royalty in favour of the producer at the contractual stage of projects (Nagpaul-D'Souza 18). This puts an end to a

stifling and commercially exploitative system in which film producers, and not the creators of music, were regarded as the sole author of the work ("Updating"). But one wonders if this amendment applies to folk musicians also, because it is usually the case that folk performers, who are incidentally also the composers, are the most underpaid people in the performance circuit,[99] usually without any rights or claim to royalty.

The contention around the issue of copyright and intellectual property rights has been taken a step further by Mira T. Sundar Rajan, who is a proponent of the "moral rights" of authors, which she explains as "protecting an author's non-commercial, personal and cultural rights" made more pressing in the "Internet age", clarifying that she is concerned with "the cultural, not the economic side of copyright." Briefly, explains Rajan, "the whole concept of moral rights is to protect the special relationship between an author and his or her works" (4). Talking about folk performers, she maintains that one can at least ask for *right to attribution*, that is, the right to be named and identified as the author; and *integrity*, which protects the work from harm, which are already protected by law under 'copyright' and 'intellectual rights' (ibid, emphasis mine).[100]

What we can thus not fail to take a note of is the fact that the seemingly innocent terrain of the rights of the composers, lyricists, and performers is being hugely debated in the intellectual arena. What remains to be seen is whether or not these so called vanguards of intellectual property rights cast their attention on folk performers, especially in the context of Rajasthan, which has an eloquent repertoire of folk songs and music. Nevertheless, what is clear from this discussion is the fact that the protection of intellectual and creative assets, of folk performers as well as other mainstream performers is an issue of grave and pressing concern.

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[99] Hayat Khan Langa seemed deeply disturbed by the fact that Rajasthani folk performers are paid almost the same amount if they perform abroad, as much as they are in India. This is because the middlemen, that is, the people who get them the contracts, keep a large share of the money from the performers. This is, however, not the case when the performers are paid directly by the organizers of the stage performances abroad (Personal Interview).

[100] One can notice a distinct similarity in the thoughts of Rajan and Komalda, who also talks of 'acknowledgement' in the case of folk performers.

Questions of Tradition and Survival and the Role of Archiving

There have been unending debates surrounding the word 'tradition' both in India and around the world, mostly about whether to classify it as 'dynamic' or 'static'. Vatsyayan, an advocate of the process of transmission and interaction of the traditions, notes:

> The word 'tradition' itself has become problematic through overuse and misuse. We often speak of tradition as a static quantity, denoting a past at a particular period of history. It then becomes synonymous with the words 'heritage', 'of the past', as opposed to the 'other': 'modern' or 'western' or 'contemporary'. Furthermore, when tradition is equated to indigenous, it then begins to connote 'local' and 'native' as opposed to the other: 'foreign' or 'alien' (40).

Vatsyayan goes back to the definitions of the term 'tradition' in English and '*parampara*' in Sanskrit. Tradition or *parampara*, according to Vatsyayan, "connotes a flow, a vertical transmission in time and spatial spread horizontally. It does not constitute a frozen, static object, or even a corpus of values and behavioural patterns" (41). Even for Alver, tradition is "a *process* and not a *material*" (48, emphasis in original). Even Faith Singh, a founder trustee of Jaipur Virasat Foundation, says in *The Lost Music of Rajasthan* that the *virasat*, which she interprets as the wealth of tradition, can reinvent itself into the modern world because it is the expression of the people.

However, Bharucha takes recourse to Ramanujan, who provides numerous examples to subvert stock associations that the 'folk' tradition is necessarily oral and fluid in his essay "Who Needs Folklore?" (25, author's emphasis deleted). So, what this school of thinkers, people who do not wish to categorize 'tradition' or 'folk tradition' as fluid, seem to drive home is the fact that folk traditions would in any case survive. Cook, in a similar vein, insists that "'survive' is perhaps too strong a word, for the music of the past exists in a kind of half-life" (53). So then, probably what really needs to be done is just re-vitalize these half-alive traditions, which can be done through improvisation, either to create a new idea or to elaborate or develop an existing idea in a novel manner, and through adaptation of music, in this case, folk music, in popular culture.

Even Bharata, who composed his treatise on dramaturgy, *The Nāṭyaśāstra*, in third century B.C., describes plays having two different *dharma* (nature/characteristics): 'Lokadharmī' (realistic) and 'Nāṭyadharmī' (dramatic). In the former, men and women behave naturally without any change or added gestures, while in the latter, "speech is artificial and exaggerated, actions usually emotional, gestures graceful . . . [and] voice and costumes are not from common use (Rangacharya 115). If one translates the vocabulary of

Bharata in the context of this study, 'Lokadharmī' would come to stand for folk songs and folk music in their natural environment, and 'Nāṭyadharmī' for stylized presentation of these songs and music, which may be both contextualized or decontextualized. So, what we can safely assume is that there has always been a kind of borrowing and cultural exchange that great thinkers like Bharata have believed to be legitimate, the very essence of art and music.

This is, perhaps, even necessary, because sometimes, the folk arts stand the threat of getting extinct for lack of support and encouragement. In fact, a recent article in a leading national daily tried to draw the attention of the readers towards the threat of evanescence that Rajasthani folk music is facing, highlighting the plight of the Langas and the Manganiyars, who fear that their art might get lost in the face of poverty and illiteracy (Sharma 8). Even the folk instruments face the fear of extinction as there are few makers available.[101]

Abel, the director of *The Manganiyar Seduction*, makes a very pertinent remark when he observes that "[u]nless you find ways to give folk music new platforms, it will certainly die out . . . once upon a time, folk music was actually just that: music of the folk. So unlike today, its popularity was really mass" (qtd. in Dixit 21). This contrast with the general presumption that folk music gets diluted, distorted, and/or polluted when rendered in some other media and context. Additionally, it drives home the point that 'tradition' can be 'constructed' through media and technology.

In any case, a new and significant factor in the dynamics between tradition and lived life today is its mediation by the electronic media, so much so that suddenly, a multidimensional flow in constant flux—changing and yet not changing with each performance—becomes a fixed category (Vatsyayan 48). In fact, Ashok Ranade looks at fusion in contemporary music, not as a unique phenomenon, but as part of the tradition of *sankara* or 'mixing', which is a constant feature in the history of Indian music. He demonstrates that borrowings, assimilation and mixings are quite common to music in India in the past and, therefore, that contemporary 'fusion' is not so new after all. He suggests that 'purity', as currently defined, has become a standard for judging music only recently. (Ganesh 26)

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[101] Something highlighted in Sharma's article as well as attested to by Kuldeep Kothari and Shrawan Kumar Meghwals.

This mode of constant cultural transmission, and, by implication, survival becomes all the more necessary in the face of the sparse cases of archiving of Rajasthani folk songs. Although Rupayan Sansthan is the single most widely stocked archive of Rajasthani folk songs and music in the country, what we need is more such institutions and committed individuals, which are increasingly more and more difficult to come by these days. Archiving becomes all the more necessary because archiving and tradition are correlates, mutually dependent—archiving reinforces tradition and the sense of tradition compels individuals as well as institutions to archive (Ranade, *Perspectives* 298). After all, valuable documentation of languishing genres, forms and styles will enable posterity to peep into this vast storehouse (Vatsyayan 49).

Ranade observes that collection, preservation, classification, systemisation, archiving, documentation, re-creation, and dissemination are some of the basic processes directly related to any discussion on archiving (*Perspectives* 288). But ultimately, what all of it boils down to is the fact that archiving is designed to enable cultures to re-examine, re-orient, and re-activate themselves so that the 'present' becomes a 'live', meaningful, or relevant link between the past and the future (ibid). Ranade is perhaps right in pointing out that creating conditions favourable for maintaining continuity in cultural experience is the essence of any archiving activity (*Perspectives* 298).

However, the task of archiving is a daunting one, not as easy and ideal as it might sound. Leela Samson points out the impediments involved in the process of archiving in the context of India, as well the indispensability of making historical archives of art and music available to scholars, artists, and institutions, "Digitisation costs the earth and there are patenting issues involved. But the repository of our intangible heritage should be made accessible to educational institutions, eminent artists and scholars" (qtd. in "Leela Samson").

However, the situation is not all that grim. One is inclined to ponder over the question that Hartley poses: "*what exactly is an archive*, in the era of the internet?" (157, emphasis in original). Hartley argues:

> The internet has transformed the very idea of what an archive can be, and with it how knowledge can be stored, shared, grown, and lost. Because of the scale of information available online, because the traditional boundaries between different types of knowledge are no longer reliable, and because of the ways the users can navigate through multiple systems . . . [w]e may need to rethink the opposition between 'objective' and 'subjective' knowledge by integrating

them with other kinds of distinction – between static and dynamic, fixed and iterative, residual and emergent, authoritative and uncertain" (158-59).

Sites like YouTube, which thrive on user-generated content, transform television into an archive, but one that is governed by the principle of "probability" (Hartley 155). Hartley argues that that the flip side of online archives like YouTube is that it is uncertain, because the content on these archives can be removed anytime the administrators wish to do so. So, in that sense, the status of any object in such archives is unlike that of artifacts in conventional galleries, libraries, archives, and museums (14). Nevertheless, as I will argue in the following chapters, such avenues at least provide the youngsters with cultural resources that would otherwise have been unavailable to them, hence leading to a sort of cultural revival and perpetuation, also playing an important role in the formation of identities.

The last section of the chapter deals with the system of patronage that is integral to a comprehensive understanding of Rajasthani musical culture. Any textual analysis of Rajasthani folk songs or their renditions is incomplete without an understanding of the social context of patronage in Rajasthan.

The System of Patronage of Music in Rajasthan

Cultural performances are always associable to some scientific, biological, or functional need. This might readily serve as the reason behind the thriving of the system of patronage extended to music in India, especially in the state of Rajasthan. "Patronage", explains Ranade, "is a kind of protective, fatherly support extended to and by individuals as well as institutions in furtherance of cause, movement, ideology, tradition or a similar aspect of culture. Patronage connotes a process and not an isolated act . . . India has a long history of patronage to arts and other cultural expressions. (*Essays* 263)

Komalda explains the system of patronage in Rajasthan. Pointing out that the relationship shared by the Manganiyars and their patrons is hereditary, and entails an absolute obligation on the part of the patron families to use the services of the musicians and reward them according to traditional agreements, Komalda explains that this is true of all other professional caste musicians in Rajasthan (*Musicians for the People* 205).[102] Every caste in

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[102] Hayat Khan Langa suggested that the *jajmani* (patronage) system is more prominent in the villages, in the towns where some folk musicians have settled, the *jajmani* system is replaced by stage performances. However, what remains the same is that the desert musicians from both the rural and urban areas generally make their living from music (Personal Interview). Kuldeep Kothari explained that the latter comprise only 5-7% of their respective communities (Personal Interview). So, even today, the system of patronage is something on which

Rajasthan, whether high or low, has its traditional hereditary musicians: it is not a privilege of the princely families alone. This means that most folk musicians receive patronage from ordinary people also (208).

Komalda explains that the Langas are also Muslims, and they have two sub-castes: the Sārangiā and the Surṇāiā. The former play *sārangi* and have Sindhi Sipahis as their patrons, while the latter do not sing, but only play instruments like *surṇāi*, *murli*, and the *satārā* and have the Rajad Muslims as their chief patrons (Bharucha 223). The Manganiyars are Muslims, having Bhati Rajputs as their patrons. Consequently, they sing a lot of devotional songs in praise of Lord Krishna to please their patrons (Verma C-2).

The feeling of being bound in traditional ties to their patrons also exists in the musicians, who are expected to perform on all the life-cycle events in their patrons' houses. In fact, so deep is the feeling of responsibility among the musicians that even if they have a contract worth lakhs of rupees at some stage show or elsewhere, they turn down the offers or breach the contracts,[103] because they feel that their first responsibility is towards their patrons who have always sustained them in good times as well as bad times.

Highlighting the importance of social structures and traditions for the survival of caste musicians in Rajasthan, Komalda explains that as long as Rajasthani rural society is able to maintain its traditional organization, the role of professional caste singers will persist. And as long as this role continues, their musical tradition has every chance of surviving, in some form or other. But the day Rajasthani society abandons its social traditions, the musical tradition will also wither (*Musicians for the People* 237).

Bharucha draws attention to the fact that now-a-days, there are new 'patrons' in the making through the availability of new modes of musical reproduction. With the widespread use of new technologies, primarily the cassette recorder, CDs, and the video, folk artists are becoming increasingly more 'mediatized'. Add to it the new media, digital media. Indeed, folk texts and performances have 'hybridized' in all kinds of ways over the years through 'intertextual' interactions with other modes of representation (Bharucha 266-67, author's emphasis deleted). Whether their songs and stories are recorded by archives, or sold on

most professional caste musicians thrive even today. At the same time, it is also true that most folk performers take to alternative means of livelihood because of lack of exposure, dwindling patronage, and changes in the standard of living. This is the conclusion that I arrived at after interviewing different folk performers at RIFF.

[103] John Singh says this of the patronage system in Rajasthan in *The Lost Music of Rajasthan.*

locally produced cassettes or CDs, the point is that there are new markets opening for folk culture. To what extent this culture remains 'folk' remains to be unearthed.

The rekindling of folk songs is also pivotal to the conservation and continuity of musical and cultural processes. Ranade expresses his concern in this regard, observing that archiving and documentation devoid of dissemination should be strictly discouraged (*Perspectives* 251). So, while there should be promotional performances, I believe the real area of concern is what John Singh, the founding trustee of Jaipur Virasat Foundation, proclaims in the context of the Kalbelias, which can taken to be his vision for most of the folk performing arts of Rajasthan. He says, "They[The Kalbelias] come saying that their children don't follow the tradition. I said there is no need for them to follow that. They are the next generation; they will come up with their own . . . This is not about preservation." The question that then arises is if it is not about preservation, don't these folk musical and performing traditions stand a chance of evanescence?

At the same time, however, we also have to take into account what Ganesh observes, that 'folk', with its mandatory face-to-face interaction, is retracting in the conventional sense. Ethnicisation of the folk and its link as a product with the market and with elite culture simulated a new 'folk' whose inner dynamics is different from the old 'folk' (Ganesh 24). As Alver suggests, if we regard folklore as "a kind of a cultural communication . . . an artistic and creative communicative process" (49-51), we will probably not have too many reservations about the transformation of 'folk' to 'popular' culture.

The Indian culture has been characterised by both continuity and change. Adaptation and borrowing are not recent in the Indian context as elsewhere in the world. It is the very essence of music and art. But, what one has to remember is that refashioning, exchange, transfers, or crossings have to be such that they do not erase the specificity of the original or the targeted culture. This, in fact, is a more holistic way of looking at changes which are beyond our control, but in our bid to contribute in whatever way possible, we can probably ensure that the ethics of the trade are adhered to, folk musicians given their due acknowledgement and copyright royalty, and the folk versions are not done great damage to, both in terms of lyrics and melody. In addition, what needs to be taken care of is that the folk culture should retain its cultural and stylistic specificities, and the popular cultural media should couple with it to form a salad bowl, where both retain their distinct characters, and not

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become a melting pot where both the folk as well as the popular culture lose their unique characteristics.

Thus, one should be guided by the mission of revitalization and creative syncretisation of folk and/or traditional music. In the process, whether one should place innovation above tradition or tradition above innovation is a debate that cannot be easily resolved. Still, most complications can be resolved if there exists, on a mass-scale, the much-needed recognition that what needs to be developed is a taste of both traditional and modernist aesthetics.

CHAPTER TWO

THE DISSEMINATION OF RAJASTHANI FOLK MUSIC IN POPULAR CULTURE

The preceding chapter has already set the stage for the discussion that is going to ensue in this chapter. No cultural production happens in a vaccum; it is located within the field of power, class and economic relations. This chapter looks at the various politico-economic factors that lead to cultural transmission in general, and, in the context of the present study, of Rajasthani folk songs and music in popular culture. Some of changes that necessitated, or rather, led to this sort of a dissemination are, broadly speaking, economic and cultural globalization, the liberalization of India in the 1990s, the resultant changes in media and technology, the rise of the new media, the boom in the tourism industry, and the rise of consumerism.[1] However, this is not the exhaustive itinerary of causes that give rise to such transformations, and the list may just keep getting longer. At the same time, one should mention that the present chapter does not overlook the role of the audience/consumer in the circuit of culture. On the contrary, it reinforces the power accorded to the consumer, because all these shifts are, subtly or otherwise, directed towards the audience and fluctuate with the changing circumstances of the audience. In a nutshell, all the above mentioned changes will be discussed with the audience as the prime reference point. Also, instances from the subject of the research, that is, Rajasthani folk songs and music in popular culture, will be provided as one proceeds with the chapter.[2]

The Contested Site of Culture

Culture, as simple as the word may sound, is perhaps the most contested of categories in the academic, social, political and economic arena. In a world which is constantly in flux, and there are various agents acting upon any commodity or person, culture becomes a highly charged term. "Culture", according to Michael Ryan, "has always had two meanings. First, culture is a way of life specific to a particular community . . . Second, culture is the deliberate design of signifying materials into meaningful artifacts" (Ryan xv). Thus, one can notice the 'constructed' character of culture from what Ryan writes about culture. On similar lines, it is

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[1] This is not intended to be a chronological sequence of developments.

[2] Some examples might have already been cited in the previous chapter and will be repeated here, though briefly.

also important to interrogate why our society makes available certain cultural resources and not others.

The insight provided by Jameson can launch us into a discussion of culture and the various factors influencing and shaping it. According to Fredric Jameson, culture is no longer ideological, disguising the economic activities of capitalist society; it is itself an economic activity, perhaps the most important economic activity of all. (qtd. in Storey, *Inventing* 65). Landes in his *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations* (1998) has rightly pointed out that "if we learn anything from the history of economic development, it is that culture makes all the difference" (Gokulsing and Dissanayake 8-9). Thus, this connection between culture and economy will have to be strongly borne in mind while proceeding with the ensuing discussions.

As if this was not enough, McCarthy et al. warn us of the precarious predicament that all of us are mired in, and which affect any cultural production or reproduction in contemporary times:

> [W]e are living in a time that has been overtaken by new events and new subjectivities unleashed in the flux of the global movement and collisions of people in modern twenty-first-century life defined as it is by the amplification of images driven forward by computerization and the Internet, the movement of cultural and economic capital, and the steady migration of peoples across national boundaries redefining the epicentres of modern societies and modern institutions. Culture and identity have been dirempted from place, and the cultural porosity precipitated by the movement of people, economic and symbolic capital, and the proliferation, amplification, and circulation of images across the globe has deeply unsettled ethnic enclaves. (xvii-xviii)

Shifts in technology and production, the movements of populations, and sudden extensions in the circulation of commodities have produced millennial hopes and anxieties in various parts of the world for a long time (Stokes 307). These anxieties are augmented by Ravi Chaturvedi's observations, that "unlike traditional societies, where cultural unity is generally expressed in local communities, the contemporary nationalities and societies . . . are characterized by the dichotomy of indigenous culture and imported culture, dominant group and periphery group culture, nationalism and globalization" (Féral x).

Thus, all these factors of present day living reinforce Henry Bial's claim that "much of what we call culture is in fact performance" (321). Culture, when seen as performance, drives home the fact that like performance, any given culture is always volatile, constantly rehearsed and changing with every passing moment. George Yúdice's, in *The Expediency of*

Culture, argues that in the contemporary globalized world, culture has come to be seen as a resource to be invested, contested, and made use of for achieving various practical ends (Szeman and Kaposy 97). Thus, that culture is acted upon by various factors becomes crystal clear by now.

For Harrington and Bielby, cultural meanings are produced at a number of different sites and are circulated through a complex set of reciprocal processes and practices. While production and consumption are key sites for meaning-making, other sites also serve important intermediary functions. They refer to advertising to give an example, using Nixon's line of arguments to suggest that advertising, while linking the processes of production and consumption, constitutes its own moment in the circuit of culture: the moment of circulation (11). The category of circulation is integral to the circuit of culture: the more consumers any one product can reach, and the more any one product can be reproduced by the existing process within cultural factory, the greater the economic return on it (Fiske 28).

Even popular culture is mass mediated. With its dependence on advanced technology and its close response to market forces, it is different in its inspiration and dynamics from folk and high cultures, though it often uses their forms and recast them (Ganesh 23). Pointing to the relationship between popular culture and globalized India, Bhattacharya assets that contrary to general perception, folk songs are never strictly "regional" in their outlook, because they also have a "tendency to expand. . . [their] sphere" (23-25).

