What is *Khyal?*—A Critique of Wade's *Khyal:* Creativity Within North India's Classical Music Tradition

Mukund Lath

This book has all the trappings of an impressive production. It is published by a University with as great a tradition of scholarship as *khyal* has of creativity, a tradition with a history certainly older than that of *khyal.* The 350-odd pages that the book contains are beautifully printed with numerous impeccably drawn charts of *sargam*-s and *gharana* genealogies and well reproduced photographs of well-known musicians. Its appearance is sober but attractive, befitting the scholarly series of which it is a part. This appearance invites respect despite the fact that the banner "ethnomusicology", under which it is published, has certain unsavoury suggestions and echoes of references to a comparatively "lower" art, practised by traditional, "third-world" communities, stagnant rather than creative. One would not write about Western classical music under this banner.

I must hasten to add, however, that Bonnie C. Wade's attitude towards her subject has no ethnomusicological overtones in any pejorative sense. Quite the contrary, she has, in fact, great admiration for *khyal* as an art-form. Maybe the meaning of the term "ethnomusicology" is changing, as many students of the subject claim. But then why not do away with the word? Is not "musicology" adequate?

But no matter what the name of the series, a book from Cambridge is bound to arouse great expectations. A student will turn to the book hoping that here at last is something definitive on *khyal.* He will be disappointed. The book does not offer much more than the musically not very illuminating books we already have in Hindi and Marathi.

Wade begins with a short chapter on the history of the social context and patronage of *khyal.* The second chapter, again a short one, defines *khyal* as a musical genre. The next six longer chapters are devoted to six *khyal gharana*-s namely Gwalior, Agra, Sahaswan/Rampur, Alladiya Khan, Kirana and finally Patiala. Chapter Nine, 'On Individuality', concerns those *khyal* singers who have attained a style so individual that it cannot be boxed within any particular *gharana.* One is surprised here to miss celebrities like Kumar Gandharva and Pandit Jasraj though a

contemporary, Manik Verma, is included. Indeed, well-known creative musicians, who do not fit into the six *gharana*-s which Wade deals with, are missed out, while comparatively minor ones, if they belong to the six chosen *gharana*-s, find a place in the book. The reason is simple; Wade considers *gharana* to be the backbone of *khyal,* responsible both for its preservation and its continuing creativity. Her final chapter, entitled 'Conclusion', which contains some reflections on *gharana,* ends with the rueful note that the current shift away from the *gharana* towards the growing 'star system', in which the emphasis is entirely on individual performers who "prefer to combine aspects of several *gharana* musical styles, could disturb the delicate balance between tradition and creativity which has characterised *khyal* as a genre". This, she adds, could lead either to conservatism or too radical a change, more radical "than has taken place in North Indian music in several hundred years". Having made this sweeping, unwarranted and ignorant comment about the last few hundred years of Indian music, she tries to balance it by making an equally unthinking remark which contradicts it. "But in India", she writes, "even that has always been so".

To be charitable to her, I do not think she really means to say anything by this seemingly profound and aphoristic remark, which is the last sentence in her book. Probably she felt that as a scientist her job was only to analyse and describe, and that she was overreaching herself in passing judgements that could be taken as prescriptive. That last remark looks to me like a hasty, half-conscious attempt at withdrawing the earlier one.

Gharana, for Wade, is not only the backbone which upholds *khyal* and gives it vitality, but also the key for comprehending it in its various aspects, historical as well as formal. This is plainly unsatisfactory. Interesting though *gharana* is as a social and historical phenomenon, it is not a fruitful basis for understanding *khyal* as a musical form. The problems in Deshpande's much-discussed attempt (in *Gharandaj Gayaki*) to do so, should have warned Wade to look for other, more structure-oriented categories for discussing different ways of rendering *khyal.*

