The *Sahitya* or the Literary Aspect of the *Thumri*

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Classical music in Upper India is today in a phase which may be termed as predominantly the age of the *khayal.* To all appearances, the *khayal* is a vocal form; but it has been recognised by experts as having had its vital repercussions and counterparts in instrumental techniques and forms. It is for this reason that the use of an expression like the age of the *khayal* can be justified.

In spite of such a strong grip on musical style, the *khayal* has had its limitations. No sooner had it established itself on the high pedestal of the classical pantheon, than it found itself sandwiched between various sides. The highbrow, puritanical *kalawant* came forward with disparaging remarks about the liberties it took in some of its manifestations. The ordinary listener blamed it for its sophisticated techniques and the paucity and the blurred aspect of its word-content.

The result was that the *thumri* trespassed in this sphere and threatened to cast her own siren spell, to overwhelm and carry away audiences in her own favour. What could the *khayal* singer do in such a situation? And how was he to acquit himself?

Before a *khayal* recital has reached its climax, there is already a certain reaction in the hearts of listeners. The reaction is symptomatic of a keen longing to find some relaxation, some indulgence, some fulfilment. What does it all amount to? The artist is expected to sing a *bhajan* or a *thumri*—something really charming. something really enthralling. And his counterpart, the instrumentalist, must come forward with some *gat* in the *thumri anga,* some *kajri,* some *chaiti,* some *pahari.* What lies behind this direct and irresistible appeal which the *thumri* commands? Is it the melody or the word-content or both?

All literary and artistic manifestations have been recognised by Walter Pater and his French and German contemporaries as being governed by two dominant tendencies—classicism and romanticism. The classical element stands for authority, order, for the grandiose, the pure, the temperate, the pedantic, the conventional, the narrow and academic working out of refinement. The romantic element stands for liberty, strength, strangeness, curiosity, novelty, experiment and a revolt against and a departure from set rules and stereotyped practices; it stands for all that has a direct, unfettered and unsophisticated appeal.

Without any further digression let us discuss the main topic-namely the literary garb of the *thumri.*

The word *thumri* has been defined in the Standard Lexicon of Hindi Usage—*Hindi Shabda Sagar* of Kashi Nagari Pracharini—in the following manner. It is a small *geeta*, that is a song; a song with two movements, and one which does not have more than one *antara.* The other meaning given to the term is rumour or gossip. The dictionary does not give the etymology explicitly, but the root is clear. The word *thum* or *thumak* denotes the kind of dancing steps used by children in their frolic or in dance. It also denotes a gait which has, according to the *Shabda Sagar*, an air of pride, conceit or simulation with all its delicate, emotive shades or nuances (*thasak*). The affix *ri* is very often used in the sense of 'pertaining to' in the possessive or associative sense, like *Kisan Rukminiri beli*, like *hama-ri, tuma-ri.* Another word closely related to the topic is *thumka* which means of small stature. Thus, by its overall etymology, the word *thumri* is suggestive of a song, which is small in size, and associated with dance and all its delicate shades. At least in one of its aspects, the *thumri* is a reorientation and descendant of the *dhamar* which too has the three-fold meaning of special steps, rhythm, and the song associated with these. Like the *dhamar*, the *thumri* also has a branch devoted to those colour sports of Vraja, which have a devotional and festive tinge, touching as they do the *Rasa* of Radha and Krishna and the cowherds and the milkmaids of Vraja; the rhythm in its measurement is also of the same number of beats, namely the Deepchandi—sometimes evolving or simplifying into Chancher. As far as this aspect is concerned, Prof. D. Ojha is not far from the truth when he goes to Vraja to trace the origin of the *thumri* (*Sangeeta Kala Vihar*, August, 1959).

This cultural and only one-sided aspect of the *thumri* should not be carried too far because as a specialised art form of music, the *thumri*, as we know it to-day, has found its full-fledged development in Lucknow and Benaras; it is there that it reached its high water-mark. As Prof. S.K. Chaubey remarks, "Lucknow was its mother and Benaras its sweetheart. From these cities the *thumri* has travelled far and wide in the country"