Since one has to deal primarily with the 'economics' of cultural and musical production in this chapter, it might be useful to refer to Hartley, who points out the subtlety behind the chain of production:

> [I]t is no longer adequate to posit a powerful corporate or state agency as *producer* and a powerless individual or private *consumer* in any model of communication . . . Equally, however, consumption or reception is never done by a collective, whether understood as an audience or as a social group . . . , but only by individuals whose choices are also patterned by association with such collectivities, among others. On both 'sides,' producer and consumer, there is both individual agency and collective productivity. It is a dialogic relationship. (15-16, emphasis in original)

At this juncture, one can move into the domain of music, which is the object of this study. Taking into consideration the circuit of composing, performing, and appraising, Cook notes the crucial link between music and economy:

The classic industrial economy followed a circuit which is based on the *production of goods* which were subsequently *distributed* and finally *consumed* by the public who purchased them . . . In the same way, music was thought of as being based on the *production of compositions* which were subsequently *performed* and finally *experienced* (enjoyed, appreciated) by the listening public. Musical culture, in short, was seen as a process of creating, distributing, and consuming what became known as 'works' of music. The term is a revealing one because it creates a direct link with the world of economics (Cook 15, emphasis in original).

The positive aspect of this circuit, however, is the fact that the musical 'work' gave a permanent form to music; music was no longer to be thought of as purely evanescent, an activity or experience that fades into the past as soon as it is over. For while performances of musical works take place in time, the work itself endures (Cook 16). This is precisely what happens when Rajasthani folk songs are circulated as 'works' in popular culture. But the primary reason why this entire process of making things from one medium or culture available in some other media or culture was initiated in the first place by the current of globalization.

A Million Dollar Question: To Go Global or Stay Local?

There are a great many number of vectors which affect any given cultural practice. But with the notion of popular culture come the related concepts of globalization and economy. Hopper explains the reciprocal relationship between globalization and culture. Hopper maintains that "globalizing processes do not stand outside of culture or cultures, but are shaped by them, amongst other influences. By the same token, culture will not be immune to the processes of globalization and are, in fact, at least in part, constituted by them" (2). The cultural dynamics of globalization emerge from the interaction of numerous processes, flows, networks and interconnections, which are interpreted, experienced and contributed to by different actors and agencies in a range of cultural, political and social environments and localities (Hopper 3).

Storey defines globalization as "the relentless global flow of capital, commodities, and communications across increasingly porous territorial boundaries" (*Inventing* 107). Immediately in the next paragraph, he highlights the other economic agents in the process of globalization by referring to the "time–space compression": the way in which the world appears to be shrinking under the impact of new electronic media, like satellite television and the internet, which facilitate the extending of social relations across time and space (107).[3]

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[3] These will be discussed in detail below.

Storey also links globalization to the increasing global mobility of people (108). In the words of McCarthy et al.:

> [C]ultural work [is] entailed . . . in the organization of globalizing effects, not "at a distance," but . . . in our everyday lives . . . as we negotiate social distinctions and cultural political choices relating to home, identity, nation, and language . . . "[M]ovement" and "stasis" are therefore intimately related to the reorganisation of contemporary life in the most private of arenas—the realm of subjectivity and identity—as well as in the public sphere (McCarthy et al. xix)

For Dasgupta, understanding what he calls "global culture" entails an understanding of relationship between the global recomposition of economic, social and political relations under contemporary capitalism, and the circulation of cultural practices, movements (such as nationalism) and discourses (140). The extraction of value under global capitalism involves precisely this valorization of cultural value, which speaks the language of "identity" (163).[4]

However, Appadurai's theory serves as perhaps the best one to have enunciated on the cultural effects of globalization. Appadurai postulates the dynamics of global cultural systems as driven by the relationships among flows of persons, technologies, finance, information and ideology (*Modernity* 47). Stratton, in his essay, "Cyberspace and the Globalization of Culture", explains:

> Appadurai's point is that global capitalism needs to be thought of in terms of flows rather than binary positionalities. He proposes a framework which identifies five dimensions of the 'global cultural flow'—ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, finanscapes and ideoscapes. He argues . . . that these flows drive an increasing deterritorialization of people, images, commodities, money and ideas . . . or [lead to] hyper-deterritorialization". (724)[5]

The problem of defining globalization or reaching at a consensus about the phenomenon is compounded by the fact that while there are some areas where scholars seem to agree upon while talking of globalization, there are some others whose views are completely in contradistinction to each other. So, while Storey maintains that globalization is producing two contradictory effects, sameness and difference—that is, a sense that the world is becoming similar as it shrinks under the pressure of time–space compression, but also that it is characterized by an increasing awareness of difference, Dasgupta asserts that it is "cultural difference" rather than the homogenization that characterizes the expansion of global capitalism (*Inventing* 114-15; 141). In the domain of music, however, the notion of

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[4] Identity, or rather identities, is a topic that will be dealt with in the next chapter.

[5] The term "hyper-deterritorialization" is, according to Stratton, a new movement within the exchange system of capitalism, and is a result of the opening up of cyberspace

impending homogenization rests on a reductionist understanding of the creative and reflexive nature of the production and consumption of popular music (Mahtani and Salmon 166).

Globalization as "time–space compression" brings into close contact images, meanings, ways of life, cultural practices, which would otherwise have remained separated by time and space (Storey, *Inventing* 108). In fact, in my opinion, it is this global culture which is also helping in the preservation and perpetuation of cultures; in its valorizing of cultural differences, it ensures that more and more people become aware of their culture and join in the drive to preserve them, even if it entails preserving the hybrid versions rather than the much-contested 'original' cultures.

Globalized culture is clearly undermining what had been a key aspect in intellectual discussions of folk culture, that is, that being embedded in a particular space – the rural – and separated by both time and space from the development of modern urban and industrial life guaranteed "authenticity." The movement of people and commodities around the globe, bringing the global into the local, clearly challenges the idea that locality can fix the boundaries of a culture. The nomadic nature of global cultures suggests we are witnessing a shift in how we see cultures, a shift from culture as "roots" to culture as "routes" (Storey, *Inventing* 117).

Thus, the "routes" of culture and, more specifically, music have considerably changed. As a result, the music of practically all times and places lies no further away than the nearest record store; if that's too far, then internet sites. Chronological and geographical differences evaporate as we increasingly think of music as an almost infinite pool of resources to be pulled off the shelf or downloaded from the Web (Cook 39-40). However, Cook points out that the immediate availability of music from all over the world means that it has become as easy and problematic to talk about different 'music' as about different 'cuisines' (41).

However, a better way to understand the processes of globalization is one which takes seriously not just the power of global forces but also those of the local (Storey, *Inventing* 108). Roland Robertson (1995) uses the term "glocalization" (a term borrowed from Japanese business) to describe globalization as the simultaneous interpenetration of the global and the local (109). Ien Ang maintains that "the global and the local should not be conceived as two distinct, separate and opposing realities, but as complexly articulated, mutually constitutive. Global forces only display their effectivity in particular localities; local realities today can no

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longer be thought outside of the global sphere of influence, for better or for worse" (qtd. in Storey, *Inventing* 112-13). The global/local interplay might be better conceptualized as a set of combined processes within which the tendencies of globalization and localization coexist (Mahtani and Salmon 168).

As we will see in the course of the chapter, globalization has in fact heightened "localization" of musical tastes and the appreciation of musical diversity (Mahtani and Salmon 168). However, in the context of India, I believe that the foundation of a culture of 'glocalization' (and not only globalization) seems to have been laid in the 1990s, with the liberalization of the Indian economy. Intrinsically linked with this change was the change in technology and the coming of the new media, the prime example of which is satellite television,[6] which also influenced the growth of the other 'new' media.

Liberating India from the License Raj and the Onset of Satellite Television in India

Theories of globalization have often considered the nation-state to be on the wane. As globalization progresses, the capacity of the nation-state to organize political, economic, and cultural experience is held to diminish. This ignores the fact that nation-states have been actively working in tandem with transnational corporations, creating industrial, business, and entertainment zones in their major cities to facilitate the needs of these corporations . . . the state has been actively involved in creating a context in which the global can "happen"; it is far from being a passive victim of it (Stokes 305).[7] Even in the opinion of Bharucha, the agencies of the State are increasingly in collusion with marketing forces in the age of globalization (251).

Arjun Appadurai and Carol A. Breckenridge note that in the mid 1980s, significant changes were under way in India. The consumer economy catering to an apparently growing middle class was a sure sign of surplus in the domestic economy, and an avalanche of advertisements heralded major lifestyle changes. Rajiv Gandhi's government was speeding up privatization and denationalization of industry, thus admitting a steady stream of

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[6] The term 'new media' is a volatile one. What was 'new media' in the 1990s is no longer new today, after we have already seen and lived the first decade of the twenty-first century. Thus, in the 1990s, satellite television and broadcasting comprised the 'new media', which has shifted to digital discourses in present day India.

[7] However, Gurcharan Das's in his *India Unbound: From Independence to the Global Information Age*, a narrative of India's economic progression from the early 1940s to the liberalization of India in 1991, argues that India's progress was engendered not by political reforms, but by economic reforms. He divides his book into three sections, the last of which (titled "The Rebirth of Dreams") is a compelling read for an insight into the economic reforms in India during the years 1991-99, and sounds almost like a paean to liberalization in India.

multinational and transnational corporations into India with their products and projects. It was becoming clear that the Indian diaspora in England and the United States could play a binational role in a changing world. Thus the term *nonresident Indian* – shortened to NRI – came to be used by the Indian state to lay claim to the skills, technologies, and finances of its "nationals" abroad by offering them favourable schemes for investment in India (vii, emphasis in original). The connection between public culture and global culture flows was the driving force behind the same (viii).

All these were just served as the trailer to the changes that were about to come in India. The advent of satellite television coincided with the economic liberalization in 1991, when the government removed several import restrictions and did away with many industrial license requirements which inevitably resulted in an economic boom (Kasbekar 21). The media landscape changed radically with satellite television allowing an explosion of private channels to overrun the state-managed Doordarshan network throughout urban India (Kvetko 111-12).

The new satellite channels,[8] with their large reserves of liquid capital, superior programming choices and access to huge video and film libraries, proved daunting competitors to Doordarshan, which has registered a corresponding shift in its strategies. (Dasgupta 148). Soon enough, satellite channels began to "Indianize" their content. Dasgupta draws attention to the discursive re-orientation of western media and other agencies around the notion of "Indian Culture" and the consequent changes in the programming strategies of television networks in the mid-1990s (143). In fact, the sophistication of satellite broadcasting technology enables the production of programming for specific regional and national audiences (Dasgupta 159).

Hall has argued that the "logic of capital" . . . works as much through difference in its globalizing mode as against it. In the specific case of global television, with advances in technology and greater flexibility of operation in software and broadcasting options, the success of international companies like STAR are predicated on fine-tuning their software to meet the individualized needs of countries (although what constitutes a country's culture again becomes internally hierarchical and exclusive) (qtd. in Dasgupta 158).

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[8] Wikipedia estimates that there are currently 515 over-the-air and satellite television stations in India.

Before this decade, radio had been the only source of electronic media available to people. Various regional songs were played on the regional FM radio, and sometimes, on AIR (All India Radio). But then, television sets became more affordable for middle-class Indians, and with a parallel growth in the number of TV channels, there were a roaring number of music videos, films, cassettes and CDs. This shift, I believe, was particularly momentous for conceptualizing culture. Dasgupta notes that Doordarshan's purpose of education (the pedagogic function of promoting a "secular national culture") took a backseat to that of entertainment, since the latter category guaranteed the most viewers to advertisers (150). He sees television both as an economic institution whose role in the proliferation of heterogeneous discourses of consumerism and the marketing of goods and services is central to capitalist expansion; and as a *cultural* institution which has come to stand for the "cultural influence" of global capitalism (142-43, emphasis in original).

Television is generally held to be at the cutting edge of the privatization of leisure in contemporary India as elsewhere, so much so that even cinema halls are gradually being replaced by the living room as reruns and videocassettes[9] are available within the comforts of our homes (Appadurai, *Modernity* 101). Appadurai and Breckenridge maintain that "[i]n television . . . it is the Indian heritage that is turned into spectacle" (9). Many TV serials that inhabit the world of satellite television today, and some of the most popular ones among them are based on Rajasthani culture. These soaps put up a culturally rich, larger than life Rajasthan on display, as in television soaps like *Balika Vadhu*, *Ye Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai*, *Diya Aur Baati Hum*, *Kesariya Balam Aavo Hamare Des*, *Bind Banunga Ghodi Chadhunga* etc.

What is particularly noteworthy in most of these television serials, is the kind of rich, ornamented lifestyles they represent, viz. the women clad in heavily embroidered and embellished clothes, with loads of jewellery on their bodies, sleeping with their entire make-up on, living in 'almost palace-like' homes, with breathtaking chandeliers hanging in drawing rooms, cooking in neatly arranged modular kitchens, men always dressed in formal wear, people moving around in luxury cars etc. So then, the 'exoticization' acquires the dimension of, to use Bharucha's term, the "market value", which is at play not only in the production and reception of folk songs, but also in the depiction of lived life on screen (283).

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[9] Add to it the recent development because of which the videos of different episodes of TV serials are available on sites like *YouTube*, which empower the audience with the choice of selective viewing, an advancement which had not happened when Appadurai was writing *Modernity.*

The strategies of entrepreneurs, especially Indian, and also otherwise, then, are manifold. Even a cursory look at these details reveals a new trend in the marketing strategies of producers of television serials and CEOs of television channels. They do not leave any opportunity in seizing the potential of folk songs and folk culture for commercial purposes, especially considering the enormous television audience today. Thus, to borrow from Kvetko's terminology, "it is not very difficult to trace global capitalist aspirations couched in fairy-tale family values melodrama", the effect of which is heightened by the use of Rajasthani folk songs and music (112).

Moreover, and what is of more consequence for us, these serials use lyrics or samplings of Rajasthani folk songs and music as title tracks, theme songs, or even have their lead characters dancing to Rajasthani folk songs as a part of their special episodes.[10] As already hinted at earlier, the extent of appropriation of Rajasthani folk songs and music is such that the soap *Kesariya Balam Aavo Hamare Des* which used to be broadcasted on SAB TV drew its name, title track, as well as melody from the Rajasthani classic "Kesariya Balam", with slight variations in lyrics and melody.

Another potent fact about television is that it has become an important vehicle for members of diasporic and exile communities around the world to stay connected with each other and to their "homeland" (Allen and Hill 106-07).

The Effect of Satellite Television on the Music Industry and Bollywood

Satellite Television also had an immense role to play in the growth of the music industry in India, particularly in the rise of the Indipop and music albums,[11] as well as in augmenting the popularity of Bollywood more than ever before.

The coming of satellite television led to a corresponding rise of music videos and the entry of multinational record companies into the Indian market. This provided ample opportunities to singers and music directors to get their music recorded by these companies and also to showcase their music in the empty time slots of television channels, which gradually started broadcasting programmes round the clock. Thus, a lot of new singers like

[10] Many such examples have been discussed in the preceding chapters and will also be discussed below.

[11] Music albums, or pop albums are remembered as an integral part of the growing up in the 1990s in India. They formed a large share of the music culture of my formative years as well, and I remember humming Alisha Chinay's "Made in India" and Ila Arun's "Dilli Sahar Ma Ro Mharo Ghaagro Jo Ghumyo", among many other songs from pop albums released in the decade.

Baba Sehgal, Alisha Chinay, Shaan, Palash Sen, KK, Sagarika, Sonu Nigam, Lucky Ali, Daler Mehndi, Shubha Mudgal, Shweta Shetty, and Sunita Rao and many others. Most of these singers mixed indigenous Indian folk or classical music traditions with western beats and rhythm,[12] thus giving birth to a genre called the Indipop, or the Pop Music of India. Television made the complex Indian dialectic between local and imported music more overtly visible. The late 1990s set the backdrop for an intensified evaluation of national culture and identity in India, and, the rise of Indipop (and, to stretch Kvetko's argument further, 're-invented' folk songs),[13] to popularity charts must be viewed in this historical context (111).

The changed landscape of the music industry led to the introduction of organized music retailing in India. The cassette revolution that Peter Manuel identifies as having engulfed India in the 1980s acquired greater dimensions with the culture of buying compact discs (CDs) rather than cassettes by the late 1990s-early twenty first century. Thus, cassette manufacturers reviewed their manufacturing policies and shifted towards manufacturing more CDs and DVDs. All in all, satellite television served as the launch pad for the music industry, especially the Indipop and the cassette industry, especially in Rajasthan.

The change that came with the flourishing of the cassette industry was that the oral versions of songs could now be recorded, preserved for posterity, as well as sold out for profit. For local cassette manufacturers in Rajasthan, manufacturing both Rajasthani folk music and devotional music, investing in devotional music was a win-win business plan. There are a lot of local deities in Rajasthan, and these manufacturers targeted such centres to export their music to the non-Rajasthani crowd swarming to these places. This was increased manifold with the coming of the satellite television and the possibility of advertising their wares on television to ensure greater sales. Kasbekar observes that for music companies, devotional music constitutes a sound business strategy: it is a low-cost genre, requires no expensive rights or glamorous marketing, and has a longer "shelf life" than film music. Additionally, the overseas market for devotional music among the Indian expatriate and immigrant communities is very steady[14] (28-29).

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[12] Many cases of Indipop songs based on Rajasthani folk songs or music have already been discussed at length in the first chapter.

[13] The first few music albums, as well as the most popular ones, released in India during the period were mostly adaptations of Punjabi and Rajasthani folk songs, or at other times, used lyrics and beats which were either Punjabi or Rajasthani.

[14] The latter is more relevant to the next chapter of the research.

Following the growth of satellite television in India, a lot of regional TV channels were added to the already existing regional radio and FM channels. This provided the local cassette manufacturers with a golden opportunity to reach out to the local audiences through their packages of regional folk music in Rajasthan, which could be advertised on regional TV channels. Veena Music, however, tasted greater success than any other music manufacturer in Rajasthan. One of the strategies that Veena adopted was to record videos of popular Rajasthani numbers and air them on local Rajasthani channels.[15] This definitely led to a greater number of cassette consumers in Rajasthan. This was followed by a steep increase in cassette sales outside Rajasthan as well, mostly among non-resident Rajasthanis, as also among foreign tourists and Indian visitors.

Rajasthani Holi songs like "Rang Mat Daare Re", "Rang Barse", "Aaj Biraj Me Holi", and "Aayo Phaganiyo" are folk songs from the repertoire of Rajasthani folk music, which are played at almost all Holi celebrations across North India as well as outside India. These are songs that have been rendered popular in and by Hindi movies as well. Songs like "Gorbadh", "Ghoomar", "Nimbuda", "Kalyo Kood Padyo" (played during Kalbelia Dance), "Banna Re Baga Me", and "Pallo Latke" have become some of the trademark songs representing Rajasthan because of the globalizing, multi-medial forces and the simultaneous and mutually fulfilling supply and creation of demand by the tourism sector, both private and state-owned. Also, in most of the cases, the content, specifically some words, of these 'recorded' songs varies distinctly from folk versions of the songs. Many stanzas or lines have been completely omitted, or new ones added. New words, signifying technological advancements, like television, *gaadi* (car) and rail seems to have replaced words like *baansuri* (flute) and cycle. This indicates the effect of modernization and globalization on regional cultures, even remote states and villages like Rajasthan, even though the state has alarmingly low literacy rates.[16]

It may sound a bit anachronistic, but one feels the need to highlight one particular Rajasthani 'folk song' in this context, which is significant not only for its lyrics and music, but also because the video that has been shot for the song by Veena. "Dharti Dhoran Ri"[17] has

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[15] Some light on the features of such videos has been thrown in the preceding chapter.

[16] According to the Census of India 2011, Rajasthan has the third lowest literacy rates in India (67.06%) as against 93.91% literacy rate in Kerala (highest), 63.82% in Bihar (lowest), and an overall literacy rate of 74.04% of India.

[17] Meaning "Land of Shifting Sands".

a disclaimer at the beginning of the video which announces that the song is based on two poems of the Rajasthani writer Kanhaiya Lal Sethia,[18] and is a concept of K.C. Maloo, the owner of Veena Music.[19] Infact, as clarified by Meghwal, it is not a song from the folk repertoire of Rajasthan (Meghwal, Telephone Interview). It is a poem used by corporate giants in order to uphold the valour of the Rajputana (erstwhile Rajasthan which also included certain other territories like Gujarat, parts of Pakistan and other neighbouring areas) or/and use it for the promotion of tourism in the state.

