FELICITY, TRINIDAD

THE MUSICAL PORTRAIT OF A HINDU VILLAGE

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For Henry and Elsie

In India I know I am a stranger; but increasingly
I understand that my Indian memories, the memories
of that India which lived on into my childhood in
Trinidad, are like trapdoors into a bottomless past.

V.S. Naipaul

India: A Wounded Civilization

ABSTRACT

This thesis is based on musicological field work
conducted during three visits (1974, 1975, 1977) to Felicity,
a village situated in the savannah land of the eastern coast
of Trinidad. From 1845 to 1917, East Indian indentured
labourers were brought to work on the sugar-cane plantations
of several West Indian islands, and their descendants now
constitute over one-third the population of Trinidad. The
villagers of Felicity, nearly all Hindus, have a musical
repertory based almost entirely on north Indian genres. The
founders of the village came mainly from eastern Uttar Pradesh,
and traditional Bhojpuri folk songs and drumming styles from
this region have been passed on in oral tradition and are
still performed in the village today. These include byāh ke
gīt and lachārī sung at weddings, sohar sung at the birth of
a child, lullabies, and songs for the cultivation of rice,
as well as repertories and performing practices for the
dholak (double-headed barrel drum) and tassa (kettledrum).

Music is performed in the three village temples to

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accompany the sandhya and havan services as well as puja
services for the various Hindu deities. The vocal forms
include bhajan, kirtan, and dhun (all sung in Hindi),and
Vedic chant (in Sanskrit). Some of the bhajans (devotional
songs in strophic form) have been passed down in oral tradi-
tion since the indenture period, but most have been newly
introduced to Trinidad either by missionaries from the India-
based Arya Samaj and Bharat Sevashram Sangha (from the 1920's
onwards) or through imported Indian films (1936 onwards).
Indian classical music was introduced to the island in 1966,
but is not performed in Felicity.

Musical change in Felicity since the beginning of the
20th century has followed a pattern of revitalization whereby
older Bhojpuri forms in oral tradition are gradually forgotten
and newly introduced Hindi forms are adopted by the community.
The spoken language in Felicity is now English (Bhojpuri
is used only by the older generation); consequently, the
difficulty of song texts is an important consideration in
the evolution of the musical repertory of the village. In
1974-75, a new repertory of songs devoted to the Hindu saint,
Satya Sai Baba, was introduced to the village and adopted
in one of the temples. The Sai Baba songs with their simple
one- or two-line Hindi texts are easy to learn; their style,
characterized by accelerando and loud handclapping, makes
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ethnic solidarity.

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<u>PREFACE</u>

This is the story of music in a Trinidad village.
I have called it a portrait to emphasize that it is the
whole musical life of the villagers that interests me.

The people of Felicity, nearly all Hindus, refer
to themselves as East Indians to distinguish their group
from other West Indians (all peoples of the West Indies)
and from the American Indians (the indigenous Arawaks and
Caribs). The forebears of the East Indians - 143,900 in
number - were brought by the British from South Asia to
Trinidad beginning in 1845. Known originally as the
'Gladstone Coolies', these people were amongst the legions
of indentured labourers shipped out from India to work
the plantations of the Empire: sugar in Trinidad and
other colonies of the Caribbean (Jamaica, Grenada, St Lucia,
St Vincent, St Kitts, St Croix, and British Guiana);
coffee, tea, rubber as well as sugar in Africa, Asia, and
the Pacific (Ceylon, Malaya, Natal, Burma, and Fiji).
This export of East Indian labour was suspended during
World War I and legally abolished by Act of Parliament in

1921. The indenture system had little to recommend it over the system of African slavery which it replaced. Greed prevailed, but Lord John Russell (Whig Secretary of State for the Colonies), opposing indenture before it began, said: 'I should be unwilling to adopt any measure to favour the transfer of labourers from British India to Guiana.... I am not prepared to encounter the responsibility of a measure which may lead to a dreadful loss of life on the one hand, or on the other, to a new system of slavery.'[1]

I first visited Felicity village in the summer of 1974, returned in June 1975 and again in November 1977, each time for a stay of several months. This thesis (composed by myself and supported by my own work) is based on 158 hours of music tape-recorded during these visits, 152 hours of recorded interviews transcribed on 1,794 typed pages, 742 pages of field notes, 58 local commercial 33⅓ and 45 r.p.m. microgroove discs, tape dubbings of 9 local 78 r.p.m. standard groove discs, and books, pamphlets, music texts, song books, and liturgical writings, in Hindi and English, published locally and in India.

I was very fortunate that the villagers permitted me to record everything I requested - religious rituals, music at parties, question and answer sessions, conversations. My 300 hours of recording includes a number of hours where the villagers and I listened to earlier recordings together and they allowed me to record their comments.

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1. 15 Feb., 1840.

Obviously for the purposes of this thesis it was necessary to be selective. I am able to present here actual transcriptions of only a very small percentage of the music I have studied and analysed. Much remains to be done with these rich source materials. Copies of all my original open-reel recordings and supporting documentation are available at the following archives: The National Sound Archive (formerly the British Institute of Recorded Sound), London, England (Myers Trinidad Collections 1975, 1977; Myers New York City Trinidad East Indian Collection 1975; Myers London Trinidad East Indian Collections 1977, 1979, 1980); the Columbia University, Center for Studies in Ethnomusicology, New York City (Myers Trinidad Collections 1974, 1975; Myers New York City Trinidad East Indian Collection 1975); and at the University of Edinburgh, School of Scottish Studies, Edinburgh, Scotland (selections from the above-mentioned collections).

My thesis is founded on the assumption that ethnomusicology is the study of 'music as culture', and the understanding that 'music is culture and what musicians do is society'. Music may be defined as 'a complex of activities, ideas and objects that are patterned into culturally meaningful sounds recognized to exist on a level different from secular communication', and I see culture as a dynamic process rather than a static assemblage of

artifacts and traits.[2]

Both field and laboratory work have been essential aspects of this study. The design and implementation of my research has been deductive. I have formulated problems and made systematic attempts to test and refute them. The chief value of this method is that through the process of 'falsification' we are able to pose more and more interesting questions, and by incorporating our test results within the reformulated theory, the information content of the theory may be increased. The new theory will be more specific, more testable, and more easily refuted during subsequent research. The result is a spiral in which stronger theories replace weaker ones in what Karl Popper calls a Darwinian struggle for survival of the fittest in the world of ideas.[3]

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2. Alan P. Merriam, 'Definitions of "Comparative Musicology" and "Ethnomusicology": An Historical-Theoretical Perspective', Ethnomusicology, XXI (May 1977), 204; Merriam, 'Ethnomusicology Today', Current Musicology, XX (1975), 57; and Merriam, The Anthropology of Music (Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1964), p. 27; A.L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckholm, Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions (Vintage Books, New York, 1952).

3. Karl Popper, Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1963); Popper, Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach (The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1972); and Popper, Unended Quest: An Intellectual Autobiography (Fontana/Collins, Glasgow, 1974); Ernest Gellner, Cause and Meaning in the Social Sciences (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1973); and Gellner, Legitimation of Belief (Cambridge University Press, London, 1974); Thomas Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, 2nd ed., International Encyclopedia of Unified Science, II, no. 2 (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1970); Bryan Magee, Modern British Philosophy (Secker & Warburg, London, 1971).

My study incorporates a systematic distinction
between folk evaluation and analytic evaluation, takes
into account the 'multiple facets of music as symbolic,
aesthetic, formal, psychological, physical', and 'involves
study on three analytic levels - conceptualization about
music, behavior in relation to music, and music sound.'
Thus my focus throughout is on 'man as music-maker' and
not simply on musical sound.[4]

My question has been 'How musical is man?', and
my answer (unchanged since my first day and night in Felicity
village) is that 'It is when we try to grapple with another
man's intimate need that we perceive how incomprehensible,
wavering, and misty are the beings that share with us the
sight of the stars and the warmth of the sun.'[5]

I have chosen to fit the materials into the space
available by stressing, for the purpose of analysis, three
aspects of the village music that seem to me most important:
wedding songs (the liveliest, most active part of the
Bhojpuri repertory from the past), music of the temple
(which involves every man, woman, and child in the village),
and the Sai Baba songs (the newest music in the village,
which helps to show how the repertory of the past has
changed, as new forms and ideas are introduced from India).

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    4. Merriam, The Anthropology of Music, p. 32;
John Blacking, How Musical Is Man? (University of
Washington Press, Seattle, 1973).
    5. Joseph Conrad, Lord Jim (New American Library,
New York, 1961), pp. 135-6.

Chapter 1, 'East Indians of the West Indies',
provides an historical introduction to the Hindus of
Trinidad, emphasizing those factors that have shaped their
musical life. Chapter 2, 'Roots', deals with theory and
method; it also reviews the writings on the East Indian
community and their relevance to the present study. It
outlines important anthropological models and theories
(consensualism, pluralism, acculturation, and syncretism),
and discusses their importance in an ethnomusicological
study. Also, in this chapter I propose an analytic model
for musical change in Felicity, juxtapose this with a
folk view, and relate both to the major anthropological
concerns.

Chapter 3, 'Felicity', defines the unit of study,
the micro-framework, and the network by which this unit is
linked to the rest of the world, the macro-framework.
Chapter 4, 'A Day in the Village', is primarily an exposi-
tion of my field techniques, my role as participant-observer,
and the categories of informants I worked with. And, by
means of describing the music of the village during a
typical day, it explores the whole realm of sonic ideation
in Felicity. Chapter 4 also introduces two substantive
issues: aesthetics in Trinidad Indian music and the rela-
tionship of Creole music to the music of Felicity.

Chapter 5, 'The Seasons', discusses music within
the context of the annual cycle, particularly the chowtal,
sung at the springtime Phagwa festival. Chapter 6, 'Local
Musicology', presents a history of Indian music in Trinidad,

drawn from local sources. It describes the impact of films
and records from India (imported from the late 1930's on-
wards), and discusses the effects of the Trinidadian music
industry on Felicity. It also analyses the introduction,
by Professor H.S. Adesh, of north Indian classical music
to the island from 1966 and its ramifications, particularly
the revised folk concept of 'authenticity'.

Chapter 7, 'Speaking of Music',is a folk taxonomy
of musical terms, based on a series of elicitation inter-
views I conducted in 1975 and 1977. Chapter 8, 'Wedding
Day',analyses the repertory of Bhojpuri wedding songs,
passed down in oral tradition since the earliest years of
the indenture. In Chapter 9, 'Morning at the Temple',
the repertory of <u>bhajan</u> (devotional song) is analysed.
Also, diachronic data (1910-1977) on the introduction to
Trinidad of new Hindu sects (together with new musical
styles) is discussed in terms of the analytic models pro-
posed in Chapter 2. In Chapter 10, 'Music and Miracles',
the introduction of a new repertory of Sai Baba songs to
the village (1974-75) is discussed in relation to the
analytic model. In Chapter 11, 'Sweet Memory', I have
offered my conclusions.

But this tale is better told in simpler terms, and
'I beg of you, in courtesy, /Not to condemn me as unmannerly/
If I speak plainly and with no concealings/ And give account
of all their words and dealings, /Using their very phrases
as they fell. /For certainly, as you all know so well, /
He who repeats a tale after a man/ Is bound to say as nearly

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as he can, /Each single word, if he remembers it'.[6]

*   *   *   *   *

My best thanks must go to the villagers - those
intelligent, perceptive, warm-hearted, gracious, intuitively
kind people who did not refuse me access to any part
of their musical life. They provided such a rich store
of material that a much longer thesis, or several theses,
would be required to do it justice. I shall always be
indebted to the people of Felicity for sharing unselfishly
their time and their knowledge of music, particularly to
Mesho and Matti Rohit, my hosts in the village, who offered
me comfort and companionship during my stays and aided
in countless ways with my research. My thanks also go to
Sulin and Parsuram Ramsundar for their kindness and gener-
osity, to the learned Professor H.S. Adesh and all his
students, particularly tabla specialist Amar Rajkumar and
vocalist Usha Bissoondialsingh. I am also grateful to
Dhanpat and Kalawatee Permanand, Moon Ramnarine, Siewrajiah
Lochan, Rajia Sooknanan, Sahodare Nanad, and Bhagmania
George, all of whom sang for me their wedding song reper-
tories and provided information about the Indian wedding
ceremony in Trinidad, past and present. Thanks also are
due to members of the Divine Life Society, Unit 1, the

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6. Geoffrey Chaucer, The Canterbury Tales,
'The Prologue' (Penguin Books, Baltimore, 1952), p. 37.

of the School of Oriental and African Studies, who provided the <u>bhajan</u> translations which appear in Chapter 9. To my thesis supervisor, Dr Peter Cooke, I owe thanks for his constant encouragement and for demonstrating how an astute ear applied to transcribing sound can contribute to the understanding of a musical culture. Dr Raymond Monelle, also of the University of Edinburgh, has been particularly helpful on matters of musical analysis.

I wish to express my gratitude to the University of Edinburgh for financial support and for cooperation during all phases of my work, to Mike Steyn for the loan of his Stellavox SP7 and AKG microphones for the 1977 visit, to the National Sound Archive, London, for blank tapes and working copies of all my material, and to my employer, <u>The New Grove Dictionary of Music</u>, London, for a sabbatical leave during which I was able to complete this project.

Finally I wish to thank my family: my mother, Elsie Myers Stainton (who introduced me to the Indians of the Caribbean), for reading this thesis and offering editorial guidance; my husband, Bob Woolford, for technical assistance throughout the project, for helping me draught Tables I and II and the Felicity map, and for engineering the recording that accompanies this essay; and my sons, Ian, Adam, and Sean, who have cheered me on.

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Helen Myers
1 June 1984
London, England
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NOTE ON MUSICAL TRANSCRIPTIONS

Standard Western notation has been used for the
transcriptions in this thesis, although a number of
modifications have been made and special symbols added
to accomodate features of the Felicity repertory.
Attacks incorporating a glide into the target pitch are
indicated with a curved line: ♩ . Releases that rise
or fall are similarly indicated: ♩ ♩ . Pitch glides
between notes are shown with a straight line, thus: ♩♩ .
Pitches that are approximately a quartertone flat or
sharp are indicated with arrows: ↓ (flat) ↑ (sharp);
in a few examples, a half-sharp (♯) has been given in
the key signature. Sharps and flats that recur throughout
a piece are given as 'key signatures'; these, however,
are not intended to indicate tonality or scale. It has
been possible to notate some of the bhajan using
conventional European time signatures without distorting
the essential character of the piece. For the Bhojpuri
repertory, however, time signatures have been avoided,

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and rhythmic groupings are shown by dotted or half-bar
lines with the number of units per division being indicated
thus: $\overset{7}{\varphi}$, $\overset{3+4}{\varphi}$ etc.

For ease of comparison, all the examples have been
transposed so that the g above middle c serves as the
sa or tonic. The original pitch is given for each example,
as is the tempo and the pitch material of the piece,
arranged from low to high (labelled 'range' on the
transcriptions). This pitch array is not, however, to
be interpreted as a scale.

The fundamental problem inherent in all transcriptions
of this kind is to decide which pitches should be written
out as full-sized melody notes and which as small ornaments.
I have aimed to arrive at a reasonable compromise, bearing
in mind for each example the purpose of the transcription.
Consequently, greater detail is shown in the example
of the harmonium accompaniment to a vocal line, intended
to illustrate melodic variation, than in, say, some of
the bhajan scores intended to illustrate form. Those
ornaments that can conveniently be described as grace
notes, turns, mordents, and inverted mordents have been
indicated with conventional symbols. In song texts,
syllables that appear in the printed text but which are
omitted in performance are enclosed in square brackets.
Syllables added during performance that do not appear
in the printed text are enclosed in round brackets.

The cassette that accompanies this essay includes
all musical examples transcribed from my own field
recordings (exx. 1-19, 21-26, and 28-29).

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NOTE ON THE ROMANISATION OF INDIAN LANGUAGES

Although English is the first language for most
of the Felicity villagers, Hindi, Bhojpuri, and Sanskrit
terms are frequently used when discussing music, religion,
agriculture, kinship, and for practically all song texts,
be they religious or secular. Most of these Indian terms
have been romanised according to the conventional system
outlined below (from Fairbanks and Misra, Spoken and
Written Hindi, 1966). In Trinidad there is also a local
orthography for many Indian terms, for example, as in
the many printed bhajan texts. Where a local orthography
for a word exists, I have favoured that spelling over
the Fairbanks and Misra romanisation. Words now accepted
in the English language are given in their usual English
spelling, hence, Rama, Sita, Krishna, mantra, yoga, pandit,
raga, tala, and so on.

अ आ इ ई उ ऊ
a ā i ī u ū

र से ओ औ
e ai o au

अं अः
an ah

क ख ग घ ङ
ka kha ga gha nga

च छ ज झ ञ
cha chha ja jha na

ट ठ ड ड़ ढ ण
ṭa ṭha ḍ/ṛ ḍha nRa

त थ द ध न
ta tha da dha na

प फ ब भ म
pa pha ba bha ma

य र ल व
ya ra la va

श ष स ह
sha shha sa ha

Vowel Signs

Short: त ति तु
ta ti tu

Long: ता ती तू ते तै तो तौ
tā tī tū te tai to tau

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FELICITY, TRINIDAD

THE MUSICAL PORTRAIT OF A HINDU VILLAGE

CHAPTER 1

EAST INDIANS OF THE WEST INDIES

A man's destination is not his destiny,
Every country is home to one man
And exile to another.

                    'To the Indians who Died in Africa'
                                        T.S. Eliot

'Well, your ancestors came from India, true?'

I asked.

'Yea,' Siewrajiah replied. 'They come in big ship.
Before time they call jahāj. That is big boat. That
taking three month to reach Trinidad from India. Three
month used to reach. It used to move slow.[1]

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1. Myers Trinidad Collection 1977, Cassette
no. 37, Interview ET4, 24 Nov. (transcribed in Field
Notes pp. 31-2), hereafter referred to as T3/77/CS/37
(FN/31-2). Siewrajiah Lochan's parents came from Gorakhpur
in Uttar Pradesh, north India; they immigrated to Trinidad
before she was born. At the age of 14, Siewrajiah married
and moved to Felicity. Now, she is a grandmother and also
an accomplished singer of wedding songs and sohar nativity
songs, learned from her mother.

Out from Calcutta or Madras she sailed - the
Wellesley, the Bucephalus, the Sir Robert Seppings, the
Adelaide, the Burmah, the Scindian, the Ganges, the Foyle,
the Fatel Razack, the great full-rigged ships   - through
the unpredictable waters of the Bay of Bengal. On board,
she carried the newly recruited East Indian indentured
labourers bound to work the sugar plantations of the
New World. And when India and Ceylon were left behind,
the northeastern monsoon carried her to the storms of
the Mozambique Channel. There, her miserable human cargo
entirely unprepared for the icy winds, she turned the
Cape of Good Hope and headed into the bitter seas of
the south Atlantic. She might call at Table Bay to bring
on fresh water and rations or laudanum for the sick.
Then she rode the southeastern trades past St Helena
(15.58 S, 5.43 W), past Ascension (7.57 S, 14.22 W),
and crossed the Equator where, with good luck she picked
up the northeastern trades that would carry her to the
Caribbean.

With bad luck she lay becalmed in the doldrums,
that equatorial belt of light and baffling winds which
lies between the northern and southern trades. Under
sail, the voyage could last as many as 188 days or as
few as 80 (compare this with the Middle Passage of the
slave trade which took 30 to 40 days). Even when steam
was in general use, 22 of the 28 immigrant-carrying vessels

were still under sail.[2]

'And coming in the ship - there were thousands of people in the ship,' Jagdai told me. 'They mess up and they die in the ship together. They throw those who were sick - they throw them away in the sea, just like that.'[3]

'They used to pack them like sardines,' Veni explained. 'In the ships, right? And what lived lived, and what died died.'[4]

Typhoid, cholera, dysentery, malaria swept through the depots and the ships. In the year 1851-52, 4.5 per cent of the Coolies bound for the West Indies were lost; in 1852-53, 5.6 per cent, and in 1855-56, 5.8 per cent. In 1856-57, 17.3 per cent died en route: on the Roman Emperor, 88 deaths of a total of 313; on the Maidstone, 92 dead of 375; on the Merchantman, 120 dead of 385.[5]

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2. Hugh Tinker, A New System of Slavery: The Export of Indian Labour Overseas, 1830-1920 (Oxford University Press, London, 1974), pp. 154, 146; Basil Lubbock, Coolie Ships and Oil Sailers (Brown, Son & Ferguson, Glasgow, 1935), pp. 52-69; The Times Atlas of the World, 5th ed. (Times Books, London, 1975), Plate 4, 'Climatic Fronts and Atmospheric Pressure'.
3. T3/77/CS/25, Interview EL6, 15 Nov. (FN/4). Jagdai Ragoonanan is in her twenties. She lives with her husband in his mother's house on Pierre Road, Felicity. Jagdai attended the St Augustine Secondary School for girls where she had classroom training in music.
4. T3/77/CS/16, Interview EL9, 18 Nov. (FN/6). Veni Ramroop's great-great-grandparents came to Trinidad from India. Veni lives with her parents on Nolan Street in Felicity and she attends the St Andrew's Secondary School in Chaguanas. The Ramroop house is next door to the Trinidad Sevashram Sangha temple where Veni, who attends regularly, has learned to sing many Hindu devotional songs.
5. Tinker, pp. 162-3.

The musicologist can not escape these tallies
of death, these recounts of shipwreck, fire, hurricane,
stench and pestilence, epidemic, suicide and despair.
For amidst descriptions of the horrors are found the
few hints about song, about dance.

Dr De Wolfe of the Sheila wrote on the 2nd
of March, 1883: 'I do not know how the fact became known
that cholera was on board.... The ship was very quiet,
coolies and crew were very subdued, there was no music
and little conversation.'[6]

In the diary of Dr Wiley, Surgeon Superintendent
of the Delharee, 1872, we read:

October 25: Very wet all day, and a heavy storm
with lightning; kept the coolies below...
issued 100 lbs. of preserved mutton.

October 29: Lovely day, with a little wind; coolies
on deck all day, singing and dancing in the evening;
invalids improving, with the exception of the
children who seem to get worse.

October 31: Blowing hard, with heavy seas all
day. Had to keep the coolies down below; unable to
give a cooked meal.... One of the women killed
her child, name Soonmereah - a strong healthy
child - and another weak child died, gradually
wasted away, although receiving ... medical
comforts.[7]

From The Report on the Mortality of Emigrant
Coolies on the Voyages to the West Indies in 1856-57
produced by F.J. Mouat, Inspector of Jails, Bengal, the
following note: 'The Madrassee is a lively, singing

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6. De Wolfe's account enclosed by British
Consul, Surinam to Foreign Office, 2 March 1883; in
Tinker, p. 158.
7. Wiley's diary forwarded by J. Mackenzie,
Bengal Government, to Government of India, no. 2966,
5 Aug. 1873; in Tinker, p. 160.

fellow.'[8]

In the diary of Captain E . Swinton of the <u>Salsette</u>
(Calcutta to Port of Spain, 17 March to 2 July, 1858)
the detailed description of an epidemic on shipboard is
recorded together with many general comments about
music and dance. This account was published by his wife,
Jane, after the Captain drowned at sea on the return voyage:

<u>May 3</u> : A woman died of dysentery. This makes seventy
dead. It is dreadful mortality; still any one who
had ever sailed with them would not wonder at it, as
they are so badly selected at the depot, and so many
diseased sent on board....

<u>May 20</u> : A little girl died. Jane getting music up
to amuse the Coolies.

<u>May 21</u> : A little orphan girl, five years old, died,
after lingering long, the last of her family; in
fact, they appear to die in families.

<u>May 28</u> : The doctor says he wants medicine (chalk-
mixture), and two men died of diarrhoea. Coolie
blind man dead; a little girl and its mother almost
gone also. Doctor asked me if I intended to call
at St. Helena, as he was out of chalk-powder and
laudanum, both essentially required for the Coolies'
complaint. I replied, Not unless he insisted on it,
as it would put the ship to considerable expense by
doing so.

<u>June 1</u> : One child died of dropsy. The doctor and
Jane attending the sick. Doctor wrote me a note
begging me to call at St. Helena for medicine, which
I must now do, in compliance with the terms of the
charter-party. Woman died.

<u>June 3</u> : Hove to off James Town, St. Helena.

<u>June 8</u> : One man died, age thirty-five. Another
man died; this is the last of another family, who
said this morning he was much better, and really
appeared far from a dying man; but it is most odd,
how very suddenly these people go off from apparent
medium health to general debility, though kept up

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8. <u>From Public Consultations</u>, Sept.-Dec. 1858, laid
before Governor-General's Council, 29 Oct. 1858; in Tinker,
p. 164.

with port wine and soup; and were it not for the unremitting attention of Jane, many of them would have sunk under the disease. I hope she may not herself fall a prey to her disinterested kindness, but she seems to have no fear.

June 21: The Coolies very musical.

June 22: Coolies performing.

June 23: Coolies having some native games and war-dances.

June 25: Little girl, two years old, died of diarrhoea, and neglected by its mother. Coolies performing.

June 30: Mustered the Coolies, and find only 108 men, 61 women and 30 children under ten years of age, two infants and two interpreters left of the 323 or 324 we sailed from Calcutta with, and 3, I fear, will die before we can get them landed.[9]

In the remarks that Jane Swinton appended to

her husband's diary, she comments:

One day, when ordered by the doctor for all to run around for exercise, one woman enciente did not like to go, but was ashamed to tell the doctor why, and came and told me to tell him; by having proper female nurses these difficulties would be obviated. We found exercise, such as their native dances, very useful in keeping up a good state of health - an experiment which we tried. Music is also very desirable, and keeping them employed in any way, to prevent them from thinking and drooping.[10]

       *   *   *   *   *

'"O voyagers, O seamen, /You who come to port,

and you whose bodies/ Will suffer the trial and judgement

of the sea/ Or whatever event, this is your real

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9.   From James Carlile, ed., Journal of a Voyage with Coolie Emigrants from Calcutta to Trinidad (London, 1859), pp. 8-11.
10. Carlile, p. 14.

destination." /So Krishna, as when he admonished Arjuna/
On the field of battle.

    'Not fare well, /But fare forward, voyagers.'[11]

      *   *   *   *   *

From the sailing ship, Trinidad's northern
range, some 900 metres high, was the first landfall.
Passing through the Boca del Dragon, the 'dragon's mouth',
and into the warmer, gentler waters of the Gulf of Paria,
the Atlantic behind him,the rounding of the Cape behind
him,the disorientation of the voyage, the humiliation
of recruitment, the filth of the depot, the trickery,
the loss of family, all behind him, he - the East Indian
indentured labourer, the new 'slave' of the New World,
the Coolie - sighted the northern range of Trinidad.

For any sailor it is a memorable event, the
blue waters mixing with the green and the long-awaited
sights and sounds of land:

> We became aware of the blue mountains of North
> Trinidad ahead of us; to the west of them the
> island of the Dragon's Mouth; and westward again,
> a cloud among the clouds, the last spur of the
> Cordilleras of the Spanish Main. There was South
> America at last; and as a witness that this, too,
> was no dream, the blue water of the Windward Islands
> changed suddenly into foul bottle-green. The waters
> of the Orinoco, waters from the peaks of the Andes
> far away, were staining the sea around us....
> We ran through the channel; then amid more low wooded
> islands, it may be for a mile, before a strong
> back current rushing in from the sea; and then saw
> before us a vast plain of muddy water. No shore
> was visible to the westward; to the eastward the
> northern hills of Trinidad, forest clad, sank to

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    11.   T.S. Eliot, Four Quartets (Faber and Faber,
London, 1959), 'The Dry Salvages', p. 42.

the water; to the south lay a long line of coast, generally level with the water's edge, and green with mangroves, or dotted with coco-palms. That was the Gulf of Paria, and Trinidad beyond.... In half an hour more we were on shore, amid Negroes, Coolies, Chinese, French, Spaniards, short-legged Guaraon dogs, and black vultures.[12]

And how does a woman or a man feel at this first glimpse of the unknown? The Coolie (perhaps from the Chinese k'u, 'bitter', and li, 'strength') never realised that this island would become his home.[13] He had placed his fate in the hands of strangers, abandoned home, crossed the Black Waters, broken the rules of his caste; but his plan was to go back. How could he know, as the ship came to dock in Port of Spain's harbour, as he first set foot on Trinidadian soil, that the promised life of ease, 'sifting sugar', was never to be? He did not anticipate the backbreaking toil of the cane fields and the relentless passing of the eighteen-month sugar-cane cycle: plant, burn, cut, harvest, grind, plant, burn, cut and so on and so on and so on.

The Coolie did not know he probably wouldn't see India again. 'The journey had been final,' Naipaul writes. 'How complete a transference had been made from eastern Uttar Pradesh to Trinidad, and that in days

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12. Charles Kingsley, At Last: A Christmas in the West Indies (Macmillan, London, 1900), p. 54.
13. Tinker, p. 41. This term is of disputed origin. The Oxford English Dictionary gives 'Coolie' (Urdu qulī, qūlī, Bengali kūlī, Tamil, Telugu, Canarese, Malayalam, kūli), 'by some considered to be originally Tamil, and identical with the word kūli "hire, payment for occasional menial work".... The objection to this is that the first known mention of Coolies early in the 17th c. refers not to the Tamil country, in the south, but to the region of Guzerat, in the west of India.' The word was used in 1680 according to J.T. Wheeler, Madras (1861), I, 129: 'That the drum be beat to call all coolies.'

when the village was some hours' walk from the nearest

branch-line railway station, the station more than a

day's journey from the port, and that anything up to

three months' sailing from Trinidad.... My grandfather

had made a difficult and courageous journey. It must

have brought him into collision with startling sights,

even like the sea, several hundred miles from his village.'[14]

So the present-day Trinidadian feels for his forebears.

The difficult and courageous journey had been

final for all but a few. In 1865, 302 Coolies returned

to India; in 1854, 180 returned. In 1865, 25 Coolies

who had completed their indenture agreed to commute the

value of their return passage (which they had earned)

into land grants. With this precedent, the Trinidad

Colonial Government established the policy of offering

ten acres of land in exchange for the return voyage.

In 1872, the option was changed to ten acres of land,

or five acres with £5 cash. In 1881, it was again changed

to £5 and no land. In 1890, the option of either

cash or land for the return voyage was withdrawn.[15]

But most Coolies stayed in Trinidad, remembering

the starvation in India from which they had fled. They

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14. _An Area of Darkness_ (Penguin, London, 1968),
pp. 29-30.
15. Morris Freilich, 'Cultural Diversity Among
Trinidadian Peasants' (Ph.D. thesis, Columbia University,
1960), p. 23; Bridget Brereton, 'The Experience of Inden-
tureship: 1845-1917', in _Calcutta to Caroni: The East
Indians of Trinidad_, John La Guerre, ed. (Longman
Caribbean, Trinidad and Jamaica, 1974), pp. 27-8.

had come from districts where the crops had failed. In 1860-61, they had come in great numbers from the North-Western Provinces (later called the United Provinces, today, Uttar Pradesh). In 1865-66, they came primarily from Orissa and Bihar, in 1873-75, from Bihar, Oudh (also part of modern Uttar Pradesh), and the North-Western Provinces. In 1904 they were reluctant to leave home: 'The recent harvest in India has been exceptionally good, and the result is that emigrants are at present almost unobtainable.'[16]

The recruits were vulnerable, often unemployed, ailing, hungry. Some had been enticed away during a family quarrel, some during a dispute with village leaders, others while visiting a religious shrine. The recruit was usually a man with a problem and, whatever the problem, he had been intercepted by the arkatia, the middleman, the trickster. No one in Felicity today has forgotten the trickery :

'They tell them that they going in Trinidad to sift sugar,' Doday explained to me. 'They wasn't knowing they was coming to be slave here. My grandfather often said they thief some of them and bring them come. Unknowing to their parents, they catch them by the wayside

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16. Geoffrey Barraclough, ed., The Times Atlas of World History (Times Books, London, 1978), pp. 172-3; Annual Report on Immigration into Fiji (Fiji, 1904); in Tinker, p. 119.

and they bring them.'[17]

'Who ain like you in the village, and they want you to go away from here again,' Rajiah told me. 'They fool you on and they bring you come. And they done put you in the ship. And they done take money. And they can't go back. They have to come to Trinidad. So, well, when the old India people come, well, we Trinidadian then.'[18]

'They fool them, they fool them,' Mrs Maharajh said. 'Come down in Trinidad and they will work for plenty money. They don't have money to go back. When they see it don't have money down here, those people didn't have, so they had to stay here and stick out with everything.'[19]

The nineteenth-century descriptions of the East Indian indenture only amplify the stories

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17. T3/77/CS/13, Interview EL4, 14 Nov. (FN/11-12). Doday Balgobin's grandparents were from north India. Doday was born in southern Trinidad and moved to Felicity after her marriage. Her family now lives on Makhan Street, 'in the back' of Felicity village. Doday's husband drives a tractor on the sugar-cane estate and she earns extra money by 'sewing rags'. Doday is a devout Christian and she loves to sing hymns.