I want to sound a note of warning, and caution those who regard the *thumri* as an invention of Wajid Ali Shah or Sadiq Ali Khan. Because already in 1834 when Captain Willard first published his work, *A Treatise on the Music of Hindostan*, the *thumri* had been recognised as an established form "in an impure dialect of the Vrajabhasha". As far as the literary aspect envisaged in the existing repertoire of the *thumri* is concerned, it is not possible to take up authentic examples earlier than in the time of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah of Lucknow who was born in 1822, installed on the *gadi* in 1847, forced to abdicate and sent to Matia Burj, Calcutta in 1856 where he died in 1887. "Wajid Ali Shah", as pointed out by Shri K.M. Munshi in his illuminating *Kulapati's Letters*, "had a fine command of the Persian language and was a master of Urdu. He wrote over a hundred works in these languages and his poems fill several big volumes. Himself an adept in music, he was the greatest patron of music and dance. In his days, music and dance were the breath of the *parikhana* and its master was the patron of the well-known Lucknow *thumri* . . . . . He dramatised his romantic poems and prepared a ballet known as *Rahas*—an Urdu corruption of the word Rasa. Its theme was the sport of Krishna and Radha. It must have been a delight to Wajid Ali Shah's admirers to see him, in his solid corpulence, playing the part of Shri Krishna with a *mukut* on his head, valued at a lakh of rupees . . . . . After

deposition when he lived in exile at Calcutta, Wajid Ali continued to stage his *Rasa.* Including technicians, the troupe numbered three hundred and sixty-one souls of which eighty-four were women. Their total salaries amounted to Rs.11,859 per month".

The learned author goes on to state, "Wajid Ali Shah was the father of the modern Urdu stage. At his command, Amanat, the well-known Urdu poet of Lucknow, wrote the famous *Inder Sabha* which became the model for all later Urdu plays. When the *Inder Sabha* was staged, Wajid Ali played the title role of Inder (Indra) and there is little doubt that his *paris* took part in the play. The romantic mysteries of Wajid Ali's court are certainly brought vividly to life in this realistic drama".

It is further noteworthy that in dance, Wajid Ali's guru was the famous Kathak dancer, Thakur Prasadji (the father of Bindadin and Kalka Prasadji, and the grandfather of Shambhu Maharaj and Achhan Maharaj). They all adorned a school not only famous for the Kathak dance but also for the *thumri* and particularly that aspect of it which is called *bhava batana,* that is an emotional interpretation of the *bol* in a sitting pose with rather informal gestures accompanying the vocal rendering in all its shades and nuances.

Thakur Prasadji, the guru of Wajid Ali Shah, was a specialist in the *Natwari*—the delicate feminine aspect of the Kathak dance. All these elements go to form the background against which the *thumri* worked out not only delicate graces like the *murki* but also the literary garb, most suitable for its requirements. It is remarkable, however, that the language which was chosen for the *thumri* was neither Urdu nor Persian, but Hindi. We shall presently see what kind of Hindi was chosen for the songs. As pointed out by Prof. Arnold, "Oudh was the garden, the granary and the queen province of India. The ruler was a Mussalman. Essentially it was a Hindu realm".

The doyens of *thumri* were, therefore, wise and far-sighted enough to choose the Hindi of the region to clothe the *thumri.* It was a mixed jargon of *Vrajabhasha,* interspersed with the rural jargon of Lucknow and of the eastern districts.

Thus, in his famous *thumri* in Bhairavi, Wajid Ali Shah mourned and wailed over his pathetic departure from Lucknow -

बाबुल मोरा नैहर छुटो जाय।
चार कहार मिल डुलिया मंगावो,
अपना बिगाना छुटो जाय॥

The pathos lies in the mood of a bride, departing from her parents, and is heightened by the deliberate act of sending for the palanquin and its four bearers. In spite of his masculine voice, the late Ustad Faiyaz Khan once brought tears to the eyes of a distinguished audience at a music conference by his rendering of this *thumri.*

The *bol* or the actual word or expression which is to be interpreted by the singer in all its emotive shades is the soul of the *thumri.* This requires a special temperament and an exuberance of emotion and imagination in the artiste. It also demands a restraint. The artiste must avoid the temptation of presenting an elaborate and lengthy passage of improvisations so characteristic of the *khayal.* The literary aspect is thus quite an important element in the *thumri.* The *khayal* singer can and very often does throw the words of his song to the winds. This is what a *thumri* singer cannot afford to do. No *thumri* singer can present a passage where the literary meaning is ambiguous, or where the literary garb does not suit the tender and delicate sense. The essence of that delicacy which belonged to the Lucknow of the time—with its *nazakat* and *nafasat*—had thus pervaded the mantle vouchsafed for the *thumri.* And this mantle was not a royal robe. It was a simple garment within the easy reach of any commoner.