Entering the arena of Bollywood, Punathambekar and Kavoori are of the opinion that in addition to theatrical releases in cities with sizeable South Asian populations, Bollywood's entry into overseas markets has been enabled by satellite television and online delivery systems (5). In the last decade of the twentieth century, television channels provided Indian film producers the space and time to advertise their films. Since most of these TV channels also had a massive viewership outside India, especially among the Indian diaspora, the film producers got a fairly large platform to advertise their movies. Seeing the huge overseas audience, the film producers started investing money in scripts that upheld traditional Indian cultural values, which guaranteed a colossal income both in India and abroad. Another strategy that was generally employed by the producers, directors, and scriptwriters was to incorporate a good number of songs that derived folk, regional, or at least 'Indian' elements in terms of content, lyrics, melody and picturization. Some ready examples of movies based in Rajasthan are *Lamhe* and *Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam*.[20]

The Advertising Industry

Ciochetto has rightly suggested that advertising plays a pivotal role at the junction where the economy and culture interact (192). Owing to the proliferation of television and satellite channels during the 1990s, there was also a change in advertising strategies and increased focus on local cultural referents, and a reworking of these cultural values and beliefs to sell consumables to the Indian middle classes as their disposable income levels rose (Ciochetto

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[18] So, this cannot even be called a 'folk song' per se, but, perhaps, 'Rajasthani poetry made to sound like a *folk* song'.

[19] The concept of the song is very similar to Kaushal Bhargav's production *Dhartī Dhorān Rī*, which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

[20] Some songs from these movies are Rajasthani folk songs. They have already been discussed in the preceding chapter. Moreover, some other songs from different movies which derive their lyrics melody, or both from Rajasthani folk songs have also been already dealt with in the previous chapter.

192). He adds that this trend had a parallel in the localised and hybrid television programming, which was customised for a local market (196).[21]

Dorson calls mass media, especially electronic media "omnivorous", because it absorbs and engulfs all kinds of folk themes and formulas, to spew them out to their giant audiences in a cultural feedback (41). Ramanathan has brilliantly put forward a similar idea in a broader framework or art and creativity. She observes:

> The power of cultural and creative expressions has been skilfully hijacked and exploited by commercial superpowers to sell themselves successfully. As Simon Evans . . . says, "Companies like Nike and Coca-Cola do not manage factories, they manage narratives. And the language that they use is not analytic and impersonal, but intuitive and aesthetic. It is the language of the storyteller, the entertainer, the artist." (12)

The global marketing of commodities is increasingly sensitive to regional variations and tailoring advertising accordingly (Dasgupta 160). Nowhere is this strategy more apparent than in the case of the advertising industry. In fact, the recourse to folk culture for advertising is associated with going back to the past, to the cultural history of a community or group, refashioning it, and making use of the past through folk themes and folk music to give rise to potential customers, the consuming public. This reminds one of Raymond Williams's concept of the residual cultural element, which is "usually at some distance from the effective dominant culture, but some part of it . . . and especially if the residue is from some major area of the past—will in most cases have had to be incorporated if the effective dominant culture is to make sense in these areas" (123). If we are to borrow from Williams's terminology, folk songs and music can be considered as residual cultural elements, which have to be appropriated in contemporary musical culture so that the dominant musical culture appeals to people.

Berger also observes that the power of the human voice is well known—when this is added to strong narratives, music, sound effects, and superb writing, it is easy to see why the commercial is such an incredible means of persuasion (62). In so suggesting, one does not

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[21] A study commission by DD in 1992 showed that a striking 80 percent of urban viewers of cable and satellite channels were affluent and well-educated, with disposable incomes much prized by the emerging international players on the consumer market (Dasgupta 148). Sevanti Ninan points out that between 1993 and 1994, with a greater number of urban middle class residents turning into investors and consumers, advertising in the categories of consumer goods and investment services skyrocketed (qtd. in Dasgupta 148-49). Thus, these figures show that with the coming of satellite television, there was a corresponding, and almost immediate boom in the advertising sector also. Although the data I have provided here is very old, it is, nevertheless, very useful for analyzing the general effect of satellite television on the advertisement industry and the importance of the study of television viewership for advertising strategists.

wish to convey that sound or music is the only way of advertising one's products, but definitely the most potent of strategies, because music has a particular resonance that gets the message across faster and more effectively. Cook affirms this when he sees television commercials as a massive experiment into musical meaning; he observes that advertisers use music to communicate meanings that would take too long to put into words, or that would carry no conviction in them (3). He calls the advertisers "the masters of hidden persuasion in today's society". He cites an example to drive home the point:

> [M]usic in a commercial speaks to each listener/viewer personally and confidentially, playing on unspoken values of authenticity and self-identity, whispering its message [in, and through the ears of the audience, thus persuading him to buy the product advertised]. As it does so, it effaces its own agency; you hear the advertiser's message, but you don't realize how much of it is coming from the music. In this way music naturalizes the message, make it seem that . . . it is just 'the way things are' (Cook 128).

This can be discerned in the fact that generally, signature tunes of products and snippets of folk melody used in commercials or title tracks of television serials stay with us more than any other form of music. From the focus area of this research, one can take, for example, the signature song "Halla Bol" of Shilpa Shetty's IPL team Rajasthan Royals for the year 2009, which uses a pepped up variation of Rajasthani folk instrumental music and lyrics, and the title track "Choti Si Umar" of the television soap *Balika Vadhu*,[22] or the snippets of Rajasthani folk instrumental music used in the title track of the TV serial *Diya Aur Baati*.[23] Hence, we detect that television becomes crucial for the successful penetration of the Indian Consumer market, for the propagation of the ideology of consumerism (Dasgupta 150).

Appadurai's observations about the advertising industry also come in handy to understand this complex dialectic. Appadurai has rightly observed that rummaging through history has become a standard technique of advertising, especially of visual and electronic ads, as a way to draw on the genuine nostalgia of age-groups for past they actually know through other experiences (*Modernity* 78). He suggests that this entire conundrum can be seen as a set of practices that involves a new relationship between wanting, remembering,

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[22] I believe title tracks are tactics of producers to sell their own television programs better. It is because of this assumption that I have considered title tracks as forming a crucial part of the advertising industry.

[23] A noteworthy change in the kind of borrowing from Rajasthani folk music can be seen in the case of the anthem song of Rajasthan Royals and the title track of the TV soap *Diya Aur Baati Hum.* Both these songs use snippets of folk instrumental music from Rajasthan, which, I believe, leads to the preservation of and awareness about folk instruments from the state, which are constantly on the wane, as the traditional, specialized makers of folk instruments are no longer alive or are giving up the practice of making folk instruments (Kuldeep Kothari, Personal Interview).

being and buying (84). The targeting of "cultural difference" and "the invention of tradition" in the discourse of advertising and programming is a sure-shot way to winning the audience (Dasgupta 158). I believe it especially holds true for the advertisers who mainly target the north Indian belt for selling their products, as most people in North India, even if they are not connected to Rajasthan, have some impression of it as the royal and exotic land, a land of rich cultural heritage of the past.

This matrix of the interconnected use of 'past', as well as 'folk music and arts' is helpful in understanding how folk songs and music, combined as it is with 'nostalgia', is put to use by the ad-world. Advertisements are designed to attract the attention of a large number of people with suitable demographics and the proper psychographics to some product service (Berger 58).

Ruminating about Rajasthani folk music and folk arts, Komalda confesses to being concerned about whether or not the originality of folk arts will be hurt, about whether their capacity of being carried across generations maintained or destroyed if they are used for advertising. While admitting there can be no simplistic answer to this, he writes, "[I]t is my strong belief that if these folk arts are used for commercial purposes, some of them will definitely vanish forever. But at the same time, running away from any social responsibility was also not acceptable" (*Traditional Communication*, 202). Yet, he maintains that "social, educational and religious messages cannot be better conveyed than folk tales, music songs etc . . . folk songs certainly can be used as messenger to convey new messages. Both their poetry and music parts can be made very attractive and decorative to have the desired effects on the target audience" (sic) (202-03).

One can find a ready illustration for what Komalda maintains in the use of Rajasthani puppet show and folk music by the lead character Sandhya Rathi in the TV soap *Diya Aur Baati Hum* (aired on Star Plus) to educate the villagefolk about the importance of cleanliness hygiene. She organizes a puppet show with the melody of a Kalbelia folk song, "Kalyo Kood Pado" in the serial to enlighten the people of her village about the fact that people could be prone to diseases for lack of hygiene, and an immediate change in the mindset of the people is shown in the same episode of the serial, thus driving home Komalda's point that use of folk

arts and folk music used for the purpose of advertising[24] have the ability to get the message across to the people.

Komalda clarifies further why the folk arts have such an effect on the masses, especially if used in advertising. He writes:

> These traditional modes are important because they are directly linked to the spoken and body language which a human being uses with another for all possible human interaction. Each and every word, sentence, and even a letter of a language can be meaningfully utilized if they are understood with reference to their environment and historical background. Specially rural India which is endowed only with spoken literature not with written literature, the traditional modes of communication will definitely prove to be very effective media (sic). (*Traditional Communication*, 204)

But at the same time, Komalda maintains that one should be careful of one thing, that he creator and singer of the song should be the person who belongs to the local community[,] otherwise it will not have the desired impact over the target audience, while also warning that it will be a challenge before the advertisers to mold these traditional modes according to whether they are used in print media or audio-visual media (*Traditional Communication* 203-04). Ramanathan voices a similar concern. She notices that "[a] new hierarchy has been created by the corporate giants and the dominant commercial forces, who appropriate and exploit human creativity, intellectual property of the less advantaged and generate a business sector that excludes the very sources of its business" (Ramanathan 12).

Thus, this is an area that we need to negotiate before hailing the advertising industry as another medium where folk songs and folk music (especially, but not only Rajasthani) find a new life, because most of the times, there is little or no benefit that is meted out to the folk performers and their musical calibre.

On this note, one can now enter into the arena of tourism, primarily the tourism industry in Rajasthan and its appropriation of Rajasthani folk songs and music to promote its ends.

Selling Out the Exotic: Rajasthani Folk Music in the Tourism Industry in Rajasthan

According to Chaney, tourism is a sophisticated mode of consumerism (165). "Mass tourism," writes Gonsalves, "is one of the few economic enterprises that dictate that

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[24] For educational or commercial purposes, or in the given instance, for both (even though the latter intention perhaps overrides the former).

consumption take place on-site, bringing consumers and producers face to face in hitherto unprecedented ways, and alongside transformed conventional notions of the marketplace" (329).

Appadurai and Breckenridge observe that in India, domestic travel and museums are now important parts of a generalized, mass-media- provoked preoccupation with heritage and with a richly visual approach to spectacles (9). They add that while tourism may be a relatively recent form, it is not obvious when and how the transition from pilgrimage to tourism may have occurred (14).

Four decades ago, tourism in Rajasthan was a small industry that was largely confined to the elite foreign tourists and domestic pilgrim traffic (*Study of 20 Year Perspective*). Tourism has become a big industry in Rajasthan, and the state has been visually rendered in 'panoramic' ways in media (Bharucha 284). Kalia notes:

> The richness and diversity of this culture creates natural infrastructure for tourism promotion and development. Rajasthan is fortunate to have rich treasure of natural beauty, flora and fauna, accompanied by places of religious, historical and [a]rchaeological importance. In a nutshell, except sea shores and snow peaks, the state is endowed with everything which may attract a tourist (19).[25]

In fact, one of the secondary texts that I consulted in the study, Kishore Singh's *Golden Rajasthan*, is a text with lots of photographs and details about the culture of the state of Rajasthan. It is almost as if it was conceived as a tourist guide book in a much more sophisticated language and awe-inspiring photographs, a combination which will, almost inevitably, is sure to arouse in the reader, a strong desire to visit the mesmerising "[f]orts and [p]alaces" of the desert, be a proud owner of the "crafts" or a participant in the "celebrations", immerse in the folk music, "[r]ituals and [c]ustoms"; in a nutshell, to romance "[t]he romance of Rajasthan".[26]

It is Rajasthan, and, in a broader context, India, which is up for 'viewing' or 'sale', through its heritage and culture, art and music, in the consumerist and tourist oriented markets. This tendency comes to stand for something that almost becomes synonymous with

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[25] Citing this as reason the reason behind the exceptionally high number of tourist footfalls in Rajasthan, Kalia particularly classifies the various tourist destinations of Rajasthan (and presents an itinerary of sorts, with brief descriptions) into hill resorts, centres of wildlife and natural splendour, historical centres, archaeological sites, religious centres, recreational centres, tourist circuits,[25] and important cities of Rajasthan.

[26] The quotations are all chapter headings of K. Singh's book, with the exception of the chapter 'Crafts and Celebrations', which has been broken up into 'crafts' and 'celebrations' above.

"an Indian experience that is both 'authentic' and 'original.'" It is sold as the 'exotic', as something that "charms" and "fascinates".

Cultural or historical value, their 'contextualization', promotes cultural artefacts to the status of intangible and tangible traditions and heritage. The harnessing of the cultural resources of the past has become a standard technique for the tourism industry, and it cannot be better illustrated than by taking the example of the tourism industry in Rajasthan. The royal background of Rajasthan is used to attract tourists from all over the world. Rajasthan, which is probably the most representative state of Rajput culture, is showcased to promote the tourism industry, in addition to the stunning architecture, living traditions, the colourful fairs and festivals, handicrafts etc. But at the same time, there is no denying the fact that Rajasthani folk music is something that pervades and encompasses almost all of these symbols of heritage and cultural artefacts in Rajasthan.

The earliest inhabitants of this part of western India were tribes who settled in a few fertile tracts, and groups of nomads who travelled with their herds from one oasis to another (K. Singh 11). The first reference to Rajasthan as the abode of the rulers occurs in the Rajasthan stone inscriptions of 625 A.D. About 1200 years later in the two works of the eighteenth century, *Muhnot Nenasi ki Khyat* and *Veer Bhan's Rajroopak*, the same name occurs. In the colonial period the term Rajputana replaced Rajasthan and was applied to "that part of the country where Rajput rulers lived" by Colomel James Tod in *The Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (1820). Tod glorified and romanticised the Rajput rulers and their country, Rajputana. After independence, there was a backlash against the colonial notion of Rajputana which was replaced by the old, historical and comprehensive notion of Rajasthan. The state of Rajasthan, in a territorial and political sense, took shape during the period from 1948 to 1956, when various princely states, first organized into unions and territories, were consolidated into present day Rajasthan (K.S. Singh, Foreword, Part 1: xvi).

Much of Rajasthan's past now lies in museums, in palace hotels, and in its continuing traditions of fine craftsmanship (K. Singh16). Palaces are now hotels and for a price, visitors may have the pleasure of not only staying in palaces, but also meeting the former maharajas and their families (K. Singh 17). Hardgrove discusses how the broader context of the romanticisation of princely Rajasthan serves to incorporate the merchant *havelis* in a new socio-economic universe of cultural tourism (353). She also notes that the Indian government changed its policy on tourism in 1991 by starting the Heritage Hotel scheme, providing loans

and tax breaks to the owners of at least 50 year-old buildings such as forts, castles, hunting lodges and mansions that are being developed for tourism (358). The website *Heritagehotels.com* lists Rajasthan as "The Heritage State", also informing that this state has the maximum number of heritage hotels in India.

In fact, tweeking Hardgrove's argument, one can advance that the promotion of tourism in Rajasthan capitalizes on the romantic Orientalist, and princely stereotypes of Rajasthan inspired by colonial ethnographers such as Colonel Tod who sought to promote Rajasthan as an exotic land of the desert, of breathtaking forts, and ancestral mansions, a process which continues till date with the Heritage Hotel Scheme, government and private agencies offering 'princely tours', and promotion of other cultural nuances specific to Rajasthan (356-58). This almost invariably transforms the tourism industry in Rajasthan from being 'just another' example of tourism in India to 'heritage tourism'.

The opening page of the official website of Rajasthan asks the visitors to choose from seven languages, five of which are foreign languages, with only Hindi featuring as the only Indian language. This provides enough evidence for the fact that the website has been primarily designed to provide ease of access to foreign tourists as well as to cater to a largely Hindi-speaking belt of India. Moreover, the website is a regularly updated one, also a very detailed and graphic one, with information about package tours, wildlife and adventure, places to visit, handicrafts, folk festivals, music festivals, desert festivals etc. Also, the website has a lot of videos of folk performances of Rajasthan to give a glimpse into the musical life and culture of Rajasthan. Interestingly enough, the first column in the category "About Rajasthan" is "Music and Dance". This nuance, coupled with the fact that on a visit to the state, one cannot have not experienced the folk musical culture of Rajasthan, because it is something which is invariably served on a visitor or tourist's platter.[27] Even local travel and tour agencies, travel blogs, TV shows—all these agencies of promoting tourism in India especially focus on Rajasthan as a must-visit tourist destination, and try to give the potential customers or visitors on their website an audio-visual treat by providing a glimpse or taste of the folk music and folk dance of Rajasthan as a vital constituent of the rich heritage and

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[27] On a visit to Rajasthan as a tourist in Dec. 2010, I stayed at a resort in Khuri village in Jaisalmer, which is situated in the heart of the Thar desert. The resort offered a package to all tourists which included a camel safari to the desert to experience sunset, a musical evening with some 'folk' performances which ended in the DJ being played and even the 'folk' artists dancing to hit Bollywood numbers, 'generic' evening snacks and Rajasthani delicacies for dinner, stay in a beautifully-engineered tent in the desert, and the 'not so Rajasthani after all' morning breakfast. Interestingly enough, there were around a hundred resorts in this small village itself, and all the resorts had similar programmes to offer, as well as their own folk artists.

culture of Rajasthan, thus trying to lure the potential customers into becoming actual customers.

The tourism department of the government of Rajasthan, as well as various other private institutions which claim to 'preserve' the heritage of Rajasthan, re-create the colourful festivals of Rajasthan, and there is a lot of hype and hoopla around these 'traditional' fairs to attract more and more tourists. The folk music of Rajasthan is used as a tool to enhance the experience of these fairs and festivals, especially, if not only for the tourists. Most of these celebrations display the various hues of Rajasthan in terms of its folk music, folk dance, folk arts—in general, the folk culture of Rajasthan. Schechner, in this regard, has rightly observed that "[a]lmost everywhere in the world, 'folk performance' has become, or is becoming 'tourist performance'" (273, author's capitalization deleted). He clarifies his assertion:

> If an event is in any way out of the ordinary, distinctly local, colourful (that is, different); and if it has a definable schedule and reasonably limited place of performance it becomes fair game for the tourist industry. This industry does not, as some fear, simply prey on local events, corrupting and transforming them forever. Often local people are involved in the tourist promotion . . . And as tourist performance becomes its own genre, the whole category 'folk performance' is thrown into doubt. If by 'folk performance' is meant events that originate within and are controlled by local people, expressing their beliefs and practices, then a diminishing number of these exist each year. And those that continue to exist become raw material for the tourist industry, local, national, and international. (273-74).

The emphasis is on the element of "folk", which all such institutions and agencies seek to encash. The official website of Rajasthan tourism alone lists some fifty shows, fairs and festivals, prominent among them being the Desert Festival held in Jaisalmer, the Braj Mahotsav held around Holi in Bharatpur, the Marwar Festival of Jodhpur, the Winter Festival at Mt. Abu, not to forget the hugely popular Rajasthan International Folk Festival (RIFF),[28] which is jointly organized by the TAJ Group, the Mehrangarh Museum Trust,[29] Jaipur Virasat Foundation, and UNESCO. Majumder has discussed the basic agenda of RIFF:

> For five days in October each year, . . . RIFF brings together prominent musicians and performing artists from around India and the world to Jodhpur, so that they may perform on their own, as well as collaborate with the best folk artists from Rajasthan, thereby creating

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[28] RIFF is organized at Mehrangarh Fort, one of Rajasthan's three great hilltop forts which is located in Jodhpur, the erstwhile capital of the state of Marwar.

[29] One of the organizers of the event, the Maharaja Gaj Singh II of Jodhpur believes: "We have to find the right place for these traditional musicians. They have talent. They have great skills which can be placed side by side with some of the best in the world" (*The Lost Music of Rajasthan*).

"musical magic".[30] This has been made possible by the Jaipur Virasat Foundation, founded in 2002, through many years of talent scouting, documenting thousands of Rajasthani folk performance groups, supporting rural performing arts festivals in Rajasthan, work-shopping the artists, all the while being cued in to the larger Indian and international music scene to be able to engage the best collaborators (Majumder 4).

While the focus on "fusion" and "the larger Indian and international music scene" does not escape one's attention, Majumder has, at the same time, rightly suggested that "for the Rajasthani folk performer, struggling to survive, such collaborations translate into the marketability of their music to a modern audience, and an immediate earning through performances outside of RIFF and, sometimes, through CD sales, sometimes also creating a new interest for their music in Rajasthan itself" (4). The logic of John Singh also testifies to this: "It is a living heritage, and if the people have lost their songs, then that living heritage would die, and so, I wasn't interested at all in conservation or archiving".[31] He adds, "If they can't earn their livelihood and if they can't get self-dignity, then their children are never going to adopt it and if they don't, then it's gone" (*The Lost Music of Rajasthan*).