18. T3/77/CS/8, Interview EL2, 11 Nov. (FN/10-11). Rajiah Sooknanan lives on Cacandee Road across the street from Mesho and Matti. She has worked for years in the cane fields but is now nearing retirement age. Rajiah's parents were born in India and as a girl she learned a large repertory of East Indian traditional songs from her mother and the other village ladies.

19. T3/77/CS/14, Interview EL5, 15 Nov. (FN/2-3). Mrs Maharajh is the wife of Kedar, a prominent Felicity shopkeeper and pandit. Her grandfather was born in India. In addition to housekeeping, she helps mind the shop. The Maharajh house is large and modern with many luxury items such as a hi-fi system and a large collection of LP records.

that people tell today. As I discovered these descriptions, I came to share with my Felicity friends - the grandchildren and the great-grandchildren of those original 'Coolies' - their sense of outrage against this inhuman system:

The licenced recruiter has in his employ a number of unlicenced men called arkatias and while the licenced recruiter sits leisurely in some district these creatures of his go out into all the neighbouring districts and collect emigrants. The arkatias entice the villagers with a wonderful account of the place for which the emigrants are wanted and bring in their victims from long distances to the neighbourhood of the headquarters of the licenced recruiter. The licenced recruiter hearing of the arrival of a party goes out a short distance to meet them when the arkatia disappears. On arrival at the sub-depot, the intending emigrants are told the exact facts of their prospects, and on hearing them, decline to proceed. Very well, says the licenced recruiter, you are all at perfect liberty to return, but I have here a little bill against you for road expenses, and as you have no money I must have your lotah /bowl7 and dopattah /shawl7 and anything else that will procure me a refund of the amount I have expended. The wretched coolie may be a hundred miles from his home, and finding that he has the option of returning penniless ... and of emigrating, chooses the latter alternative; but this is not voluntary emigration.[20]

Emigration agents of the British Colonies appointed professional recruiters, who were generally very unprincipled men. They frequented the Indian villages where the crops had failed and also the pilgrim centres where thousands of illiterate and extremely poor people congregated. Here the wily and most unscrupulous recruiters cast their net and entrapped their victims, who were then brought to the recruiting depots for the so-called legal procedures. The recruiter received a gratuity of Rs. 45 (£3) per head for every male and Rs. 55 (£3.13.6) per head for every female whom he successfully enrolled as an emigrant. For the class of people to which the recruiter belonged, the temptation thus given was strong enough to inspire him to use means that were horribly cruel and

20. The District Magistrate of Ghazipur, writing to the Government of the North-Western Provinces, 10 Nov. 1871; in Tinker, p. 123.

utterly dishonest.[21]

During 1845, the first year of emigration to Trinidad, Thomas Caird of Calcutta with the aid of 300 recruiting agents covered an area of 5,000 square miles and recruited 3,000 Coolies. Of these, only 1,026 were actually dispatched for the West Indies. Then the ships were full.[22]

The legislators back in Westminster continually refined the system: ships were permitted to embark only from the 1st of October through the 28th of February so as to avoid winter in the south Atlantic. They began to issue the Coolies with warm clothing: for women, two flannel jackets, woolen petticoat, worsted stockings, shoes and sari; for men, woolen trousers, jacket, a red woolen cap and shoes. The English were concerned that, once in the West Indies, Coolies would marry whites, and in 1870 introduced a statutory quota of 40 women for each 100 men. In practice, this quota system never worked; most Indian women feared for their wellbeing and refused to sign up. On those occasions when the legislation was strictly enforced, then the recruiters

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21. N. Gangulee, Indians in the Empire Overseas (New India Publishing House, London, 1947), p. 43.
22. Caird to Hope, Sept. 19, Oct. 16, Dec. 23, 1844, Public Record Office MSS, Colonial Office, 318: 162 (Coolie Emigration 2058, 2300, 188), Parliamentary Papers, 1846, XXIV/c. 708/, 32-3, and 1847, XXXIII/c. 809/, 158-63; in Edgar L. Erickson, 'The Introduction of East Indian Coolies into the British West Indies', The Journal of Modern History, VI, 2 (June 1934), 138.

had to turn away many men to achieve the four to ten ratio. Only rarely did family groups sign up. Most of the Coolies were single unrelated individuals, and when they reached the depots of Calcutta or Madras, they found themselves alone amidst hundreds of strangers.[23]

Amidst the rush and confusion of the Calcutta depots, the clerical niceties were overlooked. Much of the information about caste and religion of the Coolies can be given in a few sentences:

For 1872-73: The Protector of Emigrants lists in his Annual Report the departure from Calcutta of 2,521 Coolies of high caste, 4,974 of agricultural castes, 1,537 of artisan castes, and 5,309 of low castes, together with 2,910 Muslims.[24]

For 1877-78: V. Richards gives details about 18,488 emigrants: brahmins, high caste - 2,223; agriculturalists - 4,438; artisans - 763; low castes - 8,807; 'Mussulmans' - 2,250; Christians - 7. Of this total, 2,151 went to Trinidad. Half were from the North-Western Provinces, a quarter from Oudh, and the remainder from Bihar, Bengal, Native States, Punjab and dependencies,

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    23. /John Jenkins/, The Coolie: His Rights and Wrongs: Notes of a Journey to British Guiana, with a Review of the System and of the Recent Commission of Inquiry (Strahan and Co., London, 1871), pp. 175-200.
    24. Tinker, p. 55.

Central India, and Orissa. One-hundred and thirty-one were from 'miscellaneous Madras and Bombay, etc.'.[25]

For 1883: G.A. Grierson records facts about a group of 1,200 north Indian Coolies: Muslims - 264; high caste Hindus ('Brahman', 'Rajput', 'Chettri') - 231; agricultural castes ('Kahar', 'Kurmi', 'Gowala') - 454; low castes ('Chamar') - 277. The Calcutta Protector of Emigrants lists 1,995 'Brahmans', 2,454 agriculturalists, 456 artisans, and 2,790 low castes.[26]

For 1908: 1,248 came from the United Provinces, 983 from Oudh, 120 from Bihar, 53 from the Native States, 25 from Central India, 7 from the Central Provinces, 6 from Punjab, 1 from Bombay and Madras, 1 from Bengal, and 2 from 'other' places.[27]

What faces were behind the statistics? Many of them particularly in the early years of the indenture, were of the Dhangars, the 'janglies', a dark, semi-aboriginal hill people, short of stature, from Chota Nagpur. These tribal folk, outside the caste system, included the Santals, Mundas, and Oraons. They had a long tradition of hiring themselves out as seasonal labourers in the towns and cities of India, and were natural targets for the recruiting agents. Then there

25. V. Richards, Annual Report on Emigration from the Port of Calcutta to British and Foreign Colonies in 1877-78 (1878), in Notes on Indian Immigration, 1878-1893, p. 18; in Morton Klass, East Indians in Trinidad: A Study of Cultural Persistence (Columbia University Press, New York, 1961), pp. 10-12.
26. Tinker, p. 56.
27. Arthur and Juanita Niehoff, East Indians in the West Indies (Milwaukee Public Museum, Milwaukee, Wisc., 1960), p. 17.

was that flotsam of humanity, the unemployed and home-
less of India's teeming ports - Calcutta, Bombay, and
Madras. These too were easy targets for the agents.
The balance was made up with a cross-section of rural
northeastern India. All groups from the great Gangeatic
plain are represented in these figures, all religions
of the area, all castes, however high, however low, all
occupations and social classes except the rich.

On the 30th May, 1845, the Fatel Razack, the first
ship bearing indentured East Indian labour to Trinidad,
arrived in Port of Spain with 197 males (including one
infant) and 28 females.[28] By March of 1846, all of the
sugar estates on Trinidad save one had requested indentured
labourers, and 812 Coolies had arrived. By 1848, 5,403
East Indian workers were on the island; by 1870, 29,583;
by 1892, 93,569. After 1860, immigration from the port
of Madras was halted.[29]

And what to the Coolie was this 'Chinitat', this
Trinidad? Most southerly island of the West Indian

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28. Louis Antoine Aimé Gaston Verteuil, Trinidad:
Its Geography, Natural Resources, Administration, Present
Condition, and Prospects (Cassell, London, 1884); Surgeon-
Major D.W.D. Comins, Notes on Emigration from India to
Trinidad (Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1893), p. 3
Appendix A; N.P. Bowen and B.G. Montserin, eds., Colony
of Trinidad and Tobago Census Album (Government Press,
Port of Spain, 1948), p. 9.
29. Comins, pp. 4-5, 24, Appendix A.

archipelago, it is just beyond the mouths of the Orinoco
River, off the northeastern coast of Venezuela. On a
bright day, you can see the South American mainland,
only 11 miles distant. The island covers only 1,836
square miles; it is 48 miles wide and 65 miles long.

In addition to the northern range, which runs
from east to west, there are the Monserrat Hills in the
centre of the island, and on the southern coast the
Trinity Hills from which the country takes its name. The
remaining terrain is fairly level. The Caroni swamp and
the Oropuche lagoon, regions of marshland and nesting
ground for thousands of Scarlet Ibis, are found on the
western side. These two swamps are bordered by a belt
of low-lying treeless savannah, used since the nineteenth
century by the East Indians to grow rice.

Sugar-cane was introduced around 1650. It was the
basis of Trinidad's economy when the Indians arrived and
is still important today, together with other exports,
especially oil, rum, grapefruits, and Angostura Bitters.
In the south of the island, the 212-acre Pitch Lake, a
sedimentary volcano, is a seepage of natural asphalt
which is used locally and sold abroad. Trinidad has no
sizeable deposits of precious metals, and for this reason
attracted few Spanish colonists after its discovery by
Christopher Columbus in 1498.

For nearly 300 years after Columbus's voyage,
Trinidad remained a Spanish possession. Spain followed
a policy of neglect. Little economic development was

undertaken until the late eighteenth century and the island remained sparsely settled. The indigenous American Indians, the Arawaks and Caribs, soon died out from exposure to white man's diseases and from exploitation on the tobacco plantations. In 1797, Spain peacefully surrendered Trinidad to the British.

As early as the seventeenth century, African slaves had been brought in to work the plantations, and during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries they became the mainstay of Trinidad's labour force. In 1807, the slave trade was outlawed by the British; in 1833, all slaves under the age of six were freed; and in 1838, the practice of African slavery in any form was terminated. The emancipated slaves tended to shun the plantations and move to town. This migration resulted in a labour shortage and drastically reduced the sizeable income the absentee landlords had come to expect from their colonial estates. At the same time, Trinidad's economy was suddenly threatened by the introduction on the world market of beet sugar, produced on Cuba and other Caribbean islands. It is not suprising that the new scheme for East Indian labour followed fast upon the heels of slavery. The English legislators moved quickly to substitute evil for evil. Their venture succeeded, for within a few decades it was clear that the East Indian labour force had saved Trinidad from economic ruin.[30]

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30. Eric Williams, History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago (André Deutsch, London, 1962), pp. 5-49, 65-121.

'You know, before time, Trinidad wasn't cultivate,'
Siewrajiah told me. 'And Trinidad was just as high wood.
It didn't have people to work in Trinidad. Well, they
tried to get people from India. Them Negro people don't
want to work. Is India people who cultivate Trinidad.
And since Indian people come - this is, I don't know
how many years - might be thousand year since Indians
come, probably more - and then Trinidad get to cultivate,
because Trinidad wasn't have nothing.'[31]

The newly arrived Coolies were first divided into
groups: the shovel gang or cane-cutting gang who did the
digging, clearing, and planting, and the weeding gang -
the women and weaker men. Smaller jobs were done by the
'light' gang or 'invalid' gang. There was also a building
gang. Coolies worked by the task, and those who could
not complete an entire task forfeited their whole day's
wage. For a member of the shovel gang - these, the
strongest men - a day's task would be 80 to 90 caneholes
five feet by five feet (in heavy soil), or 150 caneholes
(in light soil).[32]

The working day began before daybreak. 'Morning
the head driver from the estate, the overlooker, walking
barrack to barrack', Siewrajiah explained, 'and calling
them to come out to work.... They come out and they looking
out every house. House ain open, they pushing the door

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31. T3/77/CS/37, Interview ET4, 24 Nov. (FN/34-8).
32. Comins, pp. 6, 8-12; /Jenkins/, pp. 94-5;
Tinker, pp. 182-3.

and waking you to get ready to go to work.'[33]   There
was a break for lunch when the Coolies returned to the
line; then they worked until sunset - in Trinidad, about
five-thirty p.m., year round.   In the Victorian sugar
mills, hours were longer, especially during the crop
time (February through June), when they might be expected
to work around the clock.   During the 'slack' season
(December to January), the Indians worked to clear the
land for the next planting, and they were used as draught
animals for the hauling and plowing.   Monday was a day
off without pay.[34]

During their first year, the mortality rate among
the indentured population was often as high as it had
been on shipboard.   The new workers were worn down by
the system:

> It is when the rainy season sets in that his heaviest
> trials commence, when he makes his first essay in
> weeding, perhaps in high cane and heavy grass ... the
> work is hard, monotonous, and in high canes may
> almost be called solitary; he loses heart, makes a
> task in double the time in which an experienced
> hand would make a whole one, returns at a late hour,
> cold, wet and fatigued, to renew the struggle on
> the morrow with decreased vitality till at the end of
> this first year it is found that his work has not
> paid for his rations....An immigrant embarks on the
> second year of apprenticeship saddled with a consid-
> erable debt from his first year's ration.[35]

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33.   T3/77/CS/37,   Interview ET4, 24 Nov. (FN/37).
34.   Comins, pp. 8-9; /Jenkins/, pp. 92-4.
35.   The Immigration Agent-General, Trinidad
Immigration Report for 1871; in Tinker, p. 182.

It was only after the Coolie marked his thumbprint on the contract ratifying this, the 'meanest and weakest of bonds',[36] after his identification papers had been issued, after he had been shown to his quarters on the Coolie line, after he had been assigned to a work-gang, after he had been defeated by the heat of the mid-day, after his hands had become raw, then hardened from the cane, after he had been beaten, fined, jailed, after his rations had been withheld - that the realisation came that this 'Chinitat', this Trinidad, was the world of slavery.

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'Fare forward, travellers! not escaping from the past /Into different lives, or into any future; /You are not the same people who left that station /Or who will arrive at any terminus, /While the narrowing rails slide together behind you; /And on the deck of the drumming liner /Watching the furrow that widens behind you, /You shall not think "the past is finished" /Or "the future is before us".'[37]

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36. Kingsley, p. 97.
37. Eliot, p. 41.

CHAPTER 2

ROOTS

Sweet memory hid from the light of truth
I'll keep thee, for I would not have thy worth
Questioned in Court of Law nor answer for it
                                on my oath,

But hid in my fond heart I'll carry thee
And to a fair false thought I'll marry thee
And when thy time is done I'll bury thee.

                    Stevie Smith, 'Portrait'

Indian immigrants, cut off by time and distance
from their mother culture, living in a New World African
culture, exploited and abused by English plantation
owners, confronted with different traditions, different
values, and a whole new way of life - what songs would
these people chose to sing? What music would they
play? These simple questions puzzled me as I read the
anthropological accounts of life in Felicity, Charleyville,

Endeavour, Warrenville and other East Indian villages of Trinidad.

Morton Klass, the first anthropologist to study life in Felicity, had been particularly interested in the questions of acculturation and cultural persistence. During his stay in Trinidad (1957-58), he had examined these opposing forces in relation to five areas of Indian culture: caste, extended family, religion, economics, and politics. He concluded that cultural persistence had predominated; the Trinidad Indians had managed to reconstruct a South Asian culture in the Caribbean. I wondered if his conclusions would hold good for music:

> The Indian immigrants to Trinidad who founded the village of Amity were able to reconstitute a community reflecting their society of origin. They did this, moreover, despite considerable handicaps. The original settlers derived from different villages in northern India. Again, during the period of indenture they had become part of what was for them the alien sociocultural system of Trinidad. Finally, the community they reconstituted had to exist within the framework of the larger Trinidad society and its culture. But such a community did in fact come into being, making possible the persistence of major elements of the Indian culture to the present time. Despite considerable modifications, Amity today resembles a community of the sociocultural system of India, rather than a community of the particular variant of West Indian culture to be found among the Negro population of Trinidad.[1]

I read everything available - accounts of the

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1. Morton Klass, <u>East Indians in Trinidad: A Study of Cultural Persistence</u> (Columbia University Press, New York, 1961), p. 4. Klass calls the village 'Amity'.

voyages from India, analyses of the indenture system, its place in the economic picture and its effects upon the Indian émigrés, the diaries of foreign missionaries, the researches of anthropologists who journeyed to Trinidad, the reflections of teachers, religious leaders, novelists, and poets who were born there - and began slowly to piece together the clues. Firstly, there were the fragments from the logs and diaries of those tortuous voyages: 'Coolies on deck all day, singing and dancing in the evening'; 'the Madrassee is a lively, singing fellow'; 'coolies and crew were very subdued, there was no music'; 'should be permitted to play their drums till 8 bells'; 'getting music up to amuse the Coolies'; 'Coolies having some native games and war dances'; 'the Coolies are very musical'; 'Coolies performing'. Nothing about the steps of the dances, the verses of the songs, the types of drums, the groups of singers; here only the sparsest evidence of cultural persistence and the wonderful image of songs at the very moment in time that they were transported from one world to another.

These glimpses, so incomplete, so wanting in detail, carried me in my imagination across those oceans, in those ships, with those emigrants. I imagined the amazement of white captain and crew, hearing traditional north Indian songs sung on deck. I wondered if the passengers themselves were also amazed to hear songs - new to them - from other villages, other districts, in other languages. Overnight, these rural folk, leaving home for the first

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time, became cosmopolitan in outlook. Overnight, the
definitions of 'them' and 'us' had changed and us now
could include someone of a different caste, with differ-
ent traditions, whose song had different words and a
different tune. Did the amalgam that has become the
Trinidadian Indian music of today originate on shipboard
as new songs were passed from one voyager to the next,
and strangers learned to dance hand in hand?

I found clues about acculturation and cultural
persistence in the writings of historians and anthropol-
ogists. Of these, several remarks have proved of special
value throughout my research, firstly, the comments of
anthropologist, Melville J. Herskovits, whose observations
date from the 1930's. The topic of his <u>Trinidad Village</u>
(1947) is life in Toco, a small and remote fishing commun-
ity on the island's northeastern coast. During his study,
he noted the resistance to acculturation between Blacks
and Indians :

> Another example of contact with a minimum of
> borrowing is found on the island of Trinidad,
> where British Indians and Negroes have lived in
> contiguity since the first half of the nine-
> teenth century. The immigrants from India,
> brought as indentured workers on the plantations,
> settled in Trinidad, and their descendents now
> form a colony almost one hundred and seventy-five
> thousand strong. They speak their own language,
> dress in the Indian manner, cultivate their
> irrigated rice patches, and otherwise follow
> the modes of life of the parts of India from
> which they derive. The Negroes, on the other
> hand, have become acculturated to many patterns
> of the Europeans who constitute the economically,
> politically, and socially dominant minority of
> the island's population. The Negroes, from the
> first, resented the importation of the 'coolies'
> from India as an economic threat; the Indians

looked on the Negroes as 'savages,' according
to Charles Kingsley, who was on the scene in 1871.[2]

Of course, the situation has changed since the
1930's. Today in Trinidad, the East Indians contribute
to all facets of the Westernized life of the island.
Most Indians speak English, and many wear bluejeans.
The casual visitor, walking down Frederick Street in
Port of Spain, assumes that the East Indian has assimil-
ated into the mainstream of Trinidadian life: as the
national anthem tells him, 'Side by side we stand....
Every creed and race finds an equal place.' To a great
extent, our tourist is correct, for Indians as well as
Blacks are amongst the doctors, lawyers, and bankers of
the country; both Indians and Blacks are businessmen,
architects, politicians, and government officials.

But, if our visitor continued down the Princess
Margaret Highway, past the miles of cane fields, to
Felicity village, then the picture would change. For
there, we find that the cane land remains the domain
of the Indian; sugar, ever still, his benefactor and
his master. 'Find cane, and you've found Indians,' my
Black friends told me.

There amidst the fields of cane, in the villages
of Caroni in central Trinidad, we find the sights and
sounds that transport us to an Asian world.

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2. Man and His Works (Knopf, New York, 1949),
p. 538.

India lay about us in things: in a string bed or
two, grimy, tattered, no longer serving any
function, never repaired because there was no one
with this caste skill in Trinidad, yet still
permitted to take up room; in plaited straw mats;
in innumerable brass vessels; in wooden printing
blocks, never used because printed cotton was
abundant and cheap and because the secret of the
dyes had been forgotten, no dyer being at hand;
in books, the sheets large, coarse and brittle,
the ink thick and oily; in drums and one ruined
harmonium; in brightly coloured pictures of
deities on pink lotus or radiant against Himalayan
snow; and in all the paraphenalia of the prayer-
room: the brass bells and gongs and camphor-
burners like Roman lamps, the slender-handled spoon
for the doling out of the consecrated 'nectar',
... the images, the smooth pebbles, the stick of
sandalwood.[3]

The brass vessels, the string beds, the printing
blocks, these artefacts, 'never repaired', 'no longer
serving any function', were these like the wedding songs
of the Felicity ladies, the godna (tattoo song) Moon
taught me, the sohar (childbirth song) Mr Charran sang
from his great Ramayan, 'cherished because they came
from India,... continued to be used and no regret attached
to their disintegration'?[4] Was I hearing songs from
India's past, here locked in time and slavishly reproduced
in their Trinidadian exile? These songs from grandfather's
Uttar Pradesh - could I ever find them in India today?

Or would they long since have been altered beyond
recognition or abandoned altogether? 'How can I explain
my feelings of outrage', Naipaul cries out, 'when I

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3. V.S. Naipaul, An Area of Darkness (Penguin,
London, 1968), p. 29.
4. Naipaul, pp. 29-30.

heard that in Bombay they used candles and electric
bulbs for the Diwali festival, and not the rustic clay
lamps of immemorial design, which in Trinidad we still
used?'[5] Were the songs, like the rustic clay lamps,
merely marginal survivals of Indian practices, now
obsolete in their original home?

'What is striking', writes John La Guerre, Professor
of Government at the University of the West Indies, is
'the virtual demise of some of the more crucial features
of East Indian culture - of the panchayat /village council/
and of caste - and the retention of those with more
symbolic value.'[6] These contradictions are the very
heart of Indian life in Trinidad, and it is this cultural
and social complexity that has drawn so many scholars
to the island.

Since Herskovits's generation, two opposing views
of the role of Indian culture in Trinidad have been put
forward. Both views, 'pluralism' and 'consensualism',
are useful to the musicologist. It is not so much a
question of taking a stand on one side of the debate or
on the other, but in appreciating the divisions in
Trinidad's multi-ethnic society that have led to this
particular discussion. And the issues involved help in
assessing the nature of musical acculturation in Trinidad,
and help explain it.

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5. P. 36.
6. John La Guerre, 'Preface', in Calcutta to Caroni:
The East Indians of Trinidad, John La Guerre, ed. (Longmans
Caribbean, Trinidad, 1974), p. xiii.

The anthropologists, M.G. Smith and L. Despres, describe the island's social organization as 'plural' because they feel it is characterized by 'formal diversity in the basic system of compulsory institutions ... kinship, education, religion, property and economy, recreation.... It does not normally include government.'[7] The notion of pluralism as used in Caribbean studies should not be confused with the more colloquial use of this term, particularly in the United States.

> As defined by most social anthropologists, pluralism is quite different from its ordinary use in, for example, American political and social discussions. In the United States the term 'pluralism' commonly refers to the melting pot, in which European groups of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, though retaining some Old World values, are believed to have pooled their differences in a consensual stew. American democracy and libertarian individualism are often ascribed to the capacity to make such differences culturally enriching rather than socially divisive....American pluralism encourages ceremonial diversity but renders cultural differences trivial and harmless; it thus promotes concensus. ... For many European social anthropologists, on the other hand, pluralism marks societies in which class cleavages are deep and persistent, cultural differences are institutionalized, and force is the main regulative mechanism.[8]

The pluralists maintain that in Trinidad and other similar Caribbean societies including Guyana and Surinam, the Indians and Blacks each have individual systems of

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7. M.G. Smith, 'Social and Cultural Pluralism', in Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, LXXXIII, Art. 5: 'Social and Cultural Pluralism in the Caribbean' (20 Jan. 1960), p. 769.
8. David Lowenthal, West Indian Societies (Oxford University Press, New York, 1972), pp. 88-9.

agriculture, buying and selling, worship, schools, the
arts and music, dance, and so on. These separate
institutional structures were unified before independence
by the European metropolitan powers, England or Holland
or France, and now by the local governments. In the
pluralist view, Indians and Creoles are antagonistic
forces; Indians have always been excluded by Creoles.
They have no assigned place in the colour-class hierarchy
of Trinidad as it is perceived by Creoles, a hierarchy
in which white colour has high status and black low.
The reasons for this are historical. The Indians were
brought to the Caribbean specifically to work on the
estates, and it was to the estates that they were legally
bound. No love was lost between the 'coolieman' and the
'niggar' (the scornful terms used by each group to desig-
nate the other). As so often is the case with immigrant
arrivals, in districts where the East Indians settled,
the Creoles quit. From 1845 to 1917, isolation remoulded
that ethnically, culturally, and linguistically mixed
Hindu population which had originally landed in Trinidad:
they became a community of individuals with more in
common with each other than with the Indians of India.
Naipaul describes the pluralist vantage point as he him-
self perceived it as a child:

> It was easy to accept that we lived on an island
> where there were all sorts of people and all sorts
> of houses.... We ate certain food, performed certain
> ceremonies and had certain taboos; we expected
> others to have their own. We did not wish to share
> theirs; we did not expect them to share ours.

They were what they were; we were what we were.[9]

The opponents of the pluralist viewpoint, especially Lloyd Braithwaite and R.T. Smith, think that the functional, consensual model of society, developed by Talcott Parsons, best describes these Caribbean societies. Pointing out that Indians and Blacks share many concepts, they claim that the Indian community is not a separate enclave, but rather one class in a highly stratified but unified society. 'Values are not co-terminous with norms, nor norms with behaviour,' Lowenthal points out. 'West Indian social groups often maintain separate institutions and exhibit divergent behaviour while they share underlying values.'[10]

Any visitor to one of the temples on Cacandee Road in Felicity will feel immediate sympathy with the consensual model. Sunday morning, early. The congregation gathers, the hymns are sung, the prayers said, the sermon delivered, the collection taken, the blessing given. How Western and yet how Hindu. A Christian modus operandi superimposed over an Eastern faith. The village pandits behave like priests - advising families, visiting the sick in hospitals, ministering to the needs of their parishioners. 'Competition is the root cause', Lowenthal points out. 'To counter Christian proselytization, Hinduism has achieved a comparable conceptual scope and

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9. Naipaul, pp. 30-31.
10. Lowenthal, p. 90.

organizational range .... Competition thus led Hindus to emphasize uniqueness in belief and ritual while emulating Christian structure and function.'[11]

'Competition' was one of the first musical terms the villagers defined for me - quite by chance - in Felicity. Q: 'Is this a composition?' A: 'No, no. Competition is, you know what? Like you and me singing, and I singing with you, and you singing with me. And you sing better than me. And you win me.'[12]

This misunderstanding happened so often that my village teachers finally persuaded me to think beyond the accidents of accent - American and Trinidadian - to the question of meaning. Q: 'Is this a composition?' A: 'You know what they call competition song? That now she singing and I singing. Now we two are we jostling to better we self. I singing to better she and she singing to better me. So that mean we two are we jostling to better one another. But if I better she, well I win; and if she better me, she win.'[13]

Competition for recognition and fame, for money, and simply for its own sake, is a basic feature of the Trinidadian world view. Indians compete with Creoles

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11. P. 152.
12. Myers Trinidad Collection 1977, Cassette no. 9, Interview EL3, 11 Nov. (transcribed in Field Notes, pp. 39-40), hereafter referred to as T3/77/CS/9 (FN/39-40). Rookmin Ragbir lives on Cacandee Road in Felicity. Her father came from Guyana, her husband's father from India. She is a housewife in her forties.
13. Rajiah Sooknanan, T3/77/CS/8, Interview EL2, 11 Nov. (FN/46-7).

and Indians compete with Indians. All Trinidadians
compete with the other little islands and with the rest
of the world. In the land of Carnival queens and road-
march kings, the victory, the win, is everything: 'Ainsley
Crawford just win the gold', sings Lord Kitchener, 'to
put Trinbago on top of the world....Our Crawford done
win the race, with the Russian beaten into third place'.[14]

District competes with district in the 'Prime
Minister's Best Village Competition'. Singers compete
with singers and musicians and dancers on 'Mastana Bahar',
Trinidad and Tobago Television's Indian amateur hour;
Blacks compete with Blacks on 'Scouting for Talent'.
Indians and Blacks compete with each other for financial
sponsorship from national corporations, who think of
musical organizations as teams; for example, these sides
sponsored by the Solo Company: the Solo Sangeet Indian
Orchestra, the Solo Harmonites Steelband, the Solo Beavers
Basketball Team, the Solo Crown United Soccer Team, the
Solo Stars Cycling Team, and the Solo Crusaders Table
Tennis Team.

Not all the competition is friendly. 'We fear
the black man is trying to use us for some sinister
purpose,' Grace Maharajh said. 'Every Indian is united
today....We are closer together now than we have been for
centuries....Approaching us in your tightly knit band,
will drive us into our tightly knit band....We distrust

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14. The 100 metres, Olympic Games, 1976. From
Trinidad Calypso 1977 (Topic Publications, /Port of Spain,
1977/), n.p.

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strangers, especially you, who behave like strangers all these years.'[15] But in Trinidad, this competition never erupted in civil insurrections as in Guyana in 1969, nor have the Indians adopted a Creole lifestyle as in Jamaica. In Trinidad, Indians have survived as a distinct community, and they share with the immigrant minorities of all lands the problem of self identity.