Wade herself spells out some problems and complications in trying to understand the very notion of a *gharana.* Her book begins with an effort to grapple with the concept (pp. 2-5). To explain what *gharana* means, she takes as her basis the attempt at a definition of *gharana* made by Neuman in his book *The Life of Music in North India* (1980). The term, he had admitted, was loose and ambiguous; its closest equivalent in the West, he says, is an 'intellectual circle'. The *gharana,* according to him, consists of a group of musicians who formulate, share and represent a musical style. What distinguishes a *gharana* from an intellectual circle is, in Neuman's opinion, the familial nature of the *gharana* as an institution, with a lineage of hereditary musicians. Thus a group with both a distinct style and a distinct familial pedigree is what makes a *gharana,* style being the more definitive of these two elements. Style, he says, is what binds the group together. The style, it is further stipulated, should have endured through three generations of continuous cultivation (a feature associated with *gharana* by Deshpande).

Wade realises that, vague and accommodating as this definition is, it cannot yet be applied to all the six *gharana*-s she has picked out as distinct groups worthy of that status. She discovers that it is flawed with *avyapti* (leaving groups out which are truly *gharana*-s). She thus seeks to refine the definition. A *gharana,* she says, need not consist of a single lineage of hereditary musicians, it may consist of several lineages. "A distinction", she remarks, "can be made between a lineage which is the 'founding family' of the *khyal* style and a lineage which has become successor to the tradition". She finds it necessary to make this distinction and enlarge the definition, for otherwise Gwalior—considered by some as the oldest of *gharana*-s and 'father' of others—cannot be included within the fold of the chosen six. That will be a serious *avyapti,* indeed. "In the Gwalior *gharana",* she writes, "the oldest of the *khyal gharana*-s, the lineage of hereditary musicians who were the founding family of the *khyal* style is extinct; a different family of hereditary musicians (the Pandits) who were trained into the tradition by the founding family carries on the tradition of family transmission".

But this refinement—or rather enlargement—of the definition she finds, is not enough. It must be enlarged further, made more loose. Gwalior had a lineage of the 'founding family' which may now be extinct and taken over by a very different family (the earlier family being the Muslim; the successor family Hindu Brahmin!), but there *was* such a lineage. But this stipulation has to be 'refined' away if we must recognise 'Alladiya Khan' as a separate *gharana.* For, as Wade points out, no other member of the family of musicians to which Alladiya Khan belonged, ever cultivated his *khyal* style. And yet how can we leave 'Alladiya Khan' out of the *gharana* fold? Wade makes it qualify as a *gharana* on the ground that "two of his (Alladiya's) eminent successors are a mother and a daughter". So there is a familial continuity even though the founding family had no musical lineage. This raises the question whether 'Alladiya Khan' would have qualified if the two continuous successors were not mother and daughter but mother and her distant niece, or two quite unrelated disciples in two successive generations. Thus arises the basic question whether family connections are really important for there to be a *gharana.* Wade herself states that family ties need have nothing to do with the continuation of a *gharana.* "Thus", she writes, "consideration of disciples in *gharana*-s allows for the exploration of relationships between families of hereditary musicians and musicians not related by family ties. Non-family musicians have been prominent in the cultivation of *khyal*". Ties of discipleship, she remarks, can be the same as family ties "if the teacher so chooses".

But if this is so, what happens to the definition of *gharana* we began with? It was extended to save it from serious *avyapti*-s, but now it has become so loose and large—so *ativyapta,* in other words—that it is applicable to any *guru-shishya-parampara!* Transmission from a teacher to a taught has always been central to the transmission of any knowledge, be it music or any other art or science, in India or any other country. And when the art or science transmitted is a specialised body of knowledge, then the relation between teacher and taught is often a close relationship even in the so called non-traditional societies. Wade's moves help us realise that the distinction Neuman makes between a *gharana* and an 'intellectual circle' is quite tenuous.