It is almost as if the cultural identity of Rajasthan comes alive through these folk festivals, which have been recently added to the long list of tourist attractions in Rajasthan. Moreover, Gonsalves's observation that "[p]ractically, everything and anything that can be sold to tourists is up for sale, as long as it wrings in the moolah" (330)[32] can be seen as coming true in such endeavours. The concern is with bringing home the bacon, and no stone is left unturned for the same, at least not in the tourism industry.

However, it is indeed worrisome that while tourism has encouraged the rebirth of forgotten arts and crafts, these are often mass-produced by factory workers who have no inherent emotional connection with them (Gonsalves 331-32). Arguably though, one might

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[30] This effort is seen as a step towards promoting "music tourism" by a leading travel magazine (see the article by Jha on the website of RIFF). It is estimated that the audience for RIFF comprises almost an equal number of locales, people from the rest of India, and people from the west (*The Lost Music of Rajasthan*).

[31] Even if one were to overlook this vision, what about the fact that most of the times, the folk musicians and performers are expected to present the most popular of their 'folk' repertoire at such conglomerations? Kuldeep Kothari opines that these folk singers and performers should be encouraged to sing other songs from their repertoire, so that the lesser known songs do not just die out (Personal Interview).

[32] Interestingly, a lot of words of the Kathuria tribe which performed at RIFF were Marathi, but they are represented as Rajasthani folk artists (Interview with Roop Lal, head of the group of 15 Kathuria folk artists performing at RIFF). The assumption must have been that since they have settled in Rajasthan long back, they are Rajasthani. But what about the language games? Had anyone noticed that the language did not resemble Rajasthani except a few scattered Rajasthani words in their songs? Even I would have safely assumed that this is a tribal dialect of Rajasthani that I do not recognize, and would never have deciphered this had I not interviewed Roop Lal. Isn't this a case of an appropriation of everything at one's disposal?

contend that this is not so much the case when it comes to the folk performers who still have strong emotional links with their intangible musical heritage, but one might comply with what Gonsalves says, at least to some extent, when one takes into consideration the case of Rajasthani cassette manufacturing giants like Veena Music, a large share of whose market thrives on cover versions of Rajasthani folk songs; and charitable trusts run by corporate players,[33] like Jaipur Virasat Foundation, which, although working for the "conservation of tangible and intangible heritage", lays greater emphasis on innovations and fusion,[34] selling heavily priced entry tickets to the events and festivals that they organize months before the actual festival, with such lucrative offers as the relatively cheaper "early bird donor passes" (for all the events) only valid for early bookings, and slightly more expensive tickets if one wishes to book entry tickets some fifteen days in advance. Despite these facts about the 'economic' aspect of RIFF, the brighter side of the festival is that it has proved that there are plenty of traditional acts which can pull the crowds (*The Lost Music of Rajasthan*).

However, Komalda has never favoured any kind of 'fusion' experimentation between Rajasthani folk music and musicians representing 'world music' or 'New Age' music. The focus has always been on representing the traditional repertoire[35] (Bharucha 251, author's emphasis deleted. From the kind of approach adopted by the organizers of RIFF, one can gather that one of the tricks of the trade is to showcase continuity and change, tradition and modernity, in the same lens. Chaney identifies the same trend: "Modern mass tourism is based on two seemingly contradictory tendencies: the international homogenization of the

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[33] While fully aware of the connotation, the oxymoron is best suited to refer to organizations which under the semblance of "work[ing] with and for traditional artists in Rajasthan", actually mint money through festivals like Jaipur Heritage International Festival, Rajasthan International Folk Festival (RIFF), Jaipur Literature Festival, and other Regional Festivals. What really gives one food for thought is the fact that the artists do not come to share the profits as much as they deserve to, and, ironically enough, look forward to such events and festivals as opportunities to earn some money to supplant the meagre income from subsistence farming or other occupations that they are engaged in.

[34] One might be inclined to think who hogs the limelight in such cases of innovation—Rajasthani folk artists or the foreign artists and bands that they team up with during festivals like RIFF, which bring the two disparate set of artists on the same stage. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, the problem lies in the fact that the people behind such organizations, do not seem to believe in the continuation of the folk musical traditions in their own right but in collaborations with other musicians from India and abroad. For example, John Singh, the founder trustee of Jaipur Virasat Foundation, admits in *The Lost Music of Rajasthan* that "it is not about preservation".

[35] This contrasts with what Maloo claimed in a telephone interview. According to him, before the coming of Veena Music, there were different versions of the same song circulating in Rajasthan and across the country. After Veena, similar music and similar culture came into existence, the Veena version of the Rajasthani folk song came to be known as the standard version of the song. Now, this, by the standard to Komalda is unwelcome, because the local specificities in Rajasthani folk songs is something that should be welcomed, rather than trying to homogenize the different folk versions of a song as "the folk version".

culture of the tourists and the artificial preservation of local ethnic groups and attractions so that they can be consumed as tourist experiences" (qtd. in Chaney 164).

Generally, we may chance upon such cases where folk songs are deployed to garner up an aura of authenticity around the latter tendency, which we can easily discerned in the case of Rajasthani folk songs (especially the good old "Kesariya Balam Avo Ni, Padharo Mhare Des", "Ghoomar", "Gorband", "Kalyo Kood Pado", and "Nimbuda", to name a few), which are not only put to perennial, repeated use by the organized as well as unorganized tourism industry of Rajasthan,[36] but also by the Indian tourism industry in general. An example which deserves a mention in this regard is the entire conglomeration at the Rashtrapati Bhavan humming the tunes of "Kesariya Balam", the classic welcome song at the banquet hosted in honour of US President Barack Obama and his wife Michelle Obama who were on a state visit in India in November 2010. This song is a special case of a Rajasthani folk song which has come to acquire the significance of an Indian welcome song, thanks to Rajasthan Tourism, which has used the song as a welcome song, especially for tourists, both Indian and foreign.[37] Another trend which testifies to this is the fact that any folk festival, or cultural evening organized in India, especially in North India, has to, as a matter of fact, have at least one performance by the folk artists and musicians of Rajasthan.[38]

A case which I would like to bring up again here is "Dharti Dhoran Ri". For NRIs, foreigners, tourists, it serves as a song and video which can really draw them to the land to explore its land and splendour, myriad hues, and vibrant culture. One can find, in the video of the song, the depiction of the land in all its beauty and magnanimity, forts and palaces, places of worship, sand dunes as well as 'greenery' is intended to promote the land as a 'must-come' place on the map of India, giving a glimpse of the architectural masterpieces of places like Chittorgarh, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, Udaipur and many more places in Rajasthan. In fact, two lines in the song "Aa to surgan ne sarmave, be par dev raman ne aave" means 'this land mortifies the heavens, even the gods themselves come to visit that land' (Maloo, *Colourful Music*, my translation).

[36] Taking a look at the various brochures of Rajasthan tourism, or websites of travel and tour agencies will reveal that in addition to the pictures of forts and palaces which are generally find a place in these brochures and websites, pictures of folk singers, dancers, artists and performers is also flaunted to depict the 'lived' or 'living' culture of Rajasthan.

[37] The song was the first song that was performed by the 'folk' artists at the resort in which I stayed in Jaisalmer in Dec. 2010.

[38] An example in this regard is the recent cultural evening organized at Dilli Haat on 15 June 2012, which featured a folk performance from Rajasthan.

However, an example of the decontextualization that is brought about by the tourism industry is the 'Teratali' song and dance performance. During the 'Teratali' dance, women performers sit in front of an image of the deity Ramdeoji, and perform intricate movements to the pulse of thirteen cymbals (K. Singh 60), while the men in the group sing hymns in praise of the deity. But these days, it has mostly become devoid of its religious association and is performed privately, unlike *Pabuji Kī Phaḍ*, which is so ritualised that as of yet, no one has 'dared' to decontextualized the four-night long epic tale of sacred music, believed to have the powers of healing, and the performers of this epic are mostly called upon by fairly traditional people.

The discussion about the tourism industry in Rajasthan can go on, but one has to now move on to a discussion of the rise of the new media and its impact on the transmission of Rajasthani folk songs and music in popular culture.

The New Media and the Dissemination of Rajasthani Folk Music in Popular Culture

Before getting to "new media", one must take into account the effect of media and how "mass media" revolutionized leisure, communication, and people's understanding of and the meaning of culture in general.

Appadurai and Breckenridge point to the heterogeneity of the cultural forms generated by the spread of media (15). It is, by now, a given that there exists a "symbiotic relationship" between technology and culture (Jones 201). Writing about the change that media brought to the meaning of the past and communication in the lives of people, Thompson explains:

> Prior to the development of the media, most people's . . . sense of the past, of the world beyond their immediate locales, and of the socially delimited communities to which they belonged, was constituted primarily by oral traditions that were produced and reproduced in the social contexts of everyday life. With the development of the media, however, individuals were able to experience events, observe others and, in general, learn about worlds – both real and imaginary – that extended well beyond the sphere of their day-to-day encounters. They were increasingly drawn into networks of communication and forms of interaction that were not face-to-face in character (95-96).

The most important categories that we can cull out from Thompson's argument are a "sense of the past", "the world", "communities", and "communication", and how all these categories were revolutionized by the development of media. These are precisely the very same

categories that become important to the discussion at hand.[39] All these categories also tie up with folk music and arts, and how the evolution of media brought about significant changes in the conception and transmission of these arts.

Berger goes a step ahead to explain the term "mass media" and its role in the shaping and circulation of popular arts (and, by extension, popular music), drawing our attention to the indispensability of the latter to our everyday life:

> As I use the term, the *mass media* carry or spread or broadcast various popular arts and the media and the popular arts play a major role in shaping our everyday lives. The media and the popular arts have become, for many people, the content of our leisure hours: we watch television four hours a day, listen to the radio driving to and from work, listen to recorded music . . . We can tie the mass media and popular culture together into something called media-culture, which covers both the media and the art works or texts they carry. (4, emphasis in original)

Jones draws our attention to "technology transitions, the moments when we first encounter old and new media together in everyday life" (201). Old media have always adapted to new technologies (Wolf 276). Jones insists that old and new media rarely clash directly—in fact, they coexist. They adapt—the new often adapting to the old, or vice-versa, and culture adapts alongside and with them (201). To date, the Internet has affected the traditional media by opening up a new form of distribution rather than by threatening the core product or business itself (Wolf 278). New media technologies present the 'past' as the 'present'. This is discernible in such examples as use of PCs as TVs or of YouTube broadcasting episodes of television serials, movies, personal performances or videos uploaded by random people. Thus, digital technology is uncoupling entertainment products from any specific medium and making them portable across multiple platforms (Wolf 92).

In fact, Wolf takes McLuhan's famed dictum a step further by insisting that the message is now independent of the medium (92). Along a similar line of argument, Hartley, writing about the new avatar of television, observes the following shift in the technology used and the increased accessibility of television for people across the globe:

> What counts as television is diversifying – across technology, mode of production, viewing experience, programming, production base, and geography. It has come to include non-broadcasting technologies like DVDs; can be viewed on YouTube and mobile devices like phones and iPods; and . . . has become personalized and portable. Most importantly, it has spatially diversified from its origins in national and city-based communications systems to

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[39] However, the notion of "community" becomes an important category for discussion in the next chapter.

overlapping personalized or social networks that may be next door or global. Migrants, taste constituencies, communities of interest (around identities [and]. . . pastimes), and enterprising creatives can exploit the 'long-tail' characteristics of the internet to find content or an audience from anywhere (118-19).

Thus, Stratton has rightly pointed out that "[t]he terrain of cyberspace is fundamentally deterritorialized" (723). This is one of the several reasons why the Internet and other new media provide seemingly endless choices and freedoms (Jones 203). Ciochetto observes that the latest marketing frontier is the internet (195). Manuel Castells finds an intrinsic connection between culture, communication, and technology. According to Castells, since "culture is mediated and enacted through communication", new technological systems have the power to transform cultures, because technology leads to fundamental advancements in communication and interactivity (357).

While for McLuhan, "the medium is[/was] the message", Castells insists that "because of the diversity of media and the possibility of targeting the audience, we can say that in the new media system, the message is the medium. That is, the characteristics of the message will shape the characteristics of the medium" (268). This difference in the opinions of McLuhan and Castells can be credited to the fact that "the McLuhan Galaxy was a world of one-way communication, not of interaction", while Castells recognized that "the culture of the Information Age . . . [requires] processing [that] goes far beyond one-way communication . . . [and that] the audience speak up" (370-71).

Even tourism promotion has particularly accelerated with the growth of the new media, which provide strategies to rework cultural values and beliefs. The growing number of travel and tour agencies offering packages online serves as an example of the same. One can now practically plan every detail of one's tour in advance, thanks to the new media and technology which is making it possible, more so in the case of Rajasthan.

The study of the new media becomes important in lieu of the fact that the new media have combined with the forces of the market to create a readily saleable Rajasthani culture, primarily through the 'marketing' of Rajasthani folk songs and music in popular culture, which is discussed at length below. But before that, one should stop to examine a very crucial aspect of the relationship between the new media and the compulsions of the market: the problem of piracy.

The Menace of Piracy

An anti-social and unethical practice at the intersection of the music industry, the new media, the logic of the market, and, partly, the tourism industry, is the mushrooming of gangs which sell pirated versions of cassettes and CDs, especially targeting the 'unaware' tourist. In a telephone interview, K.C. Maloo notes that ninety percent of the music sold in the markets of Rajasthan is pirated. Out of interest in Rajasthani folk music, I bought some really inexpensive pirated CDs from a small shop in Khatu, Sikar district, long before I started work on this topic.[40] I realized that they were pirated CDs only when I ordered some CDs from Bharati Cassette Udyog, Jaipur (which cost me a whopping six times of the price of the earlier 'authentic' CDs!). I realized that I had unself-consciously become a victim of piracy, or rather a pawn in the hand of the local companies/individuals selling pirated CDs. The irony of the situation was heightened by the fact that three out of the four claimed to be 'Veena Ki Original MP3' (Original MP3 of Veena Cassettes).

This revelation about the piracy of the CDs removed the clouds of doubt that were cast over my mind, as to the reason behind the inclusion of such lewd songs as "Tu Hariyane Ki Hoor", "Chori Mane Kare Ishara", and "Naal Ho Gaya Ishq" in a few pirated CDs that I happened to buy as an 'unaware tourist' in Rajasthan in the December of 2010. These songs struck me when I was listening to the CDs for the present research, because they were Haryanvi or Punjabi songs with a titillating content, probably to draw the audience from the lower rung of the society in the neighbouring states or state borders (for instance, bus and truck drivers, waiters etc.) who would generally go for such songs as well as the low rates at which such CDs are sold.

Also, some songs that feature in *Rangilo Rajasthan* like "Kaanta Chubha", "Laal Dupatta", "Naal Ho Gaya Ishq", "Chori Manai Karai Ishara", "Tu Hariyane Ki Hoor", are produced especially to pander to the taste of those who see music as a form of pure (and sometimes base form of entertainment). Such songs sound very Filmi (to the extent that one might be inclined to think that such songs borrow their melody from Hindi Film songs), have a lot of Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, and non-Rajasthani words, have a loud rhythm, with a lot of orchestra that is used in place of folk instruments or a mix of folk and modern instruments,

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[40] The four CDs that I thought were great collections of representative Rajasthani songs are *Rangilo Rajasthan: Naye Rajasthani Nritya Geet*, *Dharti Dhoran Ri: Lokpriya Rajasthani Nritya Geet*, *Kabootar Ja Sajan Re Des: Masti Bhare Rajasthani Geet*, and *Chand Chadyo Gignaar: Paaramparik Rajasthani Geet*, all pirated copies of Veena productions, released between the years 2005-08.

with a lot of double entendre, sexual innuendos, sometimes almost bordering on the lewd. In fact, the song "Naal Ho Gaya Ishq" is particularly worthy of attention because it begins with a Rajasthani verse and then the entire song is composed in Punjabi, with a few Rajasthani words strewn here and there throughout the song. It is a blatant example of a 'hybrid' song, with a lot of film melody and Sufi music played in between the song.

However, this does not rule out the fact that such songs have started making their appearance in Rajasthan also. Komalda identifies an unwelcome trend—the growing popularity of obscene songs, which draw heavily on the folk repertoire. Not only are the melodies and lyrics of these songs appropriated, they also draw on familiar social customs and practices conducted during marriage ceremonies, like riddles, for instance. These songs play with double meanings, puns, and sexual innuendo (Bharucha 285).

Nonetheless, a close examination of these CDs reveals a lot about what sort of music is popular at such nodes of tourist and commercial interests. On first look, one is attracted by the titles and the cover images, which sound and seem 'Rajasthani'.[41] A cursory glance at the playlists of these CDs reveals that they contain some quintessential Rajasthani songs like worldwide favourites ("Kesariya Balam", "Gorband" and "Gangaur"), dance numbers ("Ghoomar", "Kalyo Kood Padyo" and "Pallo Latke"), medley and/or *dandiya* numbers (Odani-1 and Odani-2), songs of *viraha* or longing ("Poorab Ki Naukri", "Supno", "Kabutar Ja Sajan Re Des" and "Mhara Bhanwar Ne Kaagad Likh De"), songs about a peacock/peahen ("Mor Bole Re" and "Sun Baga Ki Morni"), songs of *mehndi* ("Mehndi" and "Mehndi Rachi Mhara Haathaan Mein"), songs where a wife demands goodies from the husband ("Aagre Ko Ghaagro Manga De" and "Pomcho Leta Aai Jyo"), songs where the wife entreats the husband to get the sister-in-law married off or to take her to her maternal home because she is missing her natal home ("Nandi Ko Byav" and "Baaisa Ra Beera" respectively), Songs of Holi ("Aaj Biraj Mein Holi" and "Aayo Phaganiyo") and miscellaneous ("Chaumaso", "Talariya Magariya", "Panihari" and "Podina").[42]

If we look at the factors that govern the choice of songs, they are mostly picked up from earlier Hits recorded and sold by the brand Veena.[43] Moreover, they are chosen on the

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[41] For details of cover images, one can visit *veenamusiconline.com* and scroll down the home page to have a taste of the sensuous, symbolic, and exotic beauty that is invoked by the covers of the cassettes and CDs.

[42] These songs appear in more than one cassette out of the four cassettes being dealt with in this section.

[43] Some albums like *Kuve Par Ekli-1*, *Gorband*, *Ghoomar-1*, *Nakhralo Devariyo*, *Mehndi Rachni*, *Pinghat Ri Panihar*, *Batau, Baga Ki Morni*, and *Leheriyo-2* recorded great success in the market.

basis of relevance of archetypal Rajasthani themes like *viraha*, *morni*, Holi etc. and some others are taken only because they work best as dance and DJ numbers, like "Ghoomar", "Pallo Latke", "Kalyo Kood Padyo", and "Gorband."

This is another flip side of this general demand-supply curve of regional folk songs, which is also nurtured by the very same factors that lead to the electronically-mediated world of globalized regional folk music, sometimes leading to breeding of practices like piracy. Adding to this menace is the increasing influx of tourists to such religious centres and tourist places, where 'innocent' customers are caught unaware, thinking they are getting original music for reasonable prices, sometimes because of lack of time and knowledge about such unsocial activities mushrooming mostly in places of tourist or religious interest. But again, the brighter part of this story is the fact that only because these pirated CDs fit the budget of most middle-class Indian tourists and visitors that regional folk music is even reaching distant corners of the country and the world.

Marketing the Intangible: Selling Rajasthani Folk Music in Popular Culture

The economic growth of India led to a new consumer middle class, ensuring that more and more people have access to cable and satellite television, video, computer, the internet, and watch live concerts (Gokulsing and Dissanayake 8). This change in consumption patterns led to the growth of the idea of the market. This idea of the market can be used to understand how music works as a business. The idea behind the doing brisk business in the field of music is to trace all possible arenas where music can be 'consumed', or 'used', in some form or the other, which includes new ways in which music is being consumed online, appropriated in television soaps and serials, television commercials, 'folk festivals', of course the traditional markets of music notwithstanding.

Dasgupta argues that contrary to popular perception, the people behind the economic forces do care about culture, and the attention to local specificities in programming is an evidence of the fact. Schiller's fear that transnational corporations are "saturating the cultural space of the nation" fails to realize that it is by valorizing "cultural difference" and by altering their media and marketing strategies to the specificities of local audiences that giant media corporations engage in culturalism that is essential to their economic success (161).

Chaney observation ties up with Dasgupta's stand, though also bringing in the concept of the "past" and "tradition" in conceiving the plan of the market by market

strategists: "The reiteration of retrospective themes . . . might suggest that the past has acquired a sacred quality, but, as MacCannell goes on to argue: 'it is still more accurate to read these forms *not* as bearing traditional values, but as specifically designed to appear to bear traditional values, which is a different matter'" (164, author's emphasis deleted).