> The minority must adopt certain aspects of the culture of the dominant group and of the society at large, for some acceptance of common institutions and expected behavioural responses is necessary if the larger society is to function. On the other hand, the dominant group must recognize the distinctive cultural traits of the minority as acceptable 'specialties'... or 'alternatives'.... In fact, some of the distinctive cultural equipment of the minority will probably need to be given new emphasis if it is to serve as a rallying point for sentiments of group solidarity. Religious traditions may ... be especially effective as a means of organizing and developing unity of purpose in a minority.[16]

The Creoles in Trinidad appreciate many of the East Indian specialities: the spice of the cuisine, the grace of the sari, the melodrama of the films, the rhythmic complexity of the music, and the elegance of the dance. Other specialities baffle the Black: the Indian's frugality, their conservative views about marriage, their attachment to the soil, to the cane and

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15. 'To the Black People in T'dad', Embryo, II, no. 19 (24 March 1970), 9.
16. Charles Wagley and Marvin Harris, Minorities in the New World: Six Case Studies (Columbia University Press, New York, 1958), p. 287.

rice, their monkey- and elephant-headed icons, their elaborate Hindu liturgy. It is the Indian's sense of time and of history that is most perplexing to the Black man. For the Blacks are Westerners, and like Europeans and the Americans, they expect that 'every day in every way things are getting better and better.' For the Indians, this modern world, this kali yuga (the degenerate fourth age), is only a dim shadow of a glorious Asian past, when all men were brave like Rama and all women were virtuous like Sita, and goodness prevailed. These mythical recollections are as real to the villagers of Felicity as yesterday's headlines.

'The culture of our fathers', writes K.V. Parmasad, a Trinidadian of East Indian descent, 'has outlived the stresses and strains of thousands of years. Whereas other ancient cultures have disappeared under the weight of time (in Egypt only the Pyramids stand), Indian culture lives on and as Gandhi said,"though ancient it is yet not old". We in this land are the inheritors of this culture, we are the transporters of this way of life to these parts.'[17]

Our past, our heritage, is it perhaps the product of our imagination? Although we cannot foresee the future at least tomorrow does come to prove us right or wrong.

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17. 'By the Light of a Deya', The Aftermath of Sovereignty: West Indian Perspectives, David Lowenthal and Lambros Comitas, eds. (Anchor Books, New York, 1973), p. 288.

But we can play with our memories of the past. T.S.
Eliot, for example, describes the 're-collection' of
memories:'It seems, as one becomes older, /That the past
has another pattern, and ceases to be a mere sequence -
... But the sudden illumination - /We had the experience
but missed the meaning, /And approach to the meaning
restores the experience /In a different form, beyond any
meaning/... The past experience revived in the meaning/
Is not the experience of one life only /But of many
generations.'[18]

This search back in time is, for immigrant groups
cut off from their roots, cut off from the lost gener-
ations, a venture into an unknown landscape. While
exploring this maze which we call our 'heritage', our
'roots', we need to relate the unknown past to familiar
reference points. Where there are gaps in the record
we must speculate, invent, and improvise. Alex Haley,
author of Roots, describes this process as 'faction'.

'How much of Roots is fact and how much is fiction?'
... Since I wasn't yet around when most of the
story occurred, by far most of the dialogue and most
of the incidents are of necessity a novelized
amalgam of what I know took place together with
what my researching led me to plausibly feel took
place.[19]

Haley's arrival in Juffure, the village of his
forebears by the Gambia River, was the culmination of
his thirty-year search for his great-great-great-great-

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18. T.S. Eliot, Four Quartets (Faber and Faber,
London, 1959), 'The Dry Salvages', p. 39.
19. Roots (Hutchinson, London, 1977), p. 686, and
below, p. 680.

grandfather, Kunta Kinte, for his homeland, Africa, and
for his roots. He described this journey as a quest
undertaken on behalf of his family and on behalf of his
race 'for all of us to know who we are.' In Juffure,
Haley discovered what the East Indians discovered in
Trinidad, that one's heritage - real and imagined -
combines the familiar with the strange: 'Later the men
of Juffure took me into their mosque built of bamboo
and thatch, and they prayed around me in Arabic. I
remember thinking, down on my knees, "After I've found
out where I came from, I can't understand a word they're
saying."' The East Indians of Trinidad are constantly
exposed to a new and unfamiliar version of their own
past. These versions may be the myths of ancient Bharat
as portrayed in the popular comic books on sale in all
towns or the technicolour Indian culture promoted by the
Bombay film industry. For the Felicity villagers, these
new images are gradually replacing the 'little tradition',
the old rural ways of their forebears which they can
still touch and still remember - the 'brass vessels',
the 'string beds', the 'printing blocks'.

When I inquired how it could be that they, the East
Indians, had discovered within themselves an instant love
for the urban art music of north India (introduced to the
island only in 1966) - part of the 'great tradition' -
as foreign to them as to me, their teacher from India,
Professor Adesh, explained: 'It is their heredity, their
parentage. The link was not broken since they came here.

The link wasn't broken. If the link had been broken, then this love could not exist. It would have changed.'[20]

But the East Indians of Trinidad are all too aware of the circumstances which cut them off from their former motherland, the barriers of time and distance. Parmasad writes of his own people:

> No one is advocating that we return to India. But it is necessary that we, the Indians of the West - West Indians in the truest sense - should come to terms with what we have here, not discard it. We must dig deep into the farthest recesses of our consciousness as a people and discover our true selves, tapping if necessary the limitless reserve at the source of our culture. We cannot and must not deny the future social order, this, our most lasting and significant contribution in the creation of the new society.[21]

Competition, Daniel J. Crowley claims, is the motivation behind the Indian's renewed search for his Asian heritage. '"This latter-day 'revival' of Indian culture is not Indian at all." In the typical competitive Creole way, East Indians are using Indian culture and often mythical caste for "making style" and as a club with which to beat contemptuous Creoles.'[22] What impressed me throughout my time in Felicity was the ingenuity with which the villagers were able, not only to modify their traditions, but to Indianise them in order to meet the new demands

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20. T3/77/CS/52, Interview SP12, 1 Dec. (FN/27). Professor H.S. Adesh, the scholar, musician, and poet, has lived in Trinidad since 1966. He teaches Indian languages and music and is the head of the Bharatiya Vidya Sansthhaan ('Institute of Indian Knowledge') of Trinidad and Tobago.
21. Parmasad, p. 287.
22. 'Cultural Assimilation in a Multiracial Society', in Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, LXXXIII, Art. 5, 853, quoting Kumari Santosh Chopra, the Punjabi Headmistress of Gandhi Memorial High School in Penal, Trinidad.

continually posed by the Caribbean setting, demands ranging

from the celebration of a wedding to the revamping of a

school curriculum. What concerns Crowley is the authenticity

of the results; authenticity also worries C. Jayawardena

as he generalises about overseas Indian cultures:

> What is meant by 'persistence' of Indian culture?
> Since the period of emigration to various countries
> ranges from three or four decades to more than a
> century, and since, presumably, society and culture
> in India were also changing during that time, a
> question arises as to which point in this flux
> should be used as the base time to measure change.
> Is 'persistence' to mean that the customs and
> organizational principles of peasant communities
> of Oudh before the Mutiny persist in, say, Trinidad,
> whereas in all likelihood they have changed in
> India? If the Kenyan grandsons of a Patidar farmer
> from Gujarat lead the life of the Bombay urban
> upper class, learned from the Indian Illustrated
> Weekly, does this represent persistence or change?[23]

Once I had considered these thoughts of the scholars

who had gone before me, once I had visited the village again,

again, and again, I began to notice a pattern running through

all the events I had witnessed, a pattern that also helped

me to account for the observations of other writers. On

the left hand side of the page is the past - the arrival

of the East Indians in Trinidad together with the things

and the memories they brought with them on those ships, so

long ago now. On the right (or moving forward in time,

however you wish to conceptualize this model or hypothesis)

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23. 'Migration and Social Change: A Survey of
Indian Communities Overseas', The Geographical Review
LVIII, no. 3 (July 1968), 438-9.

is the future. It includes survival - the physical survival
of the Indians, overcoming both the perils of nature and
man's inhumanity to man in order to flourish as a community
in Trinidad today. Then the survival of their culture,
the 'remembered past', genuinely their own. It also includes
renewal - the refreshment of a tradition by returning
directly to its source, or what is perceived to be its source,
its roots.

Down the middle of the page (or now, any particular
now) are the forces of change in human life: simple
phenomena like omission and forgetfulness, complex attitudes
like rejection (that song is no longer appropriate for
this event), acculturation (those people have something we
can use), syncretism (what they have is similar to what
we have), and all the creative acts of man's mind and
imagination - improvisation, delight in adventure, a sense
of taste and style, a sense of humour.

Lowenthal has observed such a pattern in many
aspects of Indian life in the West Indies:

  Clothing, food, and language display a common
  sequence of retention, gradual disappearance,
  then self-conscious revival in ethnic separatism.
  The elaborate pagadi headdresses, the ubiquitous
  long skirts and orhnis, dhotis and shalwars, gave
  way by the time of the Second World War to dress
  differentiated from Creole mainly by the vestigial
  head veils of East Indian women and the ceremonial
  dhotis of some men. But imminent independence in
  India and rising ethnic tensions in the Caribbean
  impelled many East Indians to adopt imported
  saris and other items of 'national' dress.
    The decline and rejuvenation of Hindi follow the
  same pattern. Within a generation of their Caribbean

arrival, indentured East Indians, save those in Surinam, spoke English and had begun to forget their native Hindi, Tamil, or Telegu. Although many rural Indians in Trinidad and Surinam continue to speak Hindi at home, almost all are bilingual in Creolese. National sentiment reanimated by Indian independence spurred prominent East Indians to advocate Hindi instruction in schools, and Hindi has become an anti-Creole focus for urban Indians, even those whose ancestral tongue it was not.[24]

One Saturday morning, in the midst of my stay in Felicity, all these ideas came into focus. I was living with Matti and Mesho in their big, comfortable house on Cacandee Road. Kamini, Matti's younger sister, came over to visit. She was no more than seventeen years old - a schoolgirl - and we were good friends. We often chatted and we enjoyed walking around the village together. Since Kamini liked singing, we decided to go off and listen to some tapes of songs I had recorded in the village. I needed help with the documentation. But our conversation soon got sidetracked to historical matters.

'Sometime afterwards the English settled in Trinidad,' she was explaining. 'They fight Spain and they got Trinidad and they settle. And from India, well, to work in the plantation they had this indentureship system. And the Indians, well, they used to force. At first, they fool them with glass and metals and all this thing, and pieces of glass, anything that shine, because they didn't know anything about it. And they tell them about

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24. West Indian Societies, p. 154.

it have plenty milk and sugar, spice, and all this thing in the West Indies. That to come and they will get plenty and be rich. And they didn't know. And they came down. Then they started working them hard hard in the plantation.'

'What was it like living here?' I asked.

'Terrible,' she replied. 'Houses is just shacks, without any facilities and thing. They just have two pieces, they just nail up a wall, and those shack, and they even had to sleep on the floor. Only the estate owners, the plantation owners, had a little piece of bench, like board, and they slept on it. The Indians were still okay, but if you saw those slaves, oh, they had it really terrible!'

'So the Indians were never slaves?'

'No. They had to work on the plantations for five years. They had to sign an agreement, a contract. It was known as the indentureship period.'

The conversation idled on. We had the whole morning to pass together as she was escaping household chores by chatting with me. I asked why it was that the Indians in Trinidad spoke English but generally sang in Hindi.

'The English', she explained, 'when they came down here, well, they sort of speak English,and the Indians, well, they used to speak Hindi. When they started getting slaves from Africa, they used to mix them. They never put a whole group of Indians together, and a whole group of Africans together, because they afraid they rebel....

They mixed them together and they couldn't speak their
language. So they couldn't really rebel. And they
learn a language. First they used to communicate by
signs, and then they learn a language, "patio" /patois/.
That is just a "local". And they started communicating.'

'Is that the same as broken English?' I asked.

'No, is a mixture - well, in that case it would
be a mixture of Indian and African languages.'

This was the past from my model, the left-hand
side of the page. She went on to talk about the disap-
pearance,the adaptation to the new Trinidadian situation.

'Anyhow, when they mix them.... Then gradually they
started picking up the English language. And generations
after generations, you know, as one generation finish
and the other coming, they started understanding the
English language better than the Indian. Because the
English never really understand Hindi. And they started
this communication. Gradually the Indian, the Hindi, was
left out and just one or two people spoke it. Mostly
the English. English and English and English and English.'

'But why', I persisted with my original question,
'why do they sing in Indian?'

'It's because they say, well, our ancestors brought
down their culture here. And being as Hindus, we have
to maintain it.'

Professor Adesh's words were going through my
mind, 'the link was not broken, the link wasn't broken'.

'Keep up the culture', she went on, 'and although

we speak English, through the British ruling, we still
carry on the culture of our forefathers, of our ancestors.'

'Why bother though?' I asked. 'Why?'

'Because my mother grandparents and my father grand-
parents, they came from India. And they brought their
language with them, their culture. And up till the ...
early twentieth century Indians were coming in from India,
as I said, they brought their culture with them. The
elder people, the older Indians here, gradually they
spoke a mixture of English and Hindi. According to who
they speaking with, and I guess that just inherited in
the other generations.'

As she spoke, I remembered the model. 'The past
experience revived in the meaning is not the experience
of one life only but of many generations.'

'But you're the younger generation,' I pushed
her to explain more to me. 'Why don't you just give up
the Indian things.'

'You see', she replied, 'that's my culture, okay?
And if I don't preserve it, what will I pass on to my
generation?'

'But you're in Trinidad,' I said. 'This is an
English-speaking country. There are Negroes, English,
and Indians; whites and Blacks. Why not just forget the
Indian things?'

'You see, I wouldn't,' she replied. 'Because that's
my religion. I born in it. I growing up in it. And
I'll keep it, okay?' ['Sweet memory hid from the light of

truth /I'll keep thee, for I would not have thy worth/
Questioned in Court of Law nor answer for it on my oath./

Then she started to complain about the older gen-
eration.

'Well, the Indians, the Hindus, how they does carry
on when they go to bhagwat /religious service/ and thing!
Always talking and making out all kind of noise. Those
other religions just said to keep their mouth. But at
the school we going to, we are learning to such a way,
that we sort of fighting all these, uh, we compressing
all these bad natures of all our parents, you know.
Just talk talking.'

'Wait. What do you mean?'

'Like, when they go to bhagwat and they talking and
making all sorts of noise and thing. We are learning to
try and compress these things. So that when we go to it,
we'll try to maintain this standard that keeping out all
these noise and all this thing.'

'Oh, the older Indians are making the noise?'

'Yea, you know, talking. They have this way of
when they go somewhere and they meet up this one, and
they ain meet up for a long time, you know, they talking
and hard hard hard long and they say, while the prayers
going on and all this. So we are trying to get this idea
compressed.'

'What do you mean, compressed?'

'Well, just dissolve it. Just try to get it away
from us so that when we go you will get on like the other

religions, the other faiths get on; remain quiet and all this thing. We are trying to build up this idea, so you feel we get on really like the other religions. Probably they will, might recognise us.'

Perhaps Lowenthal's idea worked. Here was the consensual model: 'Competition thus led Hindus to emphasize uniqueness in belief and ritual while emulating Christian structure and function.'

'Who might recognise you?' I asked. 'The public?'

'Yea', she answered, 'and besides that, the people who are trying to compress the Hindu religion, the other religious faiths.'

'What do you mean compress? Put down?'

'Yea.'

'Who's trying to do that?'

'You mightn't really notice it, but you see all the other people then of other faiths, they just laughed at the Hindus and the way they does carry on and all this thing. I guess they have a right to laugh at us because the Hindus are really, it's really...' Kamini paused. I felt sorry to hear her say that.

'So you'll stick with your Indian ways?' I said.

'Yea.'

'And when you have children?'

'Pass it on. Cause I born in it, growing up in it. ... That's why I'm trying to learn Hindi, so I'll be able to understand it a little better.'

'Well, what's going to happen to the Hindi?' I

asked. 'Are you going to learn the Hindi script?'

'Yea, I'm learning it.'

As she continued, I realised that she was describing what I had called future in my model.

'You see, long time people they never bothered about anything much. But now going to school and modern trends, you sort of realising what our religion mean and getting to understand it better, getting it explained to us so that we will understand it better and appreciate it.' ['We had the experience but missed the meaning.'] 'So when we understand it now, we will appreciate it and try to keep it up and teach others about it. That is why we learn. Now we going back to our own culture. We going back to learn Hindi.'[25]

'Roots,' I thought. 'After I've found out where I came from, I can't understand a word they're saying.'

Kamini hadn't answered my question about the songs, why they were sung in Hindi. Or perhaps she had and I hadn't heard. Had I missed the point? Was the answer to my question about music buried there in her chatter about her forebears, her language lessons, and her Hindu beliefs? We went on and talked about the songs on my tape until lunchtime. When we were done, Kamini and I walked back to her house. She finished cleaning her room while I looked through her big collection of paperbacks and

25. T3/77/CS/39, Interview EL12, 26 Nov. (FN/44-53).

picked out a few to borrow. As she was sweeping, I thought over what she had just described - about the transformation from survival to renewal that her people had achieved in less than one hundred years. How this process has transformed the music of Felicity village is the story which follows now.

CHAPTER 3

FELICITY

How small of all that human hearts endure,
That part which laws or kings can cause or cure!
Still to ourselves in every place consigned,
Our own felicity we make or find.

          Samuel Johnson
          'Lines Added to Goldsmith's Traveller'

The village lies midway along the road leading
west from the market town of Chaguanas to the cane fields
and the sea. Approaching by car, it is easy to miss the
turning on the right, Cacandee Road, and the markerless
weedy cemetery on the left, to suddenly find yourself
lost on a narrowing lane, all vista save the sky cut off
by the green stalks and the spikey white arrows of mature
sugar-cane. The day is hot, the air dusty and dry, the
breeze listless, and you can not help but wonder why the
East Indians chose such a spot to build their homes.

It is a young village by European standards, with

a history of less than one hundred years. In the Northern Chaguanas Ward, where Felicity is situated, Crown Land was first made available for settlement in 1885. The government record of deeds tells us that the first settler in the area was Cacandee, who bought a plot on the 30th of November, 1886. A few of the old villagers still tell of him. He had left India some time around 1875, survived the crossing and endured the indenture. Cacandee had won back his freedom, and he decided to settle in Trinidad. The cluster of adjoupas that quickly sprang up around his, the first, became known as 'Cacandee's Settlement', and the main road through the village still carries the old man's name.[1]

It is a long village, some two miles from the junction, with its two shops, at the Peter's Field end up to the Caroni River on the northern extreme (see map). The land of the village proper is a treeless and marshy savannah, a 'region of tall bamboo grass', unsuitable for the cultivation of sugar-cane.

The village is large by Trinidad standards, with a population of around 6,500 living in some 953 house-holds. Modern Felicity has resulted from the growth and merger of five small adjoining villages ('districts') - Cacandee Settlement, Casecu, Jangli Tola, Union Village, and Peter's Field. Cacandee Settlement is the

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1. Morton Klass, East Indians in Trinidad: A Study of Cultural Persistence (Columbia University Press, New York, 1961), pp. 30-31.

FELICITY

N

SWAMP

SWAMP

SWAMP

RICE

RICE

RICE

RICE

RICE

RICE

CANE

CANE

CANE

CANE

CANE

CANE

CANE

CANE

CANE

CANE

CANE

CANE

CANE

CANE

CANE

CANE

TAHADEO ROAD

CHARLEYVILLE

CHAQUANAS

PIERRE ROAD

ANIL ROAD

Irrigation canal

SCARLET IBIS
SANCTUARY

CACANDEE ROAD

Cacandee Road

HINDU
SCHOOL

SHIVA
SHANKAR
MANDIR

MESHO'S
HOUSE

HINDU SCHOOL

THE SEA
(GULF OF PARIA)

CARONI RIVER

CREMATION
AREA

Bernard Road

LYLE LANE

LYLE LANE

LYLE LANE

NOLAN STREET

McMILLAN STREET

CLARK STREET

CLARK ROAD

MATHURA STREET

MAKHAN STREET

PHILLIPS STREET

BALLKISSON STREET

MAIN STREET

WATER
TOWER

RICE MILL

CHATOORIE STREET

BOUNDARY STREET

PETERS FIELD ROAD

CHURCH
OF THE NAZARENE

CRICKET
PITCH

CRICKET
PITCH

CRICKET PITCH

FURLONGE
CHURCH

CEMETERY

Estate Railway (disused) - route for trucks carrying cane

CANE

CANE

CANE

CANE

CANE

© Helen Myers
1984

most fashionable district with paved roads, street lights, and telephone cables (plate 1). 'In the back' of the village, simple board houses line the dirt traces of Jangli Tola (plate 2). Ninety per cent of the population is Hindu, 1.5 per cent Muslim, and 9 per cent Black. Most of the Blacks live in Peter's Field district, at the southern end of Felicity.

There are four dry goods shops, 18 rum shops, two social clubs (with jukeboxes) and many small 'parlours' that sell penny sweets and biscuits to the school children. The largest buildings are the two primary schools, both situated within sight of each other on Cacandee Road. Each accomodates some 1,500 children. There are three temples - two on Cacandee Road and one on Nolan Street - and two small board churches - both on back streets. The three village cricket and football grounds are on land donated by the sugar estate, Caroni, Ltd. The sports ground in Jangli Tola, the westernmost district, also accommodates the village community centre. Felicity has no main square or central meeting place; during the early evening hours, villagers tend to congregate at the road junctions - often near a rum shop or club.[2]

Plate 1 (following). Outside Mesho's house; the junction of Cacandee Road with Pierre Road.
Plate 2 (following). Board houses in Jangli Tola.
2. Joseph John Nevadomsky, 'The Changing Family Structure of the East Indians in Rural Trinidad' (Ph.D. thesis, University of California at Berkeley, 1977), pp. 74-9.
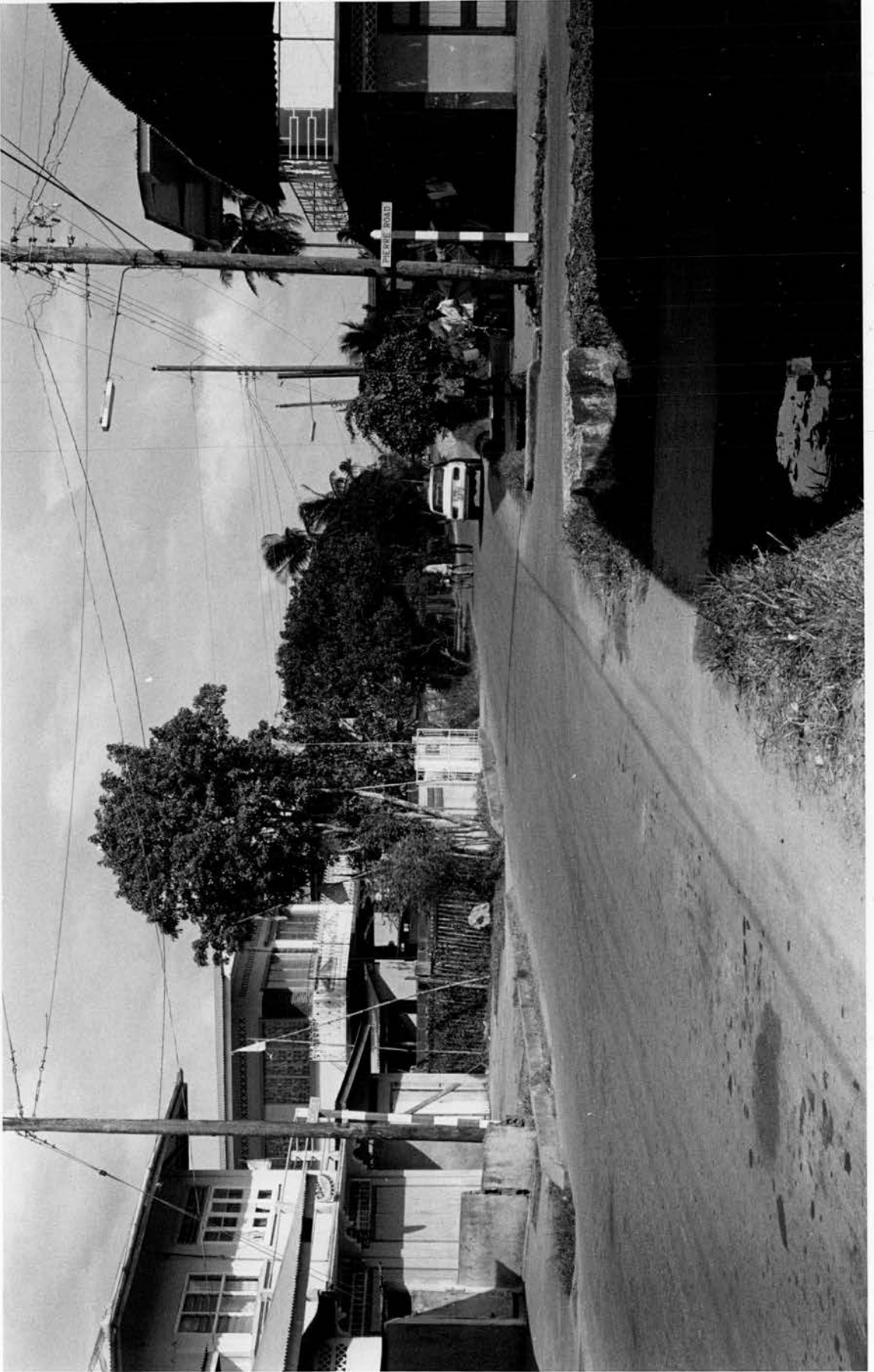
Cacandee Road is the heart of the original settle-
ment. Houses, shops, and parlours line it on either
side, thinning out about half a mile before the river
bank. I found the river side pleasant, cool, quiet, but
no one lived there. The girls would walk along in the
evening, after the day's cooking, sweeping, and washing
were done, but no houses were nearby. The rites of
cremation are performed on the banks; the little river
then carries the ashes of the villagers, the Hindu faith-
ful, away from the village and out to the sea. I never
saw anyone wash clothes in the river, or bathe in the
river, or swim in the river. I doubt if the Felicity
folk would understand India's great multipurpose Ganges.
Their little waterway knows only one task which it
swiftly and silently performs.

Cacandee was not a fool for buying such poor farm-
ing land because he had brought with him the staple of
his Indian way of life, the seeds of rice that would
thrive in marshland. Only four years after the founding
of Felicity, the Reverend John Morton, first Christian
missionary to the East Indians, saw the rice-fields
spread across the Caroni savannah.

April 7, 1890. Monday. I took early train to
Chaguanas. My first duty was to explore a new
settlement on the border of an extensive savanna
which stretches from the sugar estates of Chaguanas
north to the estates on the Caroni, that is, about
eight miles. A ride of two miles through cane-
fields brought me to a small village on the very
edge of this wonderful savanna. The land is low
and flat, but capable of being drained. It has
never grown trees, but is covered with a crop of
tall grass, too dense for man, or horse, to get

through it. Nearly all the people are East Indians,
and the greater number of them have bought the land
upon which they live. The houses are much better
than those usually built by the East Indians,
and there are evident signs of remunerative industry.
The road is, however, infamous, from the nature of
the soil, which is rich and deep, without a pebble.
There are two rum shops to demoralize the people,
but no school or church. This ought to be remedied
as soon as circumstances will permit.

One very interesting feature of the place is the
rice-fields. Imagine over one hundred acres of
level land divided into fields of several acres
each by a low bank of earth that can be made to
serve as a dam to flood the fields when necessary.
Here magnificent crops of rice are grown year after
year.[3]

And so on - the savannah, the sugar and the cacao,

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3. Sarah E. Morton, ed., John Morton of Trinidad:
Pioneer Missionary of the Presbyterian Church in Canada
to the East Indians in the British West Indies. Journals,
Letters and Papers (Westminster Co., Toronto, 1916),
p. 321. The village described in this passage is
Charleyville, Felicity's neighbour to the east. The
following year, Morton visited Felicity: 'Sabbath, Sept.
16th, 1891, I spent in Chaguanas. In the morning I went
to Kakandi settlement, on the margin of the Grande
Savanna; for two miles the road was a mere track through
tall grass. I had to dismount several times to get my
mule over deep ravines with only a log across them. At
length I came to rice fields all under water, and a
stream that had carried away the passengers' log. John
Ganesh, my catechist /at Chaguanas/, here fortunately
met me. He wears the native clothing and no shoes, so
with his kapra /i.e., loin-cloth/ tucked up to his thighs
he fears neither mud nor water. He was a soldier in
India, is over six feet high, and fertile in resources;
so he carried me over on his back....We met in a shed,
thatched with palm leaves, and without walls. Into
this shelter seventy-five persons were packed. To one
of the posts a cock was tied which plumed its feathers
close to my feet during the service, while several dogs
lay at their masters' feet.' (p. 324) Ellipses in
original.

the rice. How little time has changed the face of the
land. Despite the brightly painted houses, the improved
roads, the outlook is static. The villagers - great
materialists that they are, owners of pressure cookers
and colour televisions - they still stand barefoot in
the mud planting each seedling carefully by hand. There
is no other method. The rice dictates a way of life
that only the Indian understands.

Like all island peoples, the villagers are great
travellers. In Felicity, hardly a week passes without
an arrival or a departure from foreign parts. All day
you see the BA and the BWIA wide-bodied jets floating
through the lazy cloudless sky, over the rice and cane,
on their final approach to Trinidad's Piarco International
Airport. They bring a constant traffic to the island,
and they take it away again. Everyone has someone
'away' - a sister married and living in Toronto, or a
neighbour's son in London. It is not just the traffic
in people, but in goods: a Japanese portable radio-
cassette player, polyester yard goods, bunches of plastic
flowers, a glass chandelier, blank 8-track tape cartridges,
Johnnie Walker Black coming in; home-cooked meals in
cool bags, live crabs from the swamp, local Indian records,
fresh mangoes, 'Limacol' astringent, Old Oak White rum
going out.

The world for Felicity folk looks like those old
BOAC route maps: Christchurch and Wellington, Georgetown,
Toronto, Cape Town and Durban, Karachi, Lagos, Delhi,

Hong Kong - the countries shown in red from the 1950's school atlas mildewed on the shelf. Beyond their many parochial concerns, theirs is the world of the BBC overseas services, and of relaxed afternoons in the shade, listening to the cricket test-match from Islamabad or Melbourne or Lord's. It is the world that hears the Queen's Christmas message and watches the Commonwealth Games, the world of Paddington Bear, Mills and Boon romances, New Zealand cheddar, the eleven-plus, Horlicks for tea, and the ubiquitous orange spines of Penguin paperbacks. It is the old Empire, terra incognita for the American, home ground for the English.

I spent a lot of time discussing with them the writings of V.S. Naipaul, their best-known and most eloquent spokesman in the English-speaking world. Ironically, the villagers look upon him with suspicion, precisely because they felt he had ignored this Westernized side of their lives, their love of the modern, the fashionable, the up-to-date. They resented being portrayed to the outside as the inheritors of Mr Biswas, leading the life of the Tulsi family in Hanuman House. Naipaul betrayed them. He defected to the English side and told the world of their hidden treasures, those old Indian ways. He had robbed them of their secret, and they will never forgive him.

Felicity itself is a much-studied village. Almost everyone there remembers the visits of anthropologists Morton Klass in 1957-58, and Joseph Nevadomsky in the

early 1970's. They expect scholars to turn up from time to time, and they remain cheerfully optimistic that the next one will get it right and set the record straight for once and for all. They welcomed me without hesitation from the very first day, but I could see that they were relieved to learn that this new visitor had come to learn about their music and not about their private lives.

CHAPTER 4

A DAY IN THE VILLAGE

With the sense of sight, the idea communicates
the emotion, whereas, with sound, the emotion
communicates the idea, which is more direct and
therefore more powerful.

Alfred North Whitehead, Dialogues

For me, the village was a noisy place, lacking the
pastoral tranquility attributed to the agricultural
settlements of all lands. The sounds of the night kept
me awake during the early weeks of my stay. There were
the dogs, 'pot-hounds', one, sometimes two, per household.
Not pets these, they were constantly prodded and rapped
with sticks by the women and children as they, the dogs,
crept around at their business of scavenging food and
bickering amongst themselves. They barked all day. But
as the sounds of the day faded into the darkness, and
Matti prepared the children for bed, the village dogs

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began their noisy vigil in earnest. Like a string of firecrackers, they would set each other off. By eight o'clock, I could hear from my bed the canine alarm passing from one to the next, relayed along the entire length of Cacandee Road and all the way to Nolan Street in the back, as some individual haltingly made his way home from the rum shop. Only the dogs and I noticed his passing, for all the while the rest of the family and the rest of the village slept.