Another feature Wade considers necessary to mark a group as a *gharana* is that it should have persisted over three generations both as a style and a pedigree with a hereditary family lineage. Thus Delhi *gharana,* though claiming to be a *gharana* and generally called so, is not granted *gharana*-hood by Wade because it lacks the necessary continuity of group style, although it possesses the other qualification: a hereditary family pedigree. 'Amir Khan' is granted a group and a group style—the group having no family connection with Amir Khan—but, says Wade, "whether it will become a *gharana* is yet to be seen." Followers of Amir Khan are now surely in the second generation, but that is not enough for Wade. The style should persist for another generation or two before she would be prepared to consider it as a *gharana.* Wade does not even speak of a Mewati or a Kumar Gandharva *gharana* though both have a group following and Mewati also has the desired pedigree (its group following is perhaps more recent).

The idea of a *gharana* being a group style, having in common certain important features of delineating *khyal,* seems relevant and valuable, like the notion of an intellectual circle in the realm of thought and of a school or a *qalam* in painting. But a continuity of three generations is not required as a necessary mark of an intellectual circle or a *qalam.* Why should it be so for *gharana*? The stipulation seems quite arbitrary and deliberately tailored to restrict the use of the term to a chosen group of six.

To insist on a persistence of group style over three or more generations before it can become a *gharana* has yet another fundamental problem where *khyal* is concerned. As Wade rightly points out, the transmission of musical knowledge is of basic importance in the concept of *gharana,* as it would be in any *guru-shishya-parampara.* But let us also not forget that ways of improvising and innovating are of central importance in what is transmitted in *khyal.* Every generation significantly transforms what it has received. The process of transformation is built into the very process of transmission. How, then, can we be sure if an identifiable group style has been retained? What we have of the old comes in a new garb, especially from before the age of recorded music.

Furthermore, innovation in art is not a group phenomenon but a highly individual matter. Wade is aware of this. No wonder, therefore, that she remarks, "even in the earliest history of *khyal,* contributions of individual musicians were consistently important and, indeed, frequently formed the basis of what has become associated with family or *gharana* style." Again, "some characteristics of individual style, however, remain associated with the individual artist rather than being subsumed into a group style". If individuality *is* so strong and *has been* always "consistently important", how then do we at all arrive at a group style, and one which has moreover persisted over at least three generations? Presumably there is a core which survives. But attempts at describing this core have resulted in the vaguest of accounts, quite unenlightening as to the musical content of a style. Wade's is no exception. One has only to see her table (no. 10-1 at pp. 276-277) entitled *'Khyal: characteristics of six gharanas'* to realise this:

Table 10-1. *Khyal: characteristics of six gharanas*

Characteristics	Gwalior	Agra	Sahaswan/Rampur	Alladiya Khan	Kirana	Patiala
1. Vocal technique		Aggressive		Elasticity, flexibility	Long, sustained pitches	Emphasis on developing the voice
a. quality		Powerful				
b. range	Wide		Wide	Open		Emphasis on lower register
c. ornamentation					*Kan, mind*	
2. Choice of *ragas*				Complex *ragas*	Traditional *ragas*	
				Rare *ragas*	No combined *ragas*	
3. Choice of *talas*				Emphasis on *tintal*		Emphasis on variety
4. Repertoire		Traditional and new compositions (i.e., emphasis on composing)	Large, including composing new songs		Traditional	
5. Performance speed level				Slow	Slowest	
					De-emphasis on fast speed	
a. acceleration			Slight in *bara khyal*		Slight in *bara khyal*	
6. General emphasis	Balanced emphasis on melody and rhythm	Rhythmic play	*Svara* (melody over rhythm)	Contrast	Vocal expressiveness	Balanced emphasis on melody and rhythm
	Contrast	Elements close to *dhrupad*		Rhythmic play	Emphasis on melody (*alap*) (i.e., minimum rhythmic play)	
				Close to *dhrupad*		
7. Structure of *bara khyal*						
a. pre-*ciz alap*	*Ciz*-like (tuneful)	Might be lengthy				
b. initial	Slow speed *sthai* → improv. → *antara;*	Slow speed: *sthai* → improv. → *antara*	*Sthai* & *antara* → improv.			Might omit *antara*
c. presentation of *ciz*	Medium speed: *sthai* & *antara* → improv. OR *sthai* → improv. → *antara*					
8. Improvisation						
a. *nom-tom*		*Nom-tom*-like singing		Some *nom-tom*-like improv.		
b. *bolbant*	Emphasized	Emphasized (less, recently)	Relatively little	Emphasized	Minimal	*Bolbant*-like *sargam*
c. *boltan*	Emphasized	Emphasized	Little	Emphasized	Occasional	Occasional
d. *sargam*	None	A little, recently	Judicious	In *alap* & elsewhere	Emphasized	Emphasized, *alap* & elsewhere
e. *tan*	Descending *sapat*, melodic leaps, *alankarik*, wide range	Relatively slow, clarity emphasized	*Sapat*, melodic leaps	Rippling, roller-coaster shape		Variety emphasized
9. Miscellaneous	Slow-speed *bara khyal* for *alap*-type improv.	All of *ciz* text used throughout improv.	Use of dynamics	Large proportion of performance time on *tans*	Clear text, but mostly *mukhda* phrase	All of *ciz* text used throughout improv.
	Medium-speed *bara khyal* emphasizes rhythm more	Wilful enunciation or 'mumbling' of text, for reasons of rhythm	Multiple types of improv. within one *tala* cycle		Vowels other than 'a' for sustained melody	Text & *sargam* combined in one *tala* cycle
	Active musical relationship with accompanist is likely	Active musical relationship with accompanist is likely			Use of dynamics	

(The numbering of the items is not in the original).

What can one make of such a table? One fails to find any logic in it if *gharana* is to be understood as style—though one must grant that it mirrors the kind of vague, mixed-up and incoherent judgements through which *gharana*-s are popularly distinguished, judgements containing a jumble of statements where features relevant to style are confounded indiscriminately with more accidental, historical traits contingent to style. One would have thought that Wade would help to get us out of this popular confusion.

One might, however, expect that her descriptions here are incomplete by necessity of space; they only sum up what has been described in greater and more specific detail and musical content earlier in the book. But this is hardly so. Let me illustrate with an example or two.

Take item two, choice of *raga*. One wonders what that has to do with style. A *khyal* can be sung to any *raga*. But perhaps Wade has a point. Perhaps what she means is that there are certain *raga*-s which have such an intimate affinity with certain *gharana* styles that *gharana*-s come into their own in them and are projected best in them, just as *thumri* comes into its own in *raga*-s like Pilu, Khamaj or Bhairavi and is projected best through them. It would be a significant enterprise to show such affinities, and to explore certain *raga* structures and reveal their more-than-contingent amenability to certain *gharana* styles. Wade does not make such an exploration.

In fact her definition of *khyal* itself as a style remains sketchy. It leaves essential questions unexplored. A question one is bound to ask about *khyal* is how it differs from *dhrupad*, and how from *thumri*. This difference is essential to our understanding of *khyal*. We speak of the style of certain singers as *dhrupad*-like, of others as *thumri*-like. Wade herself in her table uses such language. In item six, 'general emphasis' (in rendering of rhythm), she describes Agra as having elements close to *dhrupad* and Alladiya Khan, with the words: 'contrast/rhythmic play close to *dhrupad*'. One would expect from her a more detailed elaboration of a phrase like 'close to *dhrupad*' in terms of musical structures. A similar understanding of the differences between *dhrupad* and *khyal* is assumed in item eight which seeks to distinguish *gharana*-s on the basis of 'improvisation' under which are noted elements such as *nom-tom*. Agra has '*nom-tom*-like singing' and Alladiya Khan 'some *nom-tom*-like improvisation'. Even if we slide over the difference between 'singing' and 'improvisation' in this context, we must still ask how the *nom-tom* in these *khyal gharana*-s differs from the *nom-tom* of *dhrupad* singers.