One of the greatest of the *thumri* composers of Lucknow, Kadar Piya, fully understood this factor and once expressed his views in unequivocal terms. Kadar Piya was the son of a spurious descendant of the second emperor of Avadh. His original name was Wazir Mirza, and with full titles it was Mirza Bala Qadar Jung Nawab Wazir Mirza Bahadur (1836-1902). There is an article on him written by Shri Gopal Chandra Sinha in *The Journal of the Hindustani Academy.* He was a poet, a painter, a musician, and a scholar of Urdu and Persian, but chose the *Bhakha* as he called it, which is the Urdu corruption of *Bhasha.* When he was asked why he did not compose in Urdu, he replied, "I shall never do that in view of the common audience I have. I shall write only in *Bhakha*—the dialect spoken in the households of the Hindus of Lucknow and the neighbouring villages." Urdu, in his opinion, was meant for the select few. Kadar Piya has, therefore, used pure Hindi words, and where he has used words of Persian origin, he has shaped and moulded them on the Hindustani anvil. He was, in fact, a great protagonist of Hindu-Muslim unity. He has written a work named *Nayan-Dil Samvad.* The eyes and the heart each try to impute to the other the responsibility for the pangs of love. This idea frequently reverberates in his *thumris.* His life was typical of the aristocrats of his time. Apart from a number of illegitimate connections, he had seven wives. His refined, delicate, voluptuous, acutely erotic temper, with occasional devotional outbursts, is reflected in the text of his *thumris.* While many of his *thumris* belong to the type of *chhota khayals* in a lighter strain and have the concomitant spuriousness of a *raga*, he has also to his credit a large number of compositions which have a full-developed *thumri* personality, being in the slow tempo of the Deepchandi or the Punjabi Theka. Here is a typical *thumri* of Kadar Piya in the *raga* Zila Khamaj and the Deepchandi *tala*.

ए री गुइयां कैसे भेजूं पाती कदर ओर।
काहू को साथी, पाती आपही चली जाती कदर ओर॥
एक रैन अंधेरी पापिन, सूनी सेज जैसे सांपिन।
कैसे मोरा बारा जियरा, हाये, डसे जाती कदर ओर॥

Kadar's beloved is pining for him. She does not know how to send the message. How she wishes that the love letter could walk over to him by itself!

The dark night is a veritable sinner, and the forlorn bedstead lurks like a female serpent. It mercilessly stings her tender and innocent heart. Everything is feminine here—even the simile and the metaphor. And the ejaculation, *haye*, savours of the voluptuous, mingled as it is with the agony of separation. Again, in a *thumri* of Pilu, Kadar would like a sarcastic retort from a jealous and disappointed maiden.

मोरि अंखियां ढूंढ़ रही, हो तुमका पावत नाहीं कहीं।
कदर पिया, जिनका तुम चाहते थे, ना जानूं कौन देस गई॥

"You say—'My eyes are searching for you, but alas do not find you anywhere' Beloved Kadar, I do not know to which land she has gone—she whom you wanted". Another maiden complains of the enmity of her eyes, that are responsible for a kind of collision, and have got the heart involved and fatally wounded for no fault of its own.

मोरि अंखियों ने बैर किया देखो मोसे कदर पिया।
आप लरत और मनका फंसावत, इनही कारन घायल होत जिया॥

There is a typical *thumri* in Paraj which has for its theme the village well, where a maiden is painted in all colours of feminine fury and the caprice of dalliance; she threatens Kadar because he has been impertinent. Kadar, however, relishes it all.

मैं को रोको नाहिं पनघट पै जाने दो
काहे करत हो ठठोरि मोसें, ऐसी नाहिं
हूं मैं भोलि जानत हूं तुमरी घतियां सगरी
अपने गौंकि मोसे करत हो बतियां
चलो हटो, अचरा छोडो तो मैं का।
बेर बेर मोसे करत छेर ऐसो ढीठ कदर
तुम्हें नाहिं काहू को डर, काहे को छिन लेत गगर,
भला तोड़ो तो।

Such *thumris* cannot be translated. This *thumri* is an example of a song where three languages have combined to form one synthetic whole. The language of music, of poetry, of dance or gesture, and of fantasy has taken a flight with every manner of twist and turn and the shifting panorama of colour.