By ten or eleven o'clock, the 'whistle' of the local crapaud[1] frog - 'punganak, punganak' - would subside; but the cocks crowed till dawn, shattering the silence at random with their raspy cries. As I lay awake, listening to the unfamiliar voices of the night, I felt very alone in this little village on the savannah.

The sounds of morning were reassuring, repetitive, and rhythmic, the sounds of a household waking to the new day. They began just before the light, around five

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1. Many words, now obsolete in England, are preserved in the everyday language of Trinidad. <u>Crapaud</u>, now obsolete according to <u>The Oxford English Dictionary</u>, is an example of these marginal survivals. In the 15th century, it took the forms 'crap<u>ault</u>, -<u>pauld</u>, -<u>pault</u>, -<u>pald</u>, crep<u>aud(e)</u>, -<u>pawd</u>'; in the 16th century, 'crap<u>aude</u>, -<u>pawd</u> (crap<u>eaux</u>, cro<u>polte</u>, crap<u>al</u>)'; and in the 17th century, 'crap<u>aud</u>' - from the French <u>crapaud</u>, in Old French '<u>crapaut</u>, -<u>ot</u>, for earlier -<u>ault</u>'. It was used by William Caxton in 1481: 'Yf the tode, Crapault, or spyncop, byte a man or woman, they be in daunger for to dye'; and by him again in 1485: 'Serpentes, crapauldes, and other beestes.'

o'clock, with the 'bawling' of the housebird, the bluejean, and the palmist and, on some mornings, the full-throated ramageing[2] of the picoplat. Then, pots banging in the kitchen, water splashing in the bath-house as one, two, three, four children and one, two adults washed from head to toe, tooth scrubbing and spitting; then, the whispering sounds of sweeping the house with a coconut-rush broom, making up the beds and tying up mosquito nets. House and dwellers clean, the bell sounded from the family altar for the morning prayers, quietly said. A bit later, the goats were dragged 'bawling'[3] to tether, the traffic picked up on the road, the post-boy rang his bicycle bell, and the sound of a myriad of little voices passed by under my window. Felicity had awakened to another day, and Felicity's children - more than two thousand of them -

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2. The word ramage (pronounced in Trinidad as ramagé), the song or cry of birds, also is obsolete, but persists in Trinidad as a marginal survival. The Oxford English Dictionary says that it is derived from the French ramage = Provençal ramatge. In the 17th century, it was also spelled rammage. In 1616, William Drummond of Hawthornden used it in one of his poems: 'My Lute bee as thou wast when thou didst grow.. in some shadie Groue, .. And Birds on thee their Ramage did bestow.' Before 1693, Sir Thomas Urquhart used it in The Works of Mr. Francis Rabelais: 'The barking of currs, bawling of mastiffs,.. rammage of Hawks.'

3. Bawling is another unusual Trinidadian word. Unlike crapaud and ramage, it is not obsolete, but is commonly used in Trinidad, especially informally, in a sense that has long been obsolete elsewhere. The Trinidadian meaning follows the earliest use in English (in the 15th century), referring to the howling or yelping of dogs, and later to other animals. The Oxford English Dictionary says the word was probably adapted from the medieval Latin baula-re (unlike crapaud and ramage, which are derived from the French). The Promptorium parvulorum of 1440 mentions 'Baffynge or bawlynge of howndys' and the Fardle of Facions Conteining the Aunciente Maners of Affrike and Asia of 1555 says: 'Their singing is like the bawlynge of woulues.'

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were walking down Cacandee Road to school.

It became my habit at first to enjoy these morning sounds - up until eight o'clock - from my bed. Then, following the five-minute news broadcast from the BBC World Service, I would go down for my bath, that wonderful cold splash, and my breakfast. There was always hot roti (thick bread pancakes) and 'tea' - Milo, Horlicks, or Ovaltine for them, and Nescafé for me. Every morning Matti prepared a different vegetable dish: eggplant or beans or tomatoes or peas, some days pumpkin, some days potatoes, and many others depending on the season. The East Indian diet is extremely varied and healthy, with a lot of garlic, curry, chili pepper, and aromatic spices, especially cumin seeds. It is not unlike the cooking of India, but the differences are interesting: there is little chay (real 'tea') drunk in Trinidad, and the small oily whole-wheat chapātī of India has largely been replaced by the larger, thicker sadha roti ('simple bread') made with white flour.

Matti and I would chat about this and that: All the children refused pumpkin this morning. Why? Instead, they were eating bread and cheese or bread and butter. When is she going to get a chance to dry the cashew nuts? Tomorrow Mesho is going to see a film in Chaguanas. We're going to temple tonight. And so on until the business of the morning pressed us both into action. All the weekdays began with this same routine. Then she would get on with washing the 'wares' and soaking the clothes, and I would head out of the yard and through the gate, being careful

not to let the dogs out.

I turned left down Cacandee Road and walked in the direction of the schools. As I walked, the sounds of singing grew louder. Many many little voices, unaccompanied.

DING DING.

The morning prayer ends: 'Aum shanti, shanti, shanti' (Aum, peace, peace, peace). Teacher hits the desk bell again with the heel of his hand.

DING.

A song, a bhajan (Hindu devotional song), begins. 'Seetaa Raama kaho Raadhe Shyaama kaho/Seeta Raama binaa koi apanaa nahi,/Radhe Shyaama binaa sukha sapana nahi'[4] ('Say Seetaa Raama, say Raadhe Shyaama/Without Seeta Raama nothing is yours,/Without Radhe Shyaama no happy dreams'.)

DING, as the last word of that song fades.

DING DING. The next song begins.

DONG DONG. Another desk bell at a different pitch

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4. Myers Trinidad Collection 1974, Open-reel Field Tape no. 5, Infants Choir (ages 5-7), Felicity Hindu School, 5 July, hereafter referred to as T1/74/F/5. Also T1/74/F/6, Five Rivers Hindu School, Arouca, 8 July; T1/74/F/60-61, Port of Spain Hindu Mandir, St James, 4 Aug.; Myers Trinidad Collection 1975, Open-reel Field Tape no. 13, hereafter referred to as T2/75/F/13, Shri Shankar Mandir, Felicity, 25 June; and Myers Trinidad Collection 1977, Open-reel Field Tape no. 5, hereafter referred to as T3/77/F/5, Bucaro Cultural Group, Felicity, 7 Nov. Text in Divine Life Bhajans, Book 1, compiled by H.H. Sri Swami Satchidananda (Divine Life Society of Trinidad and Tobago, Enterprise, Trinidad, n.d.), p. 55 (transliterated as 'Seetaa Raama kaho'); also in song sheet, Port of Spain Hindu Mandir, St James, July 1973, p. 3 (as 'Seeta Raam Kaho').

sounds, and another set of voices, these deeper and
louder, begin a different bhajan. 'Tumhi ho maataa,
pitaa tumhi ho'[5]('Oh God, to me you are like my parents').
These must be the voices of the upper form pupils on the
first floor.

I reached the entrance to the Felicity Hindu School
yard and stopped.

DING DING, the first bell again, then the shuffle
of feet, the sound of books going out onto the desks,
whispering voices, the rustling through book bags for
pencils. The lower forms had completed their morning
prayers and were beginning maths. In the distance, I
could hear more voices: 'Thou preparest a table before
me in the presence of mine enemies...'; 'All the way
my Saviour leads me, for the goodness of his love'.[6]
This was the Presbyterian School across the street and a
bit further down. In the morning, those Hindu children
across the street sang hymns, not bhajans.

My friend Shama had already explained this to me.
A few days earlier I had asked her, 'Shama, did you go
to school here in Felicity?'

'Yea, I went Hindu School,' she said.

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5. T1/74/F/7, Choir, Five Rivers Hindu School,
Arouca, 8 July; and T2/75/F/50, Divine Life Society, Unit
1, Felicity, 18 July (also FN/15, 21 June). Text in
Divine Life Bhajans, p. 47 (transliterated as 'Tumhi ho
maataa, pitaa tumhi ho'); and in Swami Purnananda, Aum
Hindutvam: Vedic Prayer, Hindu Catechism (Swami Purnananda,
London, n.d.), pp. 122-3 (as 'Tumhi ho maata Pita tumhi
ho').
6. T2/75/F/39, Upper Forms, Felicity Presbyterian
School, 3 July.

'How do they decide who goes to which school?'

'Well, when my father died I went by uncle to spend holiday. So when I was staying there, they put me into the Hindu school.'

'But his house is nearer the Presbyterian School,' I answered, for I knew her uncle, Basraj, well.

'Yea. But being as we were Hindus, right, he put us into the Hindu School. But she and the other sister went to Presbyterian School.'

'Aren't all the people in the Presbyterian School Presbyterian?' I asked.

'Majority of them are Hindus,' Shama replied.

'Do they convert you when you go?' I asked.

'No, they cannot convert you. But the teachers who are going to work, right, they have to be converted. I think they supposed to be Christian. Christian names and so, too, before they go to the school.' She paused. 'But in the Hindu School, I think they only take Hindus too.'

She laughed at the irony. Another pause. 'Yes', she concluded,'because this Hindu School here, they don't have any Christian teachers. They all are Hindus.'

'What was the Presbyterian School like?'

'Well, it's just like the Hindu School. Just the same, but, you know, all that when the Hindu School have anything, they do Hindu business.'

'Like Diwali?' /Hindu festival/, I asked.

'They have celebrations for Diwali. And well, they teach the children Hindu songs. Teach they Hindi.

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They got a few teachers teaching Hindi, _bhajan_ and closing prayer like. But the Presbyterian School have Christian thing.'[7]

But oh, what a difference in the music, I thought.

Today I had decided to record at the Dorman Nursery School, situated in front of the Hindu School on Cacandee Road. Its big windows are open to the air, and the tiny Indian children, all standing at their desks and in the midst of their singing, had seen me walking towards the school. The three teachers greeted me, but the singing did not stop.

'Good morning to my teacher, good morning to my parents... Are you sleeping... oh my friend... morning bells are ringing, ding dong bell... pretty little butter-fly... nothing to do but play... Row row row your boat... merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily ... Merrily we roll along, roll along... Ring-a-ring... the bear went over the mountain, to see what he could see, and all that he could see, was the other side of the mountain, was all that he could see... Once I saw a bird going hop, hop, hop... Twinkle twinkle little star, how I wonder what you are... Mary had a little lamb... it followed her to school one day... it made the children laugh and play... Jack and Jill went up a hill... If I had a donkey... The time to be happy is now, the place to be happy is here, and the way

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7. T3/77/CS/20, Interview EL8, 16 Nov. (FN/5-8).

to be happy is to make someone happy and you'll have a little heaven right here... Three blind mice, see how they run... Be careful little eyes what you see, be careful little eyes what you see, there's a father up above and he's looking down at you, oh, be careful little eyes what you see, be careful little ears what you hear ...little nose what you smell... tongue... taste... brain ... think... hands... do' and so on without break, without hesitation, without pause or interruption, those tuneless little voices spun out one song after another.[8]

The order was fixed but without any apparent logic. It was difficult to tell when one song ended and the next began; their medley had grown willy-nilly by accretion, a verse a day, a song a week, learned by rote, until the patchwork had expanded to occupy the entire half hour between eight-thirty and nine o'clock. Each song was rendered complete, with all its verses, complete with its little rhyme or joke, complete with its moral or lesson for the very young. There were hymns and Mother Goose, and what Trinidadians call 'folk songs'; there were songs I knew by heart and ones I had never heard.

Today all the songs were in English; on other days they sang the Hindu bhajans as well. The English songs were unusual in Felicity. They had been learned by rote, by memory, by a fixed procedure: performance without

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8. T3/77/CS/48, opening exercises, Dorman Nursery School, 30 Nov.

regard to the meaning, the same rote learning that was out of fashion when I was a child and still is out of fashion in England and America. Rote: wasn't this the key to understanding a musical system in which people sing more songs in Hindi - a language they do not speak, a language they little understand - than in English, their mother tongue. Rote, the foundation, the bedrock of a culture.

'All right, you can sit down now.' The little voices had completed their musical pastiche, and it was time for them and for me to turn to other work.

I packed up my tape recorder and said goodbye. I could feel all the pairs of deep brown eyes following me as I continued down the road. The Shiva Shankar Mandir next to the Hindu School stood dark, silent, and empty at this hour of the morning (plate 3). As I passed, I could make out the black silhouettes of Hindu statuary at the altar in front. I passed the cricket ground on the left, with all the goats grazing, the little dry-goods shops, the sweet parlours (idle now as school was in progress), and the many 'upstairs houses', supported by six or eight sturdy concrete pillars. Hammocks were slung between the pillars and in the shade of the house the dogs loafed, the chickens and ducks scratched around, the toddlers played, and the ladies and the old men

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Plate 3 (following). Shri Shankar Mandir (usually called the 'Shiva' Shankar Mandir), Cacandee Road.

'limed' (gossiped). When I reached the Divine Life Society temple, near the junction with Peter's Field Road, I was tired. And I was puzzled by those nursery songs. For everywhere I went in Felicity, I only heard Hindi songs; everywhere, that is, except the schools. Why were the little children singing in English?

The Divine Life Society temple stood dark and silent. I decided to turn back. My rubber flip-flop thongs slapped along the dusty road. As the heat intensified, the village grew still. I could hear the women preparing lunch - an occasional hiss as a ladle of boiling hot oil and parched garlic was plunged into the cooked <u>dhal</u> (split peas). The rice was already boiled and cooling. Lunch time was early in Felicity. Sulin and her daughter were outside their large house, fanning the unmilled rice. They lifted grain in a scoop (made from an empty cooking-oil tin) high over their heads and sifted it, allowing the kernels to fall on the sugar sack spread out below, while the breeze carried the chaff away. Across the road, Kowsil was rocking her grandson, Vince, in the hammock.

'Sita Raam, Miss Helen,' I heard from a stray schoolgirl, uniformed, smiling. We passed on the road.

'Sita Raam,' I replied. The village greeting, Sita and Raam. The eternal godly lovers. Warmer this than the more proper *Hindi* <u>namaste</u> ('I bow to you').

'Sita Raam, little friend,' I repeated, but she was beyond hearing.

Sankey was stretched out in the hammock by her house, her morning's work completed.

'Come naa, come naa Helen,' she said. Sankey was acknowledged to be the finest lady singer in the village, and a good drummer as well.

'Come lime naa. Come eat crabs naa.'

'Sita Raam,' I said. The curried crabs were brought out and I lay back in a second hammock.

'I need a coke cottle to smash these,' I said. (The villagers cracked them with their teeth.)

'Mash it, mash the crab for she,' Sankey called out, and the crabs were taken away.

WHAM WHAM from the kitchen, and then my lunch was returned. The curry sauce for the crabs was very hot, and my eyes watered.

'Sankey', I asked, 'how do you make pepper sauce?'

'Well, we make pepper sauce with pepper and acid', she replied, 'cooking acid.'

'Sankey', I asked, 'when they talk about hot songs, when they talk about chutney songs...'

'Chutney sauce?' she asked.

'No, songs.'

'Oh, songs, songs! Yes, yes. I know what you mean. A hot song is when you beating the drum hard. And the ladies singing, you know, that they sing on a good voice then, big voice. Well, that is chutney song.'

'Do they have any cold songs?' I asked.

'It's not sun, it's song.'

The accent was always a little problem. And no,
there weren't any cold songs.

'Thanks for lunch Sankey. Goodbye. Sita Raam.'

'Sita Raam, Sita Raam, Helen.'[9]

I shouldered my bag and decided to go home, wash
the dust off my feet, and then visit Channu, the seam-
stress. Channu was making three dresses for me, and she
needed my measurements before she could cut the cloth and
get on with the sewing. She was a member of the Shiva
Shankar Mandir singing group, and liked to discuss music.

The sun was at its full height now, but I felt cool
and refreshed from the coke and the crabs and the rest
in the shade.

SMASH BANG BANG CRASH. Passing the auto mechanics'
shop. I hurried along, and the little oil-dipped mechan-
ics grinned.

CRASH CRASH KAWAM. Louder this time.[10]

When I reached the Hindu School, a group of children
were standing in the playground. They formed a circle
around one of their teachers, and they were all chanting:

Nine six-es are fif-ty four

Six in-to fif-ty four nine

9. T3/77/CS/50, Interview SP10, 30 Nov.
10. T3/77/CS/49, 30 Nov.

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4
Ten six-es are six-ty

4
Six in-to six-ty ten

4
E-le'n six-es are six-ty six

5
Six in-to six-ty six e-le'n

4
Twelve six-es are se'n-ty two

5
Six in-to se'n-ty two twelve[11]

And it was finished.

I found Channu in a chatty mood. She was finishing
a piece of work at the sewing machine, and her husband,
who did carpentry work, was home for the afternoon.
While I waited, we talked about calypso.

'And they have Sparrow,' Channu was explaining.
'They have Mighty,' she paused. 'They have certain names,
I just can't quite remember.' She glanced over at her
husband and then turned back to her work.

'The Striker', he said, 'Lord Shortie, Almighty
Power.'

'Do you like calypso?' I asked.

'Yes', she replied, 'it's all right, you know, it's -
for my mind then I always prefer my Indian music.'

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11. T3/77/CS/2, Felicity Hindu School, 7 Nov.

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I wanted to ask about the nursery tunes from the morning, but I just said, 'Why? Why do you prefer your Indian music?'

'I find it sounds much sweeter,' she answered. 'It gets you. You get a kind of a different mood when you sit and you listen. We have some cassettes; my brother has it in his car. And they have a cassette based on a chaupāī /four-line verse/ in the Ramayan. When you sit and you listen to that, when he explains it to you...'[12]

Channu's hands fell away from the fabric and the machine stopped. She sank back into her chair as a memory from her childhood began to come alive. I didn't interrupt, but the little English tunes still came to mind as she spoke.

'From the time I was a little girl, I lived together with my parents, always real Indian, you know, Hindu. They do all their prayers and everything in the real Hinduism way. They learn us little little about our religion, so I can understand a little bit of Hindi, and I can talk some too.... So when the cassette play, then I can remember when I used to be at Ramayan.... This chaupāī, it starts from where Rama went to Ban /the forest/ with Sita. This is what Mukesh /popular Indian playback singer/ sang. And if you hear the music from that, I

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12. T2/75/CS/3, Interview no. 5, 30 June (FN/83-6).

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sure you will drown with the amount of happiness you will find in you. It must touch your body that you will find, when you hear certain parts, you can see, you can picture, by listening to the music alone, what was taking place in the forest at that time. Your imagination can draw you that amount of attention, you will see true.'

'And calypso?' I asked.

'Calypso, they only sing,' she answered. 'I just find they have no sense at all of what they sing in calypso because it's just joking to everybody. They will sing something about you, and the calypsonian see me pass and he want to make up a joke about me and he will do it. But these bhajans and whatever the Indian sing and whatever music they play, they don't do it of a joke. It's a serious thing for whoever understand it. It's something that will put you to sit down and concentrate, whenever you listen.

'So that is the difference. Probably if I tell somebody that, they might figure because I am an Indian, and I am a more Hindu, I think that way.... But a person like you. You have experience about music, and I sure if you sit and you listen to the music, the different types of music, you will realise, and you will see what type of instrument they use to play the music and you will understand for yourself if a man has not enough experience he would not be able to do that. A person could just take up a pan /steeldrum/ and knock it as anyhow he want. But a next person could never take up a good drum and

beat it as how you want. Whatever music you hear from
the Indian side, it's well played. Each and everybody
could never do it. But whatever the calypsonian use and
the other local people use, anybody could do it. It's
common.

'Something that is sung real seriously brings such
serious feelings to you. You might hear calypso. You
will just feel happy to jump up /traditional Carnival
street dance/ and thing because it makes you feel like
that. But if you hear a real technical piece of Indian
music, you might sit down stiff and still and you might
be concentrating so much that you mightn't know when it
start or when it finish.'

After supper that evening, Mesho, Matti, the four
children, and I went to their temple, the Divine Life
Society, for the weekly Friday service. We got back home
just before ten o'clock. Everyone was tired and went
straight to bed. I got ready for bed and tucked the
mosquito net under the mattress all around. I slipped
into bed through the gap I had left in the top corner,
taking with me a pencil and my diary. After I had tucked
the net in behind me, I settled back and began to write
about my day.

Friday Night, 10:30 p.m.

'I went to see Channu this afternoon, and we talked
for hours....'

'Busy weeks ahead. Since I go to temple with Mesho
and family on Fridays, I can't attend the prayer meetings

at the Furlonge Church. The Furlonge group has another
service on Sunday morning but this conflicts with the
Nazarene Church Sunday School. A typical week in Felicity
has many scheduled events:

Friday: 7:00 p.m.   Divine Life Society, Unit 1 (Cacandee
                         Road), sandhya [Hindu devotional
                         service] (with Matti and Mesho every
                         week)

             8:00 p.m.   Furlonge Church (Makhan Street)
                         Prayer Meeting (These two conflict,
                         but see Wed. p.m. and Sun. a.m.)

Saturday: 4:00 p.m.   Trinidad Sevashram Sangha (Nolan
                         Street), Singing Class ('Teacher'
                         leads session till Basraj recovers.
                         Chance to get together with Rawti,
                         Shanti, Baby, and Parvati)

Sunday: 6:00 a.m.   Trinidad Sevashram Sangha, sandhya
                         (Go every week, at least until Swami
                         Purnananda leaves for Guyana)

             7:30 a.m.   Shiva Shankar Mandir (Cacandee Road)
                         sandhya

             7:30 a.m.   Divine Life Society, sandhya (conflict
                         again, but attend DLS on Fri. p.m.)

             9:00 a.m.   Furlonge Church Sunday School

            10:00 a.m.   Furlonge Church Morning Worship
                         Service

            10:00 a.m.   Church of the Nazarene (Lyle Lane
                         Street), Sunday School

            11:00 a.m.   Church of the Nazarene, Morning
                         Worship (Can record one sandhya
                         and one church service every Sunday
                         a.m., recharge Stellavox before p.m.)

             7:00 p.m.   Church of the Nazarene 'Evangelistic'

Monday: 5 :00 p.m. Professor Adesh's classes (Hindi,
                         Sanskrit, music, dance) (In Montrose
                         Vedic School, Chaguanas. Transporta-
                         tion a problem)

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Tuesday: Nothing special   (To Port of Spain?)

Wednesday: 6:30 p.m.   Shiva Shankar Mandir, sandhya.

           7:00 p.m.   Furlonge Church Worship Service
                       (alternate weeks?)

Thursday: 6:30 p.m.   Trinidad Sevashram Sangha, sandhya
                       and Ramayan. (Only weekly Ramayan
                       session in Felicity)

           6:30 p.m.   Sai Baba Group (Mr and Mrs Dhun)
                       Pierre Road, sandhya and chanting

           6:30 p.m.   Sai Baba Group, Montrose, Chaguanas
                       (Amplified) (Go with Matti or
                       Kowsil. Mesho will drive)

'The puja at the Divine Life Society tonight
combined the performance of Durga puja /devotional service7
with a full moon katha. The entire service lasted about
two-and-one-half hours. The most interesting part was
the consecration of the jhandi - a long green bamboo pole,
about 12 feet long, with a triangular yellow flag tied
at the top. Yellow symbolizes the goddess Durga. Jhandi
can be seen flying everywhere. They mark all the temples
and Hindu homes on the island. Mesho has five or six in
the front yard.

'Tonight, the pole was blessed at the altar with
oblations of ghee, oil, water. No bhajans were sung during
the blessing. The pole was then carried out to the temple
yard. More offerings were made while the Brahmchari chanted
mantras addressed to various deities. The pole was im-
planted in a tin and now stands there with other jhandi
from other kathas. The stalk will dry out and turn
yellowish-brown, the leaves will fall off, the flag's

colour will fade, but the pole will stand.

'There was a suprise tonight. The congregation sang some bhajans from the Divine Life Bhajans, the book they gave me last year. But for the first hour they sang from a new book, Bhajans and Chants of Satya Sai Baba. These songs are all responsorial in form. Mesho explained, 'Each line is sung four times, two times by the leader and two times by the group. The leader gives the group a chance to learn the words and tune.' During the singing, the congregation claps on the beat. As I looked around, everybody was singing, and many were clapping, especially the children. The sound was very loud, louder than last year....'[13]

I must have fallen asleep there. When I awoke in the morning, the diary and the pencil were beside me on the bed.

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13. T3/77/FN/34, 14 Nov.; T2/75/FN/13-14, 21 June.

CHAPTER 5

THE SEASONS

To everything there is a season, and a time
to every purpose under heaven.

Ecclesiastes 3:1

This is the calendar that Siewrajiah, Dotty, Tara,

Rawti, Rajia, Savtri, Ramesh, and Amar gave me.[1]

The evenness of the year in Felicity is difficult

for people from northern climes even to imagine: the

ever-hot days, the constant breeze, the equal division

of the day into twelve hours of darkness and twelve hours

of light, year round.   The seasons in Trinidad are marked

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1.   Myers Trinidad Collection 1977, Cassette nos.
24-5, Interview ET1, 18 Nov. (transcribed in Field Notes,
pp. 1-34), hereafter referred to as T3/77/CS/24-5 (FN/1-34);
T3/77/CS/26-7, Interview ET2, 19 Nov. (FN/1-47); T3/77/CS/
27-8, Interview ET3, 19 Nov. (FN/1-86); T3/77/CS/36-7,
Interview ET4, 24 Nov. (FN/1-44); Myers London Trinidad
East Indian Collection 1980, Cassette nos. 41-4, Interview
no. 8, 20 April.

by the rain and in harmony with the rains, the seasons
are marked by the crops.

It is the agricultural calendar that the old folks
know so well, the relentless timetable dictated by cane
and rice. In most years, the dry season begins sometime
in January and lasts until mid-June. The older generation
call this 'crop time' or 'in the crop', the period of
intensive labour in the cane fields. In June, the rains
begin. The short afternoon cloudbursts usually continue
right up until Christmas. During June and July, the rice
is planted. Then follows the 'post-crop time', from
July to September, when the cane labourers weed, plough,
plant, and spray the fields for the next crop. In October
or November, there is a short dry season known as the
'petit carime'. The rice is harvested, beaten, dried,
and fanned at this time. The 'slack season' in the cane
begins in October and ends in early January.

But for the younger generation, many of whom have
escaped the inevitability of the plantation cycle, the
seasons are distinguished one from the other by fruits
and vegetables, festivals of different religions, and
children's games. The dry season is cricket season, and
when the rains come, cricket is abandoned for football.
The old folk might be shocked to learn, if ever they
thought to ask their children and grandchildren, that
'in the crop' was known as 'pitch' season or mango time,
that the sweat and agony of the indenture years, the time
of isolation in the high cane, was now associated with the

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juicy yellow flesh of ripe fruits or a game of marbles.
But young and old alike agree that this yearly cycle
begins anew on the evening when Lakshmi Mata, the goddess
of prosperity, good fortune, and illumination is believed
to enter into every home and bless it. Her coming is
called Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights.

Diwali falls on the 13th day of the first half of
the month of Kārtik in the Hindu calendar (usually around
November).[2] During the week preceding the festival,
every house is scrubbed spotless, for it is believed that
Lakshmi will not visit a dirty house or a dirty person.
At sunset on Diwali night, the villagers light diyās,
primitive oil lamps consisting of a small shallow clay
dish, a cotton wick, and coconut oil. Each family displays
as many diyās as it can afford, sometimes several hundred.
They are arranged in rows and in ornate patterns around
the house, in the yard, along the windowsills, doorsills,
roof, fences, and gate. There is a friendly competition
to see which home can produce the most effective display.
By nightfall on Diwali eve, the contours of Felicity
village are outlined by thousands of tiny flickering points
of light. After supper, while the small children and old

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2. The Hindu calendar used in Felicity has months
of 30 days, each divided into halves (paksh) of 15 days.
The first half is called sukr-paksh and the second krishn-
paksh. The days of each half are numbered 1 to 15.
J.F. Fleet, 'Hindu Chronology', Encyclopaedia Britannica,
XIII, 491-95; Morton Klass, East Indians in Trinidad: A
Study of Cultural Persistence (Columbia University Press,
New York, 1961), 158.

people stay at home to replenish the lamps, the teenagers
and married couples stroll up and down Cacandee Road to
admire the magic effect of 'lighting up'.

Diwali is an important occasion for village music.
The large repertory of bhajan devoted to Lakshmi are
heard throughout the day on the radio. Indian religious
films, with many bhajan, may be shown on television and
in local theatres. Many families hold a Lakshmi puja or
a Durga puja (worship services) to bless and purify their
freshly cleaned home and to ensure happiness and prosperity
for its occupants. Consequently Diwali is a busy day for
the village pandits who each may be requested to perform
more than a dozen hour-long puja. The only singing in
these simple home puja is the recitation of mantras
by the pandit. This he does on an inflected monotone,
following the rhythm of the Sanskrit text. The tradition
of religious chanting in Sanskrit dates back some 3,000
years. Its styles, regional variants, and the relationship
of inflection to text is a study in itself.[3] Most important

3. A.C. Burnell, 'Saman Chants from "The Arsheyabrah-
mana"', Hindu Music from Various Authors, 3rd ed., Sourindro
Mohun Tagore, comp. (Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office,
Varanasi, 1965), 407-12; Alain Daniélou, 'Vedic Recitation
and Chant' The Music of India I (Bärenreiter Unesco Series,
1965-8) /disc notes/; A.H. Fox Strangways, The Music of
Hindostan (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1914); J.E.B. Gray,
'An Analysis of Nambudiri Rgvedic Recitations and the Nature
of the Vedic Accent', Bulletin of the School of Oriental and
African Studies (University of London), XXII (1959), 500-530;
J.M. Van Der Hoogt, The Vedic Chant Studied in its Textual
and Melodic Form (H. Veenman and Sons Press, Wageningen,
Holland, 1929); V. Raghavan, 'Sama Veda and Music', Journal
of the Music Academy, Madras, XXXIII (1962), 127-33; T.S.
Ramakrishnan, 'The Music in the Chant of Sama Veda Hymns',
Journal of the Music Academy, Madras, XXXVIII (1967), 59-62;
F.J. Staal, Nambudiri Veda Recitation (Mouton, Gravenhage,
1961).

is the belief that the mantras must be correctly pronounced
and intoned to ensure the successful outcome of the puja.
In India, this belief has tended to encourage a continuity
of tradition over the centuries, as has the secrecy sur-
rounding the teaching of vocal techniques for mantra chant-
ing (these performing practices have often been jealously
guarded by brahmin pandits). In former years in Felicity,
the chanting of Sanskrit mantras was the exclusive domain
of brahmins; today with the liberalization of the caste
system, many non-brahmin villagers intone mantras, both in
temple services and at home.

On the day before Diwali, the Felicity Hindu School
generally has a Lakshmi puja which all the students attend
(plate 4). This service includes the singing of many bhajans
as well as the chanting of mantras by one of the village
pandits. On Diwali eve, Lakshmi puja are also held in the
village temples, although these are not well attended as
most villagers are occupied with the lighting up.

The entire month of Kārtik is a time for ritual
bathing, and on Kārtik Nahan, the full-moon day, many
Felicity families go swimming at the Maracas Bay, Mayaro,
or Manzinilla beaches. A few families go to temple. There
is no special music for Kārtik Nahan.

Beginning in December, most of the cane labourers

Plate 4 (following). Lakshmi Puja in the Felicity
Hindu School.

have a six-week holiday. The rains continue every after-
noon, and pigeon peas, a favourite food, come into season.
Christmas is celebrated by Hindu, Muslim, and Christian
families, and the preparations take up a great deal of
time.

'Tell me about Christmas', I asked Tara and Rawti,
two young housewives who lived near Mesho.