Wade does give more body to such phrases. Comparison and contrast with *dhrupad* occurs quite frequently in her more detailed description of the *gharana* styles of Agra and Alladiya Khan and she has some interesting and structurally probing things to say. But her comments are like those made by good connoisseurs of music who *assume* the difference between *khyal* and *dhrupad* as known and understood. Surely a musicologist should not do that. He must spell out the differences more systematically in as great and basic a structural detail as possible. Such an undertaking will pose many problems, for *dhrupad* and *khyal* overlap in many ways. But it is just such an undertaking that makes musicology or *sangita-shastra* significant as a *lakshana-shastra* (the science of analysing and describing musical structure).

Wade is just not interested in such an undertaking. Her small chapter (ch. 2), concerned with defining *khyal* as genre, is poor. She hardly probes into the difference between *khyal* and *dhrupad* and *thumri*. No attempt is made to spell out the distinction between these genres in terms of basic musical idiom, that is to say the different kinds of movements that they make, phrases that they construct and *alamkara*-s that they use. These genres are not only *sung* genres. Their difference is quite as evident in *playing*. Any distinction made between them which does not recognize this central fact is bound to be weak and deficient in true musical terms. Elements of these genres that can only be sung and not played are relatively contingent in basic musical terms. Even an ancient *acharya* like Bharata, writing two thousand years ago, discriminated between the more basic musical elements of a genre (the *gandharva* which he had set out to describe), analysing and describing it in terms applicable to both singing and playing and separating this from less basic elements peculiar to singing or playing.

Describing *khyal* purely in terms of song, Wade is unable to discriminate between *khyal, dhrupad* and *thumri* in basic musical terms. The following is her list of characteristics that "distinguish *khyal* as a genre, and which are available to all *khyal singers*" (italics mine):

> The characteristics that distinguish *khyal* as a genre are of three types: (1) the particular musical materials that can be utilised, that is the *raga* (melodic mode), the *tala* (meter) and the *ciz* (the composition itself); (2) the selection of types of improvisation which are acceptable for *khyal*, that is, *alap, tan, boltan, bolbant, sargam* and *nom-tom;* and (3) the placement of all those materials for the creation of a formally balanced and aesthetically pleasing performance.

This is practically all that we get from her by way of a definition. No exposition is given of large concepts like *raga* and *tala*. Seven *tala*-s, popularly used, are listed, and *rupak* is said to have 'six counts' (p. 13). The little she has to say about *alap* (p. 27) includes nothing about this most essential element of serious music making in India. All she has to comment is that "the ways in which *alap* is carried out by different *khyaliya*-s are numerous", one major distinction being that some sing *alap* on vowels, others on vocables such as 'de' 'na'!

After listing the characteristics that make *khyal* (in the passage quoted above), she notes that complex combination of these makes *khyal* and distinguishes it as a genre. Though she realises that there are problems here, and more is needed to separate *khyal* from other genres, she still fails to tackle the problem properly, and makes short work of it:

> Placement of the *raga, tala,* and composition at the outset occurs in *tarana* and in *thumri,* but not in the majestic *alap-dhrupad*. Likewise, while other vocal genres include a selection of types of improvisation, only *khyal* includes the particular package consisting of *alap, tan, boltan, bolbant, sargam* and *nom-tom. Alap, bolbant* and *nom-tom,* for instance, are utilised in the genre *alap-dhrupad,* but not *tan, bolbant* or *sargam*.