The *thumri* dwells on some deep-rooted sentiment, a situation or phase or mood typical of the villager or the common man. This is given a literary shape in the regional dialect and expressed in its musical and emotional context. All taboos and restraints are lifted. Eroticism releases itself in all its feminine sense and sensibility, in feminine delicacy and fury, with all those spasmodic twitches of the wrist, of the waist, the jingle of the *ghungru*, the cracking of the bangles and the jerky pull of the garment. There are charges and counter-charges. The darts of Cupid are hurled mercilessly. The glances are veritable shafts or sharp-edged daggers; the heart is wounded, it bleeds; jealousies and wailings and all the sallies and fitful whims and caprices of love stalk the scene.

There is no law, only unrestricted wooing. The Nayika is seldom *Sweeya*. She is *Samanya* or *Parakeeya*. A stranger comes and casts his magic spell and the maiden of Banaras is inflamed by this casual meeting -

परदेसी बालम कैसा जादू डारा।

It is into such a world of fantasy that the *thumri* composer carries his flights and dreams. He is tired of the *dhrupad's* grandeur and majesty, of restraint and decorum; he has had enough of the sophistication and mannerisms of the *khayal*, with its never-ending vocal gymnastics. He is tired of paying his homage and tribute to *Sapta-Sur*, to *Teen Grama*, to *Ekais Murchhana*, *Unanchasa Kootatan*. He no longer claims to swim across the unfathomable *Nadasagar* and there are no chances, therefore, of his getting drowned.

We may note here that one of the functions of art, in the words of Walter Pater, consists "in the removal of surplusage, from the last finish of the gem-engraver blowing away the last particle of invisible dust." And "the artist may be known" as Schiller said, "rather by what he omits". Even when he is in devotion, it will be a devotion to the personal god of the cowherd and the milkmaid, and that devotion will be in the context of sport and dalliance and will be garbed in unostentatious speech. Thus, Sanad Piya, another composer of Lucknow could put these words in the mouth of a maiden:

केसी ये भलाइरे कन्हाई, पनियां भरत मोरि गगरि गिराई, करके लराई।
सनद कहे ऐसो ढीठ भयो कन्हाई, का करूं माइ नहिं मानत कन्हाई,
करत लराई।

or another composer would say:

नाहिं परत मैंका चैन सांवरिया नाहिं परत मैका चैन।

Even when the charm and spell of Krishna's flute is expressed, the *thumri* singer and composer will follow his own path. It will not be like the great Kalawant Baiju Bawara who composed and sang in the *raga* Shankara with all its grandeur and majesty:

बंसी नाद सुर साधके बजाय
प्रवीन कान्हाए सप्त सुर मधुर तान धुनि मनी
बैजू कहे प्रभू नर नारी फसपंछी,
मोहे और मोहे सुर नर मुनी।।

An anonymous *thumri* composer would express his feelings as follows, in Pilu:

कलेजवा के बासुरि की धुन लागी
हों अपने घर काम करत रहि
श्रवन सुनत उठ भागी, हे सखि श्रवन सुनत उठ भागी।।

Take another theme for comparison—the eyes. A *khayal* in Multani says:

नैनन में आनबान कौनसी परी रे

Mian Tansen once expressed the unfathomable depth and pathos which he saw in the eyes of a tear-stricken maiden in a *dhrupad* in the *raga* Bihag.

रुमझूम भर आए परी नैना तेहारे
बिथुरी सी अलक श्याम घनसी लागत
झपक झपक उघरत मेरे जान तोरे।
अरुन बरन नैन तेरे तामे लाल डोरे
तापर अंबुज बार बार डारे।
कहे मिया तानसेन सुनो शाहे अकबर
उपमा कहां लों दीन, बिन अंजन कजरारे॥

But the *thumri* singer will express his sentiments in his own lighter and more direct way. For instance, Sanad Piya will say in the *raga* Bhairavi :

अब तोरि बांकी लोचनियां रे अब तोरि बांकी चितवन
मेरो मन बस किनो प्यारि प्यारि बतियां करके।
सनद कहे मोरा जिया नहिं माने
डारदिनो मोपे जादुसा कछु करके।

Tansen will have the patience to search for similes in heaven and earth, but poor Sanad is under a spell that has been cast on him, not by नैन or लोचन but by लुभानियां and चितवन. Note the full elasticity and resilience given to the synonyms, used partly as verbs, as dynamic elements in action rather than as something static. Another *thumri* composer would say हसके भरे तोरे नैन ..... and would dwell on the emotions in all manner of shades and colours by means of the *bol.*

There are a host of *thumri* composers belonging to the Lucknow school whose very pseudonyms savour of the *thumri* element—Kadar Piya, Sanad Piya, Najar Piya, Sughar Piya and Lalan Piya.