'The day before Christmas', Tara began, 'if people
have a goat to kill, they kill it the day before Christmas.
Christmas mean happiness for the people. The day before,
who eat pork, they kill their pig the day before. Who eat
goat, they kill their goat before. Who eat cattle, they ...
they ...' Tara paused, perhaps not wishing to discuss
such a serious transgression against Hinduism. 'And the
housewife and them', she went on, 'they start mixing they
cake and baking.'[4]

'Is there any singing on Christmas eve?' I asked.

'Yea', Rawti replied, 'people have parang /Spanish
Christmas songs/.'

'Do you know how to sing parang?' I asked.

'No', she replied, 'I enjoy it. On the radio they
have it. People have dance. Christmas we fete and thing.
Some days before Christmas people start drinking and get-
ting drunk. They done have the "breeze" already. The
Christmas breeze. You wake up Christmas morning feeling

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4. T3/77/CS/26-7, Interview ET2, 19 Nov. (FN/1-47).

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happy. Cutting up your cake and fixing it nice, buying
ice from the truck, big chunk of ice. You have everything.
Who killing chicken, you kill the chicken and they feather
it and they pluck it. And they cook stewed chicken, curry
chicken, fried chicken, baked chicken, curry goat, stewed
goat, anything, dhalpuri [roti with lentil filling], ice
cream, anything. Whole day, people come to your home and
you invite people. You go to people home that day. You
just keep coming and going by people home. Eating and
drinking. Friends, neighbours, relatives, everybody.'

'What do they have on the radio?' I asked.

'It is really nice. Parang whole day.'

'Not Christmas carols?' I asked.

'Christmas carols too, yes.'

'Do they have any bhajan on the radio?' I asked.

'No, no,' Tara replied.

'On the television Christmas day you see people
dancing to parang and thing,' Rawti said.

'And on Christmas day', Tara said, 'from England
and from Canada, from the universities, they get Trinidad
students sending Christmas greetings to their parents.'

'Do you go to the temple?' I asked.

'No. The Christians go to church,' Tara replied.
'We just stay home and cook and eat and spree and fete.'

'And Christmas night?' I asked.

'Visiting people,' Rawti said. 'Who get tired,
they go to sleep, and who ain tired, they still go visiting.'

'Then the 26th?'

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'Boxing Day,' Rawti answered. 'That day they have horse racing and all this sort of thing going on.'

'In Felicity?'

'No,' Rawti replied. 'Valencia, Arima. And people still keep on coming by your home. Who doesn't come Christmas, they come for Boxing Day. Who doesn't come for Boxing Day, they come the next week. Eating and drinking endlessly. Christmas time is the best time, the most happiest time for people.'

'Happier than Diwali?' I asked.

'Happier than Diwali. Becuase they ain have to fast and all of that. Anything they feeling to eat, they eat and they drink; but at some homes people don't cook flesh on Diwali.'

'What happens on New Year's Day?' I asked.

'Well, that is the first day of the year. Everybody happy to be living for the next year.'

'There's New Year's Eve,' I said.

'That is Old Year's Day they call it.'

'Old Year's Day?'

'And they always have Old Year's fete,' Tara said. 'They have bunches of bamboo. They make something like - it have a noise like a gunshot. People bake and all of that to prepare for the New Year's Day. You wake late and be baking.'

'And you buy apples again and balloons,' Rawti said. 'They blow balloons up and hang in the house. They put decorations in the houses. Christmas and New Year is

actually the same kind of happiness, same preparations. Everything new. Endless new sheets, new flowers, new vase, table cloth. And some people paint up the house.'

'What if you can't afford all that?' I asked.

'You know', Tara said, 'Christmas is a time the poorest person does have things in their house.'

'If they don't have food the whole year', Rawti explained, 'they have food that day and they have everything nice. It does be really great, you know, in Felicity.'

January and February are uneventful months with no major national or religious festivals. But with the approach of Lent, Carnival preparations preoccupy the entire Creole population. Indians also participate in Carnival - it is always emphasized that this is a national, not a racial celebration - but their feelings are often ambivalent about this essentially non-Hindu form of celebration.

'After Christmas', Rawti went on, 'if you don't hear Christmas carols, you're hearing this Carnival. Carnival calypso and steelband. Tents and thing all over the place. Calypso tents. That is when the New Year comes and, well, is only Carnival preparation.'

'Where is the nearest calypso tent?' I asked.

'I am not too acquainted, you know. I don't like Carnival too much,' Rawti said.

'In Enterprise they have a pan,' Tara answered.

'What's the name of the group?'

'I don't know.'

'And St Augustine has one,' Rawti added. 'You
know, they say every company have to have steelband group.'

'Any big firm', Tara explained, 'they just sponsor
a side to play music, to play pan.'

'But', I asked, 'when Carnival Day comes, what
happens in Felicity?'

'Well', Rawti replied, 'you see, there are two
days, right? People buy clothes and they go up to see
Carnival in Chaguanas because Felicity don't have any
celebration. That day on Cacandee Road, you could sit
down outside you house and see all your friends and rela-
tives passing. They dress up and they going to Chaguanas.
The young poeple like it. Go jump up /popular Carnival
street-dance style/ and dance.'

'Did you go last year?' I asked.

'No', Rawti replied, 'long time I never go to see
Carnival. But in the school, when I used to take part
in the bands, once I took part. The name of the band was
"Somewhere in Hawaii". We dress up with bag - bag they
make hammock with. We strip it and make skirts. And we
put flower in the hair like Hawaiian people. And plait
up our hair, and we put plenty make-up in the face to look
red. This blue thing on top of the eyes, and you know,
we dress up like real Hawaiians. And we have the hula hoop
- put it around the waist and we dancing up with it.
When the steelband playing the music, we going on that.
We dancing to that music. I enjoy it, but mostly Creole
people take part in it, not Indians.'

'Do Indians ever play in steelbands?' I asked.

'Yea', Rawti replied, 'most are Creoles, but they have Indians too.'

'And on the radio on Carnival Day?' I asked.

'Endless calypso,' Rawti replied. 'You hearing calypso and the thing that happening in town, the big city like Port of Spain and San Fernando. It comes through the radio what band going now up on stage, and on television from morning till twelve o'clock the night you seeing bands go up. You don't bound to go to Port of Spain to see Carnival. You can see it on television. You see all the people jumping up and drinking up and all that.'

'Sometimes it have fight, you know,' Tara added. 'When it have some bad people drinking, it does be danger-ous.'

'Do you ever go to temple on Carnival Day?' I asked.

'No,' Rawti said. 'People who are accustomed pray-ing and they go every day, well, they will go. It's not a religious thing. Trinidad is a cosmopolitan society, right? They show that all the different nations could play together. They live in unity. Or like a Carnival theme going through all of that. Carnival is for every-body. That is the time when everybody could participate. It is not for any special race.'

Shivaratri is an important Hindu springtime festival and without doubt the most active day of the year at the Felicity temples. Many villagers told me that if they could only attend temple once a year, they would choose to

go on Shivaratri, the commemoration of the birth of Shiva.
It is observed on the 13th day of the first half of the
month of Phāgūn, around March. The temples are decorated
with streamers, and beggars, who come from outside Felicity,
wait in the temple yards to receive alms. Villagers
start going to the temple about midnight and continue
until noon of the following day. The Trinidad Sevashram
Sangha on Nolan Street has a 24-hour kirtan devotional
session on Shivaratri with groups of singers performing
in relay to complete the whole day and night of continuous
singing.

'And what do you do for Shivaratri?' I asked.

'Well', Tara explained, 'when you wake up in the
morning, you bathe, you throw a lota of water [an act of
worship], and then you fast for the whole day. You wait
until twelve o'clock in the night. They all them singing
bhajan and Ramayan till twelve in the temple. Anywhere
have temple, all the temples have the same thing that day.
From seven they start singing, until twelve, right? All
the bhajans, but most is Shiva bhajan. Steady bhajan
singing right through. You must wake whole night. You
hearing bhajan this side; you throwing jhal [oblation of
water] that side, and everybody talking.'

'And give beggars rice and money,' Rawti added.

On the last day of the month of Phāgūn (usually
March), Hindus celebrate Phagwa (also called Holi). The
religious significance of this springtime festivity (the
destruction of the demon Holika) is still remembered but

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is of little significance in Felicity (or in India). The
day is one of music and merriment, often referred to as
the 'Indian Carnival'. In Felicity, the villagers 'play'
Phagwa by sprinkling abir, a red dye, on their friends
and relatives. Normal social barriers are transcended in
the excitement, the mess, and the confusion of the festivi-
ties.

'Phagwa morning you wake up as usual and it have a
powder called abir powder,' Tara explained. 'And you
mix it in some warm water for that powder to melt. And
usually people start playing after lunch.'

'What do you mean by "playing"?' I asked.

'With the abir. With this red liquid. After lunch
they really start it because that is a messy thing. They
full up a little bottle and they make some little holes
on the cork and they start wetting you with it. You're
all red that day. They have a red powder to throw on you
too, and they use ordinary white powder. And in the
savannah in the back they does have big celebration.
Everybody wetting one another and they singing song and
they dancing.'

'What kind of songs do they sing?' I asked.

'They call them chowtal. Kinda fast fast kind of
song for Phagwa.'

Chowtal is a seasonal genre, and the bands only
rehearse once a year, beginning several weeks before the
actual Phagwa celebrations. Groups usually consist of
eight or more male singers (all of whom play jhal - brass
cymbals) and one dholak player. Until recent decades, the

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chowtal bands used to process through the village on
Phagwa day, pausing to play at houses along the way. As
they performed, the women of the house came out and
sprinkled the musicians with abir. Men who had not prac-
ticed with the group might join in on the day, either
singing or playing the jhal. Morton Klass observed some
half a dozen groups during his visit in 1958.[5] Today
the number of bands has declined to four and street
processions have been abandoned in favour of performances
in the village savannah and nation-wide competitions in
the larger towns.

'From morning the band does start,' Tara explained.
'They does start drinking their liquor. And they start
playing, all by the corner. They does go to San Juan in
the savannah. And they does have a competition there.
More than one band does go.'

'Do they walk along Cacandee Road?' I asked.

'No', Tara replied, 'they more going in the back,
in the savannah, the playground. Just around the time it
start getting dark, they stop playing.'

'What is the meaning of Phagwa?' I asked.

'They say that there was a bad man', Rawti answered,
'and that is the day that they fought and destroy him.
That is why the abir. The abir is to signify blood, blood-
shed.'

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5. Klass, 'Cultural Persistence in a Trinidad East
Indian Community' (Ph.D. thesis, Columbia University, 1959),
pp. 226-31.

The term chowtal refers to the entire repertory
of Phagwa songs, and also to one of the three main sub-
types of these songs; the other two are jhumar and ulaara.[6]
Most of the songs in this repertory relate episodes from
the Ramayan, the Mahabharata, and the Puranas (all Hindu
epic texts); often they describe incidents from the life
of Rama or Krishna. In eastern Uttar Pradesh, Edward
Henry found several song genres for the rites of Holi
including cautāl (chowtal), cahakā, kabīr, and jogīṟā.
The jhumar and ulaara forms that I recorded in Trinidad,
and that Arya found in Surinam, were not sung in the
districts in which Henry worked.

Chowtal singing is responsorial. A song may have
as many as 20 verses, each of which is repeated some 10
to 16 times. The distinguishing feature of this style
is accelerando. Gradual accelerando occurs during the
first four to eight repetitions of the verse; then there
is a sudden burst of speed called dugun, 'double', by the
musicians. This is cued by the drummer and characterized
by increased density and volume of the drum part. The
verse is repeated six to eight more times at this very fast

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6. Any connection between this repertory and the
north Indian tala, cautāl, a rhythmic cycle of 12 beats,
is not clear, as most of the Trinidad examples have a
rhythmical cycle of four, seven, or eight beats (as in ex.
1). Henry does not comment on a possible connection between
the north Indian cautāl repertory sung at Holi and the
classical tala. 'The Meanings of Music in a North Indian
Village' (Ph.D. thesis, Michigan State University, 1973).

tempo (about $\sharp$ = MM 120), hence Tara's description, 'kinda fast fast kind of song'. Crescendo and accelerando also characterize the cautāl singing studied by Henry in eastern Uttar Pradesh, where these musical techniques are cultivated to induce states of religous ecstasy. To heighten the effect of Holi songs, north Indian musicians eat bhāng, an intoxicating mixture containing cannabis. The association of chowtal with heightened states of religious awareness seems to have been lost in Trinidad, as does the custom of taking bhāng (although the festive atmosphere of Holi in Trinidad is assisted by the drinking of rum). When I enquired about the striking accelerando effect of the chowtal songs, Kamini simply explained: 'It is written like that in the Ramayan and the Bhagwat Gita /the best-loved portion of the Mahabharata/. When the song starts to speed the drummer takes the lead and the singer just follow on.'[7]

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7. Kamini Ragoo, Personal Communication (1984). Religious ecstasy during Holi is described in Henry, 'The Meanings of Music in a North Indian Village', pp. 119-142: 'The music of holi is an important agent in the infusion of mastī, which is the valued sensual, intoxicating experience of the participants in the rites of holi' (p. 142). When I played my Trinidad recordings for S.M. Pandey formerly of Ballia, eastern Uttar Pradesh (Professor of Bhojpuri and authority on Indian oral epic), he told me that they exemplified the nāradi singing style as he remembered it from Uttar Pradesh over 30 years ago. This style of group singing of the Ramayan with crescendo and accelerando, is dying out in the regions of Uttar Pradesh with which he is familiar. The texts of Holi songs from Surinam are given in U. Arya, Ritual Songs and Folksongs of the Hindus of Surinam (E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1968). The reversal of social roles during Holi festivities in western Uttar Pradesh is discussed in McKim Marriott 'The Feast of Love', Krishna: Myths, Rites, and Attitudes, Milton Singer, ed.

Chowtal are sung by two groups of male singers, each playing a pair of jhal. At the beginning of the song, and again with each new verse, the leader begins alone with the first few words of the text; half-way through the verse he is joined by the other members of the leading group. The dholak also joins around this point. Then the chorus group repeats the entire verse. After the final repetition of the verse, the group stops abruptly, usually for a quaver rest on beat 1; the leader follows immediately, introducing the new verse. Example 1, Boliye Rājā Rāmachandra Kī Jay ('Shout Victory to King Rāmachandra'), recorded in Felicity, has 17 verses, each starting slowly and accelerating from ♩ = MM 96-116 to ♩ = MM 120. In this example, the opening verse has a rhythmic structure of seven beats (3 + 2 + 2) followed by two verses in four. The fourth verse is in seven, the fifth and sixth in four and so on for the 17 verses of this chowtal: 7 4 4 7 4 4 7 4 4 7 4 4 etc. (see ex. 1). The text of this example is in the Avadhi language of north-central and central Uttar Pradesh. Although most folk songs of Felicity are in Bhojpuri, some items are sung in Avadhi, a language spoken by many of the original indentured labourers to Trinidad.

(University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1968). Trinidadian customs for Holi are explained in The Phagwa Annual '74 (Harry Amarsingh, San Fernando, Trinidad, 1974).

Example 1

Tape No: T2/75/F/59, Item 54   **Title:** Boliye Rājā Rāmachandra Kī Jay,
Verses 4-5

Type: Chowtal (Holi song)

Area: Felicity, Trinidad   **Performer:** Ramnarine   **Coll:** HM   **Trans:** HM

Pitch   Range

♩ = MM 96-240

4.

Leader: ā- he ga- ja ke- (e) ga- ha   yā——— ha- ta   pāw/ā/-   re ka- ha- ta cha- lo   pyā

Chorus

('Oh dear one, repeat throughout your life how he saved the elephant from the crocodile [?.]')

5.

Leader: ā- he ga- ja ke- (e) ga- ha   yā——— ha- ta   pāw/ā/-   re ka- ha- ta cha- lo   pyā

Chorus: e dru-pa- da su- tā

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Example 1

Tape No:

Area:

Title: Boliye Rājā Rāmachandra Kī Jay,

Performer:

Type:

Coll:

Trans:

Leader

Chorus

ke chī- ra ba- ḍhā ye ga-ṇi-ka su- tā ta-na- hāy/e̱7

('The sari of King Dhrupāda's daughter increased in length, and the prostitute [tanahāye - meaning unclear].')

ā-

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Leader

etc.

Chorus

ho dru-pa- da su- tā ke chī- ra ba- ḍhā- ye ga-ṇi-ka su tā ta- na- hāy/e̱7 etc.

Example 1

Boliye Rājā Rāmachandra Kī Jay[8]

Verses 1 - 7

बोलिये राजा रामचन्द्र को जय

boliye   rājā   rāmachandra   kī   jay

1. सीय राम नाम दिन रैयन

sīya   rāma   nāma   dina   raiyana

कहत चलो प्या

kahata   chalo   pyā

2. स गिद अजामिल गनिका

e   gida   ajāmila   ganikā

तारी सेवरी कीन्ह सुतारी

tārī   sewarī   kīnha   sutārī

3. देखहु ध्रुप प्रहलाद न अनभली

dekhahu   dhrupa   prahalāda   na   anabhalī

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8. T2/75/F/59, Item 54, Chowtal (Holi Song),
Ramnarine and his group, Felicity, 20 July.

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4. आहे गज के गह या हत पावारे
   āhe gaja ke gaha yā hata pāwāre

   कहत चलो प्या
   kahata chalo pyā

5. र द्रुपद सुता के चीर बढाये
   e drupada sutā ke chīra baḍhāye

   गणिक सुता तन्हाये
   gaṇika sutā tanahāye

6. म्हरत में बर दोर मचाओ
   bharata mẽ bara dora machāo

7. अ कंठह से दी कृष्ण मुरारि
   a kā̃ṭhaha se dī krsshhn murāri

   कहत चलो प्या
   kahata chalo pyā

8. ओ जब जब गाड परे भकन पर
   o jaba jaba gāra pare bhakana para

   तब तब हरि अवतारे
   taba taba hari awatāre

9. कह लगि करौ बयान एक मुख
   kaha lagi karõ bayāna eka mukha

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10. आरे सारद पावत नाहि पार

āre sārada pāwata nāhi pāra

कहत चलो प्या

kahata chalo pyā

11. आरे सिद्ध महेस गनेस आदि

āre siddha mahesa ganesha ādi

सब बरनहि बरहि बार

saba baranahi barahi bāra

12. सुन्दर ब्रज हिय माँहि बसाबहु

sundara braja hiya mā̃hi basābahu

13. आरे दसरथ सुत राम उदारे

āre dasaratha suta rāma udāre

कहत चलो प्या

kahata chalo pyā

14. सुमिरौं मन राम सहित

sumirõ mana rāma sahita

सीता

sītā

15. ओ चरणों का एसा भूप
    o caraṇõ kā esā bhūpa

    महा बल
    mahā bala

16. स इन्द्र कुबेर वरुन सीता
    e indra kubera waruna sītā

17. सुमिरो मन राम सहित
    sumirõ mana rāma sahita

    सीता
    sītā

    बोलिये राजा रामचन्द्र की
    boliye rājā rāmachandra kī

    जय
    jay

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Example 1

Boliye Rājā Rāmachandra Kī Jay

Translation

Shout victory to King Rāmachandra!

1. Oh dear one, repeat the name of Rama day and night.

2. He gave salvation to Agamil and to Gamika and to Sevari.

3. Look how he keeps Dhrupa and Prahalad free from danger.

4. Oh dear one, repeat throughout your life how he saved the elephant from the crocodile [?].

5. The sari of King Drupada's daughter increased in length, and the prostitute ... [tanahāye?, meaning unclear].

6. [Verse about Bharat, brother of Rama. Text obscure].

7. Oh loved one, throughout your life, repeat the name of Krishna Murari.

8. Oh, whenever a devotee is in trouble, then God has taken incarnation.

9. How can I describe this only from my one mouth?

10. Even Saraswati can not describe the power and strength of God.

11. Oh, Siddha, Mahesha, Ganesha, and others all repeat the importance of God, time and time again.

12. Keep beautiful Braj within your heart.

13. Oh, King Dasaratha's son, Rama, is very generous; keep on saying this, oh dear one, throughout your life.

14. Always remember Rama and Sita in your heart.

15. The strength of the feet of God. /meaning unclear/

16. Oh, Indra, Kubera, Waruna, Sita.

17. Remember all these gods in your heart.

Shout victory to King Rāmachandra!

April is a quiet month in Felicity. Easter is celebrated by the handful of Christian families, but is not important to Hindus.

'We don't do anything special on Easter,' Tara told me. 'It is Christian people go to church. On Good Friday, we burst a egg and we throw it in a glass of water. The white of the egg. If it form like a coffin they say somebody will die soon in the family. If it form like a ship, somebody will leave soon to go away. Sometime it form like a church. When it form like a church, they say somebody gonna get married in the family.'

In May, June and July there are no public holidays. In August Trinidadians celebrate their Independence Day.

'Independence. That is the 31st August,' Tara explained. 'That is the day Trinidad get Independence. I don't know from where.'

'From England,' I said.

'Oh', she said. 'They just give them a public holiday. Schools get eight weeks holiday just for Independence. The people cook a nice lunch like chicken, rice, and they sit down home and they eat. Who have their own car, they just go by the beach and relax.'

'Any singing?' I asked.

'No.'

'On the streets', Rawti explained, 'the government who wear uniform, they have march-past. The policemen, the nurses and all the firemen, and all of them. The government workers. They go on the streets and they march.

They have a formal thing. They have it on television.
From morning they have special programmes on television
for Independence.'

Jhanam Āstāmī, the birth of Krishna, is celebrated
on the 8th day of the first half of the month of Bhādo,
usually in August. Many villagers attend temple, although
apparently not as many as in years past. The baby Krishna
is represented as a cucumber which is rocked to sleep in
a tiny hammock. Bhajans dedicated to Krishna are sung
for the celebration of Jhanam Āstāmī.

Ramlila, the commemoration of Rama's victory over
the demon Rawan, is celebrated on the first to tenth days
of the second half of the month of Kūār (around September-
October). The main activity is a play which is performed
in the evenings during the entire ten days. It is staged
in the savannah by the village children (usually only those
of upper caste). They are tutored by a pandit in the
principal roles - Rama and his three brothers, Sita, Rawan,
Hanuman and the monkey army. Rehearsals are held in one
of the village temples. Elaborately decorated costumes
are sewn by the village ladies.

'Rawan side is the bad side,' Tara explained. 'And
Hanuman side does wear red. The black side always bigger
than the red side. The black side always want to fight
with the red side.'

'Does anyone sing songs?'

'The pandit sometimes he sing bhajan and thing
at Ramlila.'

'What about the people who are looking? Do they sing?'

'No, they just look,' Tara said.

'Are there any special bhajans on the radio?'

'No, not really.'

Around the time of Ramlila, the 'petit carime', the short dry season, begins. Families throughout Felicity begin the serious task of harvesting their rice. At the same time, they prepare for the renewal of the annual cycle by cleaning their houses in readiness for the visit of the goddess of prosperity, Lakshmi Mata, on Diwali night.

       *   *   *   *   *

That is the annual calendar the villagers outlined for me. The dry season, January through June, is the most important season for music. It begins with the music for Carnival: calypso and steelband. Then, in February, the chowtal bands start practicing as the East Indian community prepares for its 'Indian Carnival', Phagwa. Around March, there is the all-night bhajan singing for Shivaratri. The first six months of the year are also the 'wedding season', so 'mike' trucks with their large horn speakers are often heard playing film songs. Hired Indian orchestras visit the village, and the traditional wedding songs are performed almost every Saturday night and Sunday afternoon. During the post-crop time, July through September, there are no special musical activities.

Then, in the slack season, October to January, the bhajans
for Lakshmi are sung at Diwali and the Spanish parang at
Christmas.

When I asked people about the seasons, I discovered
that older people like Rajia and Siewrajiah described the
Indian festivals in enormous detail, especially Ramlila
and Shivaratri. The girls in their twenties thought it
was more important to emphasize Christmas and Carnival.
No one volunteered long descriptions of music. Is this
because the village jukeboxes and radios never stop,
because the temple services with their singing and chant-
ing go on regardless of the season, because the villagers
play records and cassettes at home every day, because the
music never stops? Occasionally there are events like
Christian weddings without music, but I never heard any
real silence in Felicity. When you ask anyone in the
village about the special days of the year, you are more
likely to get detailed descriptions of stewed chicken,
curried goat, and dhalpuri roti - the real specialities -
than descriptions of music, which, for them, is so much
a part of life.

CHAPTER 6

LOCAL MUSICOLOGY

The body travels more easily than the mind,
and until we have limbered up our imagina-
tion we continue to think as though we had
stayed home. We have not really budged a
step until we take up residence in someone
else's point of view.

John Erskine, The Complete Life
Chapter 8, 'Foreigners'

After a few weeks in Felicity, I began to long for

silence - just an hour or two away from the dogs and goats,

the traffic on Cacandee Road, the jukeboxes, and the con-

stant prattle of toddlers. What I wanted was an after-

noon of real silence - an afternoon at the library. One

day after lunch, I packed up some papers, pen, sunglasses,

some booklets and manuscripts I wanted to read, and set

out for the University of the West Indies.

One hour and several taxi changes later, I arrived

at the St Augustine Campus, eight miles east of Port of

Spain. Silence at last.

The University of the West Indies is housed on three main campuses. At St Augustine in Trinidad are the faculties of engineering, agriculture, and liberal arts. A liberal arts student who wanted to read about the music of India might find it difficult. The library's card catalogue lists nothing under 'India-Music' or 'Music-India'. In the stacks, the student would find A Historical Study of Indian Music by Swāmī Prajñānānanda, My Music My Life by Ravi Shankar, Great Musicians of India by Dolly Rizvi, Muthuswami Dikshitar by T.L. Venkatarama Aiyar, Pandit Vishnu Digambar by V.R. Athavale, Musical Instruments of India by S. Krishnaswamy, Indian National Songs edited by R.K.Prabhu, The New Oxford History of Music edited by Egon Wellesz, Volume I, Ancient and Oriental Music (Chapter 4, 'The Music of India'), The Pelican History of Music edited by Alec Robertson and Denis Stevens, Volume I, Ancient Forms to Polyphony (Chapter 3, 'India'), Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 5th ed., edited by Eric Blom ('Indian Music' by A.H. Fox Strangways, revised by Arnold Bake), Musical Instruments through the Ages by Anthony Baines (includes two Indian instruments) and Folk Chants and Refrains of Trinidad and Tobago compiled by M.P. Alladin (contains one or two Indian songs); in all, seven books on Indian music, three works with chapters or articles on Indian music, and two books with references to Indian music.

I headed off to a different section of the library and got down from the shelf John Morton of Trinidad, the

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the diary of the first Canadian Presbyterian missionary
to the East Indians. The work was compiled and edited
by his wife, Sarah, and published in 1916. John and Sarah
Morton first came to Trinidad in 1868 and remained their
entire working lives, converting the East Indians to
Christianity and organizing church congregations. Most
importantly, they established the first primary schools
for East Indian children. From Morton's descriptions of
his daily routine, long and full of detail, we see how
music fit into life on the sugar estates of nineteenth-
century Trinidad. The picture is of ordinary singing in
everyday situations, and of course, the stress is on hymns.

To learn about the Hindu side of the historical
picture - the old religious festivals, the family cele-
brations, and the popular singers of the nineteenth century -
I was going to consult two Trinidadian manuscripts, one
by the violinist, Narsaloo Ramaya, and another by Usha
Tara Bissoondialsingh, a vocalist, school teacher, and
student of Professor H.S. Adesh. Then I would examine
Saptak and Jyoti, two publications of Professor Adesh's
organization, the Bharatiya Vidya Sansthhaan. From these
works I hoped to recreate the history of Indian music in
Trinidad from the early years of the indentureship to modern
times. The Morton book was written by a visitor, an out-
sider looking in. The Adesh publications reflected the view-
point of another, unique, category of outsider - the musician
from India. And the two Trinidadian manuscripts would paint
a picture drawn from an insider's perspective - a product
of local musicology.

The Missionary: Morton

The Morton diary begins with descriptions of the countryside, the sugar-mills, the Coolie barracks, setting a picturesque scene that has now vanished. And we learn how the missionary used music as an enticement to attract potential converts.

> From door to door of the barracks the missionary would pass, speaking with individuals, teaching small groups, and finally, by invitation, or by the singing of a native hymn, drawing as many as he could to a more formal preaching in the gallery (a little open or half open extension) of a barrack, or in the hospital.[1]

From the beginning of their mission, the Mortons saw music as a tool for conversion. Every mission service included the singing of Christian hymns, translated into Hindustani. Mrs Morton describes the usual order of worship:

> Mr. Morton opened the service in the Hindustani language, with praise, reading of the Scriptures, and prayer. I then followed briefly in an English service and read the Ten Commandments in the Hindustani. Mr. Morton then followed in an address to the Indians and two or three hymns were sung in their language.[2]

As they travelled from village to village in rural Trinidad, the Mortons always found the Indians receptive to music. The missionaries spared no effort to turn this to advantage, but this is not surprising for, in countries

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1. Sarah E. Morton, ed., John Morton of Trinidad. Pioneer Missionary of the Presbyterian Church in Canada to the East Indians in the British West Indies. Journals, Letters and Papers Edited by Sarah E. Morton (Westminster Co., Toronto, 1916), p. 68.

2. P. 104.

all around the world during the last 200 years, music and

proselytization have gone hand in hand. Morton found that

the natives remembered the songs long after they had

forgotten the preaching.

> .... I did not intend to sing, as I had so much speaking
> in the open air, but one man urged me to sing a particular
> hymn, repeating the chorus of it. When asked how he
> knew that I could sing it, he replied, 'Oh, you sang it in
> the Castries Hospital about three years ago when I was
> sick there.'... Roseau was our next place of meeting....
> Perspiration streamed from every pore, but the people
> listened very attentively, urged me to sing two hymns,
> and joined in the request that a fellow countryman should
> be sent to Roseau Valley as their teacher.[3]

As soon as he came to Trinidad, Morton learned

Hindustani. He soon was able to preach in the language

and to translate hymns. Yet despite his obvious facility,

he made scant use of everyday vocabulary, for example,

the English terms 'feast' (_puja_), 'sacred book'(_Gita_,

Ramayan), 'altar' (_bedi_), and 'tom-toms' (_dholak_, _nagara_,

tassa) in the following passage instead of their Hindustani

equivalent.

> April 18, 1868. In the evening went up to Thakurdas'
> /house/. Found them preparing a feast for their gods.
> An altar with flowers all round it, a candle in a bottle
> on each side; a sacred book in the middle; three
> babujees /or priests/, heaps of cocoa-nut cut up, betel,
> sugar, etc. They said it was their church, same as ours;
> Deenawa's mother came in. The babujee pointed to the
> book and up toward heaven. She then laid two shillings
> on the book, bent down and held her hands together near
> the ground, and looked at the babujee's face. He looked
> at hers, bowed slowly three times, she doing the same;
> then the ceremony ended. They kept tom-toms beating
> till far into the night. At 12 o'clock the god is
> believed to come and accept the offering; then the feast
> begins.[4]

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3. P. 281.
4. P. 53. Square brackets in original, indicating
Sarah Morton's editorial additions to John Morton's diary.

The Mortons often mention music when describing local
Hindu festivals. In the following passage, Mrs Morton is
describing weddings. It is disappointing that she does
not tell us more about the drums that beat 'far into the
night'. Most likely, they were the <u>tassa</u>, single-headed
kettledrums, still used in weddings today. However sketchy,
these observations are the only contemporary record from
this period of East Indian musical history.