This is practically all she has to say on the important question of distinguishing *khyal* from other genres. We find, curiously, that *tarana* is named as a genre separate from *khyal* in the same sense as *dhrupad* or *thumri*. She should only have asked: can it be played? She also names a genre called *alap-dhrupad*. Is this different from *dhrupad?* We are not told. One would also like to ask her whether it is merely the absence of *tan, boltan* or *sargam* that distinguishes *dhrupad* from *khyal*. Will use of *sargam* make a *dhrupad* a non-*dhrupad?* I have heard *dhrupadi*-s use *sargam* to great effect and that did not make their singing *khyal*. Need *khyal* necessarily use *tan?* Will its absence make it non-*khyal?* If so, we shall have to call some great *khyal* performances non-*khyal*. Wade speaks of *alap* and *nom-tom* as two separate elements both employed in what she calls *alap-dhrupad*. How is *nom-tom* separate from *alap* in *dhrupad? Nom-tom* is the name for syllables used in singing *alap* in *dhrupad*. The real question is: is the use of syllables called *nom-tom* all that distinguishes *alap* in *dhrupad* and *khyal?* Wade appears to think so. She does not ask the important question: what distinguishes them when they are played? The distinction we would find in playing would be central in singing too. Surely the *dhrupad*-style *alap* on the rudravina is not the same as the *khyal*-style *alap* by Nikhil Bannerji on the sitar. It is there that the basis of the distinction must be looked for, in the different kinds of musical movements made, phrases rendered, *alamkara*-s used.

Making *gharana* the basis for studying *khyal* leads her to consider *khyal* only as song. The larger part of the small second chapter consists of *khyal* texts with translations. One would expect these to be correctly written and translated. They are written in *nagari* with an aim at authenticity, apparently, but they are full of misspellings. The very first text (on p. 12), a well-known *khyal*, is written दैयां बठ दूभर भई. It should be दैया बट दूभर भई. The only excuse for such a mistake can be that some singer or singers sing it that way. But the text is and can be distorted in many ways. There seems no reason to accept a particular distortion as the 'standard' one. When the text is written it should be written with the standard spelling, not a favourite distortion. Almost every text has such mistakes. Let me note one or two more conspicuous ones: फिर is written as फीर. किस्मत लावे is written as किस्मत लान. अनेक रंग तरंग उपजावत is written as अने का रंग गतरंग उप जावत. Translations are not too good. One is atrocious: म्हारा रसिया बाल्मा थाने चाहे (should be चाहूं) हो राज. This is translated as, "O my handsome husband! I wish you to be a king". This Marwari line really means: "O my passionate lover/husband, I love you, my king". हो राज is a favourite phrase in Marwari love songs for addressing the lover/husband.

The *gharana* looms too large in Wade's understanding of *khyal*, being the source of what goes wrong with her book. She could have realised that the so-called *gharana*-s are just an episode in the history of *khyal*. Quoting the *Rag-Darpan* of Faqirullah (17th century), she speaks of two *khyal* singers in the court of Shahjahan. One of them was a Rajput named Ide Singh, a grandson of Raja Ram Singh of Kharagpur. He was proficient in composing *khyal* and *tarana*. Another was ascetic, Sheikh Bahauddin, who also composed *dhrupad* besides *khyal* and *tarana*. It is difficult to think of either of them as belonging to what we today call a *gharana*, unless we mean no more than a *guru-shishya-parampara* by that word. We cannot imagine the grandson of a raja to have been a hereditary musician, a member of a *gharana* system, such as we associate with more recent *khyal*.

One might argue that the age of Shahjahan was not really the age of *khyal* which was then only a nascent form. But this cannot be said of the *khyal* in the eighteenth century. There is now *in print* an eye-witness—and an ear-witness—account of *khyal* in Delhi during the period of Mohammad Shah 'Rangile' which no study of *khyal* can ignore. Wade is unaware of it though it was published in 1982; her own study was published in 1984. Perhaps the interim period was not enough for the earlier publication to become part of the general bibliography of music, a field which in any case is hardly well organised. (What is more surprising is the fact that Wade seems also unaware of S. K. Chaube's *Sangit ke Gharanom ki Carca,* published in 1977).

The eye-witness account I am speaking of is the *Muraqqa-e-Dehli.* It was written by Dargah Quli Khan, Salarjung who lived in Delhi for three years, from 1738 to 1741, during the rule of Mohammad Shah. We have from him a fascinating description of the Delhi he saw and the many musicians he heard. His Persian text has now been published with an Urdu translation by the Department of Urdu, University of Delhi.