According to Nandy, consumption is made into a value by "re-engineer[ing]" human beings through a three-step approach:

> The first-step in this process is to isolate or uproot a person from his or her community, traditions and family. In their place, he or she has to be given a large, anonymous quasi-community called the nation, a more manageable set of cultural artefacts called traditions (artefacts that can be consumed in a theatre, gallery, classroom or a tourist resort) and a nuclearized unit called family . . . Simultaneously, an ideological basis has to be laid for consumption . . . To such an individual—lonely, narcissistic and decoupled from community ties—consumption becomes the ultimate value, a guarantor of social belonging and status. He or she compensates for an empty social life by consuming. One is, because one consumes . . . this lonely individual is the basic constituent of all projects of global marketing. (45-46)

We can also take into consideration the advertising industry and how they propagate the culture of consumerism:

> Advertising attempts to create the desire for the purchase of products and services advertised on the part of those . . . listening to radio commercials or watching and listening television commercials. Advertisers hope to convince, to persuade, to motivate and, most importantly, to get people to act, to *do* something. This something generally involves moving from the desire for products and services to actually purchasing the products or services. (Berger 58-59)

This culture of consumerism is further complicated by the trend that Clifford brings to light, that the 'vanishing' status of cultural artefacts is directly proportional to the skyrocketing prices at which one can afford to experience them. What he suggests of the art world holds true of cultural commodities like folk music also. Clifford observes that "[i]n the art world work is recognized as 'important' by connoisseurs and collectors according to criteria that are more than simply artistic . . . Indeed, prevailing definitions of what is 'beautiful' or 'interesting' sometimes change quite rapidly" (sic.) (56-57).

Apparently, Veena Cassettes moved from selling 'folk' to selling 'commercial'. It can be clearly apprehended from its shift from recording folk artists like Samander Khan, Sattar Khan, and Ramzan Khan for the album *Kesariya Banna* (released 1998) to having professional singers like Seema Mishra for most of its later albums, even to sing for an album of all traditional folk songs like *Gorband: Popular Songs of Rajashan* along with Rakesh Kala (released Nov. 2002). But there seems to be another complexity in this seemingly

simple trajectory of earning more profits. The brand has come out with a "Rare Collection of Folk songs and Maand from the hidden treasure: rendered by Maand Maestro Allah Jilai Bai of Bikaner" last year,[44] songs which have been "converted from old live analogue recording", almost in an attempt to draw music lovers and music collectors of folk and rare songs, while also claiming that one can "[e]njoy liveliness without considering quality."[45]

But even then, listening to folk recordings of Rajasthani songs sung by folk singers and performers is a mesmerising experience, almost taking us into a trance, transporting us to a world which can be reached only by way of music; their modern day adaptations and reproductions, even though they are easy to understand,[46] can at best give us a feel of Rajasthani music and Rajasthan per se, but cannot take us on the musical ride. There is a marked difference in the kind of aesthetic delight that Rajasthani folk songs can generate, and the pleasure that Rajasthani folk songs in popular culture can afford. But in both the cases (and possibly others) of Veena producing albums of folk songs, the people from the company did not go about recording folk versions from the folk performers, but instead arranged the songs from different collections of Rajasthani folk from the private collection of individuals (for *Allah Jilai Bai*) and institutions (for *Kesariya Banna*),[47] and is still on the lookout for more such 'folk' collections which could be launched in the music market.

Of late, a notable shift in the sales plan of Veena Music can be seen in the fact that the slogan on its website has changed from "Veena: The Melody of Rajasthan" to "Veena: Presenter of Enchanting Folk Music".[48] So now, boasting of serving as a prism to represent Rajasthan and its melody is not the best plan to sell out its music. Instead, promising to deliver "enchanting folk music" definitely is! Thus, the manufacturer of Rajasthani folk music spreads out to manufacture "folk music". Or is it that the Music Company wants to project 'Rajasthani Folk Music' as 'Folk Music'?

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[44] The cover of the CD has this subscript.

[45] This information and claim are printed behind the CD, near the itinerary of songs.

[46] This may be facilitated by the fact that not only do the modern renderings of Rajasthani folk songs use a lot of Hindi lyrics, but also because the cassettes and CDs come with the lyrics of these songs printed in Hindi and English on the inside covers of these cassettes and CDs (the latter information given by Maloo, Telephone Interview). I also remember having the cassette *Kuve Par Ekli* with the lyrics of the song printed on the inside cover of the cassette.

[47] See bibliography for details.

[48] This is a change that I noticed over the period of roughly a year. The website of Veena displayed the former slogan on May 6, 2011. I noticed the new slogan only on 11 July 2012.

Another example one can one give in this regard is the entire culture of 'folk festivals' being organized in (and sometimes outside Rajasthan) to 'salvage' the folk arts and music which are supposedly 'endangered' or 'dying'.[49] While this may not be altogether unacceptable, one has to bear in mind what Komalda, the person who has been largely responsible for both the nationalization and internationalization of Rajasthani folk music and the popularity of Rajasthani folk music in the international festival circuit, has said in this regard. He is of the view that "one has to keep in mind the trends of the market and the availability of traditional material for different kinds of use" (Bharucha 285).[50] Nontheless, he also maintains:

> [A]nother challenge for folk music in the larger national context has been the modern conditions and contexts of performance. How do we sustain the interest of an audience in the enclosed space of a proscenium theatre auditorium for one-and-a-half hours? And how do we meet—and stretch—the expectations of the sponsors? Today there are many so-called 'cultural programmes' being organized all over India, by . . . tourist departments, radio stations, and so on. Invariably, I ask the sponsors of these programmes: 'What exactly do you mean when you say that you're organizing a 'folk' programme'?[51] (Bharucha 240)

Komalda has been one of pioneering voices among those of several folklorists concerned that the spread of the mass media may homogenize and thereby impoverish the present rich diversity of regional folklore traditions (Manuel 185).

However, the foregoing discussion should not lead one to see the audience as passive receptors of media products, silently consuming whatever is served to them on a platter. The audience has a pivotal role to play in the entire circuit of culture and the market.

The Agency of the Audience

Stokes draws our attention to the fact that discussions of globalization focus heavily on the circulation of commodities and capital. The circulation of people in the context of globalization is either ignored or treated with ambivalence (302). Consumption is an active, creative and productive process, concerned with pleasure, identity and the production of

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[49] One can refer back to the strategy behind 'folk festivals' such as RIFF in this regard.

[50] Seema Mishra admitted in a telephone interview that the tempo of Rajasthani folk songs that she recorded had to be altered at times, generally to render the folk songs into dance numbers as this would ensure more sales figures. As long as there is not much harm done to the original folk versions, this change is not that unacceptable after all.

[51] This is precisely the kind of concern I had when I participated in RIFF as an audience/visitor/tourist/researcher. The question that kept haunting me was how far are such festivals 'folk' with all the paraphernalia, recordings, varied crowd and media coverage? If this is folk, how real is the real 'folk'?

meaning (Storey, *Cultural Studies* 98). The circulation of media content— across different media systems, competing media economies, and national borders—depends heavily on consumers' active participation (Jenkins 3). Thus, the nuance that we sometimes miss out on is that consumption is dependent on the people, and hence the market is not only dependent on, but sometimes governed by the audience.[52]

Jenkins uses the term participatory culture to define the relationship between media producers and media consumers. He maintains that this neologism "contrasts with older notions of passive media spectatorship. Rather than thinking about media produces and consumers as occupying separate roles, we might now see them as participants who interact with each other according to a new set of rules that none of us fully understands" (sic) (Jenkins 3).

The relationship between the meaning of popular cultural texts (read 'popular folk music') and the power of the people (read 'audience') has been outlined by John Fiske, for whom the power ultimately lies with the consumers. In *Reading the Popular* (1989), he acknowledges that while the larger social system provides cultural resources to consumers (and, without doubt, benefits economically from the process of consumption), it is only consumers who can popularize objects or practices:

> Popular texts . . . are completed only when taken up by people and inserted into their everyday culture. The people make popular culture at the interface between everyday life and the consumption of the products of the cultural industries . . . Relevance can be produced only by the people, for only they can know which texts enable them to make the meanings that will function in their everyday lives. (qtd. in Harrington and Bielby 9)

This relationship becomes all the more pronounced in the case of popular musical tastes of the people. Storey observes that "the music industry finds it very difficult to control the musical tastes of consumers. This is because there is always a difference between exchange value ('economic' value) and use value ('cultural' value). The music industry can control the first, but it is consumers who make the second" (*Cultural Studies* 97, author's emphasis deleted).

However, this should not be taken to mean that all the power rests with the audience and that they are the ones who govern the profits made in the market. The relationship between the audience and the market is reciprocal, highly symbiotic, especially when it

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[52] The fact that companies and institutions very often go for market surveys to determine their marketing strategies stands as a testimony to this.

comes to the marketability of music. In the words of Cook, "what there is to hear determines what people want to hear, and what people want to hear determines what there is to hear" (84).

Since both the audience and the preservation of folk musical traditions are important to any given society or State, we need to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that affect them equally and simultaneously. We should not relent and say to ourselves that "never the twain shall meet". We need to shift our attention away from profit making to a more altruistic vision of continuation of folk musical traditions and reorient them in ways that further the meaning-making project of the public. Ramanathan has succinctly pointed this out when she insists that "India . . . needs to *revisit its cultural history with renewed imagination* to rediscover its reservoir of knowledge traditions. And the artist and artist-driven cultural movements must be central to chartering these new pathways not for tourists or for travellers *but for seekers*" (12, emphasis mine). This holds true for Rajasthani folk musical traditions and also for other folk musical traditions of India.

Summing up, one can contend that analysing the contemporary discourses of "difference" in relation to the dynamics of global capitalist expansion and the social economic dimensions of mass media provides one critical site for conceptualizing "global culture" by locating it in relation to specific structures and institutions (Dasgupta 167). Within this matrix, one can locate the complexity of the re-production of cultural objects, the mechanisms of their distribution, and the motives of all the parties involved. We have also discussed how the production, distribution, and consumption systems, which overlap and are mutually interdependent, influence folk music and its re-orientation into popular music.

Studying the effects of globalization, liberalization, mass and electronic mediation, and the new media provides a key understanding of the relationship between social structures, cultural meanings, and psychological orientations. This understanding is enhanced by the fact that the global movements of migrant underclasses are as vital to the creation and transmission of "global" cultures as is the movement of commodities. This is as true in a musical context as it is anywhere else (Stokes 303). Thus, taking cue from Strokes, one can move to a discussion of the "migrant culture" in the next chapter, and read it in terms of the project of identity-building around musical contexts in popular culture.

CHAPTER THREE

MUSICAL IDENTITIES: RAJASTHANI FOLK MUSIC IN POPULAR CULTURE

All talk about culture, folk or popular songs and music, the people involved in the production and dissemination of music and culture and related concepts would cease to assume any worth at all if it were not for the audience, or the receptors/consumers of music and culture. According to Carlson, performance is always performance *for* someone, some audience that recognizes and validates it as performance even when that audience is the self (73). Having already outlined the power of the audience in the circuit of culture, and the indispensible role they play in the rekindling of Rajasthani folk songs and music in popular culture, one can now move on to interrogate the meaning that such cultural transformations and events have for the audience, or, to find out if such cultural and musical events assume any importance for them at all.

The chapter investigates questions like: why do people participate in musical events, what are their motivations, and what significance the events have for them? Do textual, musical, performative, and semantic features coalesce in a musical performance, especially in the case of a musical event which is a part of popular culture? If yes, what is its implication? Does it have anything to do with identity? Or identities? If yes, what sort of identity/ies? In seeking to answer (or at best, only make attempt to try and answer) these questions, which clearly defy singular answers, the different categories of audience that will be considered are the folk performers themselves (the ones performing in popular culture), the organizers, the local Rajasthani audience, the non-resident Rajasthanis, domestic Indian tourists, foreign tourists, diasporic Indian audience, and people from all over the world who experience Rajasthani folk music in popular culture. Certain other categories like past, memory, imagination, home, belonging, place, space, ethnicity, community, media and communication will also be examined along the way, though not necessarily in that order and great detail.

Beginning at the Beginning: The Category/ies of the Audience

We are all participants and performers in the meaning that we seek to elicit from the worlds in which we are densely implicated, as meaning makers, cultural citizens, and fellow travellers (McCarthy et al. xx).

Reception theory assumes that readers come to a text with a "horizon of expectations," all their background characteristics, which include their demographic profile (nation of origin, gender, age, race, sexuality, etc.), their social networks, and personal idiosyncrasies. They read the text against their horizon of expectations. As a result, the meaning they attach to the text will be influenced by their own background. (Alexander 191). Readers belong to, what Fish calls, "interpretive communities", which are groups of people who share similar horizons of expectations. (Alexander 192). The "readers" in Alexander's argument can be replaced with 'audience' to begin our discussion of the various "horizons of expectations" and the "meanings" which audience attach to them.

In the introduction, I have identified the different types of audience of Rajasthani folk music in popular culture. One can, to make matters simple, classify them into broad groups. To begin with, Alexander's categorizations of the audience can come in handy:

> Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998) point out that there are three kinds of audiences: simple, mass, and diffused. A simple audience is physically present at the event, say a play. The art is experienced directly and publicly. A mass audience, as in broadcast television viewers, experiences mediated communication in private setting. Diffuse audiences relate to mediascape in ways that constitute a very different type of "audience-experience" . . . Theorists have developed more sophisticated ways to understand mass and diffuse audiences, as they came into existence through changing technology. (qtd. in Alexander 217)

Alexander details on the process of identity formation and reformation in relationship to "mediascapes" in everyday life. The term *mediascape* refers to the fact that we are surrounded, everyday and all the time, by a host of different types of media. As with the experience within simple and mass audiences, the experiences of people within diffused audiences are shaped by their location within those audiences (217).

So, if we take into consideration the categories outlined by Alexander, we can club the folk performers, the organizers, the local Rajasthani audience, and tourists (both domestic and foreigners) under the first category, that is, they are all simple audience experiencing the event in time and space since they are physically present at the venue. In the second category, that is, in the category of the mass audience fall the non-resident Rajasthani people and the diasporic Indian population. In the third category, we can place the audiences which, because of the influence of new media, experience Rajasthani folk songs and music in popular culture. So, in the third category can be placed the audience who come into touch with Rajasthani folk songs and music on the internet—on YouTube, blogs about Rajasthani culture (or other blogs which provide links to Rajasthani cultural products like folk songs and music), websites

of travel and tour agencies, websites of Indian or Rajasthan tourism, the website of Veena which offers people the facility to download Rajasthani songs on payment without having to take the pain of physically procuring the CD, websites of people engaged in preservation of Rajasthani heritage (Arna-Jharna, Jaipur Virasat Foundation, Rajasthan Sangeet Natak Akademy, Cultural Society of Rajasthan etc.), social networking spaces like Facebook and Myspace, or, for that matter, many other scattered media like different websites, uploads (both private and public), and links related to Rajasthan and its culture.

It should be noted here that the even simple and mass audience can sometimes fall in the category of diffused audience, but primarily, diffused audiences are those who do not engage with Rajasthani folk music in popular culture directly or through the medium of television, but through the new media. Also, the mass audience can sometimes also come to constitute the simple audience, but again, that can happen only once in a blue moon. But the simple audience can frequently fall into the category of the mass audience, as the people who experience local Rajasthani folk music can also, at the same time, view the events in popular cultural media.

These categories have been outlined here so as to ensure a smooth discussion of how each of these different audiences engages in the process of identity formation. While a lot has already been said for the audience who fall into the first category, the second and the third categories need a detailed discussion. Moreover, the audience that I have categorized as mass, that is, the non-resident Rajasthanis and the diasporic Indian people will be dealt with separately at fair length below.

The increasing globalisation of economic, political and cultural relations is matched by a massive rise in the flow of migrants, both voluntary and involuntary, and an equally enormous rise in the flow of images, narratives and information which cut across and challenge established national and cultural boundaries and identities (Gillespie 3). This is the kind of dialectic one will try to address in the ensuing discussion.

Moving Far Away: The Non-Resident Rajasthanis

Appadurai defines "deterritorialization" as the central pivot of modern-day existence in a globalized world which is criss-crossed by the networks of media. But he goes on to suggest that not all deterritorialization is global in its scope, and not all imagined lives span vast international panoramas. The world on the move affects even small geographical and cultural

spaces (Appadurai, *Modernity* 61) These "small worlds of displacement," I argue, can be traced within a country itself, as happens in the case of people of the same country migrating from one state to another, here, meaning the Rajasthanis who have migrated to other states in India or abroad.

Gurcharan Das finds the story of the Marwaris "fascinating". He explains how and why a tiny community from the desert sands of Rajasthan spread out to every corner of north, east, and central India, settling in thousands of villages and towns in the nineteenth century. He goes on to elucidate how the Marwaris, with their enormous appetite for risk, seized control of India's inland trade. Gradually, they turned to industry after the First World War, and today they control roughly half the nation's private industrial assets (176).

The centrality of non-resident Rajasthanis to the state of Rajasthan and the connections to the culture of the state is something that has been well-documented. In fact, K.S. Singh writes:

> No account of Rajasthan would be complete without the reference to Rajasthani/Marwari diaspora. The process of the migration of the trading and business communities from north-western India to the rest of the country . . . are too well known to be repeated. Under the People of India project Rajasthan communities have been studied almost all over the country. A remarkable feature of Marwari community is their strong linkage with the place of their origin in Rajasthan, the *mool* where the *gaddi* is still located. (Foreword, Part 1: xxvii-xxviii)[1]

A great many number of Marwaris and non-resident Rajasthanis constitute the domestic pilgrim traffic in Rajasthan. This also leads these pilgrims to become consumers of Rajasthani folk music and devotional music (in the form of cassettes and CDs), advertently or inadvertently. As producers and artists observe, cassettes are serving to spread Rajasthani music and folklore to migrants throughout the country, who would otherwise be losing touch with their traditions. Cassettes are educating young and old about their own culture, and in the process, documenting musical traditions more extensively and professionally than any team of ethnomusicologist could hope to do. (Manuel 185-186)

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[1] Most Marwaris, if not all, trace their origin/roots to Rajasthan, and that is how they make meaning in their existence in a land away from Rajasthan. The association with the place is established by frequent visits to the state as pilgrims (to the family deity's village) or tourists; by observance of traditional festivals, customs, and rituals; and by connecting to the folk music, dance and performing arts either in folk or popular media, generally the latter, which has also been emphasized by Maloo in a telephone interview.

Veena owner K.C. Maloo himself came from Nepal around the year 1987-88. It was a time when the economy was not very good. People would buy cheap cassettes. Since he himself came to Rajasthan from Nepal, he could feel the pain of non-resident Rajasthanis. So, he opened a music company which would specialize in Rajasthani folk music and give the people of Rajasthan and the non-resident Rajasthanis an opportunity to resense and reconnect to their culture. Later on, the diasporic Indians, especially Rajasthanis also got added to the list. He reiterates that he is not doing pure business. He has a mission, to make Rajasthani folk music available far and wide and contribute to its popularity.[2]

Infact, the intention behind the concept of "Dharti Dhoran Ri", the song recorded by Maloo, was that people should get to know Rajasthan, and not the Rajputana that the state sprang from, in a short time-span and feel proud of their history and heritage. He released the first version of the same in 1990. Dissatisfied with his production, Maloo improved on it in the year 1995. Later, he clubbed the two versions. He made it a point that people, especially the middle-class, should be able to know more about Rajasthan.[3]

Hemjeet Maloo, the son of K.C. Maloo, cites different reasons for the superiority of audio cassettes over other media options, one among them being, as he puts it:

> It is roughly estimated that nearly 4 crores Rajasthanis are living out of Rajasthan. In calcutta alone above 30 lakhs people are from Rajasthan. None of the cities in Rajasthan can boast of 30 lakhs of population; even Jaipur has only 20 lakhs of population (sic).

These non-resident Rajasthanis have more attraction for local audio cassettes. It may be because they are out of Rajasthan for a long time and they want to preserve their cultural heritage. Thus the local audio cassettes are much in demand (qtd. in Kali 193).[4]

Thus, local cassettes travel thousands of kilometres to non-Rajasthani people in different cities in India as well as outside India. Industry personnel see cassettes as helping to preserve, revitalize, and spread traditional music. Jaiswal continues: "People forget their songs and customs when they move to the cities, and cassettes educate migrants as to how their regional songs go. Every region should keep its music alive, and for that, cassettes are a great thing" (Manuel 194).

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[2] Telephone Interview.

[3] *ibid.*

[4] Source of this article titled "'Where People are Still Unaware of Lata Mangeshkar' Audio Cassette – A New Powerful Media" is The Economic Times, 7 July 1997.