> May is a favourite month for weddings; the schools are
> consequently smaller than usual; those children who are
> not getting married themselves are helping to marry the
> rest. Drums are beating far into the night; girls who
> never had any attentions before become centres for
> smiling groups, to whom the festivities of a marriage
> are a welcome break in the monotony of their lives.[5]

John Morton's most important contribution to local
music history was the compilation of a Hindi hymn book.
The project was undertaken early in the mission and took
up a great deal of time. Mrs Morton writes:

> In 1872 Mr. Morton began to be much engaged in translating
> and preparing hymns, with a view to printing a small
> collection for the use of our worshipping people. This
> work was not allowed to interfere with his daily duties;
> he notes:
>
>   May 9th. Papering house /No. 62/ and hymn work; very
> weary.
>   May 16th. Preparing hymns for press and measuring
> painter's work /in church/ - 461 yards at 15 cents.
>   May 17th. Preparing hymns; visiting among San Fernando
> Indians.
>   May 25th. Finished and mailed 30 hymns to be printed
> in Halifax.
>
> The little book was printed with care and accuracy
> in the Hindustani language, employing the Roman
> character. Many of the hymns had been obtained in

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5. P. 244.

imperfect form or even in fragments from the mouths
of Indians who had learned them in India, and were
completed and corrected by Mr. Morton with the help
of Thomas Walter Cockey, then teacher at Iere
Village. Five hundred copies were printed in Halifax
and welcomed joyfully by both adults and children.[6]

Throughout their ministry, the Mortons stressed
education. By 1878, 15 state-aided Canadian Mission
primary schools were operating in Trinidad to serve the
children of the East Indian cane labourers. In the early
years, the missionaries found it difficult to attract stu-
dents because child labour was so valuable. But by 1891,
the number of Canadian Mission schools had grown to 52,
and many of the teachers were Indians who had been tutored
by Morton. Today, there are 73 such schools, now officially
known as 'Presbyterian'. Like other denominational schools
in Trinidad (Hindu, Muslim, Roman Catholic, and Anglican)
they receive two-thirds of their running expenses from the
state and one-third from the governing religious body,
in this case, the Presbyterian Board. On Cacandee Road
in Felicity, there is a Presbyterian primary school with
over one thousand pupils.

In Morton's early schools, the curriculum emphasized
Christian education, reading, writing, and arithmetic,
but singing and Hindi were also included. Sarah Morton
explained the rationale for Hindi instruction:

Mr. Morton always regarded instruction in the vernacular
as an important element in any effort for raising the

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6. Pp. 110-111. Square brackets in original. I
never came across a copy of Morton's hymnal in Felicity.

Indian people. The child would in very many cases be obliged to leave school long before he was able to read with intelligence in English. Hindi being phonetic, is easily learned, better understood, would help in the homes and in religious services, which of necessity were all in Hindi. On our frequent visits to the schools Mr. Morton would usually examine in English branches, leaving the Hindi to me. In the assisted schools the teaching of Hindi had to be confined to the first hour, which has always been allowed by the Government for religious instruction. Beautiful hymns composed by native Christians in India were carefully taught and sung on Sabbath by the children to whom we looked for choir service. A simple catechism used was obtained from India. It was specially adapted to the needs of India's children.[7]

Singing in the schools is mentioned again and again throughout the pages of the diary. Mr Morton says:

One day I took some half dozen of the best boys in Tacarigua School and went out in the village to sing and preach the Gospel. We had three meetings. The singing of the boys gathered the people, and then I read and preached to them.[8]

Mrs Morton relates:

Before leaving San Fernando Mr. Morton had succeeded in opening a school on Cedar Hill Estate. An interest was thus awakened that was found very helpful at The Mission, especially in establishing our Sabbath services there. Arthur Tejah, the teacher, attended these services, bringing with him a band of his older scholars, who were very proud to be looked upon as our choir; the hymns were Hindi, sung to native music as taught by ourselves, and they rendered them well and heartily.[9]

And another entry:

Sep. 5, 1876. There are so many beginners that I have to help the teachers and monitors every day. Sometimes I get tired of hearing 'So-o so', 'O-x ox', and 'go up', 'go on', but after all some of the little fellows do 'go up' and 'go on' very nicely. They learn hymns and catechism and about forty attend Sunday School.[10]

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7. P. 266.
8. P. 240.
9. P. 165.
10. P. 160.

From the diary I could see five conclusions the missionaries might have drawn about the early music of the East Indians:

1.   During the second half of the nineteenth century, music was a regular part of everyday East Indian life in Trinidad. It was especially important during religious celebrations.

2.   The sung language as well as the spoken language of the period was Hindustani.

3.   The East Indians had a tradition of drumming as well as of singing, but we do not know if the drums were brought from India or made locally.

4.   The influence of Creole music on Indian music was minimal.

5.   The Indians loved music and were receptive to new musical ideas introduced by the missionaries. Indians preferred songs in their own language; Christian songs in Hindustani were not rejected, even by Hindus who refused to convert.

I turned next to the Ramaya account, Indian Music in Trinidad (1965). Narsaloo Ramaya was a member of the National Cultural Council and one of the founders of Naya Zamana ('New Era'), a popular Indian orchestra formed in the 1940's. At the National Cultural Council, he was the chief researcher for East Indian music, and his duties included collecting folk songs from Trinidad villages for the Council archives. Many of Ramaya's articles have appeared in local publications including the Trinidad

<u>Guardian</u>. He plays the violin and has made an LP record,
'Cherished Melodies'.

<u>Local Artist: Ramaya</u>

Unlike Morton, Ramaya sees the early indentureship
years as a period of great hardship during which music
played a relatively minor role. Toiling on the sugar
plantations left the indentured immigrant with little time
or energy for song.

> The early immigrants settled in the various sugar
> estates assigned to them and quickly adjusted
> themselves to their new surroundings. During this
> early period there was hardly any time for the
> settlers to indulge in any form of artistic and
> cultural pursuits since they were mainly concerned
> with earning their livelihoods and eking out a
> living under the conditions that prevailed during
> the period of their indentureship. At the expiration
> of their contract some of them drifted into the
> villages and towns and settled there seeking other
> forms of employment, others preferred to remain on
> the estates and work but under less exacting
> conditions. But all of them acquired a certain
> degree of freedom - freedom to go wherever they
> wanted and do whatever they wished.[11]

As the conditions of their lives improved, the
labourers found more time for entertainment. According
to Ramaya, the Indian music in Trinidad prior to 1900
consisted mainly of regional folk traditions from north
India. On the estates, an English planter might hear
many local styles of the subcontinent, and see a great

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11. Narsaloo Ramaya, 'Indian Music in Trinidad'
(unpublished manuscript, Port of Spain, 1965), p. 4.

variety of regional dances.

And as they settled in their changed environments
and to improved conditions of labour they no longer
felt hampered or inhibited to exercise their natural
impulses. Circumstances were now more favourable
for these erstwhile indentured immigrants to take
part in some form of recreation and amusement. The
time was now propitious for the development of latent
talent and undeveloped skills, and to give expression
to their feelings and emotions. They began to
indulge in some form of cultural activity which they
brought with them from their Motherland. This was
done mainly in the form of songs and dances. The
songs they sang were chiefly folk songs such as the
Rasiya and the Dhola; in addition, there were the
Rajasthani songs of the Rajasthan and Pachhanhiyas
(people of Western Uttar Pradesh in North India), the
Punjabi songs of the Punjabis and the Madrassi songs
of the Tamils and Telegus. The dances at this time
were also traditional. There were many varieties and
they originated from different parts of India. These
were the Ahir dance, the Rahasmandal dance, the Rasdhari
dance from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, and the Madrassi
dance.[12]

Then as now the wedding was the most important

time for music and dance. Ramaya describes the dances

of the Ahir (caste of cattle tenders), accompanied by

nagara kettledrums and biraha songs, a folk genre from

north India.

On such a night large crowds of people from the village
would gather to witness the entertainment.
The Ahir dance seemed to have been the most
popular. This style of dance was forceful and
virile with well coordinated steps and movements.
The participants were only men and the combination
of drummers, singers and dancers, presented
a fascinating scene in which the dancers with naked
backs and willows on their feet made rhythmical
movements of the body to the beating of the Nagara
drums while the singer, with fingers in his ears sang
his Biraha songs with great gusto, the total effect of
the performance giving much pleasure to the spectators.

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12. P. 4.

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The Ahir dance has always been one of the main attractions on wedding nights and its performance survived until quite recently. This was the rough and simple form of entertainment practised by the early Indians in the villages and sugar estates.[13]

For Ramaya, the turn of the century marks the second phase of Indian music in Trinidad. This period, until the outbreak of World War I, saw the rise of local celebrities - itinerant singers and instrumentalists.

Most of these songsters were indentured immigrants and they acquired their skill in music and singing in India.... Sometimes they found solace and comfort in singing.... They felt a yearning to be free once more to pursue their artistic inclinations and to bring their talents to the notice of people.... Consequently, when they had completed the period of their indentureship they left the estates forever never to return in their former occupation. They assumed a new role, that of roaming all over the country entertaining people everywhere with their songs. They found great enjoyment and satisfaction in this occupation and they were welcomed to stay at the homes of people who were willing to have them and be entertained by them. People at that time had also developed an appreciation and love for classical singing and patrons sprang up in many parts of the island to give support and encouragement to these songsters and to have them at their homes for several days as their guests.[14]

These itinerant songsters performed a variety of genres which Ramaya calls 'classical'. During the nineteenth century the local Trinidadian classical genres, sung primarily for entertainment, were considered distinct from the folk repertory, the village songs that accompanied the life cycle and annual cycle. Some of these classical forms borrow the names of north Indian classical genres (dhrupad, thumri, tilana), while others carry the name of

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13. Pp. 4-5.
14. Pp. 5-6.

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popular ragas (<u>bhairavi</u>)or talas (<u>dadra</u>). Several

forms that Ramaya lists are still common today, particu-

larly the <u>thumri</u>, <u>tilana</u>, and <u>dhrupad</u>.

> The songs that were sung at this time were those
> immortal classics as the Sargam, the Tappa, the
> Sarang, the Dhrupad, the Tilana, the Hori, the
> Thumri, the Dadra, the Marfat, the Gazal and the
> Bhairavi. Feelings and moods were expressed in
> these songs by the singer and many possible varia-
> tions in style and tempo were executed by him during
> the course of his rendition. The improvising
> quality called for in the song gave him ample scope
> to display his art. Thus he was able to produce an
> effect both spiritual and esthetic which filled the
> hearts of his listeners with profound joy and
> satisfaction.[15]

One accomplishment of these singers was the devel-

opment of a distinctively Trinidadian style of Indian

singing. But Ramaya points out that this style must

have been quite different from the classical singing of

India. He does not indicate whether the change was due

to acculturation, innovation, or simply forgetfulness.

But he implies that retention and change are two inevitable

and complimentary forces in the history of Indian music

in Trinidad.

> Perhaps these early songsters could not match the
> brilliance of their great contemporaries of
> classical singing in India, but whatever knowledge
> they possessed in music and singing, and this was
> impressive enough, they developed and perfected a
> style and manner of singing which they passed on to
> another generation and which in time became peculiarly
> Trinidadian.[16]

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15. P. 6.
16. P. 6.

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Ramaya goes on to describe the specialities of early East Indian music in Trinidad. Some indentured labourers established reputations as instrumentalists. He mentions the playing of the sāraṅgī, sitar, and tabla, but we do not know if these instruments were made locally or brought from India. By the time Professor Adesh re-introduced them in the 1960's, they had largely died out. The dholak (double-headed barrel drum), dhantal (literally 'stick'; iron-rod idiophone struck with a horseshoe-shaped beater), and manjeera (finger cymbals) have had a continuous tradition from the indenture period to modern times.

> The musical instruments that were played at this time were the Sarangi, the Sitar, the Tabla and the Dholak. In addition to these there were also the Dhantal and the Majeera; these last two were mainly used by the singers to keep time. The harmonium came sometime later.[17]

One of the best-known early songsters was Phiramat (also called Phiranta, 'vagabond'). Born in India, he and his troupe soon established an island-wide reputation. From Ramaya's description we might conclude that Phiramat was not merely a music specialist but a professional musician, that is able to support himself exclusively from his performances. Such professionalism is exceptional today; there are no professional musicians in Felicity.

> The skill with which Phiramat rendered his songs was unmatched and he became the acknowledged master of the art of classical singing. Whenever he sang at weddings or at other religious ceremonies large crowds gathered to hear him and even followed him to distant parts of the island where he sang. He wandered from

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17. P. 6.

place to place seeking the patronage of prominent people, to entertain them with his songs.... His marvellous voice was his greatest gift and this coupled with his propensity to wander enabled him to sing his ways throughout Trinidad. His favourite resort was Moklejan (Mount Pleasant, Forres Park), where he and members of his small troupe notably Imami the singer and Sarangi player, and Ramcharan Ostad the drummer, were frequent guests of Babu Ramsingh. Here they used to spend many days and nights enjoying the hospitality of Babu Ramsingh and entertaining him and other guests with songs and music.... This practice of roving from place to place seemed to have become fashionable and was followed by almost all the classical songsters of the period.[18]

During this period, most singing took place at night, often at public contests between rival artists. These battles of song sometimes lasted till dawn. Each hour of the night had its prescribed song form.

The leading protagonists of the time rendered their songs with the most consumate skill, adhering to the pattern laid down in the rules sanctified by custom and tradition, that every hour of the night demanded a special type of song to be sung, and any deviation from this practice was an indication of the singer's inability to cope with the true meaning of classical singing, so that a songster who wished to remain within the scope of that exclusive and classical fraternity must be able, not only to render his songs well to the satisfaction of his hearers, but his repertoire must be such as to enable him to battle his way throughout the night with suitable and appropriate songs. Quite often two or three top songsters would clash on such a night and vie against each other for supremacy, and in this battle of the giants the mastery and technique of classical singing were fully demonstrated to the great enjoyment and satisfaction of the audience. So keen was the interest and attention shown by the audience that the faintest whisper or the slightest movement by anyone who interrupted the performance was deemed to be an unpardonable offence and a stern look from one of the elders in the

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18. P. 7.

audience was sufficient to put the offender in his place.[19]

The most important song forms performed during these musical evenings were the *sargam*, the *dhrupad*, the *tilana*, and the *thumri*.

At the commencement of his performance, the singer on entering the Mahfil takes up his Dhantal or Majeera and opens his singing with an invocation to the goddess of music - Saraswatee, somewhat in a similar manner as the poet, who is about to write an epic invokes the Muse of Poetry for his inspiration. The singer makes this invocation by singing a poem or Doha. After this he goes on to sing a Sargam, which is one of the most difficult songs to sing. The Sargam is the purest form of improvisation and calls for the highest skill and technique by the singer and it is in the rendition of the Sargam that the singer's ability is proven. The next song in the order is the Dhrupad, then the Tilana, the Thumrie and so on. This was the pattern which the singer diligently followed and at each succeeding hour of the night until daybreak he must be able to render appropriate songs.[20]

After World War I, a new generation of singers - native Trinidadians - gained popularity. Most notable of the local stars were Benny Seenath, Jhabwah, Yacoob, Poman, Hardeo, Loorkhoor Ramjattan, Jhagroo Kawal, Ramdhani Sharma, and Seebalack. The favourite setting for music was still the wedding.

Hindu weddings at that time took place in the night, the actual wedding ceremony being performed somewhere around midnight. A special tent was provided some yards away from the bride's home and this was known as the Janwasa. Here the bridegroom and the wedding guests remained for the night while entertainment was provided either by a dance troupe or by songsters. The singing here followed a regular pattern of classical songs and as the night progressed a keen contest of classical singing developed among the songsters. The singing continued thus until daybreak....

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19. Pp. 9-10.
20. P. 11.

The night of the wedding and the grand entertainment
in the Janwasa was the climax of three days of mirth
and merriment which was a regular feature of all
Indian weddings.... If the parents were well to do
and were prominent citizens in the community then
it was certain that for three days there would be
lavish entertainment of drum beating and the best
in singing, and music and dancing. The wedding was
therefore by far the best occasion on which songsters,
musicians and dancers had an opportunity to display
their art.[21]

The musical life of Indians in Trinidad was trans-
formed in the mid-1930's by the importation of full-
length feature films from India. The first 'talkie'
(with Hindi dialogue) was 'Bala Joban', which opened
at the Gaiety Theatre, San Fernando, on 7 December 1935.
It was an immediate success as attested by the sudden
popularity of 'Bala Joban earrings', the 'Bala Joban
orhani' (veil) and 'Pandu haircuts' (after the leading
actor). During the following year more Hindi films were
imported including 'Bharat ki Beti', 'Shadi ki Raat',
'Judgement of Allah', and 'Chandidas'. Much of the pop-
ularity of these films owed to their songs, many of which
were quickly taken up by local singers:

An essential feature of Indian pictures whether they
be dramas, comedies, musicals or historicals, was that
they were replete with songs and dances. The songs
were a great attraction, and enthusiastic singers learnt
them as they came, with the result that singers by
the dozens were found in many districts of the island.
A great impetus was given to young aspirants of singing
by these pictures and an opportunity was provided
for many of them to develop the modern trend of the
film songs which had already planted firm roots in
the cultural soil of our populations.[22]

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21. Pp. 20-21.
22. P. 31.

Films from India also stimulated interest in learning Hindi; at the same time they reinforced the unfortunate notion that the Bhojpuri dialect which many Trinidadians spoke was a corruption of Hindi.

> Many people now who had only a smattering of the Hindi or Urdu language or could understand only the untaught dialect Bhojpuri which they had been accustomed to hear from the old folks, were now quite eager to learn to speak correctly. They felt a certain pride in being able to understand and appreciate the language and culture of their forefathers which were now brought before their very eyes. Ambitious songsters were equally enthusiastic in learning to read Hindi and Urdu in order to better understand the songs they sang.[23]

The new film songs from India undermined the popularity of the local classical style:

> Classical singing as it was rendered by the old masters was hopelessly on the decline.... The people were now interested in the modern songs of the films which were not without some appeal even to the classical tastes of Jhagroo and Ramdhani. For this reason, and not to appear to be opposed to any change, Jhagroo and Ramdhani met the new challenge with great adroitness. They utilised their talents to conform to the new tastes of the people and in no time they were able to render modern songs with the most consummate ease.
> But a new generation of songsters had entered the stage. They were young people who had become steeped in the film songs and anything classical was distasteful to their modern minds.[24]

The advent of Indian films provided an opportunity for local singers to augment their repertory with new material from what they considered an authentic Indian source. Hitherto, the forces for change had been primarily from the West, either Creole (calypso, steelband), or English and American (blues, jazz, big band). Film songs

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23. P. 31.
24. Pp. 26-7.

provided local musicians with the material with which
to Indianize their repertory by imitating the popular
music of India. That the culture of the Bombay film
industry had very little in common with the rural culture
of Uttar Pradesh - their genuine heritage - was not con-
sidered a problem.

Ramaya sees the period of local classical singing,
before the advent of films from India, as one of musical
stagnation, typical of an immigrant people whose music
is a static marginal survival of a larger and continu-
ously evolving tradition.

> During the classical period there was virtually no
> improvement or development in singing. The first set
> of singers who were pioneers in the field of classical
> singing came from India. They reigned for about
> thirty years singing the same songs throughout their
> entire singing career. Their repertoire, though
> consisting of various types of classical songs was
> severely limited. They had no means of replenishing
> their stock for they were virtually cut off from the
> land of their cultural heritage. The singers that
> followed them (all Trinidadians) in the later classical
> period, got their inspiration and guidance from these
> pioneers and sang the same songs in the same manner.
> They too, had no contact with the source of their culture
> (this contact only came with the arrival of Indian
> films) and were unable to make any addition to their
> repertoire. They were left with what they had and
> made the best use of it. The whole period was stagnant
> in that no appreciable development took place in terms
> of quality and form as the selfsame songs were sung
> over the years. The people nevertheless loved to hear
> them and continued to show their warmth and fervour
> and appreciation for both singer and song.[25]

Simultaneous with the arrival of Indian films in
Trinidad was the importation of Indian records, generally

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25. P. 73.

78 r.p.m. discs of popular film songs, sometimes also bhajan and light classical genres such as gazal and gawali. These provided local artists with further material to imitate. For example, with the first shipment of records in 1936 was one sung by Bhai Afzal Hossein; the two songs, 'Allah hoo' and 'Betak Ye Dil Mere Kamli Wale' were adopted by several local artists and soon became very popular throughout Trinidad. In Trinidad, the first Indian recordings were made in 1939; they featured the local singers Ramdhani Sharma, Jhagroo Kawal, Benny Seenath, and Tarran Persad.

Although records from India tended to sell better than those produced in Trinidad, the local music industry flourished during the years of World War II. Singing competitions and live stage shows were held in the new cinema houses. The musical, 'Gulshan Bahar', one of the first and most popular of these shows was produced during the War for the India Famine Relief Committee; it included Indian songs, music, and dancing by the local star, Champa Devi. The show was a success in Port of Spain, San Fernando, and on the U.S. Naval Base; it then toured towns and villages throughout Trinidad. In 1945, following on their success with 'Gulshan Bahar', the leading artists organized a second play, 'Naya Zamana' ('The New Era'); later this group organized an Indian orchestra, also called 'Naya Zamana' - the first of many such combos in Trinidad. Ramaya participated in the 'Gulshan Bahar' and 'Naya Zamana' plays and the Naya Zamana orchestra (which is still one of the most popular Indian orchestras in Trinidad).

In 1947, Trinidad's first radio station opened,

and on 26 September of that year, the first programme
of local Indian music, 'Indian Talent on Parade' was
inaugurated. In the same year this was followed by 'Songs
of India', also a half-hour programme which, however,
was devoted to imported film songs rather than local
talent.

The advent of local radio, together with the new
opportunities to perform it provided, stimulated something
of a revival of the old local classical style:

> Youngsters who had hitherto been interested in the
> modern songs of the films now switched over to classical
> singing. Every week now classical songs were heard
> on the radio and appreciation developed for them among
> the people. It now formed a major attraction in singing
> competitions and other performances. Young people
> now began to appreciate this new form of the old songs,
> for undoubtedly, the style of classical singing had
> undergone some change with these new songsters. But
> the young men who sang the classical songs, almost
> all of them had no acquaintance with them or even heard
> of them as they were sung by the singers of old.
> Consequently, they sang not as of old, nor according
> to the rules laid down for classical singing. They
> unwittingly disregarded conventional patterns and
> developed a form and style quite apart from the original
> and the songs thus lost much of the old form.... If per-
> chance visitors from India heard them (as happened on
> divers occasions) they were very often flabbergasted
> at the strange mixture that passed for classical singing.
> ... In Trinidad, an inordinate love for this so called
> classical singing grew among the population, a great
> many of whom vaguely understood its true meaning.[26]

The most striking manifestation of Indian film
music in modern Trinidad is the more than one hundred
Indian orchestras such as Naya Zamana, Solo Sangeet,
Satara Hind, Bena Sangeet, Mala Sangeet, Choti Sangeet
Saaj, Hum Hindustani, Central Merry Makers, Sisons Naya Sansar,

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26. P. 74.

Acme Dili Nadan, and the National Indian BWIA Orchestra.
These groups of from 10 to 15 players are found all over
the country, in Port of Spain and San Fernando as well
as small villages. The 'Nau Jawan' orchestra of Felicity,
lead by Chanderbally, was one of the nation's leading
groups during the 1950's and 1960's, but has not played
together for many years now.

The instrumentation of Indian orchestras varies,
but usually includes some combination of electric guitar,
electric keyboard, mandolin, congo drums, bongos, drum
set, trumpet, violin, and saxophone, as well as the occa-
sional traditional Indian instrument, for example the
bānsrī (simple end-blown duct flute), dholak and tabla
drums (see plate 5). Indian orchestras perform at private
functions, such as weddings, parties, and bazaars, as
well as on radio and television, especially the 'Mastana
Bahar' programme, an hour-long weekly Indian talent show
featuring contestants from all parts of Trinidad.

These orchestras are a distinctively Trinidadian,
rather than an Indian, phenomenon. Such combos are not
common in India. In New York City, where the population
from India numbers some fifty thousand, there are no film
orchestras. In Toronto, however, and other Canadian cities
where Indians from Trinidad have moved, these small groups

Plate 5 (following). Solo Sangeet Orchestra of San Juan,
Trinidad, with (from left to right) Hawaiian guitar, elec-
tric guitar, trap set, electric keyboard, bongo drums, and
(rear left) two electric guitars and tomba drums.
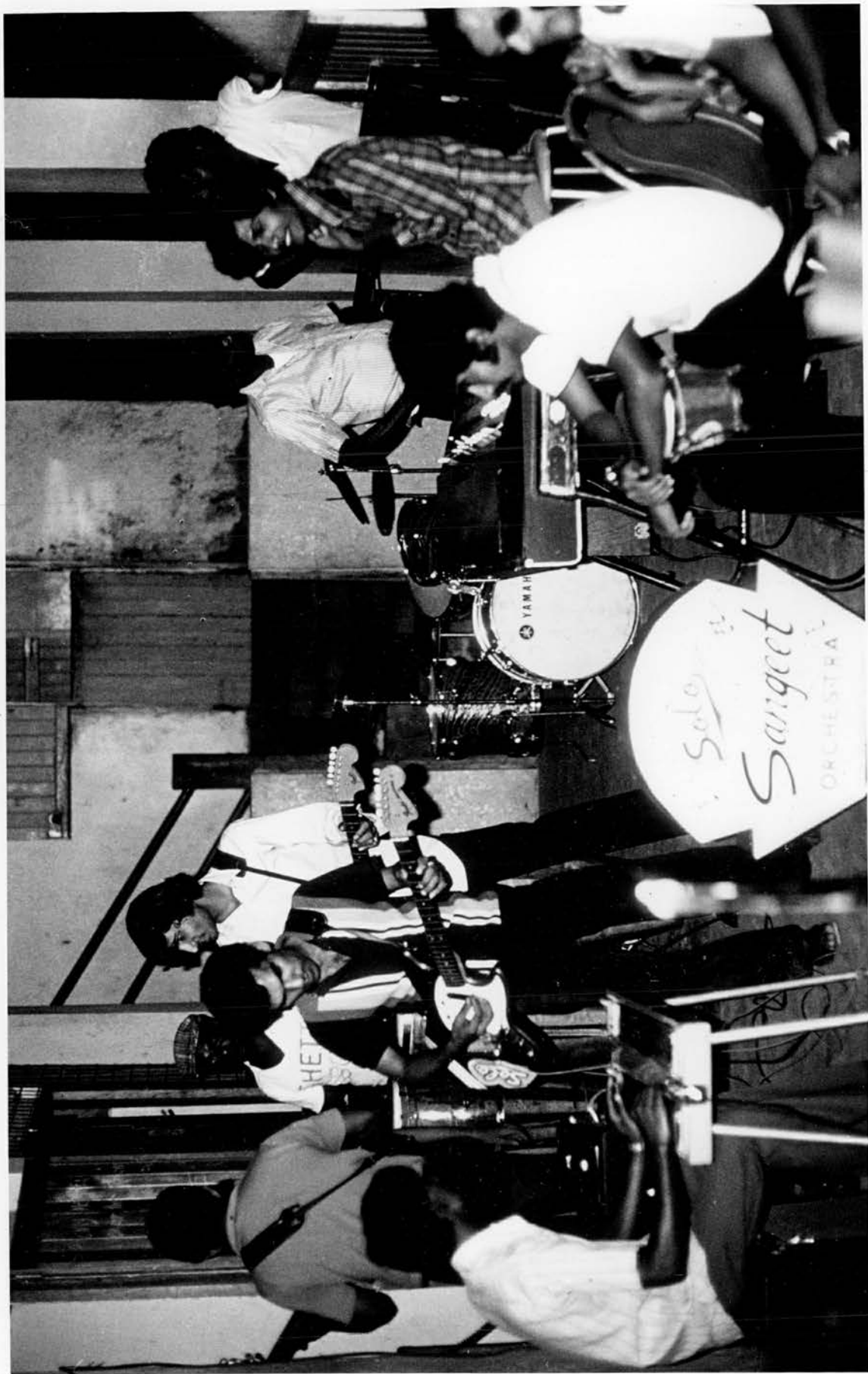
have been organized.

The Indian orchestras are similar in many aspects to the extremely popular Black musical groups in Trinidad, including calypso groups and steelbands. Both the Black groups and the Indian groups are important on social occasions; both perform for money, although neither include professional musicians; membership in both carries status; and with both the rehearsals are a point of community interest. And most importantly, both compete with each other for financial sponsorship from the nation's business firms and companies. Indians feel that they have not received their fair share of sponsorship, a crucial point since the electrical instruments are so expensive. To start even a small group costs well over £500, which is a large sum in Trinidad.[27]

During the last 25 years, the opportunities for Trinidadians to hear music from India have continued to increase, for example the many visits of famous film singers to the island (Hemant Kumar in 1964, Manna Dey in 1965, and Mohammed Rafi in 1969) and the awarding of scholarships for Trinidadians to study music in India (Harry Mahabir in 1965). Consequently the process of Indianization of music in Trinidad has accelerated as has the process of Westernization. This situation is not as paradoxical as it might seem, for most of the film songs from India are themselves Westernized. Ramaya sees

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27. Helen Myers, 'The Process of Change in Trinidad East Indian Music', Journal of the Indian Musicological Society, IX, No. 3 (Sept. 1978), 11-16.

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this cross fertilization of ideas as stimulating for local artists, and a source of inspiration and promise for the future:

Since /1962/ the tempo of Indian music rose considerably. ... New avenues were being open to Indian artists to provide entertainment and greater opportunities were afforded them for the expression of Indian art. Indian music assumed greater dimensions and added meaning was given it in the context of the cosmopolitan nature of our society. People other than Indian began to take a second look at Indian music. There was a new awareness of its presence, and an appreciation for it developed among the population as a whole as the latest pop tunes of the Indian films were being sung with the syncopation and swing of the calypso tempo. ... Even Indian bands mixed their playing and some of their selections often included calypsos, Latin American music and other popular hit tunes of the day. The steel band, too, became the medium through which Indian music was played and Cyril Raymond and his unique and talented family started to beat out lovely Indian tunes on the 'pans' to the great delight of many an audience....
There is vast scope for the improvement of Indian music through the adaptation of western techniques of harmony especially in orchestration and one can hopefully contemplate an era of synthesis in eastern and western forms of music.[28]

From the Ramaya manuscript I could draw a number of conclusions:

1.   The East Indians of Trinidad have had a continuous tradition of vocal and instrumental music based on Indian models. Music has always been important.

2.   Professionalism developed, together with a style, known locally as 'classical'. Both declined after World War II.

3.   The relationship between the 'classical' music of Trinidad and north Indian classical music is not clear.

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28. P. 88.

Trinidad classical forms often carry the names of Indian ragas, talas, or genres.

4.   The wedding has always been the most important occasion for music.

5.   The history of Indian music in Trinidad is a story of continuity and change. The changes are of two types - Indianization and Westernization. The rate of change has accelerated since the introduction of Indian films to Trinidad and the development of a local music industry.

6.   Foremost for local musicians has been the desire to emulate what are thought to be authentic models from India, even if this means overthrowing local Indian forms of long standing.

I turned next to the Adesh publications, Saptak and Jyoti. Professor Adesh has had an enormous impact on the musical life of East Indians in Trinidad. In Felicity, everybody has heard of the Professor, but only two villagers, Deodath and Kedar, have attended his classes. Kedar went primarily to learn Hindi; Deodath was interested in music. Other villagers would tell me about the Professor's television appearances and his LP records. They know of him as a poet, musician, composer, and teacher. Above all, they know that he was born in India and that he brings to Trinidad the authentic tradition of Indian classical music.

Professor from India: Adesh

Professor H.S. Adesh came to Trinidad in 1966 as
a representative of the Indian Council for Cultural
Relations, New Delhi, India. He held this position for
ten years. In 1976, he became the principal of Ashram
College, San Fernando. Shortly after Adesh arrived, a
group of student-disciples gathered around him. Usha
soon became a leader within this group. The focus of
their work in the early years was the teaching of Hindi,
Urdu, and Sanskrit, these being the subjects which his
predecessors from the Indian Council had taught. Then
Adesh added Indian classical music including instrumental
traditions, vocal forms, music theory, and dance. By 1968,
his group had incorporated itself as the Bharatiya Vidya
Sansthhaan of Trinidad and Tobago.