The list of musicians that Dargah Quli describes is long. A major portion of it consists of *khyal* singers. He speaks of no less than seventeen musicians much admired for their *khyal* singing, many of them women and some very young beardless boys (*amrad*-s) who were much in favour during those days. In Delhi, at least, *khyal* was as popular a form as it is today. Only two *dhrupad* singers are named.

The *khyal* scene during Mohammad Shah's reign which Dargah Quli paints for us upsets much of the received picture we have of *khyal* history. It appears as complex and creative as the *khyal* scene today. *Gharana* as a 'group style' with 'familial' ties seems conspicuously absent. What is more evident is something like a modern 'star system', which Wade deplores, with individuals asserting themselves and shining out on their own.

Dargah Quli speaks of Nyamat Khan, also known for his bin playing, as the greatest of the many *khyal* singers in Delhi, comparing him to the *nayaka*-s of old for his mastery over *raga*-s, his technical excellence and his creativity in composing new *khyal*-s. Nyamat Khan, celebrated in the history of music as Sadarang, is the man to whom *khyal* as we know it today is traced back. It is believed that, looking to the taste of his times and that of his patron, the king, he moulded the severe *dhrupad* into the pliant *khyal,* though he never sang it himself. He taught it to two young boys, two *qawwal bacche* through whom the style became popular. (See, for example, Neumann, op. cit., p. 134.) The *gharana*-s, in many accounts, are said to have come out of the progeny of these *qawwal bacche.* Thus is a link established between Nyamat Khan, Sadarang, the chief architect of *khyal,* and the *gharana*-s.

A look at the *Muraqqa-e-Dehli* shows that this picture is mostly a myth. It is in all likelihood a myth created by the *gharana*-s themselves, and Wade, too, tacitly assumes it. Dargah Quli's account shows that Nyamat Khan was only one among many creative *khyal* singers of his time. In fact, the better ones were all creative and innovative. This seems to have been a value as greatly prized then as it is today. Many singers are called composers in their own right. Of a singer called Rahim Khan

Jahani, Dargah Quli says, "he sings *khyal* with great charm, innovating new melodies (*tarz*) and is worth listening to" (pp. 179-180). Four musicians, described as 'brothers' but more likely to have been cousins, are said to be 'matchless' (*benazir*) for their *khyal* singing, which was full of grace and flights of imagination (*nazakat aur uran*). These four 'brothers' were called Rahim Khan, Daulat Khan, Gyan Khan and Haddu. People flocked to their house to listen to them. Daulat and Rahim who were older were also more celebrated. Each sang in his own style. Daulat was loved for his thin and slight voice which could not be heard unless one was really near him. Listeners pressed forward as he sang and yet not everyone could hear him. But such a 'star' was he that when people near him shouted 'wah' 'wah', those at the back who had heard nothing, repeated these words of praise. Rahim had different qualities to commend him. He is praised by Dargah Quli for his simplicity, maturity, command over technique and beauty of presentation (p. 189). The notable individuality of these two *khyal* singers is also evident from the fact that their 'fathers'—perhaps really uncles—Kola and Savada, once famous musicians, were considered too old-fashioned by the younger set; only older people liked them (p. 180).

Ladies, too, were known for their individuality. A *khyal* singer named Uma Bai is described as 'matchless' (p. 202). Two other women, Panna and Tanno—who perhaps sang together—are said to render *khyal* with such charm that the audience was moved despite itself—listeners could not control themselves from 'crying out' exclamations of approval. Dargah Quli adds that lovers of *raga* were never tired of them (p. 202).

Even *amrad*-s (beardless youths) were famous in the genre. One called Raji—whose other attractions had diminished, for his face showed signs of an uncomely growth of beard—was yet fancied for the beauty of his *khyal* which he sang in a novel manner. His father was a well-known *qawwal* (p. 190).