The last of these, Lalanji of Farrukhabad, needs special mention. He has composed *thumris* in the medium and fast tempo; they have a sparkling rhythm and yet they maintain the definite *thumri* in *raga* Khamaj, *tala* Trital, which has become very popular and is highly respected by Ustads. It is

सोहनी सोहनी मोहनि मोहनि मुरत वारि रे सलोने सांवरिया पे।

The *thumris* of Lalanji are a class in themselves. The most authentic version of a large number of Kadar Piya's *thumris* is contained in the Kramik series of Bhatkhande, because these were learnt by Padmabhushan Shri S. N. Ratanjankar directly from Kadar Piya's son, the late Nawab Chaulakkhi Mirza Murad Dahar.

Many of the *thumris* of Najar Piya were learnt directly from him by Raja Bhaiya Poochhwale and are published in his *Thumri Tarangini*, ठुमरी तरंगिणी along with the *thumris* of some of the other composers who have been mentioned earlier. I shall deal with only a few of such compositions which have a representative character.

There are some *thumris* which bear the stamp of Urdu, but such instances are rare. For instance, here is a *thumri* in the *raga* Tilang :

सांवरिया तोरे बारी में ना जैहो रे।
इस बारी में क्या क्या बोया इष्क मुहब्बत यारी
सांवरिया तोरे बारी ...

There are some *thumris* in the Punjabi language. This style has a monopoly of the *tappa* and is also used in the *khayal* and the *dhrupad*. For instance, the following *thumri* blends the *ragas* Bhimpalasi and Dhani.

सांडे नल वामनियां दिल भरिया सजन मन रामैया।
लटक लटक लटलैं नंदलादी हंस हंस मुस बतला वदियां।

The Punjabi language is not suited to the genius of the *bol*. It could not thrive in the realm of the *thumri* as it did in that of the *khayal*.

There are words from Surdas or Ghananand and other poets which also make their appearance in the realm of the *thumri*. For instance, लाग रह्यो मन राधा वर सों in Khamaj is a song by the famous *Riti-kala* poet of Brajabhasha, Ghananand. There is another *thumri* Kafi, *tala* Deepchandi which is akin to a *bhajan*. The words are attributed to Surdas. The Banaras school has followed suit in the *thumri* sponsored by the Lucknow school. It has some leanings towards the local dialect and some gleanings from the *chaiti* and *kajri*, the regional folk tunes.

नाहक लाये गवनवा रे मोरा
अरे आप तो जाय बिदेसवां रे छाये।
जब से गये मोरि सुधहुंन लीनी, तुम तो छाये बिदेसवा रे।

The *thumris* of the Banaras School are comparatively free of the impact of Urdu, of patches of *Khari Boli.* Sometimes a *thumri* singer can start with a *thumri* and, as a kind of relief from the rhythmic procedure, can sing a series of devotional or love poems in the form of so many *antaras*, during which the drumming is suspended.

Like *Sama Vedic* music, the *khayal* and other forms which have their *stobhaksharas* (syllables of exclamation or ejaculation) the *thumri*, too, has its own syllables of exclamation. These are हां हां, हाय, हाये, हो रामा, अरे हांरे. These ejaculations have a definite role to play in the presentation of a song. They heighten the effect of the sentiment portrayed and help the repetitions and variations of the tune and sometimes they savour of the lascivious or the voluptuous.

Emphasis must also be given on a class of *thumris* which have a depth and a pathos of their own, which cannot be reproduced in any other form. To this category belong the famous *thumri* sung by the late Abdul Karim Khan, namely पिया बिन नाहीं आवत चैन, and the one sung by Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali कटे ना बिरहा की रात, सखि के बिन जोबना, जात, सुधि बिसराई मोरी. The phrasing here is simple and direct. There is hardly anything in the words which can aspire to pure poetry; but the language certainly inspires the singer to reach both the depths and flights of melodic imagination which are in tune with the feeling of pathos.

I made mention of the School of Bindadin. Bindadin has to his credit a large number of *thumris*, some of which are published in Bhatkhande's Kramik series. Here is an example of a *thumri* in Shahana *raga*, Trital *tala*.

जाने दे मैं का सुनो सजनवां
काहे करत तुम नित उठ हमसन रार
नाहिं नाहिं मानुंगि तोरि मैं अब।
छेर करत नहिं माने बरजोरि करे गहलीनि,
बिन्दा कहुं क्या मैं, नित उठ हम सन रार
नाहिं नाहिं मानुंगि तोरि मैं अब।।

Most of his *thumris* are full of the delicate yet sparkling expressions which harmonise with the *Natwari* form of the dance and give a solid grounding to the would-be dancer in some of its traits.