The Professor is an example of those rare personal-
ities that one encounters from time to time. Why is the
world of music so full of them? Perhaps the many challenges
of a musical life, practical and aesthetic, attract such
exceptional individuals who combine extraordinary personal
energy with creativity, administrative capabilities, and
a way with people. Although they are single-minded they
have a broad world view. Most of all, they like to get
things done.

I never asked, 'Professor of what, Professor in
what?' When we first met it seemed rude, and later we
became too familiar for such an obvious question. His

students call him 'Guru' ('teacher'), the 'Revered Gurudev' ('godly' guru), and 'Guruji' ('honoured' guru). To these he protests, 'I haven't reached that stage yet. I don't deserve that much reverence.' He belongs to the Shankar gharānā ('school', 'tradition') which claims its origins in the Gwalior, Agra, and Rampur gharānās of the North and, in typically Indian fashion, traces its membership and their musical style back to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and the great fathers of Indian music, Swami Haridas and the famous Mayan Tansen. The Professor's own guru is the vocalist and tabla player, Dr Tara Shankar Rakesh from Uttar Pradesh.

Adesh calls himself 'a musician by chance', and refers to music as his 'hobby', but he is a fine vocalist in the north Indian tradition and a gifted performer on the sitar, tabla, santour (box zither of Kashmir), and jal tarang (an idiophone: a chime of china bowls tuned with water and beaten with two sticks; see plate 6). His greatest love is composition. He has written hundreds of songs, song texts, poems, stories, and tales, as well as theoretical works on music and the dance.

Adesh has now delegated many teaching responsibilities to his senior students like Usha, Amar, and Uma. There are some 25 centres of the organization around the country, run by students. The centre nearest Felicity is

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Plate 6 (following). Professor Adesh tuning the jal tarang to raga jaunpūrī, 15 Aug. 1974.

in Chaguanas, and classes in Hindi and music are held
there Monday afternoons. Adesh estimates that 1,000 new
students join the institute each year, and that of these,
some 200 take the first-year Hindi examinations. In 1974
he reckoned that a total of 5,000 students had registered
with the organization. The core of true devotees that
meet on weeknights for the advanced classes and Swar Sansar
recitals is small - say 20 or 30. But Saturday morning
brings hundreds of children to the gathering under the
palms outside the Adesh Ashram, to learn language, to
practice music, and to dance.

Adesh is fond of saying that the students range in
age from eight to eighty. The younger pupils are still
in primary school, but most of the older ones work. Uma,
one of the best vocalists, is a salesgirl in Kirpilani's
Department Store in Port of Spain. Usha is a school
teacher.

The students help to prepare the Institute's many
publications which include booklets of poems, songs,
stories, and epics by the Professor. The most important
is Saptak ('octave'), the core of the music curriculum.
It consists of a series of eight graded texts written by
Adesh; they take the student from the basic beginner's
vocal exercises and easy songs through intermediate pieces
to advanced compositions in difficult ragas and talas.
The early volumes are in Hindi (Devanagari script), with
Roman transliterations and English translations given for
nearly all the material. For important songs, both a

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literal word-by-word translation and a free translation
are given. The later volumes are exclusively in Hindi.

The eight volumes all follow the same pattern.
Each opens with three or four vandana (sung prayer) or
bhajan composed by the Professor. Pitches are notated
with sargam (solfeggio) syllables in Hindi following the
widely-used system introduced by Pandit V.*N.* Bhatkhande
(Sa स, Re रे, Ga ग, Ma म, Pa प, Dha ध, Nī नी). The
tala is indicated in the usual manner with Hindi numerals
under the pitch syllables. The Hindi text in Devanagari
script is given separately, and if a Roman transliteration
or a literal translation is included, these are laid out
below it.

Following the devotional songs, a large section is
given over to the introduction of new ragas. The text
explains their vādī (principal important note), samvādī
(secondary important note), vivādī (forbidden note), thāt
(family), jāti (class or category of the raga according
to the number of notes), āroha (ascending) and avāroha
(descending) forms, pakard (characteristic phrases), and
gāyan samai (appropriate time for performance), followed
by a number of practice pieces, usually barrā (big) and
chhotā (small) khhyāl (an important classical vocal genre
of north India).

The vocal material is followed by a section for
string instruments, mainly sitar and mandolin. New gat
(compositions) in different ragas are introduced in sargam
notation. A tabla section follows. It introduces new

talas and short practice pieces with their bols ('words',
mnemonic syllables). Each volume closes with a page or
two of definitions for important Indian musical terms.

The basic musical course contained in Saptak is
supplemented by many smaller publications. Jyoti ('a
flame of knowledge'), 'The First Hindi, Urdu, and Indian
Music Monthly of Trinidad and Tobago', is the magazine
of the Institute. Each issue contains the text and musical
notation of a bhajan composed by the Professor. There
are articles on Indian instruments, famous musicians,
stories and poems, and news of individual members and
forthcoming events. Some space is always devoted to the
performances of the Professor or his students on radio
and television.

In Volume VIII, numbers 1-12 (July 1975 to June
1976), for example, Jyoti contained 12 bhajan, five stories
in Hindi, a Vedic (Sanskrit) prayer with English trans-
lation, one Urdu lesson, articles on the tabla and tambura,
an outline of the Hindi and music examinations of the
Institute and (months later) the exam results, a special
camp issue, four items concerning the relationship of
guru and disciple, and the following feature articles:
'Kabir Das' and 'Tulsi Das' (saints), 'Ameer Khusaro'
(musician and composer), 'Dusserah in Mysore', 'Divali in
Maharashtra', 'Kumbh Mela' (religious festivals), 'Why
Learn Sanskrit', 'Children's Corner - The Lazy Man and a
Thief', 'Life Sketches of Some Great Musicians', 'Defini-
tions of Musical Terms', 'Temples and Mosques in Trinidad',

and 'Hindi in Trinidad'.

In addition to the publishing programme and weekly classes, the Institute sponsors a week-long camp every April at Balendra on the eastern coast of the island. Some two hundred students of all ages attend. The main camp activities are instrumental and vocal music classes, lectures on Indian culture by the Professor, Hindi, Sanskrit, and Urdu poetry recitations, formal debates ('mothers are the real protectors of moral values', 'the study of Indian languages and music is the only means of preserving Indian culture in the Western hemisphere'), dramatic productions by the campers, outdoor games (swimming is prohibited), and films supplied by the India High Commission.

Adesh has modelled the curriculum, the examinations, and the degrees of the Institute after the music courses at several Indian schools and universities. Four degrees are offered in vocal or instrumental music and three in dance. Instrumental examinations are offered on the sitar, mandolin, violin, esrāj, sarod, sārangī, tabla, pakhāwaj, and dholak.[29]

The exams are based on the eight parts of Saptak as well as Hindustānī-Sangīta-Paddhati and Kramik-Pustak-Mālikā of V.N. Bhatkhande.[30] Up to the sixth year, the examinations

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29. Prof. H.S. Adesh, 'Bharatiya Vidya Sansthhaan of Trinidad and Tobago: Syllabus and Rules and Regulations from Sargam to Seventh Year - Sangeet Kalanidhi - Vocal and Instrumental and Fourth Year - Sangeet Prasoon - Dance', Saptak ('Octave'), Kumar Satyaketu, comp. (Bharatiya Vidya Sansthhaan, Aranguez, Trinidad, n.d.), 34pp. (Mimeographed.)
30. Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande, Hindustānī-Sangīta-Paddhati, 4 vols. (B.S. Skuthankar, Poona, 1914-32); Kramik-Pustak-Mālikā, 6 vols. (Bombay, 1913-37).

are in two parts, theoretical and practical (performance).
The theory paper always includes definitions of important
terms in Indian music, the notation of songs in Hindi
with English translations, and the writing of talas and
their theka (basic pattern) in Hindi notation. Beginning
with the second year Sangeet Pravesh exam, short essays
are required, for example: second year - 'Film Music',
'My Favourite Singer', 'My Favourite Ragas', and 'My
Favourite Concert Instrumental Player'; third year -
'Importance of Vadi Swar in a Raga', 'Indian Classical
Music', 'Any Music Conferences Which You have Attended',
'Importance of Taal in Music', 'Music and Human Life', and
'Indian Music in Trinidad'; fourth year - 'Folk Music of
India', 'Music is the Best Source of Devotion', 'Nature
and Music', 'Music and Life', 'Taal is the Soul of Music
and Sam is the Soul of Taal', and 'Kinds of Indian Instru-
ments'; fifth year - 'Khyal and Dhrupad', 'Classical Music
and Folk Music', and 'Utilities and Scope of Indian Music';
sixth year - 'Harmonium and Tanpura', 'Music and Health',
'Literature and Music', 'Music is a Universal Language',
and 'Short History of Indian Music up to the Eighteenth
Century'.

The seven-year degree is considered equivalent to
a university bachelor's degree and the exam is more
advanced and its administration strictly controlled. A
thesis of 50 typewritten pages or an exam essay of 15
handwritten pages (in Hindi or English) is required in

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addition to the theoretical and practical portions. The theoretical section includes essays on the principles and philosophy of Indian music, the comparative study of north and south Indian music, and also the writing of Indian songs in Western notation and Western songs in Indian notation. Outside examiners from India grade the practical performance section, which the candidate records on a cassette.

When I first met the Professor I had been in Felicity for just six days. It was lucky that on one of my many taxi rides I met a driver whose sister studied with Adesh. He volunteered to chauffeur me to a 'musical function'. With no idea of what to expect, I packed up my recorder, microphones, some tape, and we set out. Those were to be the first field recordings I ever made. I later learned much about what the tapes contain: the musicians, the songs, raga, tala, style, the significance of the occasion - Guru Purnima - the day set aside each year to honour one's teacher. But more interesting to me now, years later, are the hasty notes made to myself during the course of the evening.

> This appears to be a religious function - men and women in traditional Indian costume are seated on the floor. ... Tabla drums and tambura. While the girl sings she holds a sheet of music. Her voice is overpowered by the instruments. The song is a bhajan. People keep drifting in, all in formal Indian dress....
> Applause after each number. No, a concert, not a religious function. They are following a programme. This, a very 'renaissance' affair.[31]

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31. Myers Trinidad Collection 1974, Field Notes, pp. 34-5.

Having anticipated her idea, I was not surprised later to read Usha's article, 'A Renaissance of Indian Music in Trinidad':

> The last decade between the years 1966 and 1976 has seen not only a musical but a whole cultural renaissance in Trinidad. These were the years when Hindi, the religious and Cultural language was almost dead, particularly where the younger generations were concerned. There no longer was love for the language nor the desire to learn. Even the Hindi dialects (different Provincial Languages brought here by our various ancestors) were dying out with the older heads.... Since there was a total absence of the true Classical forms of Indian music and since there was no basis on which to teach or carry on the tradition except by ear, our musical forms were fast being assimilated in Western Music, especially since almost the entire film world of India is moving after Western Music.
> It is at this crucial point that a son of Mother India in the person of Prof. H.S. Adesh, M.A., arrived on this soil to place the Indian Culture on the high pedestal on which it now stands....On his arrival here... seeing the almost total absence of Hindi as a language and the total absence of the musical forms of India, he there and then vowed to INTRODUCE Indian music to a people who could not tell anything about Raagas or Taals or anything what they know about Indian Music except what they know from films or records.[32]

Usha's thesis, 'Dhrupad Singing in Trinidad', written in 1973, gives some of the background for this 'renaissance', including a short history of Indian music in Trinidad.

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32. Jyoti, IX, No. 1, p. 10.

Music Student: Usha

Like Ramaya, Usha begins by describing the hard-
ships of the indenture years and the paucity of music.
Both accounts agree that the Indian music of this early
period was folk music, but Usha chooses to stress the
importance of oral transmission as a criterion of folk
culture:

> When our people were brought into their new home, Music
> was brought with them from the Pagunā (village) the
> Zilla (or districts) or the Shahar (town) from which
> they came, but weighing this against the background
> of hardships, suppression, neglection and separation
> which they had to undergo as a people, what could be
> expected out of their Musical Forms but 'Folk Music'....
> Whenever they had the opportunity, they gathered
> together singing their Folk Songs. These folk
> communities did not have the means to record their
> Music or Songs, they had no choice but to tell their
> songs and tales through 'word of mouth'.[33]

Usha uses evidence from modern folk practices in
Trinidad to reconstruct a picture of the musical life of
the nineteenth century. Songs, including <u>sohar</u> and wedding
songs, accompanied the events of the life cycle. Songs
for the annual cycle included <u>kajri</u> for rice planting,
<u>biraha</u>, <u>chowtal</u>, <u>ulaara</u> and <u>jhumar</u> for the Holi festival,
and many others. In her analysis, Usha concludes that
Trinidadian folk songs are a degenerated form of Indian
classical music. This idea is related to the German
theory of <u>gesunkenes Kulturgut</u> (debased or lowered cultural

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33. Smt. Usha Tara Bissoondialsingh, 'Dhrupad
Singing in Trinidad' (B.I. Mus. Thesis, Bharatiya Vidya
Sansthhaan, Aranguez, Trinidad, 1973), p. 42.

element). According to this hypothesis, expounded by Hans Naumann and John Meier, folk music is a debased form of art music.[34]

> Indian Classical Music, though to a limited extent, found at the beginning of the 20th Century, lived through two generations with constant change, and then degenerated into nothing more than Folk Music with the passage of time.... With the coming of the 'Matla Jahaj' ... to Trinidad about 1910, some Musicians like Imami, Firamat (known in his day as 'Firimtad'), Bel Begai ('Gulam Hosein'), Bahadur Syne, Ali Jaan, Kalloo... and Fakir Mohammed came. Earlier than their arrival was Ustad Ramcharan and his brother Lakshman etc. These were the men directly responsible for the introduction of some classical forms into this country. To what extent, however, these forms, after a mere generation and a half, could stand the test against the Authentic Classical forms of India, will be seen by the knowledge of these forms amongst the acclaimed Classical Musicians and Singers here.[35]

As part of the research for her thesis, Usha did fieldwork amongst the descendants of these early classical singers. She asked them what ragas their parents and grandparents knew, and about the instruments they brought from India or made in Trinidad. Usha discovered that only the names of a few well-known north Indian ragas had been retained, and only a few popular instruments had found their way to Trinidad before 1900.

> Through the many Interviews with the local 'Classical Singers'... it can be clearly seen that these men who came around 1910 brought with them the knowledge of a few popular Raagas like Bhairav,... Bhairavi, Kaffee, Malhār, Kalingara (they call it 'Kalangara'), Desh,

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34. Bruno Nettl and Helen Myers. Folk Music in the United States: An Introduction (Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 1976), p. 23; Hans Naumann, Grundzuge der deutschen Volkskunde (Frankfurt, 1922).
    35. Bissoondialsingh, p. 44.

Malkosh, Pelu, Shyam-Kalyan, Bihag, Saarang, Poorvi
(called here 'Poorbi') and Assawari. These were the
names of the Raagas which I came across during my
Interviews.... On the Instrumental side, Sitar,
Sārangi (mention of one local Tanpura, made and used
by 'Imami'), Dholak, Mangeera, Tabla and Mridang found
their way here. (A miniature Sārangi made by the
father of Jhagru Qawal, a traditional classical singer
was shown to me.)[36]

According to Usha, the original function of the
raga as a modal form was forgotten in Trinidad. The
second generation of performers used the names of ragas
simply to identify melodies or well-known local composi-
tions. Usha outlines the transformation of the repertory
from the original versions of the early indentured labourers
to other quite different and distinctively Trinidadian
forms.

> Using the tunes of these 'Compositions' as the main
> 'melody' of the Raagas, the new generations of singers
> ... put tunes to the poems of Surdas, Tulsidas, Mirabai,
> Mahatma Kabir, etc. (whose books of Poems with only
> 'name' of Raaga printed next to them which either
> found their way here or were imported from India), and
> sang them, calling them by the names of Raagas. With
> the passage of time and the lack of knowledge, all
> these tunes were mixed up, resulting in the name of
> a Raaga being given to a song or composition which
> bear no resemblance to the melody of that particular
> Raaga.[37]

In many cases, the names of ragas were forgotten
until their re-introduction in recent years through
Indian films, books, and records, and by the teachings
of Professor Adesh.

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36. Pp. 44-5.
37. P. 45.

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Today, after a mere 50 years or a generation and a
half, even the 'Names' of these Raagas were recalled
with difficulty; and it must be born in mind that the
knowledge of Raagas have been introduced authentically
since 1966 all over the country to the thousands of
students who learn them.
    Apart from this, the availability of books, magazines,
Music Albums (of Records) and Films etc., have all
helped in recent times to keep alive the 'Names' of
these 'Raagas'.38

    During her interviews Usha found little resem-
blance between local Trinidadian compositions named after
traditional ragas and the corresponding classical Indian
raga.

From my interviews with the 'Cream' of the remaining
'Traditional' Classical Singers here (Ustad Jhagroo
Kawal, Mr. Ramcharitar, Mr. Hanniff Mohammed, Mr. Edoo
Khan (aged 82), Mr. Abdul 'Kush' Rajah, and others like
Mr. Asgar Ali (Dealer in books), Mr. Ramdeen Chotoo
(Chowtal Expert) etc. and by detailed examination of
the specimens of the Styles of Singing (Dhrupad, Dhamaar,
Khayal, Thumri, Tarana, Tappa, Chaturang etc.) I have
found no authentic piece, except Thumris and Gazals....
There is a slight trace of Dhrupad (which is known as
'DHURPAT')...but... it does not resemble the authentic Dhrupads.
Among the remaining classical singers, a little picture
of Raaga Bhairav could be given by Mr. Ramcharitar
(being remembered as an 'Air' or 'Tune'). When the
difference between Bhairav and Bhairavi was asked,
between Kaffee and Bihag, no answer could be obtained,
either by way of explanation or by demonstration.[39]

    In conclusion, Usha finds vast differences between
the system of local music in Trinidad, past and present,
and the classical music of India.

This Indian Classical Music is, however, different
from the Indian Classical Styles of India. In the
words of Pundit Adhikari (famous Pakhawaj and Tabla
Player who visited Trinidad... in the 1960's...)
'Brother, I am unable to accompany you as we don't
have these Styles of Singing in India'.

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    38. P. 45.
    39. Pp. 45-6.

After the earliest Pioneers left their Compositions of Dhrupads, Taranas, Thumris, etc., these songs were learnt and the future generations tried to carry on these styles... by putting tunes to the poems of the great Poets, found in Books. Compositions in verse form only were taken from these books and, on the basis of the tunes of the existing Dhrupads, Gazals etc., tunes were put to these new compositions. With the course of time, one tune was mixed with another, the Taals were forgotten because they were never understood beyond imitation, one Raag was mistaken for another, and the outcome today is a Music which cannot be comprehended by the Musicians of India who cling firmly to the Authentic Classical System handed down to them through the ages. The Music which is found in Trinidad, Guyana and Suriname are entirely different, as the language of the compositions have become outdated, the Language of Hindi became less known to the Singers and Musicians, and above all, the little 'art form' which was brought was lost with time.[40]

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By the time I got back to Felicity, it was evening, and the darkness was, as always, filled with the night sounds of the village - the tree toads, the jukeboxes and the dogs. Gone was the silence of the library. After supper, I quickly escaped to my room to sort out my notes and to have a chance to compare Ramaya's account of local music history with Usha's. They had so much in common - the descriptions of the folk songs of the nineteenth century, the ambiguity over the exact nature of the local classical style (and its relationship with north Indian classical music), and above all, the constant interplay between continuity (even stagnation) and change. Their

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40. Pp. 48-9.

findings coincided with my own in Felicity. The folk
songs which survived in the village seemed surely to date
back to the indentureship period, and I hoped that my
collection of variants would reveal something of the nature
of change over the intervening years. The ambiguity in
both manuscripts over the local classical style was entirely
understandable. I had not heard any of this repertory in
Felicity; although people remembered it no one sang it.
The interplay between continuity and change I could witness
all around me, the love of the old and the fascination
for the new, the clinging to tradition and the craving
for the novel.

Both Ramaya and Usha understood the need of local
musicians for new material from India. This too, I could
see in Felicity village: the many Indian records and
cassettes, the families gathered around the television
on Sunday afternoons to watch the Indian film, the trips
to the Chaguanas theatre every Saturday to see Indian
films, the increasingly frequent journeys to India, the
adoption of the new Sai Baba faith - the songs, the films,
the icons, the tears of honey. All evidence pointed to
the inescapable link with their motherland. It was incon-
ceivable to the Felicity villagers, as it was to Ramaya
and to Usha, that Trinidad should ever be cut off from
South Asia - this, for them, the ultimate source of musical
inspiration. For these two local scholars, the landmarks
of local music history were the contacts with this source
-films and records beginning in the 1930's and Professor

Adesh's arrival in the 1960's.

Much as they (and I) agreed about the past, the changes for the future they envisaged were quite different. The change Usha sought was a purification of local music, a rejection of local developments, and a return to authentic Indian classical forms. The change that Ramaya felt desirable was in the direction of innovation and acculturation - adding harmonies to Indian melodies, using calypso rhythms in Indian film songs - combining the traditions of the East with the best of the West.

CHAPTER 7

SPEAKING OF MUSIC

I wish he would explain his explanation.

Lord Byron
Don Juan

I was soon caught up in the rhythm of village life. It became harder to set out every morning with my list of prepared questions and, like the rest of the villagers, I too began to complain about the heat of the day. As time slipped by it was more and more difficult to isolate music from the panorama of life around me. Interviews became conversations, and informants became friends. The village became my home, and I began to think of my thesis not only as their story, but as my story as well.

People grew accustomed to seeing me make my way down Cacandee Road in the afternoon, loaded down with tape

recorders and cameras. Each day I ventured a bit further from Mesho's house, and each day I made new friends. We chatted about songs and singers. They sang songs for me, and I started to sing wedding songs and <u>bhajans</u> that I had learned back for them.

No one in Felicity likes to walk very far. They find it a hot sticky business, and prefer to be seen driving or riding in a private car, or at least a taxi. I was conspicuous less from the colour of my skin, less from the equipment I always carried, than because I walked farther than anyone else. Gradually I began to vary my walks, exploring different districts of the village: one day through 'Casacu' and down towards the river, the next day in the opposite direction down Cacandee Road to the 'Junction', the next day to 'Janglie' in the back.

Music and Singing

On all my walks, I never found anyone in Felicity who said they didn't like music. Some people preferred wedding songs, while others liked English songs or reggae or pop music, but everyone agreed that music is a good thing. Suruj Pandit told me, 'Whenever music is playing, no matter if you are worried or anything, you just feel a different happiness come into you by listening to music. Music is a charm. If a person don't like music, they're

considered to be half alive and half dead.'[1]

I tape-recorded a great deal of music; in fact,
I kept the recorder turned on nearly the whole day. I
wanted to capture all the sounds of the village: the music
and the noise, the silences, the people, the animals, the
sounds of the day, the sounds of night. I recorded services
in the village churches, and Hindu pujas (worship services)
in private homes. I recorded the oldest songs of the East
Indians, the Bhojpuri repertory, including byāh ke gīt and
lachārī (sung at weddings), sohar (for the birth of a child),
kajri (for rice planting), and godna (for tattooing), all
passed down in oral tradition since the indenture years.
I recorded the music of the Hindu temples: bhajans, dhuns
and kirtan (devotional songs) as well as mantras and prayers
and the recitation form known as jap. I recorded Indian
film songs, that have been popular since the end of World
War II. I recorded Sai Baba songs - the newest addition
to the village repertory. I recorded school activities
and playground rumpus, music classes, informal sessions
with singers and drummers, as well as discussions about
everything from building houses to growing rice and
feeding chickens. I recorded mothers talking to their
children and children talking to each other. And I recor-
ded myself talking to nearly everyone.

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1. Myers Trinidad Collection 1977, Cassette
no. 18, Interview SP2, 16 Nov., hereafter referred to as
T3/77/CS/18.

Some of the best recordings from my Felicity collections
are simply of conversations, and much of the talk is about
words. I had never realised how interested I was in words -
just plain words - until I went to Felicity. Perhaps it
was because we shared a common language, at least so we
thought at the beginning.

'Will there be music tonight?' I asked.

'No', they might reply, 'no music tonight at all.
Next week, not tonight.' But I soon learned not to leave
the tape recorder behind, knowing that an occasion with 'no
music' might have hours and hours of singing.[2]

When the villagers specifically mention music, they
usually mean instrumental music or instrumental accompaniment
to singing. The word 'musical' may also mean an instrumental
accompaniemnt or an instrumental piece. For instance, when
a villager hears a tabla solo, she might remark, 'That is
a nice musical.'[3] Occasionally, the word music is used to
refer to musical notation (either the text or tunes) that
is in printed books or handwritten out in their own personal
copies.

Villages do not agree if there is a word that

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2. The terms discussed in this chapter are shown on
Table I, 'Taxonomy of Musical Types in Felicity, Trinidad'.
Some commonplace terms such as music, musical, Indian song,
and hot have distinctive definitions in Felicity. On their
first appearance, these words are given in single quotes
and their Felicity meaning identified. The terms music and
singing are discussed on the following recording: T3/77/CS/13,
Interview EL4, 14 Nov.
    3. 'Musical': T3/77/CS/14, Interview EL4, 14 Nov. and
T3/77/CS/16, Interview EL6, 15 Nov.

includes instrumental music, song, and dance, that is, a word which corresponds to the Hindi term, sang̲ı̲t̲ (संगीत). Some people told me that term would be music, but others felt that 'Indian culture' or 'Hindu culture' would better express the complex of activities that includes singing, playing, and dancing.[4]

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    4.   'Music': Myers Trinidad Collection 1975, Cassette no. 1, Interview no. 1, 21 June (transcribed in Field Notes, pp. 22, 24), hereafter referred to as T2/75/CS/1 (FN/22, 24); T2/75/FN/7; T2/75/CS/1, Interview no. 2, 23 June (FN/53); T2/75/CS/3, Interview no. 3, 24 June (FN/100); T2/75/CS/4, Interview no. 6, 27 June (FN/131); T2/75/CS/18, Interview no. 8, 28 June (FN/148); T2/75/CS/17, Interview no. 9, 13 July (FN/155-6, 162); T2/75/CS/18, Interview no. 10, 13 July (FN/171); T2/75/CS/19,Interview no. 12, 14 July (FN/208, 214-15); T2/75/CS/20, Interview no. 13, 15 July (FN/224); T2/75/CS/28, Interview no. 20, 15 July (FN/348); T2/75/CS/23, Interview no. 15, 17 July (FN/244, 251, 253); T2/75/CS/20, Interview no. 16, 19 July (FN/259, 264, 270); T2/75/CS/21, Interview no. 17, 19 July (FN/280-81, 283); T2/75/CS/29, Interview no. 19, 23 July (FN/317); T3/77/CS/16, Interview EL6, 15 Nov. (FN/34); T3/77/CS/18, Interview EL7, 16 Nov. (FN/21); T3/77/CS/19, Interview SP3, 16 Nov. (FN/49-51); T3/77/CS/19, Interview IN1, 16 Nov. (FN/1-12); T3/77/CS/20, Interview EL8, 16 Nov. (FN/45, 47); T3/77/CS/25, Interview ET1, 18 Nov. (FN/33); T3/77/CS/27, Interview ET2, 19 Nov. (FN/35, 37); T3/77/CS/39, Interview EL12, 26 Nov. (FN/34, 40); T3/77/CS/40, Interview IN3, 26 Nov. (FN/11-12); T3/77/CS/45, Interview SP7, 29 Nov. (FN/40-42); T3/77/CS/49, Interview S P9, 30 Nov. (FN/35), CS/50 (FN/57, 59); T3/77/CS/50, Interview SP10, 30 Nov. (FN/9); T3/77/CS/50, Interview SP11, 30 Nov. (FN/4); T3/77/CS/52, Interview SP12, 1 Dec. (FN/18-22, 29); T3/77/CS/54, Interview GL3, 3 Dec. (FN/13, 26-8); T3/77/CS/82, Interview SP21, 17 Dec. (FN/42); Myers London Trinidad East Indian Collection 1980, Cassette no. 5, Interview no. 2, 6 April (transcribed in Field Notes, pp. 31-4), hereafter referred to as LON3/80/CS/5 (FN/31-4), CS/6 (FN/49, 67); LON3/80/CS/31, Interview no. 6, 10 April (FN/12, 19), CS/32 (FN/34, 48-51), CS/33 (FN/82, 90), CS/34 (FN/109, 120, 127); LON3/80/CS/38, Interview no. 7, 11 April (FN/217, 229-30).
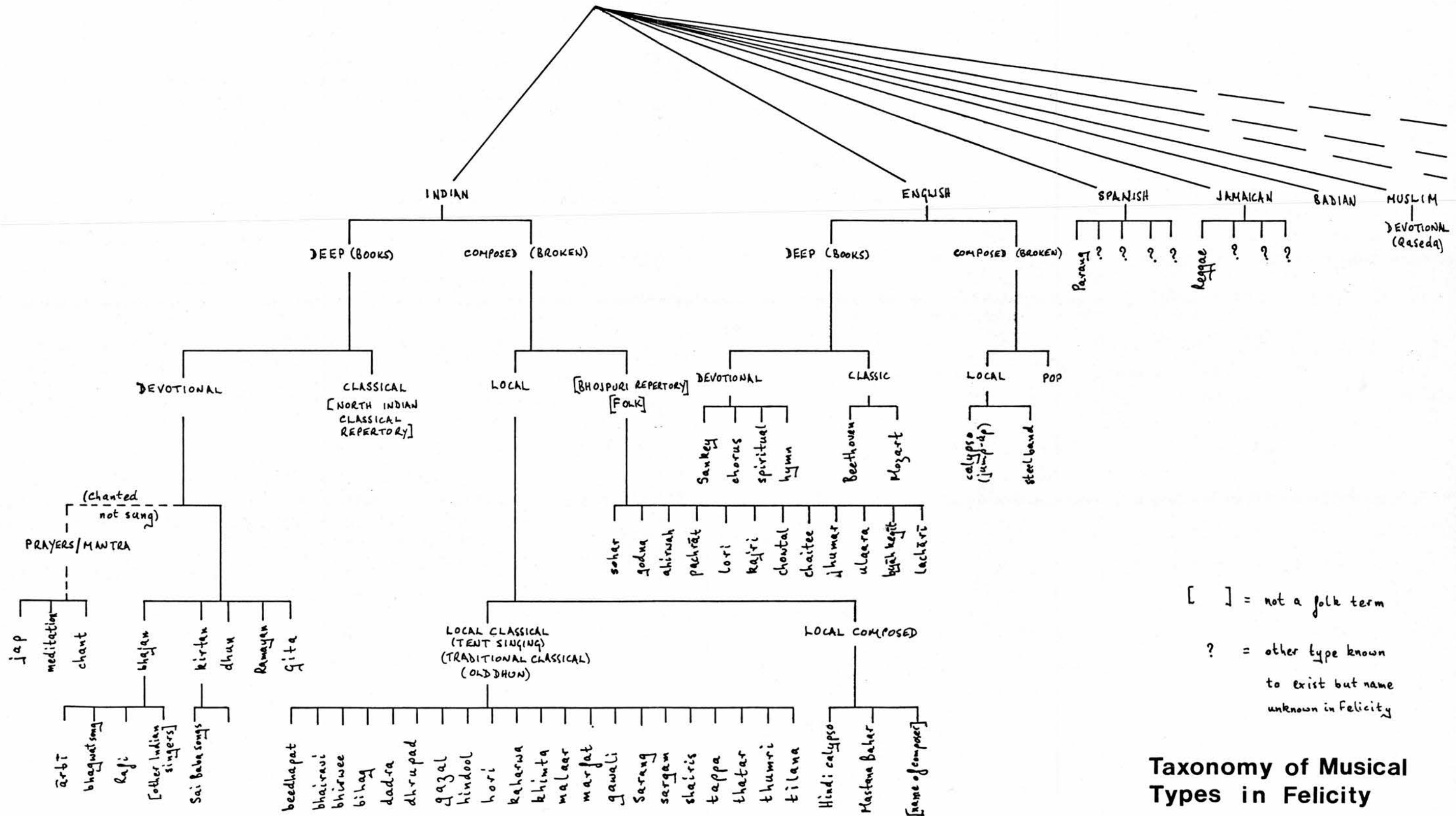
Taxonomy of Musical Types in Felicity