Appadurai's postulations about "culture" being "an arena of conscious choices" seems to hold true for the tendency of non-Resident Rajasthanis to purchase 'home-grown' folk songs, folk music, and devotional music. Appadurai inverts the key terms of the title of Walter Benjamin's famous essay (1969) and discusses the problem of enculturation in a period of rapid culture change under the subheading "*The Work of Reproduction in the Age of Mechanical Art*" in the second chapter of his seminal work *Modernity at Large*. Under this section, Appadurai suggests that "as group pasts become increasingly parts of museums, exhibits, and collections . . . culture becomes less what Pierre Bourdieu would have called a habitus (a tacit realm of reproducible practices and dispositions) and more an arena for conscious choices, justification, and representation, the latter often to multiple and spatially dislocated audiences" (*Modernity* 44).

At this juncture, one would introduce the peculiar case of the Kathuria tribe in Rajasthan, which serves as a case diametrically opposed to the case of non-resident Rajasthanis, and an interesting case-study in this regard. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Kathuria tribe are projected as Rajasthanis, but do not have their ancestry in Rajasthan. Their original place was in Maharashtra. They were brought to Udaipur and neighbouring districts by the Bohra castes for the prepration of *katha* from Kher tress. The Kathuria (or Kathodi) speak their own dialect which is a mixture of Vagdi and Marathi. They have their own folk songs, and both men and women participate in dancing and singing during festivals and occasions (K.S. Singh, Part 2: 505-07).

Thus, in the case of Rajasthan, one notices this complex set of relations between people who have migrated from Rajasthan, and people who have come from neighbouring states and settled in Rajasthan. While the former continuously seek opportunities to establish connections to their homeland, the latter have maintained their own culture and language even in a different state, but are happy to be projected as Rajasthanis. The reason for the latter can also be the fact that they are tribals, and hence do not really care about where they belong. They can stick to their own language, rituals, and customs, and still feel themselves to be an integral part of the state in whose political territories they reside, without having to worry much about ideas of past, present, home, and displacement.

Moving Further Away: The Indian Diaspora (Rajasthanis Included)

Starting in the 1970s, the word 'diaspora' spilled over its traditional boundaries as designator of the far-flung fate of a small number of groups—principally the Jews—outside their homeland (Slobin 284). The meaning of the term 'diaspora' has been expanding since then. However, the creation of a learned journal, *Diaspora*, in 1991 was a sign of recognition of the word's move into prominence. In his opening statement of purpose, the journal's editor, Tololyan, summarized the situation:

> We use "diaspora" provisionally to indicate our belief that the term that once described Jewish, Greek, and Armenian dispersion now shares meanings with a larger semantic domain that includes words like immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guestworker, exile community, overseas community, ethnic community. This is the vocabulary of transnationalism, and any of its terms can usefully be considered under more than one of its rubrics. (qtd. in Slobin 284)

For Slobin, 'diaspora' leads a double life. At its simplest, it merely marks the existence of an identified population that feels that it is away from its homeland, however imagined, however distant in time and space. However, as Slobin insists, the subtler meanings of 'diaspora' acknowledge that this involves more than just demographics (288).

However, what concerns us more in the present discussion is the relationship that the Indian diaspora share with media, and the meanings that they construct through them. Introducing Cunningham's essay "Popular Media as Public Sphericules", Allen and Hill write:

> For Cunningham . . . diasporic communities are transnational groups of ethnically-bound individuals who live as minorities, typically in western countries. They may share a linguistic and cultural heritage, but they certainly share a sense of cultural and social difference from the majority population of their place of residence as well as personal identities shaped by a strong sense of connection to a literal and symbolic place from which they are now physically and politically distanced. But in calling them diasporic "communities," Cunningham would quickly point out that they challenge the idea of geographically identifiable entities . . . Diasporic communities are to a significant extent constituted through media and media performance (108-09).

Sudesh Mishra asserts that diasporic subjects are frequently exposed to, what he calls, "nostalgia-inducing cues" as they witness culture-specific movies, music, events, restaurants etc." (188-89). Gray also talks about "[t]he construction of imaginary homelands through television and film images available to diasporic communities in their new locations" (187). In fact, possibly in a bid to aid or enhance this experience, Veena Music, used to provide the lyrics of the Rajasthani songs included in its collection on the inside cover of the cassettes

and CDs. Maloo informed that the ideas behind the same was to facilitate the understanding of these songs among non-resident Rajasthanis, but mostly among diasporic audience, which had lost touch with its language, culture and music long ago (Telephone Interiew). He also added that after Veena launched its music in the market, there were 'standard versions' of Rajasthani folk songs being circulated in the market, which also rid people of confusion regarding which 'original' Rajasthani folk song to listen to.

An example that one can cite at this juncture is the song "Kesariya Balam", especially a reading of the video of song "Kesaria Balam" from *Colourful Music of Rajasthan*, which flashes popular and oft-repeated verses, also known as *Gitasaar* throughout the song, which is basically a song a woman waiting for her husband who has gone to a distant land for the purpose of trade.[5] In any case, this is, without doubt, the most popular Rajasthani song among Rajasthanis, Indians and NRIs alike. The added element of *Gitasaar* attaches ancient Indian knowledge and scriptural values to the song, making it all the more profound, although the irony of this effort is the fact that the verses are nowhere remotely associated with the context and meaning of the song.

Cultural diasporas are created by migrants settling down in countries which offer them better income and employment opportunities. The studies of the Indian outmigrants suggest that most of them continue to maintain their traditional ways of life and customs. More than this, their cultural self-awareness becomes more protective and strengthens their commitment to the traditional modes of culture even more than in the country of their origin (Yogendra Singh 60-61). In *The Production of Belief: Contribution to an Economy of Symbolic Goods*, Pierre Bourdieu sets out to demonstrate the social basis of aesthetic tastes. He argues that cultural preferences in consumption are structured by one's social origin and by the educational capital at one's disposal. These combine to mould the set of discriminations applied in judgements of artistic value, whether they are seen as 'legitimate' high art, or as middle-brow and popular art (Collins, et al. 83).

In the context of India, Indian programs, Bollywood movies, Indian music, and Indipop are some of the cultural resources from India that the Indian diasporic audience resort to in foreign lands to make sense of themselves and their existence. Many Indians are considerably more familiar with commercial popular culture-especially film culture-than with

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[5] The essence of *The Bhagavad Gita* in the form of practical instructions, which in itself is considered to be the essence of the Vedas and the Upanishads.

their traditional arts and customs. (Manuel xv). Indian programs on cable and satellite are popular among the 20 million Indian expatriates living in North American, Europe, Africa, and Southeast Asia (Kasbekar 167). Although we can no longer see producers and consumers of cultural products as distinct entities, Hartley makes a very potent observation by going back to the 'powerful producer/purposeless consumer' model. According to Hartley, in the previous defunct model, the positive aspect was that "[c]ulturally, the 'imagined community' of very large populations was coordinated into semiotic unity when 'we' all watched the same programs" (121, emphasis removed).

For Madhav Prasad, "Bollywood carries the weight it does because of its pivotal role in articulating definitions of national identity to the figure of the Non-resident Indian. . . ." (Punathambekar and Kavoori 7). Natalie Sarrazin argues that music is not only of primary importance, but is a crucial component in the propagation of "Indianness" in national and especially diaspora-destined films (Punathambekar and Kavoori 10). Kvetko observes that while "the massive film industries in Mumbai and elsewhere, with their playback singers and celebrity icons, continued to dominate the popular music landscape across the subcontinent", Indipop served as "a soundtrack for the transnational identities of NRIs and cosmopolitan Indians" (112).

Devotional folk songs and folk songs of Holi, like "Rang Barse", "Aaj Biraj Me Holi", "Rang Mat Daare Re", and "Aayo Phaganiyo" are Rajasthani folk songs that have been appropriated in different media, especially Bollywood films, and are played almost everywhere across India and the world on the occasion of Holi. Also, folk songs pertaining to marriages, festivals and other occasions[6] make one feel that one belongs to a rich culture that he/she seems to have left behind. Rajasthani wedding songs are also sometimes based on Rajasthani folk tunes, and these songs are played by DJ for weddings of Rajasthani/Marwari families both inside and outside Rajasthan, and by technicians while mixing the actual CD of the Marwari wedding rituals with Rajasthani songs played in the background, sometimes interspersed with a lot of Hindi songs.[7] These songs played in hit TV serials, or blockbuster movies, sung in performances or uploaded on sites like *YouTube* and Facebook, reconnect people to their places of origin, or even to the country of which Rajasthan is an integral part.

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[6] Already referred to in great details in the preceding chapters.

[7] I am particularly reminded of a wedding CD in my family where Hindi songs like "Mere Sapno Ki Rani Kab Ayegi Tu" and "Ye Kaun Aaya Roshan Ho Gayi" were played alongside Rajasthani songs like "Biro Bhaat Bharan Ne" (song about the ceremony of *bhaat*), "Sahelyan Sagli Utaaro Banni Naval Bado" (welcome song for the bridegroom) and "Chali Bai Lado Saasre" (a *vidai* song).

For customers who want to be associated with their traditions, customs, land, and country in some way or the other, especially becoming nostalgic for their customs and heritage that they have left behind as they moved to urban areas, other cities, states or abroad, Komal Kothari's project and its fruits released in the form of two CDs *Banna: Traditional Wedding Songs*, one each by the Langas and the Manganiyars (both folk musicians of Rajasthan) might serve as a link between their past and present, as a bridge between the territories that they have left long back, and their present spatial location. These CDs have traditional wedding songs sung by folk artists from the two communities mentioned above, thus adding a charm of authenticity and acuity that one seldom comes across in distant lands or urban spaces. No wonder then that these albums have songs sung by the folk musicians themselves, to the accompaniment of folk instruments like Sindhi Sarangi, Dholak, and Kamaicha, since it was a "Project Conceived & Co-ordinated by Shri Komal Kothari", as the flip side of the CD cover indicates.

In Appadurai's opinion, when the story of mass migrations (voluntary and forced) is juxtaposed with the rapid flow of mass- mediated images, scripts and sensations, we have a new order of instability in the production of modern subjectivities (*Modernity* 4). For instance, Rajasthanis in India and abroad, friends of Rajasthani people in India, as well Indians abroad would both identify with the Rajasthani folk songs being circulated through the electronic media. Thus, moving songs meeting deterritorialized viewers create rooms for establishing 'imagined' links with the homeland or home-state.

Questions of identity-in-culture are clearly crucial to an understanding of these lived cultures. They also combine an understanding of the 'macro' – the possibilities of trans-border and trans-national communities and identities with the located practices of individuals and groups (Gray 187-88).

Re-constructing the Past: The Production of Past/Memory and Identity

Experience and memory, personal and collective, human and electronic—these are the substance of culture and of technology, and culture and technology can be understood as a substrate on which the past is recorded, the present unfolds, and the future is predicted (Jones 208). The aim of cultural theories of subjectivity is not to finally determine some identity—however complex and variegated— hidden under all the sedimented layers of history, but to see how this history has in fact made us what we are (Szeman and Kaposy 420)

Szeman and Kaposy have succinctly pointed out that the present comes about only through a past that has disappeared from view (337). A large part of who we are seems to belong in the past, that is, our sense of self seems grounded in our "roots." Memory seems to be at the very core of identity; it connects who we are to who we once were (Storey, *Inventing* 81). To explore the roots of cultural identities, Storey builds his analysis on the concept of "collective memory," as developed in the work of French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (1980). He divides Halbwachs' account of "collective memory" into four overlapping claims: first, memory is as much collective as individual; second, remembering is always a practice of reconstruction and representation; third, remembering is always situated in the present; memories do not take us into "the past," rather they bring "the past" into the present, that is, in order for our memories to remain meaningful to us, they have to make sense in the context of the present; and fourth, collective memory is embodied in mnemonic artefacts, what French historian Pierre Nora calls "sites of memory" (*Inventing* 81-85).

The "roots" of our identities are both present and absent, existing both inside our heads and outside in culture (Storey, *Inventing* 86). As much as I understand, it is these "roots" of our identities existing outside in culture that the organizers of folk events, festivals, and television and film producers seek to encash. Moreover, we, as audience and consumers, in the act of being a part of the event that evokes our past memories, connect the manifestations of the "roots" outside to the "roots" that exist in our heads. This is how this entire conundrum works.

Thus, "past" or "memory" is an important category in the production of subjectivities. To take Ranade's argument a step further, I would contend that folk music, or rather, folk music in popular culture today provides a good-feeding ground for the nostalgia of the city dwellers in Rajasthan, the non-resident Rajasthanis, and the Indian diaspora, who are progressively and increasingly cut-off from their "folk" roots (*On Music* 62). Storey notes that memory has become more and more something we can retrieve from external sources (*Inventing* 85). Storey notes that the "memory industries," are the part of the culture industries concerned with articulating the past. Heritage sites and museums are obvious examples, but he also includes the mass media and popular culture more generally. Indeed, more so than ever before, we see how transformations in popular culture, especially the television, cassettes, CDs, and the digital discourses help to restore cultural memory. The

memory industries produce representations ("cultural memorials") with which we are invited to think, feel, and recognize the past (Storey, *Inventing* 85).

In the opinion of Sudesh Mishra, the faculty of memory is governed by both the act of remembering and the act of forgetting. It is a given that another time or context triggers the act or remembering, hence, one can conclude that it cannot offer us an original event in all its purity. He cautions, however, that this does not imply that all acts of recollection can taken to be false or fictional, but that the contours of the original event are subject to (narrative) shifts during the process of retrieval. It is also interesting to note that it is rhetorical strategy, or the memory others have of the same event that determines to what extent an act of recollection conforms to or deviates from the original event. Moreover, the fact that what is forgotten about an event depends on the procedures of repression, suggests that the act of forgetting is determined by the act of recollection, that is, what not to remember is contingent on what one wants to recollect. This leads Mishra to conclude that "memory is related to the exercise of power" (186).

Again, what Hardgrove argues for the merchant *havelis* holds true for the revival of Rajasthani folk songs in popular culture also, that this development (even if it is done to promote the two '-isms': consumerism and tourism), just like the refurbishing of the *havelis* for tourists, "is an important part of the production of social memory, community, and region for the Marwaris" (354). This holds true not only for the Marwaris in India, but also for the Indian diaspora, irrespective of where they hail from in India.[8]

There can be no better examples to illustrate such working of power than in the cases of organizations which work to bring home a 'folk' experience to us in the form of 'folk festivals'. The organizers decide for us what they want us to remember and consume as audience. Generally, the audience does not have a very direct role to play in the administrative decisions of which folk performer or folk performances are to be a part of such "festivals". One can take, for example, the case of RIFF. In this 'international folk festival', the organizers themselves went out to every nook and corner of Rajasthan to choose whom to

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[8] I make the latter claim on the basis of an interview with Hayat Khan Langa. In a personal interview, he said that whenever he went for a performance outside India, he never felt he was away from his country because of the reception he received from Indians settled in foreign lands. The diasporic Indians sometimes offered, or rather, insisted that he stay at their houses instead of in the hotels arranged by the organizers. The hospitality he received was overwhelming. Moreover, when diasporic Indians attended his performance, they were, literally, moved to tears out of nostalgia for their country of origin.

invite for RIFF and whom not to.[9] Thus, this process of offering a bigger platform to the folk artists is very selective and contingent upon the musical tastes of the selection committee.

However, one cannot deny the reality that despite a rigorous process of selection and elimination, some Rajasthani folk artists and performers, do get a chance to showcase their musical talent.[10] Thus, the category of memory works wonders in favour of the folk performers also, though, in a different way.

Re-mapping the Location: The Production of Places and Identity

That we 'belong' to a specific locale (be it a home or a community or a nation) is an assumption that all of us share (Szeman and Kaposy 251). Schomer observes that while regions are grounded in objective realities, they are also subjective constructs, for both outsiders and insiders (x). Similarly, referring to Edward Said, Henderson suggests that "living outside the borders of the 'homeland' and inside the borders of 'another country' often entails a border journey into the memory and imagination that negotiates between the old and new, past and present" (4).

Lovering suggests that "local music spaces" can be thought of as territories in which a "community of musical taste," identifiable to its participants, emerges and is sustained, reproduced and disseminated through a place-based network of creation, production and consumption (qtd in Mahtani and Salmon 169). In this way distinctive "soundscapes" are formed, nurtured and diffused. These soundscapes can be interpreted as both the product and expression of place-based identities (Mahtani and Salmon 169).

Folk songs like "Nimbuda", "Ghoomar", "Gorbadh", "Pallo Latke", "Banna Re Baga Me", and "Kalyo Kood Padyo" are a few songs that anyone even remotely acquainted with North Indian culture would recognize as Rajasthani folk songs the moment they are played or performed, serving the function of momentarily transporting the listener or viewer to Rajasthan, no matter what the physical and temporal distance.

However, recent scholarship suggests that locality cannot be seen as a given. It is constantly being displaced and replaced in a multi-mediated, globalized world. Gillespie observes that there is no neat equation between culture, community and geography (2).

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[9] See the BBC episode *The Lost Music of Rajasthan.*

[10] See Batabyal's "In Rajasthan and RIFF, Music has the Power to Trump Boundaries".

Appadurai insists that we are enmeshed in five "scapes" which configure modes of identification across the planet: Ethnoscapes, financescapes, ideoscapes, mediascapes, and technoscapes (Szeman and Kaposy 254). The most important category that Appadurai's postulation of "scapes" displaces is that of 'a fixed place', and brings in the idea of deterritorialization.

Arguing along similar lines, Ann Gray takes recourse to Liisa Malkki, anthropologist, who argues that what we require is a new 'sociology of displacement' or 'nomadology':

> This is not to deny, she [Malkki] insists, the importance of place in the construction of identities, rather to acknowledge that place, space and identity are non-essential, and that the often assumed source, or roots of identity are in themselves changing. She quotes Hebdige in his study of Caribbean music and cultural identity 'Rather than tracing back to the roots . . . to their source, I've tried to show how the roots themselves are in a state of constant flux and change. The roots don't stay in one place . . . There is no such thing as a pure point of origin . . . but that doesn't mean that there isn't history'. Malkki further argues, using Breckenridge and Appadurai, that deterritorialisation and identity are intimately connected, 'Diasporas always leave a trail of collective memory about another place and time and create new maps of desire and attachment'.
>
> > Malkki insists that we attend to 'the multiplicity of attachments that people form to places through living in, remembering them and imagining them.' This rethinking within anthropology both insists on attention to place and space, but as contingent, and the groups which inhabit those spaces as those of identities in process" (Gray 186).

Moreover, Josette Feral has rightly pointed out:

> [W]ith today's numerous migrations of people and with the porousness of national borders, the notion of territory is no longer self-evident. A new cartography has been instated whereby subjects are more and more "deterritorialized" that is severed from the country or culture they are originally linked to and "reterritorialized" according to new parameters more akin to the localities they live in. These localities are defined through "human sociality" rather than geographic borders.[11] (Chaturvedi xvi)

Additionally, the media[12] have transformed the meaning of locality by creating complex images of distance, self, other, and the social transformation that extend to the remotest societies of the world the capability to construct imagined worlds (Appadurai and Breckenridge 15). Pratt also refers to how "a single cultural identity is often situated in multiple, interconnected spaces" (154-55). Pratt suggests further that "there are multiple grids

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[11] That music is one of the ways through which this "human sociality" can take place will be dealt with in fair detail in the course of the discussion of "musical identities" below, especially in the discussion on how people speaking different languages as well as foreigners can connect through music.

[12] I extend the argument of Appadurai and Breckenridge to include new media, in addition to electronic media.

of difference and complex and varied links between place and identity formation. It is important to understand these processes of boundary formation in order to create opportunities for imagined and actual alliances across them" (155).

Sungkyung Lee maintains that place is defined by the emotional and cultural investment of social actors and it hangs around in actors' memories and their agential investment in the past, present, and future. All of this is intensified, stretched, and multiplied by logics associated with electronic mediation and globalization that stimulate a disembedding from places of origin, a linking up to several place at once, and the multiple loyalties and affiliation that such technological innovation makes possible (McCarthy et al. xxviii).[13]

Music and performance are two of the ways through which this, what I call 'lack of locality', or 'abundance of multiple localities' can be negotiated. Berland maintains that for the listener, musical forms create an embodied but imaginary space that mediates our feelings, dreams, desires—our internal space—with the social, external space (qtd. in Mahtani and Salmon 169). In this way music gives us a sense of place, sometimes in connection with coherent spaces, sometimes in their stead. The production—and consumption—of musical forms is thus an expression of place and identity. (169-170)

Jones writes about this complex dialectic of space, place, and identity/ies:

> We can consider . . . how technology makes us and others present along multiple sensory dimensions . . . I mean "presence" not in the way it is used with regard to new technologies . . . but rather in the sense of an "imagined presence"—quite literally, to borrow from the commercial world, as "the next best thing to being there," and yet so good that we are indeed able to imagine being there. (207)

Music has the power to transcend boundaries and yet, at the same time, transport one to any other borderland. An illustration in this regard is Roysten Abel's production *The Manganiyar Seduction*. Ravneet Kler, talking about *The Manganiyar Seduction*, says: "From beginning to end, it takes you on a mental journey through the whole of Rajasthan and the different eras that existed there" (qtd. in Dixit 21).