The *thumri* bears the imprint of folk elements, which are sometimes discernible in the literary garb as well. Here is a *thumri* in Desa which has affinities with the *Jhoola*.

आवो रि सहेली झोका दीजे
बरसत फुइया ए जि अब सैंया चलो झूला झूलें
हम सब खेलें।
सैंया ने झूला बगिया में डाला
पिया को बुलावें सावन गावें।

There is another *thumri* in Pilu, which is akin to Sawan—the folk festival of the most festive month of the rainy season. But here the theme is developed to unfathomable depths in a most refined manner—

लाग रही एरि ये सावन की झरी,
ए री मैं भीजत उन बिन कबकी खड़ी
अपने सें आयो पिया मेरो मन ले गयो
दे गयो री असुवन की झरी
एरी ए मैं भीजत उन बिन कबकी खड़ी।।

The words, in conjunction with the tune, have acquired a suggestiveness that cannot be translated.

I have deliberately omitted the Punjab School. The more apt word for it is the Punjab *anga*, and it is purely a musical technique of gliding swiftly over semi-tones or quarter-tones which a musician of any school may do when he is prompted by his fancy. It has hardly anything to do with the literary element and is beyond the scope of this article.

As in the political world, so in the world of art there are revolutions and counter-revolutions. Perhaps because there was a surfeit of the erotic, of the voluptuous or of devotion to a personal god of the cowherds and the milkmaids, it provided a reaction in Benaras. The *Nirguna* or the knowledge of the self was chosen as a theme for the *thumri*.

The true essence of the *thumri* is revealed when the artist surrenders completely to fantasy, to the sport and dalliance of love or the dejection and pathos that occasionally follows in the wake of such a feeling.

Schiller says, "Man is completely human when he is playing." C.G. Jung in his *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* echoes this sentiment. "Truth to tell, I have a very high opinion of fantasy. All the works of man have their origin in creative fantasy. What right have we then to depreciate the imagination?" It is linked with the very source of human and animal instinct. The creativity of the imagination frees man from his bondage to "the nothing but and liberates in him the spirit of the play. Something invaluable is won—a growth of independence, a step towards psychological maturity."

There are various demands that are made on art and letters and as pointed out by Walter Pater, all disinterested lovers of these forms regard them as "a sort of cloisteral refuge from a certain vulgarity in the actual world." The *thumri*, indeed, comes to our rescue. The entire endeavour of the *thumri* artist is directed towards making his art "pleasing—fine—as opposed to merely serviceable." No *thumri* is serviceable in the sense that a *dhrupad* or a *Lakshana Geet* is when it presents an authentic picture of a *raga.*

The literary critic or the grammarian may come forward with attacks on the language or the patchy and haphazard literary garb of the *thumri*. But he has to be warned that he is dealing with the language of music where poetry plays a subordinate role. In the choice of words and phrases, the *thumri* artist is often "back to the earliest divination of the finished work lying somewhere, according to Michaelangelo's fancy, in the rough-hewn block." Benedetto Croce in his thesis of *Aesthetics as a Science of Expression and General Linguistics* has rightly emphasised the impossibility of a normative grammar, the impossibility of creating language artificially. He has pointed out that the nature of expression supplies the method of discovering the scientific error which lies in the conception of a (normative) grammar, establishing the rules of correct speech. Good sense, he says, has always rebelled against this error. 'Language" says Benedetto Croce, "is perpetual creation. The ever-new impressions give use to continuous changes of sound and meaning, that is, to ever-new expressions. To seek the model language, therefore, is to seek the immobility of motion."

The *thumri* artist was far ahead of the *Riti-kala* poet of Hindi, indulging in formal *Nayika Bheda* or *Nakhashikha Varnana*. The *thumri* artist, throbbing with life, had a direct approach to language and emotion. He had his own "style". And this style is a characteristic "mould", a certain absolute and unique manner of expressing a thing, in all its intensity and colour, and into this the artist pours the whole content of his being.

In spite of some of its objectionable associations, the *thumri* is no doubt a flower of transcendant beauty, and beauty in the words of Kalidasa, can never be defiled and there is nothing which does not add to its charm—

किमिव हि मधुराणां मण्डनं नाकृतीनाम्



Veerabhadra and Ishwara in Daksha Yaga—Girija Kalyana.