There is also evidence of what may be called 'group styles', but they were current in a manner quite unlike what we associate with *gharana,* they were apparently like the 'group styles' of Amir Khan, Kumar Gandharva and Pandit Jasraj. Nyamat had disciples who were famous. Two of them, Qasim and Ali had lovely voices which had the stamp of *qabul-e-am*—they delighted everyone. A lady called Panna Bai is described as one of the *khas* (special) disciples of Nyamat Khan. She sang in his manner (*andaz*), but she sang *ghazal*-s, not *khyal* (p. 200). Another lady, Kamal Bai, delighted connoisseurs with the *khyal*-s of Nyamat Khan, though she is not said to be a disciple of this great singer (p. 201). Nyamat Khan's style thus seems to have been much cultivated, but not apparently by his family, though it was a family of musicians. Dargah Quli speaks of a brother and a nephew (he does not name them) both famous for their instrumental playing. The versatile brother was an expert at playing almost any instrument. He could play for hours with great mastery and innovativeness, mixing different melodies effectively without letting them clash (*kisi sur ki takrar nahim hoti*). Dargah Quli warmly praises his playing before adding, almost as an afterthought, that the man was also a good singer (something not uncommon among instrumentalists today). Nyamat's nephew was a sitar player. He could render on the sitar anything that other instruments were capable of. He also composed new melodies (p. 174).

Another group style seems to have been moulded by the taste of an individual patron, who was not the king. A singer called Burhani Amirkhani is said to sing to the taste of Amir Khan (*Amir Khan ke zauq ke mutabiq gata hai*). His singing is commended for its quality of composure (*thahrav*) and tranquility (p. 179). Rahim Khan Jahani, mentioned earlier, also presumably sang to the taste of Amir Khan. He belonged to the court of Amir Khan (*Amir Khan ki sarkar se wabista hai,* p. 179). Amir Khan appears to have been a rich patron, perhaps a courtier, who employed musicians and had them sing to his own individual taste.

Later *khyaliya*-s had obviously inherited a rich and complex tradition which was then, after being formed into *gharana*-s, said to go back to a single genius, Nyamat Khan, Sadarang. Dargah Quli's account even throws doubt on the equation of Sadarang with Nyamat Khan. Sadarang may have been a different *khyal* composer, perhaps older than Nyamat Khan. Though Dargah Quli has much to say about Nyamat Khan, he never associates the name Sadarang with the man. In speaking of Kamal Bai (see above), Dargah Quli says that,"she often sings the *khyal*-s of Nyamat Khan which are associated with the king (*woh aksar Nyamat Khan ke khyal gati hai jo padshah ghazi se mansub haim,* p. 201). The name Sadarang is mentioned only once, in describing the music of the *amrad* Raji (also see above). Dargah Quli says that Raji sings "*khyal*-s associated with Sadarang and sung by many in Delhi today". Dargah adds that Raji not only sung the *khyal*-s associated with Sadarang but sang them in the same enchanting style (*ajkal Dehli mem Sadarang se mansub jo khyal gaye jate haim wahi iski zaban par bhi hote haim aur usi manpasand andaz mem woh naghma sarai karta hai,* p. 190). Nyamat Khan is not named in this context. And though this does not mean that Sadarang and Nyamat Khan were not the same yet it does create room for questioning the identification. The name, or rather psuedonym, Sadarang was plainly a famous one in the Delhi world of *khyal.* Sadarang had not only composed many *khyal*-s, he was also associated with a distinct style. If Nyamat had the name Sadarang, one would have expected Dargah Quli to say so when talking of that celebrated composer.

My purpose here is not, however, to initiate a controversy regarding the identity of Sadarang, interesting though the question is. But one thing is certain, Sadarang did not initiate a *gharana,* though the *gharana*-s have made much of this myth. Nor did *khyal* in Sadarang's days feel any need for *gharana*-s. Need we, make a fetish of them?