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[13] This "multiplicity" of "affiliation" will be illustrated in the course of the discussion of "musical identities" below.

"The Centre Cannot Hold"[14]: Multiplicity and Fluidity Inherent in Identity

The question of identity, of comprehending one's position and affiliation in a world which is constantly in flux, in a world which is one of changing configurations and shifting loyalties, in my opinion, forms the core of, to borrow from McCarthy et al., "the central existential dilemmas of living and being in a modern, globalizing world" (xviii).

Subjectivity acquires its irreducibly social character from the fact that experience takes place within a cultural context organized by institutions and practices. Today, these include institutions that practically fuse the contexts of cultural production and reception (Mowitt 173). Human identity, according to Hartley, is "produced by innumerable 'agents' in a dynamic process (15). Identity, according to Hartley is not an intrinsic property of individuals:

> [It] emerges – it *results* – out of social networks and relationships connected via language, culture, social institutions, and various organized forms of collective agency that use 'social technologies' (form firms, markets, and the law to media and digital technology) to *produce* our individual capacity for signalling (sense-making practices), copying (cultural behaviour), and networking (intersubjectivity). (14, emphasis in original)

Identity is how we communicate our self to the world and how we are, at the same time, constructed by the world around us (Tracy 613). Clearly, this communication in the world mediated by the electronic and new media cannot be unitary or unidirectional. Corresponding to the multiplicity of communication is the multiplicity inherent in the way the world constructs us. Scholars agree that we have multiple identities, or rather, "mobile subjectivities", a phrase that Pratt borrows from Kathy Ferguson, thus invoking the lack of any "stable resting place" (154). This lack of a "stable resting place" invokes the fundamental truth of contemporary human existence – the fact that our human race is, in reality, deterritorialized.

Appadurai has succinctly pointed out the ramifications of deterritorialization in the modern world. According to Appadurai, deterritorialization creates new markets for film companies, art impresarios, and travel agencies, which thrive on the need of the deterritorialized population for contact with its homeland (38). But one should also remember that the homeland is partly invented, existing only in the imagination of the deterritorialized groups (49). This is a world in which both points of departure and points of arrival are in

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[14] Taken from Yeats's *The Second Coming*.

cultural flux, and thus the search for steady points of reference, as critical life-choices are made, can be very difficult (44). This view of the homeland being "partly invented" and "existing only in the imagination" is something that we have to bear in mind as we approach 'the question of identity'.

Pratt informs that identities have to be increasingly considered as "a process, as performed, and as unstable " (154). The terms that Pratt uses are all very significant, because they point to a certain kind of continuity, fluidity, and performativity inherent in the very term 'identities'. The use of the plural is also significant, because it is, by now, almost a given that our contemporary, postmodern existence is characterized by temporary, shifting, and negotiated 'identities' rather than a permanent, fixed, and stable 'identity'.

Storey makes a very interesting observation in this regard. He talks of an understanding of the "hierarchies of the self" as crucial to an understanding of the various identities that we carry. Storey writes: "Depending on the context, our identities form particular hierarchies of the self. In particular contexts, the identity 'in dominance' may be one thing, in another context it might be something quite different" (*Inventing* 80). This observation is supplemented by the fact that even the popular can be characterized by its fluidity. One person may, at different times, form cultural allegiances with different, not to say contradictory, social groups as he or she moves through the social formation (Fiske 30).

Stuart Hall writes in *Who Needs Identity* "identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being." Although identities are clearly about "who we think we are" and "where we think we came from," they are also about "where we are going." Identities are always a narrative of the self *becoming*. In this sense, as Hall points out, identities are increasingly less about "roots" and more about "routes" (Storey, *Inventing* 79-80, emphasis in original). Our identities may seem grounded in the past, but they are also about becoming who we want to be or being who we think we should be in particular contexts. That is, our identities are also in our "routes" (Storey, *Inventing* 86).

The problem of understanding identity/ies becomes manifold when we come across the revelation that the project of identity/ies is, in fact, never complete. Niederer and Winter rightly quote from Stuart Hall's essay "Cultural Identity and Diaspora": "Identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should instead

think of identity as a 'production', which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not without representation" (694). In a similar vein, Kamberelis and Dimitriadis write, "Identities . . . are always tentative and partially unstable because they are continually constructed within particular configurations of discursive and material practices that are themselves constantly constituting and reconstituting themselves" (485).

The multiplicity and simultaneity of identities is by now an accepted idea. Identities are products both of deliberate construction and happenstance, and are perennially recreated and reinvented (Ganesh 33). Any individual/group of people has concurrent, multiple identities. While one identity can be influenced, threatened or extinguished, another layer can remain unaffected or relatively untouched. Also, concurrency of many moments of time is characteristics of Indian society and culture, the rule rather than the exception (Vatsyayan 40).

In this context, Fiske notes:

> "The people" is not stable sociological category; it cannot be identified and subjected to empirical study, for it does not exist in objective reality. The people, the popular, the popular forces, are shifting set of allegiances that cross all social categories; various individuals belong to different formations at different times, often moving between them quite fluidly. By "the people," then, I mean this shifting set of social allegiances, which are described better in terms of people's felt collectivity than in terms of external sociological factors such as class, gender, age, race, [or] region. (24)

David Morley and Kevin Robins argue along the lines of Fiske:

> Globalization is transforming our apprehension of the world: it is provoking a new experience of orientation and disorientation, new senses of placed and placeless identity. The global-local nexus is associated with new relation between space and time, fixity and mobility, centre and periphery, "real" and "virtual" space, "inside" and "outside " frontier and territory. This, inevitably, has implications for both individual and collective identities and for the meaning and coherence of community (Dasgupta139, emphasis removed).

Thus, both Fiske and Morley and Robins get us over to the idea of identity as related to the notion of community and collectivity. The creation of community or collective identities is best exemplified in the coming of the new media and the corresponding effect it has had on the creation of group identities.

The Dissemination of Rajasthani Folk Music through the New Media and the Formations of Identities

Electronic and digital communication leads to fostering of bonds between different people. Communication media provide a way of sustaining continuity despite spatial dislocation, a way of renewing tradition in new and diverse contexts through the appropriation of mediated symbolic forms. Hence, communication media can play an important role in the maintenance and renewal of tradition among migrant or dislocated groups. This role is likely to be particularly significant when the groups are settled in countries where different languages are spoken, and where traditions and customs diverge from each other (Thompson 103-04).

Appadurai claims that in the wider field of mass media and other traditional media, electronic media offer new resources and new disciplines for the construction of imagined selves and imagined worlds (*Modernity* 3). Electronic mediation transforms pre-existing worlds of communication and conduct (3). Because of the sheer multiplicity of forms in which they appear (cinema, television, computers, and telephones) and because of the rapid way in which they move through daily life routines, electronic media provide resources for self-imagining as an everyday social project (4).[15] Highlighting the role of imagination as integral to the conception of identities, Appadurai writes:

> One of the principal shifts in the global cultural order, created by cinema, television, and video technology . . . has to do with the role of the imagination in social life. The imagination— expressed in dreams, songs, fantasies, myths, and stories— has always been part of the repertoire of every society, in some culturally organized way. In the past few decades, as the deterritorialization of persons, images, and ideas has taken on new force, more persons throughout the world see their lives through the prisms of the possible lives offered by mass media in all their forms. (*Modernity* 53-54).

Jensen maintains that "we who study the media are also we who participate in the media. All of us create, sustain, repair, and transform reality. It's a collaborative process" (100). Digital media have put an end to mass communication as we know it, but at the same time they have created new forms of mass communication, ones as full of contradictions as were old media (after all, the Internet, once a network of networks, has become the medium of media). Digital media are interactive and individual but nevertheless bind us in an interesting, meaningful, and important social formation (Jones 210). The new media creates 'virtual'

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[15] Although Appadurai might seem dated for a discussion in this section, I still strongly believe that his theory holds true even today. All we need to do is just replace 'electronic media' by 'new media'. In any case, as discussed in the previous chapter, old media and new media do not necessarily clash with each other. The 'new' element of media also supplements the 'old' media.

communities and cultural enclaves by offering the possibility of sustained communicative interaction among members scattered in far off places. New interpretive strategies are available because of new media.

Castells, in his seminal work, *The Rise of the Network Society*, arrives at his theory of the "the culture of real virtuality", which is basically a characteristic he identifies in "the network society", a society which harbours "new kinds of virtual communities" which are "organized around computer networking" (358). Castells writes about "a communication system" which "generates *real virtuality*": "It is a system in which reality itself (that is, people's material/symbolic existence) is entirely captured, fully immersed in a virtual image setting, in the world of make-believe, in which appearances are not just on the screen through which experience is communicated, but they become the experience" (404, author's emphasis deleted).

Castells sums up his study of the "culture of real virtuality" thus:

> [T]he new communication system radically transforms space and time . . . Localities become disembodied from their cultural, historical, geographical meaning, and reintegrated into functional networks, or into image collages, inducing a space of flows that substitutes for the space of places. Time is erased in the new communication system . . . The *space of flows* and *timeless time* are the material foundations of a new culture that transcends and includes the diversity of historically transmitted systems of representation: the culture of real virtuality where make-believe is belief in the making. (406, emphasis in original)

Pamela J. Tracy explores how people construct meaning when they interpret products of the media, and use them to construct identity (611). According to her, we actively use media to communicate who we are to the world (Tracy 616). Part of what mass-media, especially electronic,[16] make possible, is what Appadurai, in calls a "community of sentiment," a group that begins to imagine and feel things together (*Modernity* 8). Jones also suggests that communication, and by extension, media can make us feel that we have travelled elsewhere, making us or others present (207). Jones refers to Carey's idea of the changes that media bring to cultural conceptions of spatial and temporal distance (206-07).

In this context, one would like to cite an example, which might not fit into the theme of 'new media' now, but which certainly did in the decades when the production was doing the rounds in Rajasthan, slowly moving out of the state into other states of India, and even outside India. Taking the perspective from within Rajasthan, Joan Erdman shows how a

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[16] And to this, we can now add the 'new media'.

modern multi-media production, "*Dhartī Dhorāṅ Rī*" (Land of Shifting Sands) by Kaushal Bhargava, seeks to develop a regional identity for all Rajasthanis through a program incorporating the stories and symbols of sub-regions and distinctive communities into a pluralistic whole (Schomer xiv).

Erdman notes that the idea of Kaushal Bhargava in his production of *Dhartī Dhorāṅ Rī* was inclusionary, designed "to develop a program which *all* Rajasthanis could feel was their own, and which would represent their social bonding in a sequence of images and statements" (*Becoming* 59). Erdman explains that the production was "a *darśan* (viewing) of Rajasthan itself, the new state of an independent India" (59-60). Its form and content strongly evoke deep cultural memories and emotional attachments for Rajasthanis – whose enculturation if different from that of outside listeners (67). For the viewers of Rajasthan, the program is a lesson in feeling proud of the heritage and traditions of the state as a whole, and identifying with them (60).

For Rajasthani audiences, townspeople and villagers alike, the *Dhartī Dhorāṅ Rī* media was new but familiar, and in the pre-television period,[17] transitional in modern India, it was sufficiently innovative to bring crowds, but familiar enough to evoke identification with its songs and messages (Erdman, *Becoming* 60). Bhargava recognizes that the potential for shaping people's viewpoints is embedded in his combination of visual and audio media (69). The finale of the production is the entire live cast singing a song entitled *Dhart Dhartī Dhorāṅ Rī* – not the popular song, but a folk song created especially for the show (71).

However insightful Erdman's paper may be for his times, what we have to now take into account is the fact that we have now moved on from the age of multimedia to the digital age, and though the end result, that is, the construction of a sense of belonging to Rajasthan, of a Rajasthani regional identity remains the same (and the project only gets furthered by the digital media), the means of the same have drastically altered, with the influx of satellite television, CDs and DVDs, the internet resources—blogs, travel websites, websites of cultural institutions, and online social communities, to name a few.[18]

There are myriad techniques of communication and avenues of understanding subjectivities in the new cyberculture. Web makes possible "spontaneous, informal

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[17] *Dhart» Dhorāṅ R»* was taken across the villages and towns of Rajasthan for the first time in the 1970s, by which time, clearly enough, television had not filtered down to the middle class or the masses.

[18] Many illustrations of the same have been discussed in the two preceding chapters.

communication" (Castells 383). According to Nayar, "[b]logging and its adjacent networking 'technologies' are designed and imbued with the spirit of perpetual construction of the self for the world – a spirit best captured in YouTube's slogan, 'Broadcast Yourself'" (208). As already mentioned earlier, YouTube abounds in popular videos of Rajasthani folk songs.

In addition, the online organization of the massive Indian diaspora leads to online interaction/exchanges between Indians abroad and their motherland and the creation of online subjectivities. Institutional and personal web pages about the culture and music of Rajasthan abound. Veena Music also has a Facebook account, while RIFF has accounts on various social networking sites like Twitter, Facebook, Myspace etc. There are chat rooms where "the people are all present in real time in virtual space" to discuss specific issues, "people who could be separate by great geographic distances but are pulled together by thematic proximity" (Mitra 273-74). Chat Rooms and Blogs, according to Castells, have "a shared interest or purpose" (386). This shared interest is Rajasthan and its music, its culture and traditions, while purposes could vary. Online communities connect around the commonality of an interest in Rajasthani folk music, or folk music, or music in general. Also, these sites serve as sites of identity-formations. Castells cites Sheery Turkle's study, one of the first psychoanalytical studies of Internet users, which showed that "users were . . . building identities on-line . . . [which] did create a feeling of community, if ephemeral" (387).

Despite the growing talk of cosmopolitanism, one can contend that regional identities do get created; when any cultural element that belongs to one's culture crosses one's way, it is sure to touch the deepest chords of one's heart, more so in the case of music and other artistic genres. Thus, in such cases, Rajasthani regional identity gets performed through one's own efforts or through the efforts of others, but nevertheless, one cannot rule out the fact that a Rajasthani identity is one among the many identities that a person belonging to Rajasthan, or from Rajasthan but residing in some other region, or a person who is genuinely in love with its art and culture, evolves along the course of one's life.[19]

However, one would like to add that this regional identity should not be confused with regionalism, separatism, or regional fanaticism. It is a given that we can never free ourselves of our Indian affiliation. Locality and parochiality are no longer necessarily mutual correlates. To put it another way, the imagination has emerged as a new force in social life,

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[19] But this is not the argument that I am trying to make in this chapter. It is just one of the observations that could help in understanding the main thrust of the chapter.

largely as a result of the spread of electronic media, in the context of rapid flows of resources, images, and persons across national boundaries. (Appadurai and Breckenridge 14)

Communication technology has proven itself a means of making people present across past, present, and future (Jones 208). The new media illustrate how particular cultural forms and social groups come in touch by means of the new communication technologies. Incidentally, the new media itself constitute popular culture. We move on to discuss popular culture in relation to the formation of identities.

The Role of Popular/Culture in the Formations of Identities

Because of the convergence of historical evolution and technological change we have entered a purely cultural pattern of social interaction and social organization. This is why information is the key ingredient of our social organization and why flows of messages and images between networks constitute the basic thread of our social structure (Castells 508). John Storey, highlighting the role of popular culture in the formation of identities, writes:

> Our identities are not the expression of our "nature," they are a performance in culture. What Judith Butler . . . argues with regard to gender identities also, I think, applies to identities in general; that is, an "identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results." In this way, the performance of identity is the accumulation of what is outside (in culture) as if it were inside (in nature). In other words, our identities are made from a contradictory series of identifications, subject positions, and forms of representation which we have made, occupied, and been located in as we constitute and are constituted by performances that produce the narrative of our lives. Popular culture is a fundamental part of this process (*Inventing* 91).

George Lipsitz has argued that popular culture has emerged "as a crucial site for the construction of social identity" (qtd. in Henderson 18). Stuart Hall writes, even when popular culture "enters directly into the circuits of a dominant technology," it is an arena that is "profoundly mythic . . . a theatre of popular desires, a theatre of popular fantasies. It is where we discover and play with the identification of ourselves, where we are imagined, where we are represented" (Henderson 19, author's emphasis deleted). All popular culture is a process of struggle, of struggle over the meanings of social experience, of one's personhood and its relations to the social order and of the texts and commodities of the order (Fiske 28). He writes:

> In a consumer society, all commodities have cultural as well as functional values. To model this we need to extend the idea of an economy to include a cultural economy where the circulation is not one of money, but of meaning and pleasures. Here the audience, from being a

commodity, now becomes a producer, a producer of meanings and pleasures. The original commodity . . . is, in the cultural economy, a text, a discursive structure of potential meanings and pleasures that constitute a major resource of popular culture. In this economy there are no consumers, only circulators of meanings, for meanings are the only elements in the process that can be neither commodified nor consumed: meanings can be produced, reproduced, and circulated only in that constant process that we call culture. (27)

Storey, in a similar vein, writes: "Consumption is a significant part of the circulation of shared and conflicting meanings we call culture. We communicate through what we consume. Consumption is perhaps the most visible way in which we stage and perform the drama of self-formation. In this sense, then, consumption is also a form of production" (*Inventing* 78).

Consumption of the popular forms constructs identity, a sense of self and relationship to others (Gray 14). She writes:

> For most of us, however, popular media forms, and other 'texts' are entwined in our everyday lives, they provide a shared social and cultural currency and their images, catch-phrases and characters often settle into the sediment of popular memory. Furthermore, we draw on the rich resources of narrative, image, style which circulate within the symbolic worlds of media in thinking about ourselves, who we are and who we might become (14-15).

This brings us to Storey's concept of identities as "roots" as well as "routes" in the process of cultural production and consumption. Storey explores the relations between popular culture, practices of consumption, and identity formation. In particular, he explores the roots and routes of cultural identities, that is, how identities are formed between memory and desire; between memory, with which we seek to ground ourselves in a known past, and desire, which propels us through the present into an unknown future (*Inventing* 78-79). Thus, the roots and routes of identity are staged and performed in culture and with culture (88).

An example in this regard is the song "Dharti Dhoran Ri". This song is the first song of the video part of the DVD, which is itself titled *Colourful Music of Rajasthan*. So, there is this immediate association of 'colourful music of Rajasthan', and, as we proceed with the video, of 'colourful Rajasthan' as well, that is established with the song at the very outset.

The video moves from giving a depiction of the land of the Rajput kings and queens, to showing a land which now belongs to the people (mostly the rural folk of Rajasthan as shown in the video), to a valorization of the Indian flag (hinting at a unified national identity, this serves to appeal to the patriotic sentiment in the Indians in general, and migrated or expatriate Indians as well). The picturesque video is quite interesting, in that it juxtaposes the

land of the brave-hearted with the ordinary people, their lives and their activities, thus drawing in people from all strata of the society, especially Indian. It epitomizes the valour in the land of Rajasthan, the great men, women, saints that hailed from the land of the erstwhile Rajputana/Rajasthan. There are clippings of the great palaces and forts, religious centres, historical photographs as well as photographs of the commoners, folk dances forms and performances, interspersed with recordings of men and women dancing. A person unaware of the actual cultural life of Rajasthan would consider it to be the 'ideal place', without realizing that the Rajasthan that they depict is seldom what it really is. Most of the activities of the folk like women going to fetch water in earthen pitchers, farming, pottery etc. are also enacted ones, with the rustic flavour superimposed by women adorned in clothes and make up, while men wearing squeaky clean clothes to farms. That is not real Rajasthan, or India for that matter! There are also some real-life clippings of men and women dancing in processions, the folk adorned in local ornaments and clothes, which accords a sense of authenticity to the lived life depicted in the video.

Anybody who has the remotest connection to the land (if the person was born or brought up there, or whose ancestors belong to the place, or Rajasthani NRIs, or NRIs in general) would be charmed by the video and the force and vigour of the song, would definitely take pride in being a Rajasthani, or for that matter, Indian. But at the same time, even people unfamiliar to the land would be drawn into the state as a tourist. Even the covers of the CDs are designed to create a visual impact of the richness of the culture and tradition of Rajasthan. So, we see how Storey's concept of the "roots" as well as the "routes" of identity get established through the song, more so through its video.

Creation of Community Identity and Musical Identity through Rajasthani Folk Music in Popular Culture

Saṅgīta, the closest equivalent to the Western concept of music in early Indian thought, was a composite art consisting of three performing components: *gīta* (song), *vādya* (instrumental music), and *nṛtta* (dance), explains Lowell (9-13). Although later in the text, Lowell paraphrases what Śārṅgadeva means by *gīta*, defining it as "a disposition of the elements of melody, with the aim of conveying the underlying accents of passion and bringing delight by means of the diverse colors of human sound" (270).

"Sound unites groups of living beings as nothing else does," wrote Ong (1967) (qtd. in Fackler 104). We can extend this to songs, music, dance, and performing arts as well.

McCarthy et al. are of the opinion that "our fractured cultural identities and our embattled social and spatial locations as immigrants" can be, to some extent, negotiated through cultural values, particularly, music (xviii).

Frith refers to the mysterious power of music in itself, emphasizing that musical experience is special, that it is the way of one person reaching another without deceit (101, author's emphasis deleted). Bhartṛhari, the ancient Indian grammarian, asserted that language cuts forms in the ocean of reality, language constructs reality rather than merely reflecting it. We can extend this to the languages we use of music, and assume that the language of music helps to determine what music is—what we mean by it, and what it means to us (Cook 14). Even Frith maintains that what people listen to is more important for their sense of themselves (100). Even music does not create meaning in isolation, but in interaction with the listeners. (Alexander 259-60)

Although Blacking maintains that the terms in which people make sense of music must be musical; they should be affected by musical symbols like a tune, a sonority, or a whole piece of music, without emphasizing its non-musical attributes (22), one can argue that it is after having made sense of music in musical terms that one extends the process of interpretation of music to "non-musical attributes", such as in trying to make sense of oneself. To use Cook's articulation here "we need to be able not just to hear music but to read it too: not in literal, notational terms . . . but for its significance as an intrinsic part of culture, of society, of you and me" (129). He further insists that "when we study music, we aren't just studying something separate from us, something 'out there': there is a sense in which we are studying ourselves, too" (73). Our musical activities, according to Frith, are central to our understanding of who we are. Music making provides, as Ruth Finnegan argues, critical pathways through life (qtd in Frith100). Music making is less about managing one's own emotional life than about enjoying being together in groups, real and imagined (Frith 100). Thus, music (be it folk or popular) almost always evokes the idea of a community, of a sense of belonging to a particular group. Thus, music not only evokes a 'musical identity', but a 'collective idenitity'.

Musical culture has always leaped across ethnic boundaries with alacrity (Ryan, *Cultural Studies: A Practical* 77). Music is one of the primary ways by which we create and maintain our identities, our sense of who we are and how we fit into the world. Individual and group identities do get formed around music (108). Music both challenges and reaffirms the

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lines that divide people according to differences in race, ethnicity, and social class (111), although one can contend that music unites rather than divide peoples and nations.[20] Music, in my opinion, is one of the best ways to negotiate one's existence in a pluralistic society.

A number of scholars have postulated upon the connection between music, past, memory, and identity. Lewis observes: "People look to specific musics as symbolic anchors in regions, as signs of community, belonging, and a shared past" (qtd. in Whiteley 2). As a "technology of self," Frith believes, music has become crucial to the ways in which people organize memory, identity, their autonomy (98). According to Gilroy, much of music's effectiveness relates to its utility in the complex synthesizing of locally acquired experiences with commonly shared memories and/or collectively held views, opinions and images relating to traditional culture, heritage and, ultimately, a shared point of origin (qtd. in Whiteley 4). Hall and Whannel (1964) argue that popular music, and its associated commodities (such as magazines, concerts, posters and films), are selected in order to explore and establish a sense of identity (Edgar and Sedgwick 288).

Sarrazin has very aptly remarked about film music, which could be applied to any form of music in popular culture in general:

> Film music . . . is used to create culturally meaningful codes that ensure emotional intensity for the audience while stretching to sustain traditional values for one type of audience [that is, Indian] as it satisfied the exotic curiosity of another [that is, the Indian diasporic audience] . . . Song in this context functions as a particular type of universal emotional language, on the basis of an understanding of shared human emotions . . . that allow for transnational audiences to share symbolically in varying images of India. (217)

Research on the role of music in relations to notions of collective identity and community among different diaspora populations has revealed much about the connective properties of music. Music, it has been illustrated, can bond displaced peoples, effectively bridging the geographic distance between them and providing a shared sense of collective identity articulated by a symbolic sense of community. This view is supported by Lipsitz's assertion

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[20] An example in this regard is the recent coverage of the death of *gazal* maestro Mehdi Hassan. Hassan was born in Rajasthan, but moved to Pakistan in his youth. Most of the articles refused to label him as an Indian or a Pakistani singer, and stuck to celebrating his music instead (see Ziya us Salam's "A Voice that Knew No Border" and other articles in *The Hindu* 14 June, 2012). Moreover, Hayat Khan Langa, in a personal interview said that he is frequently invited to sing on the India-Pakistan border. He says swarms of people from the other side of the border come in to listen to him and then go back grooving in the music that they have just heard, reiterating that music knows no boundaries, castes or religion. Such is the linking power of music.

that music functions 'as a device for building unity between and across immigrant communities' (Whiteley 4).

This notion of community and collectivity can also be seen as connoting ethnicity. Ethnicity "denotes the self-awareness on the part of a particular group of its own cultural distinctivenss" (Edgar and Sedgwick 132). It has rightly been observed that "[i]n the positive viewpoint, ethnicity is a warm, comfortable feeling, which gives a sense of belonging to a group of people. In this definition, ethnicity is also about 'shared memories'" (Chaturvedi xiii). While a nation has a definite historic territory or homeland, an ethnie may just have an association with the same; national identity differs from ethnicity by ceding more weight to territorial, economic and legal-political processes (Chaturvedi xv). Thus, ethnic or community connections can exist across political borders, and sometimes, across linguistic territories also. Again, going back to Appadurai, the social, territorial, and cultural reproduction of group identity takes place as groups migrate, regroup in new locations . . . and reconfigure their ethnic projects (48).

Moreover, while one cannot rule out the existence of a nation, one can definitely find flaws in its conceptualization. A footnote in Freitag's study quotes Rowe and Schelling, who find faults with Anderson's concept of 'imagining a nation' in the following words: "The weakness of Anderson's scheme lies precisely in its omission of the role of popular culture . . . and the fact that popular identity did not and does not necessarily correspond with the nation and its boundaries as state but may involve other allegiances of a regional, ethnic or class nature" (393).

In fact, "[t]he emergence of 'hyphenated identities' . . . has been hailed as a force undermining the oppressive identity-producing apparatus of the nation-state, and putting into play new, inclusive, and open-ended notions of belonging" (Stokes 303). The internet is one more vector in the global flows that have shifted nation-state rhetoric from homogeneity to multiculturalism, and nation-state politics from a class basis to an interest basis (Stratton 729). One can therefore assume that musical identity is a safer ground to tread on, because it cuts across all sorts of lines that delimit human existence and identity. Besides, it is also an important pillar of the discourse of community with its potential of interactive communication through websites, blogs, chatrooms, sharing of videos etc., and this 'community' carries with it an additional nostalgic connotation, of referring to a mythic

understanding of the essential 'sharedness' of a way of life before the fragmentation of interpersonal interaction (Stratton 730).

In this context, it is useful to refer to Storey again. Storey notes that the music industry may control and determine the repertoire (what music is produced), but it cannot control and determine how the music is used and moreover, the meaning(s) which it is given by those who use it (*Cultural Studies* 99). It is not only people belonging to the same place, state, or country (fellow countrymen or diasporic audience) that feel a sense of "musical identity" by listening to a particular type of music. Moreover, one does not need to understand the language that the songs are being sung in to *feel* music. "Musical identity" extends far beyond linguistic and geographical borders. Thus, musical tastes are not just derived from our socially-constructed identities, they also help to shape these very identities.

Storey writes about the matrix of music, lyrics, and performance: "[T]he meaning of a song cannot be reduced to the words on the page . . . Lyrics are written to be performed. They only really come to life in the performance of a singer . . . the noises around the words—the inability, for example, to find the right words and therefore to make do with everyday language—is the sign of real emotion and sincerity" (*Cultural Studies* 106).

This explains why people who speak in different tongues, Rajasthanis or non-Rajasthanis, Indians or foreigners, all of them can relate to Rajasthani folk music or, more specifically, Rajasthani folk music in popular culture.[21] In my opinion, music and the cultural ethos of the song is important, not the language. We should perhaps change the vocabulary from "linguistic areas" and "geographical areas" to "musical areas" as it might be better suited to the purpose of this research. For Anthony Seeger, musical areas "permit generalizations over a larger area geographic or cultural than the individually described 'tribe' or community" (98). Thus, it is not difficult to understand how music has always travelled, establishing lasting dialogues between communities (Stokes 307).

Seema Mishra, a popular Rajasthani singer, admits that there is even more craze for Rajasthani folk songs and stage performances in non-Rajasthani audiences, since they get very less exposure to the rich repertoire of Rajasthani folk songs. In fact, even among the non-resident Rajasthani population, people of all age-groups are equally enthusiastic about the stage shows and Rajasthani folk music in general, be they young people, teenagers, or the

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[21] I met Anantha Krishnan at RIFF 2011, who was from the southern part of India and did not understand Rajasthani, was there just because he loved music. He said he had just come to appreciate music.

older folk.[22] In the times bygone, folk songs were memorized by everyone and sang as an act of community recreation. Today, we are divided by time and space, are not 'so much' in touch with folk culture, but we imaginatively identify with a community when we listen to a song in popular culture. This is true of Rajasthani folk songs also. The popularity of Rajasthani folk songs is attested to by the fact that as an Assamese folk singer, Milan Newar Amatya, also sings Rajasthani folk songs (Mishra, Telephone Interview).

The effect of performance on the audience can be explained by referring to an Indian aesthetician and philosopher, Abhinavagupta. In a rather important footnote within his study *The Aesthetic Experience According to Abhinavagupta*, Raniero Gnoli makes a very interesting remark pertinent to the immediately preceding discussion. Gnoli explains that according to Abhinavagupta, "the pleasure given by a spectacle increases when there are a large number of spectators . . . [that is] when each spectator is conscious that the spectacle is being seen at the same time by a number of other people"[23] (57). This can serve to explain why people, irrespective of where they come from, what language they speak in, and how they understand music—can *feel* music and become with the other spectators and audience and get immersed in, what I call, 'musical delight'. According to Verma, "[t]he audience merges with the artiste just as the art blends with life. Even when there is a professional performer he is less of an outside entertainer and more of a designated alter ego, giving expression to his audience's thoughts, voice to its songs" (B-1).

We can extend this discussion further. Roland Barthes (1977) writes of an escape from the 'tyranny of meaning'. Taking cue from Barthes, Storey notes:

> The pleasure and power of popular music is not in the performance of emotion but in the emotion of performance. Barthes's argument is part of a general argument about the difference between 'plaisir' and 'jouissance'. Plaisir refers to 'a pleasure . . . linked to cultural enjoyment and identity . . . It is the pleasure of convention and recognition. Jouissance, on the other hand, refres to orgasmic moments of release, beyond meaning. (*Cultural Studies* 106-07)

As explained by Abhinavagupta, *rasa* is uniquely one, but differently experienced by different people. Everybody would like a particular song, would be aesthetically inclined to that song, but would receive the song differently. Chaney argues that "the meaning and significance of any one performance will differ as it is appropriated within the discursive

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[22] Telephone Interview.

[23] A detailed discussion of the *rasa* or 'aesthetic pleasure' tasted by the audience during a performance can be found in Rangacharya and Gnoli.

framework of each audience" (35). In the context of the present research, we can safely assume that Rajasthani folk music floating in popular culture invites people, even if they are not Rajasthani, or even Indians, not to find meaning, but to get lost in music, to be overwhelmed by jouissance (Storey, *Cultural Studies* 107). But, at the same time, to acknowledge that a song's significance cannot be reduced to its lyrical content should not lead to a dismissal of the importance of the words of the song altogether (108).

An example which can be cited in this regard is that of the website of Veena Music. The home page of the official website of Veena, a record company which especially deals with Rajasthani folk music, read thus on 6 May 2011: "The company now envisages to attract non Rajasthani people towards Rajasthani folk music and songs." Sometimes, CDs claim to be authentic folk recordings or even "[r]are [c]ollections of [f]olk songs",[24] which could be read as a strategy to attract not only Rajasthani music lovers form the state, but also more and more non-Rajasthani (Hindi or non-Hindi speakers alike) buyers, migrated or diasporic Rajasthanis, or even foreigners who are music-lovers.

For those who fear that this sort of an interaction may lead to a homogenization of cultures, Cook has something to clarify: "To be sure, music can establish a point of connection between cultures. But it cannot abolish cultural differences at a stroke. At best it might be seen as a vantage point for becoming better aware of cultural difference; after all, differences stands out best against a background of similarity" (Cook 127).

Thus, we have seen how Rajasthani folk music in popular culture serves as a contact zone for linguistically, geographically, and historically separated people to come into contact with each other and interact with each other. It leads to a 'musical identity' that does not conform to any border, be it political, linguistic, social or cultural. This 'musical identity' is created by people from different strata of the society, from different regions of India and the world, people speaking different languages and Rajasthani people alike. This identity, I believe, is one that is a miniscule portion of the multiple 'imagined' selves. In fact, in addition to the different types of audience, the force of this identity pervades the song, the composer, the performer, the receptor, the organizer, as well as the promoter. In that sense, 'musical identity' can be taken to be the fulcrum around which everything and everyone associated with music rotates. In the Indian tradition, we move from *bhed* (difference) to

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[24] Appearing on the cover of *Allah Jilai Bai* by Veena Music.

abhed (unity), that is, from differences to unity, whereas Western mind is ethnographic.[25] This discovery of a 'unitary musical identity' created through the transmission of Rajasthani folk songs and music in popular culture can thus, at best, serve as a paean to the Indian tradition which unites, rather than differentiates.

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[25] While most ancient Indian theories will testify to this, these words have been taken from Prof. Kapil Kapoor's lecture on comparative Indian aesthetics.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing study examined the renditions of Rajasthani folk songs and music in popular culture, the various debates surrounding this transformation, the different factors affecting this 're-inventing', and also how such renderings lead to meaning making for the audience, and culminate into the formations of identities.

The study demonstrated how there is both the necessity of 'reviving' Rajasthani folk songs, as well as ensuring that it maintains its stylistic and cultural specificities. This has to be borne in mind even as we celebrate changes happening on the national or global level. Moreover, we discovered how the differentiation between 'authentic', 'traditional', 'folk' music and or 'inauthentic', 'commercial' and 'popular' music is a belief strongly held by some of the performers of folk music, and the 'purists', that is, the organizers of folk festivals or self-appointed guardians of folk musical traditions. However, we do not really need to worry much about these debates since 'folk', as we saw, is a category which is fluid and constantly keeps changing. There is no 'original' folk version: there can only be an 'old' or 'older' folk version. So, innovation should be given a fair place, and fusions and collaborations should be welcome if they do not rob the original folk music of its essence. It gives a new platform to folk music, and is also necessary to give a new life-breath to folk music and folk arts and ensure their continuation, survival and demand.

But this does not rule out the fact that we should define the ethics of this trade. Issues of authorship, copyright, and intellectual property rights can be settled by giving proper 'acknowledgement' or royalty to the folk composer, singer, or performer, as the case may be. We should learn to share music and traditions under the rubric of ethics of exchange, and neither party should stand a loss.

The positive aspect of this trend is that Rajasthani folk music, and by extension, Rajasthani culture becomes tangible, material, and accessible, coming down from the ivory tower. This practice also gives an afterlife to Rajasthani folk music and folk performance traditions. But the flip side of it is that the forces of the market (both political and economic) sometimes metamorphose folk music into a commodity, and commodity involves faddism and fetishism, to borrow a Marxian term. Thus, we have to be wary of the latter tendency and try to find a

mid-way. Even if we call it commodification, it is important, because otherwise, the folk art would die. Even though the popular version of Rajasthani folk songs it sometimes pastiched, it is nevertheless a survival. There is preservation happening, in whichever form. This sort of a repackaging should hence be desirable.

The study of cultural industries has also enlightened us about industry systems and about globalization. As we talk about transitions of Rajasthani folk songs and music into popular music, we cannot forget the forces and the reasons working behind these transformations. The impact of world forces like globalization, demographic redistribution due to large-scale migrations, and closer home, changes like the liberalization of the economy in the 1990s, coupled with advancements in media and technology, and the upsurge in the tourism sector in Rajasthan have all contributed to a great extent in the popularizing of Rajasthani folk music, the creation of demand for the same, as well as the phenomenon of supply of Rajasthani folk music in popular culture. Amidst all these changes and agents, the audience is the central driving force in the entire circuit of this passage of Rajasthani music from folk to popular. Taking cue from Jensen, one can conclude that his interpretive audience-oriented approach demonstrates the usefulness of understanding popular culture not only as texts or industrial products, but as experience (99).

In addition, the chapter also reassured the traditionalists that this chain of production and distribution does not necessarily lead to homogenization of Rajasthani folk genres. On the contrary, it thrives on the maintenance of these 'differences'. However, it does lead to some anti-social practices like the growth of piracy of Rajasthani folk music. Nevertheless, the brighter side of this seemingly 'unhealthy' practice is that it ensures the popularity and wider dissemination of Rajasthani folk music in the form of cassettes and CDs.

We have seen how the new economic system (the free market or global capitalism) pervades and affects most of the globe; and how technologies can overcome geographical distances to the extent that we appear to live in a borderless world. The transnational and transmedia terrain of popular culture reframes relationships between geography, cultural production, and cultural identities.

Having seen how the audience or the consumers in the circuit of culture are pivotal to the entire conundrum of culture and consumption, we also went on to explore how the audience make meanings from popular cultural adaptations of Rajasthani folk songs and music, and not folk music per se (which is generally inaccessible, or the audience is not really enterprising enough to seek out for 'real' folk music). The meanings associated with popular culture, which are produced, circulated, and exchanged are complex and fluid; they cannot be easily compartmentalized into one or the other, or easily straitjacketed as simple transmission of particular types of messages.

We discovered how the production of meaning is a social process, and how the concept of identity is fluid and cannot be easily defined. While acknowledging the dynamism, hybridity, and heterogeneity involved in the term identity, the research brought to light the creation of community identities and a 'musical identity'. In reading how people interpret texts, the last chapter analyzed the discursive construction of identity through the medium of music, or, more specifically, Rajasthani folk music in popular culture. This also points to the subjective processing of cultural experience.

The renditions of Rajasthani folk songs in popular culture serve as sites of construction of one out of the "plurality of imagined selves". Rajasthani folk songs and music in popular culture provide Rajasthanis, non-resident Rajasthanis, Indians, as well as the Indian diaspora with the resources to construct new subjectivities. This involves aural and audio-visual constructions of a community or group identity. In addition, these sort of transformations lead to the construction of a musical identity which does not conform to any political, linguistic, social or cultural border/s. This 'musical identity' is not only created by people from different rung of the society and from different regions of India and the world, but also by people speaking different languages. This is because the language of music is far more inclusive than any scientific language. In fact, the force of this identity pervades the song, the composer, the performer, the receptor, the organizer, the promoter, and the audience, forming a unified 'musical whole', where every person can understand the tongue of every other person, immersed as everyone is in a single aesthetic experience, which is experienced because of the availability of Rajasthani folk music in popular culture.

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ANNEXURES

Folk Performers at the Resort in Jaisalmer, Dec. 2010.

Kalbelia Dance at the Resort in Jailsalmer, Dec. 2010.

The Folk Performers and the Tourists Dancing on the DJ, Jaisalmer, Dec. 2010.

A Tourist Trying on the Rajasthani *Safa*, Jaisalmer, Dec. 2010.

Tourists from the Resort Heading towards the Desert to Watch Sunset, Dec. 2010.

A View of the Thar Desert, Jaisalmer, Dec. 2010

Devotional Performance Organized at Khatu Shyamji, Rajasthan, Dec. 2010.

Rajasthani Folk Performers Performing Dusk Devotions at RIFF, Oct. 2011.

Dusk Devotions at RIFF, Oct. 2011 (Photo Courtesy: RIFF on Facebook)

The Manganiyars Performing at RIFF, Oct. 2011 (Photo Courtesy: RIFF on Facebook)

The Swang Performers performing at RIFF, Oct. 2011

Rupa and the April Fishes (USA) Performing with Rajasthani Folk Artists at RIFF, Oct. 2011
(Photo Courtesy: RIFF on Facebook)

The Kathuria Tribals Performing at RIFF, Oct. 2011

Yuri Honning Wired Paradise (Amsterdam) Performing with Rajasthani Folk Artists (Photo Courtesy: RIFF on Facebook)

The Kathuria Tribes (Men and Women Peforming Together) at RIFF, 2011.

From L to R: Kuldeep Kotahri, Hayat Khan Langa and the Researcher at Rupayan Sansthan, June 2012.

The Collection of Musical Instruments at Rupayan Sansthan, Shrawan Kumar Meghwal, and the Researcher, June 2012.

A Screen Shot from *The Manganiyar Seduction* (Courtesy: YouTube)

Padmashri Komal Kothari