Table I

Singing is not considered an unusual ability (any more than talking is), and everyone in Felicity can sing at least a few songs. People enjoy singing. They told me that some people sing better than others, and some people have better voices than others. Soloman, for example, has a superior voice: he sings as if he 'had swallowed a microphone'. Well-known singers are called 'songsters'; people who play instruments are called 'musicians' or 'drummers'.[5]

Children sing and grandmothers sing. People sing while they walk and while they work. They sing in temple, at school, at home, and on the road in their cars. They sing when they are alone. They sing with instrumental accompaniment (with 'music') and they sing unaccompanied. Often they hum - usually when alone. Occasionally they whistle tunes, although whistling indoors is thought to be rather rude and particularly unbecoming for women and girls.[6]

Most songs are learned informally, and people don't feel that there is any particular age when a child should begin to sing, anymore than there is a specific time when he should begin to play cricket or tell jokes. It is considered good to be able to sing and to sing well, but

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5. 'Songster': Narsaloo Ramaya, 'Indian Music in Trinidad' (unpublished manuscript, Port of Spain, 1965), pp. 6, 10; Tent Singing by Sharm Yankarran (Windsor Records LP/WO32, Port of Spain, n.d.) /disc notes/. 'Musician', 'drummer': Ramaya, pp. 6, 10.
6. 'Whistling': T3/77/CS/15, Interview GL1, 15 Nov. (FN/27); T3/77/CS/54, Interview GL3, 3 Dec. (FN/4-7).

parents told me that they would never scold a child if,
for some reason, he or she didn't learn how. Bhajans,
film songs, 'composed songs', and pop songs are considered
easy to 'pick up' (learn); wedding songs, Ramayan (epic
song) , and Indian classical songs are considered difficult.[7]
Any song a child is taught in school is considered a 'school
song', whether Indian or English.[8] Some school songs,
particularly those in English, are called 'folk songs',
for example, 'Oh Suzannah', 'Old MacDonald Had a Farm',
'Old Black Joe', and 'Three Blind Mice'. A clever child

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7. 'Learning': T2/75/CS/1, Interview no. 2, 23
June (FN/57-9); T3/77/CS/3, Interview EL1, 8 Nov. (FN/9);
T3/77/CS/15, Interview GL1, 15 Nov. (FN/20, 25, 27);
T3/77/CS/20, Interview EL8, 16 Nov. (FN/26, 47); T3/77/CS/25,
Interview ET1, 18 Nov. (FN/33); T3/77/CS/37, Interview ET4,
24 Nov. (FN/31); T3/77/CS/40, Interview IN3, 26 Nov.
(FN/3-4); T3/77/CS/49, Interview SP9, 30 Nov. (FN/29);
T3/77/CS/54, Interview GL3, 3 Dec. (FN/18-21, 32-8).
8. 'School song': Myers Trinidad Collection 1974,
Cassette nos. 3-4, Tackveeyatul Islamic Association, Silver
Jubilee Function, Nur-E-Islam Masjid, 4 July (documented in
Field Notes, pp. 45-6), hereafter referred to as T1/74/CS/
3-4 (FN/45-6); T1/74/F/4, Upper Forms, Felicity Hindu
School, 5 July (FN/46-9, 53-5); T1/74/F/5, Infants Choir,
Felicity Hindu School, 5 July (FN/46-9, 53-5); T1/74/F/6-7,
Five Rivers Hindu School, Arouca, 8 July (FN/42-4, 60-79);
T1/74/CS/9, Montrose Vedic School, 10 July (FN/81);
T1/74/CS/9, Seereeram Memorial Vedic School, 10 July
(FN/81); T1/74/CS/9, Palmiste Government School, 10 July
(FN/81); T1/74/F/8, Five Rivers Islamia School, Arouca,
11 July (FN/46, 82-90); T2/75/FN/34-5, 24 June; T2/75/F/39,
Upper Forms, Felicity Presbyterian School, 3 July (FN/105-6);
T2/75/CS/18, Interview no. 10, 13 July (FN/168-9);
T2/75/CS/23, Interview no. 15, 17 July (FN/240-41);
T2/75/CS/21, Interview no. 18, 20 July (FN/291, 301-2);
T3/77/CS/2, Felicity Hindu School, 7 Nov. (FN/4, 32);
T3/77/CS/2, Felicity Presbyterian School, 8 Nov. (FN/5,
32, 98-9); T3/77/F/6-10, Felicity Hindu School, 9 Nov.
(FN/5, 27, 100-01); T3/77/CS/33, Felicity Presbyterian
School, 21 Nov. (FN/11, 35); T3/77/F/39, Felicity Presbyter-
ian School, 23 Nov. (FN/11, 28); T3/77/CS/44, Montrose Vedic
School, 29 Nov. (FN/16, 37); T3/77/CS/48, Dorman Nursery
School, 30 Nov. (FN/14, 38); LON3/80/CS/34, Interview no.
6, 10 April (FN/110); LON3/80/CS/37, Interview no. 7, 11
April (FN/172-4, 199-200).

who hears a new song will 'catch it up' or 'pick it up'
quickly, particularly if he or she can 'well carry a tune.'[9]

Indian Songs and English Songs

Conversations about words are always a bit clumsy
since we can only describe one word with other words, and
explanations can easily be misunderstood. It took me a
long time to realise that nearly all the songs from Felicity
are 'Indian songs'. Understandably enough, that usually
goes without saying and they are just called songs.
Indian songs have Indian words (Hindi, Sanskrit, Bhojpuri,
and occasionally Bengali) or have Indian 'music'(that is,
are accompanied by Indian instruments such as the dholak
drum, and manjeera finger cymbals). Indian songs are
usually sung by Indians, but not always. If a visitor

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9. 'Folk song': (as 'school song'): T1/74/F/8,
Five Rivers Islamia School, Arouca, 11 July (FN/46, 82-90);
T3/77/CS/48, opening exercises, Dorman Nursery School,
Felicity, 30 Nov.; T3/77/CS/49, Interview SP9, 30 Nov.
(FN/46); T3/77/CS/52, Interview SP12, 1 Dec. (FN/14-15);
T3/77/CS/54, Interview GL3, 3 Dec. (FN/4, 8, 10-11); also
'folk song' (as analytic category): Smt. Tara Usha
Bissoondialsingh, 'Indian Music in Trinidad', Jyoti (Sept.
1976), p. 12; Shri Mohan Samlal, Indian Folk Songs in
Trinidad (Bharatiya Vidya Sansthhaan , San Juan, Trinidad,
1977); LON3/80/CS/34, Interview no. 6, 10 April (FN/125-6);
LON3/80/CS/37, Interview no. 7, 11 April (FN/172-5),
CS/38 (FN/205). 'Pick it up': T3/77/CS/16, Interview EL6,
15 Nov. (FN/24); LON3/80/CS/5, Interview no. 2, 6 April
(FN/23-4). 'Carry', T3/77/CS/9, Interview EL3, 11 Nov.
(FN/30); LON3/80/CS/5, Interview no. 2, 6 April (FN/23);
LON3/80/CS/32, Interview no. 6, 10 April (FN/39).

inquires, 'Is that song' - say a <u>bhajan</u> or a <u>sohar</u> - 'an Indian song?' anyone would immediately reply, 'Yes, of course'. But you would never hear a villager saying, 'I just heard an Indian song on the radio', or 'Let's sing some Indian songs'.[10]

'You see', Amar explained, 'whatever is understood we don't say. If we were speaking to someone who is non-Indian and referring to a song, we say "Indian song".'[11]

Most songs that are not thought of as Indian songs are 'English songs'. English songs are in the English language and come 'from away' - sometimes from England and

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10. 'Indian song': T2/75/CS/1, Interview no. 1, 21 June (FN/25); T2/75/CS/1, Interview no. 2, 23 June (FN/51-9); T2/75/CS/17, Interview no. 9, 13 July (FN/152-4); T2/75/CS/18, Interview no. 10, 13 July (FN/168, 173, 182); T2/75/CS/19, Interview no. 11, 14 July (FN/201-4); T2/75/CS/21, Interview no. 17, 19 July (FN/284-6); T2/75/CS/21, Interview no. 18; 20 July (FN/298, 300-01); T2/75/CS/21, Interview no. 18, 20 July (FN/293, 304-6); T2/75/CS/23, Interview no. 15, 17 July (FN/253); T2/75/CS/29, Interview no. 19, 23 July, (FN/309, 311, 318); T3/77/CS/3, Interview EL1, 8 Nov. (FN/214, 241); T3/77/CS/8, Interview EL2, 11 Nov. (FN/43-4), CS/9 (FN/66-7); T3/77/CS/9, Interview EL3, 11 Nov. (FN/34, 66); T3/77/CS/13, Interview EL4, 14 Nov. (FN/29), CS/14 (FN/49); T3/77/CS/14, Interview EL5, 15 Nov. (FN/28), CS/15 (FN/48); T3/77/CS/15, Interview GL1, 15 Nov. (FN/27-8); T3/77/CS/16, Interview EL6, 15 Nov. (FN/25, 51-2); T3/77/CS/18, Interview EL7, 16 Nov. (FN/7, 35); T3/77/CS/20, Interview EL8, 16 Nov. (FN/34, 53-4); T3/77/CS/27, Interview ET3, 19 Nov. (FN/10, 11); T3/77/CS/39, Interview EL12, 26 Nov. (FN/16); T3/77/CS/54, Interview GL3, 3 Dec. (FN/1-2, 8 12, 18, 25, 57), CS/55 (FN/45); LON3/80/CS/5-6, Interview no. 2, 6 April (FN/1-84), CS/31-5, Interview no. 6, 10 April (FN/1-151), CS/36-8, Interview no. 7, 11 April (FN/152-230).
11. LON3/80/CS/36, Interview no. 7, 11 April (FN/158).

sometimes from the United States.[12] But there are some

exceptions to these rules. The national anthem, 'Forged

from the Love of Liberty', is sung in English, but is not

an English song (or an Indian song)   I was told since it

applies equally to all the peoples of Trinidad and Tobago.

Everyone I asked agreed on this important point.[13] Reggae

from Jamaica is sung in English Creole but is thought of as

Jamaican or Rasta because of the language. Songs from

Barbados are 'Badian'.

'Spanish music' is another category, but it is not

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12. 'English song': T2/75/CS/1, Interview no. 1,
21 June (FN/20, 22); T2/75/FN/44, Interview no. 4, 24
June; T2/75/CS/19, Interview no. 11, 14 July (FN/201-4);
T3/77/CS/16, Interview EL6, 15 Nov. (FN/31, 51);
T3/77/CS/18, Interview EL7, 16 Nov. (FN/35-6); T3/77/CS/19,
Interview IN1, 16 Nov. (FN/10); T3/77/CS/20, Interview EL8,
16 Nov. (FN/58); T3/77/CS/54, Interview GL3, 3 Dec. (FN/
19, 23, 29-30), CS/55 (FN/40-41, 45); LON3/80/CS/33,
Interview no. 6, 10 April (FN/66, 76-7, 87, 92), CS/34
(FN/95, 104-9, 112-13, 117-18, 128); LON3/80/CS/38,
Interview no. 7, 11 April (FN/208-9, 218-24).
13. 'Trinidad and Tobago National Anthem':
T2/75/CS/1, Interview no. 1, 21 June (FN/20-21);
T2/75/CS/1, Interview no. 2, 23 June (FN/51); T2/75/CS/3,
Interview no. 3, 24 June (FN/96-7); T2/75/FN/44, Interview
no. 4, 24 June; T2/75/CS/3, Interview no. 5, 26 June,
(FN/80); T2/75/CS/4, Interview no. 6, 27 June (FN/126-7);
T2/75/CS/4, Interview no. 7, 27 June (FN/133-4); T2/75/CS/
18, Interview no. 8, 28 June (FN/144); T2/75/FN/67, 28 June;
T2/75/CS/17, Interview no. 9, 13 July (FN/151-2); T2/75/
CS/18, Interview no. 10, 13 July (FN/168-9); T2/75/CS/19,
Interview no. 11, 14 July (FN/188); T2/75/CS/19, Interview
no. 12, 4 July (FN/206); T2/75/CS/20, Interview no. 13,
15 July (FN/217-18); T2/75/CS/20, Interview no. 14, 15
July (FN/229); T2/75/CS/23, Interview no. 15, 17 July
(FN/240-41); T2/75/CS/20, Interview no. 16, 19 July
(FN/257-8); T2/75/CS/21, Interview no. 17, 19 July
(FN/274); T2/75/CS/21, Interview no. 18, 20 July (FN/290-
91); T2/75/CS/29, Interview no. 19, 23 July (FN/308-9,
325-6); LON3/80/CS/34, Interview no. 6, 10 April (FN/108-9);
LON3/80/CS/38, Interview no. 7, 11 April (FN/200-01).

as important as Indian and English. Although Venezuela
is very near, only one Spanish form, the parang, is pop-
ular in Trinidad. Parang is sung at Christmas time through-
out the Caribbean. A few people consider parang to be an
English form, possibly because it is usually sung by Negroes
and not Indians.[14]

Calypso and Other Composed Songs

Calypso is a special category. Some villagers say
calypso is 'English'; others say it is 'broken English',
'Creole', 'Negro', 'local', 'composed', 'Trinidadian', or
'common'. Most people associate calypso with steelband
(or 'pan') and 'jumping up' (the typically West Indian
form of dance-procession for the Carnival season). But
everyone I spoke to in Felicity had very definite opinions
about it: most were negative. For the outside world,
calypso is the typical music of Trinidad. The form devel-
oped on the island during the nineteenth and early twentieth
centuries; although it retains African elements, it is an
highly eclectic style, uniquely Creole in nature, in which
Hispanic, British, French, and African musical and poetic

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14. 'Parang': T2/75/FN/66, 28 June; T3/77/CS/26,
Interview ET2, 19 Nov. (FN/22-3); T2/77/CS/27, Interview
ET3, 19 Nov. (FN/11-12); LON3/80/CS/34, Interview no. 6,
10 April (FN/128); LON3/80/CS/38, Interview no. 7, 11
April (FN/216, 218-19, 222-3).

influences have blended. Today calypso has spread from Trinidad to the entire circum-Caribbean area.

Calypso is primarily an urban form and its early development is intertwined with the history of Carnival celebrations in Port of Spain. During the eighteenth century, the Trinidad Carnival was a holiday for the European ruling classes. After emancipation, it was taken over by the freed slaves, Creoles, and Spanish peasants, who transformed this sedate religious observance into a lively and disorderly festival. They introduced the canboulay (cannes brûlées, 'cane burning'), a night-time torchlight procession, which had raucous stick fights between bationiers and the singing of kalindas, the ante-cedent of the calypso. The kalindas in the processions celebrated Black liberation; the principal singers, chantuelles (shantrelle, shantwell), were accompanied by horns, conch shells, rattles, and African hourglass drums (called doun doun in Trinidad; from the Yoruba dundun hourglass drum ensemble).

In the 1850's and 1860's, the white ruling classes tried to suppress these masquerades and revelries because they often ended in violence and street riots. They pro-tested against the obscenity of the kalindas, with their lewd dancing and noisy instruments. In 1881, conflict between Blacks and whites resulted in two days of rioting in Port of Spain (the Cannes Brûlées Riots) and subsequently led to the prohibition of the torchlight processions. The Peace Preservation Act of 1884 banned the playing of African drums. But this political opposition did not prevent

the growth of Carnival into a national celebration.[15]

From 1890 to 1900, the 'band' system developed.
Masqueraders from different neighbourhoods of Port of Spain,
in preparation for Carnival, formed groups wearing costumes
based on themes from history and on current events. These
included 'historical bands', 'sailor bands', 'military
bands', 'fancy-dress bands', 'Jamét bands' (underworld or
prostitute), 'Moko Jumby' (stilt dancers), 'wild Indians,
red, blue, and black Indians' and 'fancy Indians' (with
elaborate feather head-dresses). To circumvent the ban
on African drums, <u>tamboo bamboo</u> bands were formed. These
musicians played stamping tubes of various lengths of
bamboo either by striking them together, by hitting them
with small pieces of wood or metal, or by beating them
against the ground. Early calypsos and kalindas were sung
in French patois; by the time local bands were formed, the

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15. Daniel J. Crowley, 'The Traditional Masques of
Carnival', <u>Caribbean Quarterly</u>, IV, 3-4 (March-June 1956),
194-223; Crowley, 'Folk Etymology and Earliest Documented
Usage of "Calypso"', <u>Ethnomusicology</u>, X, 1 (Jan. 1966), 81-2;
Jacob D. Elder, 'Color, Music and Conflict: A Study of
Aggression in Trinidad with Reference to the Role of Tra-
ditional Music', <u>Ethnomusicology</u>, VIII, 2 (May 1964), 128-36;
Elder, 'Evolution of the Traditional Calypso of Trinidad and
Tobago: A Socio-Historical Analysis of Song-Change' (Ph.D.
thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1966); Elder, 'Kalinda:
Song of the Battling Troubadours of Trinidad', <u>Journal of
The Folklore Institute</u> (Bloomington, Indiana), III, 2 (Aug.
1966), 192-203; Elder, 'The Male/Female Conflict in Calypso',
<u>Caribbean Quarterly</u>, XIV, 3 (Sept. 1968), 23-39; Elder, <u>From
Congo Drum to Steelband</u> (St Augustine, Trinidad, University
of the West Indies, 1969); Errol Hill, <u>The Trinidad Carnival:
Mandate for a National Theatre</u> (University of Texas Press,
Austin, 1972).

common language was a Creole English. Late nineteenth-
century songs dealt with topical events from the Port of
Spain underworld, the lyrics commenting on current gossip
and political events. They performed an important social
function. The use of song for social comment and satire,
still a distinctive feature of calypso, is also character-
istic of west African song, as are the responsorial patterns,
the occasional litany forms, and the frequent use of
repeated short phrases. The calypso melodies themselves
tend to be European-derived (there are some 50 common
melodies that are continually being set to new texts).
Since 1930 and the rise of the recording industry, calypso
has become commercialized, and the great singers - Lord
Executor, Lord Beginner, Atilla the Hun, the Mighty Sparrow,
the Lion, Mighty Zebra, Edward the Confessor - have inter-
national reputations.[16]

I asked everyone I met about their impressions of
calypso. I soon discovered that many people in Felicity
don't like it, for example, Doday, a Christian East Indian,
objected to it on moral grounds:

'Calypso have too much robust things in it. Some-
times they have some raw raw rude words in a calypso. But
it not proper for a Christian to listen to these things and
to concentrate on it. It is evil.... The steelband
music is nice, but the words they say.... Indian people

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16. Helen Myers, 'Trinidad and Tobago', The New Grove
Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 6th ed. (Macmillan,
London, 1980).

wouldn't put a raw rude word or bad language and a song to sing it. But the Creole put it on the table!'[17]

Mrs Maharajh, a Hindu, also objected to the texts: 'I grow in my Indian culture, so that's why I wouldn't like these. They have a lot of different wordings in it that shouldn't put at all. All different exposed words, you know.'[18]

Suruj Pandit also agreed that the words were usually indecent: 'Sometimes they sing calypso that is very displeasing to the ears. The wording. They use all types of words. I really don't like to listen to it, but some they make all right. They have a lot of meaning in it. But others they make cause a scandal.'[19]

'In calypso', Kamini explained, 'they give you the facts of life, you know?'[20]

I didn't know, and my ignorance surprised Mona:

'"Down by the seaside sifting sand?"' she asked. 'You know what that mean? "Whole day, whole night, Miss Mary Ann?"'

'No', I replied, 'what does that mean?'

'To mean whole and whole night.'

'What?'

'Whole day, whole night, you know, and they're sifting sand. But that mean, you know, they're by the seaside.'

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17. T3/77/CS/14, Interview EL4, 14 Nov. (FN/51-2).
18. T3/77/CS/15, Interview EL5, 15 Nov. (FN/51).
19. T3/77/CS/18, Interview EL7, 16 Nov. (FN/33).
20. T2/75/CS/7, Interview no. 9, 13 July (FN/156).

'Yea?'

'And having a good time.'

'What kind of a good time?'

'Sex.'

'Oh!'[21]

'What do you think about calypso?' I asked Kamini's mother.

'All right for who like it, but me ain like calypso,' she said. 'I don't just ... hate it. I feel it's nigger song.'

'What about the words? What do you think about them?'

'Sometime they go good and sometime they say something out of the way. I feel it don't suit me so I don't like to listen.'

'What is the difference between Negro music and Indian music?' I asked.

'Sometime something wrong or something come and they say it in the calypsos. They aren't hiding anything. If a girl or a boy or some kind of thing like that, they sing it out. But the Indian, no. They don't explain it, naa, you know?'[22]

'Do you like it?' I asked Mr Kassie.

'No. I don't like that music,' he said. 'I like Indian music. Is a choice. A lot of them like calypso.... You see, Indian music are more sweet, more mild. And the calypso a little rash. You know that the Indian music is

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21. T2/75/CS/18, Interview no. 10, 13 July (FN/172).
22. T2/75/CS/20, Interview no. 14, 15 July (FN/232-3).

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clean; a calypso is plenty different.'[23]

Then I asked Moon:

'What do you think of calypso?'

'Calypso? Calypso is good too,' she said.[24]

'You _like_ calypso?' I was surprised.

'Yes', she replied, 'I like anything once. Yea. Pop music and thing. I like calypso. I like everything.'

I asked Moon's daughter, 'How about you?'

'I don't follow calypso much, you know,' she replied. 'Some of the calypsos really have good meaning and some again, they call bad words and make up a song so.'

'And do you like those?' I asked.

'I don't too much like calypso.'

'Moon', I asked, 'have you ever heard one with words you don't like?'

Her daughter answered. 'She don't follow the words. The words is English....Some of the calypsos have bad wording.'

'I like music,' Moon said. 'Once it's hot music, well it is all right. You know, I make a little song with English.'

'Will you sing it?' I asked.

Moon began to sing:

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23. T2/75/CS/20, Interview no. 16, 19 July (FN/260-62).
24. T2/75/CS/24, Interview no. 15, 17 July (FN/243-6, 255).

'Dr William/s/ well proud and glad,
Trinidad and Tobago independent <u>ho gayee</u> /have become/.
Dr William well proud and glad,
Trinidad and Tobago 'dependent <u>ho gayee.</u>

Some say yes, and some say no.
Some say Dr William you'll go.
Some say yes, and some say no.
Some some say Dr William will go.

Since Dr William take over Trinidad,
How many fly over, you see in Trinidad.

Dr William well proud and glad,
Trinidad and Tobago 'dependent <u>ho gayee.</u>

Come from the east, you go to the west,
How far you see Dr William do the best.

Since Dr William take over Trinidad
Everybody flying independent flag.

Dr William well proud and glad,
Trinidad and Tobago 'dependent <u>ho gayee.</u>

'That is song when Independence,' Moon explained when
she had finished. 'This is English. Isn't in Hindi.'

'This is like a calypso,' her daughter explained.

'That come as an Indian', Moon added, 'I mean as
an Indian thing naa. If I going anywhere and we singing
I sing that with drum and thing too. If you know how them
boys and that like when I singing that one, clapping and
dancing and thing. They like that, you know.'[25]

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25. 'Calypso': T2/75/CS/1, Interview no. 1,
21 June (FN/22-3); T2/75/CS/1, Interview no. 2, 23 June
(FN/53-4); T2/75/CS/3, Interview no. 3, 24 June (FN/98);
Interview no. 4, 24 June (FN/46); T2/75/CS/3, Interview
no. 5, 26 June (FN/82-8); T2/75/CS/4, Interview no. 6, 27
June (FN/129); T2/75/CS/4, Interview no. 7, 27 June
(FN/137-8, 141-2); T2/75/FN/66-7, 28 June; T2/75/CS/18,
Interview no. 8, 28 June (FN/146-7); T2/75/CS/15-16,
Bucco Point Folk Theatre, 10 July; T2/75/CS/19, Interview
no. 11, 14 July (FN/191-4); T2/75/CS/19, Interview no.
12, 14 July (FN/208-11); T2/75/CS/20, Interview no. 13,
15 July (FN/220-21); T2/75/CS/21, Interview no. 17, 19

All calypsos are 'composed' songs, that is, written by Trinidadians. Some Indian songs, such as Moon's song about Dr Williams, are also classified as 'composed songs'; but most Indian songs are identified by the villagers as 'coming from books'. It is very easy to distinguish one type from the other. There is a general understanding in Felicity that books are written in foreign countries (especially India) by famous people (especially 'saints and sages'). Songs whose texts come from books carry the authority of the printed page. They are considered 'old' or 'from ever since' (older still, ancient).[26] Composed songs are 'local', they are homemade, 'ordinary'. Anybody can compose a song. They should not be taken too seriously. Songs from books are almost invariably religious, while composed songs are entertaining. People hear composed songs all the time on radio and television and they can buy them on records. Many local songs, like Moon's, mix Hindi words with English words. They have simple catchy tunes and usually include the accompaniment

July (FN/276-7); T2/75/CS/21, Interview no. 18, 20 July (FN/294-7); T2/75/CS/29, Interview no. 19, 23 July (FN/311-13, 324); T3/77/CS/1, Interview EL1, 11 Nov. (FN/67); T3/77/CS/2, Interview EL8, 16 Nov. (FN/52); T3/77/CS/27, Interview ET2, 19 Nov. (FN/35-8); T3/77/CS/50, Interview SP10, 30 Nov. (FN/9); T3/77/CS/54, Interview GL3, 3 Dec. (FN/7, 10, 16, 30), CS/55 (FN/44); LON3/80/CS/31, Interview no. 6, 10 April (FN/9-10), CS/32 (FN/46, 55-8), CS/33 (FN/62-70, 87), CS/34 (FN/95-7, 101, 106); LON3/80/CS/38, Interview no. 7, 11 April (FN/203).
    26. 'Old': LON3/80/CS/6, Interview no. 2, 6 April (FN/51); LON3/80/CS/33, Interview no. 6, 10 April (FN/94), CS/34 (FN/95-100, 107, 112). 'From ever since', LON3/80/CS/38, Interview no. 7, 11 April (FN/220).

of the 'drum' or 'hand-drum' (<u>dholak</u>, double-headed barrel drum) and 'organ' (harmonium, portable reed organ). Some local songs are accompanied by a whole 'orchestra' (combo).[27]

One day I played Moon's song about Dr Williams for Jagdai and Tara.

'What kind of song is that?' I asked.

'It's a composed. English and Indian and everything in one,' Jagdai replied immediately.

'Is a composed song ever in a book?' I asked.

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27. 'Composed song' and 'local song': T2/75/CS/1, Interview no. 2, 23 June (FN/51-2, 55-6); T2/75/CS/3, Interview no. 3, 24 June (FN/99-100); T2/75/CS/3, Interview no. 5, 26 June (FN/87-8); T2/75/CS/4, Interview no. 7, 27 June (FN/136-40); T2/75/F/22, The Melotones, Chase Village, 28 June (FN/75); T2/75/F/37-8, Nau Jawan, 2 July (FN/103-4); T2/75/CS/18, Interview no. 10, 13 July (FN/173-5, 184-5); T2/75/CS/19, Interview no. 11, 14 July (FN/196-8); T2/75/CS/19, Interview no. 12, 14 July (FN/211-13); T2/75/CS/20, Interview no. 13, 15 July (FN/222-3); T2/75/CS/20, Interview no. 14, 15 July (FN/234-5); T2/75/CS/33, Interview no. 15, 17 July (FN/245-9); T2/75/CS/20, Interview no. 16, 19 July (FN/264-8); T2/75/CS/21, Interview no. 17, 19 July (FN/278); T2/75/CS/21, Interview no. 18, 20 July (FN/297-8, 300-01); T2/75/CS/29, Interview no. 19, 23 July (FN/314-18); T3/77/CS/3, Interview EL1, 8 Nov. (FN/1, 7, 27); T3/77/CS/8, Interview EL2, 11 Nov. (FN/54-7), CS/9 (FN/64-5); T3/77/CS/9, Interview EL3, 11 Nov. (FN/32-3), CS/10 (FN/55, 70); T3/77/CS/13, Interview EL4, 14 Nov. (FN/26), CS/14 (FN/33, 53); T3/77/CS/14, Interview EL5, 15 Nov. (FN/23-7), CS/15 (FN/37, 48); T3/77/CS/15, Interview GL1, 15 Nov. (FN/20); T3/77/CS/16, Interview EL6, 15 Nov. (FN/22, 27, 36, 42, 50, 53); T3/77/CS/18, Interview EL7, 16 Nov. (FN/32-8); T3/77/CS/20, Interview EL8, 16 Nov. (FN/44, 53); T3/77/CS/39, Interview EL12, 26 Nov. (FN/2, 24, 39), CS/40 (FN/66); LON3/80/CS/5, Interview no. 2, 6 April (FN/33-4); LON3/80/CS/31, Interview no. 6, 10 April (FN/1-6, 13-21), CS/32 (FN/27-32, 44-53), CS/33 (FN/62-7, 89), CS/34 (FN/113, 122); LON3/80/CS/37, Interview no. 7, 11 April (FN/161-9, 196-9), CS/38 (FN/216).

'Naa', Tara exclaimed, 'they compose that.'

'What's the opposite of a composed song?'

'Well, classical music,' Tara answered. 'These is not from books. They take their own words and they make that.'

'They make that in they own head', Jagdai added, 'they own brain they compose that. That is ordinary. They compose that they own self.'

'Is it a Negro song?' I asked.

'Negro songs does be different,' Tara replied. She paused. 'Negro don't have a song really.'

'If it was a Negro song, the Negro really wouldn't put the Hindi word in it,' Jagdai added.

'Is it popular music?' I asked.

'No, popular music is something you hearing every day. And that you see does hardly hear it.'

'Is it English music then?'

'No, that is Indian music,' Jagdai explained. 'The words in English but the music in Indian. The tune is in Indian way.'

'Is it an Indian song then?' I asked.

'Well, you have to call it an Indian song,' Tara conceded, but she was not happy with the idea. 'Is a mix-up. They mix it up.'

'The words in English. The tune and the music in Indian,' Jagdai said.[28]

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28. T3/77/CS/16, Interview EL6, 15 Nov. (FN/49-51).

Dolan really didn't like composed songs, but she had heard that the people who wrote them made money:

'You know, it have a lot of people who do this thing. Now, they just compose song just for the tune and the music and to keep other people happy. They make a record. Now, they get something out of that, at least when the record sell. They buy the record. So they make their money one side. And they don't care: whatever they put in the record is all well and good. It's just a money-making business, to make a record.'[29]

Kamini could tell a local song by the language:

'Composed song sort of have a local accent to it. It don't have real Indian words in it.'[30]

Mrs Maharajh suspected that portions of local compositions might actually be taken from books:

'Sometimes they compose it down here. They have the book and they compose it. They take a part from this, a part from that page and they make up like a calypso.'[31]

But most other people agreed with Tara that 'when you say "composition", they mean they use they own words.'[32]

Amar's analysis was the most thorough.

'Of course all songs are composed', he pointed out, 'but if you say "composed" back home, we will think automatically "local composed". We substitute the word

29. T3/77/CS/18, Interview EL7, 16 Nov. (FN/32).
30. T3/77/CS/39, Interview EL12, 26 Nov. (FN/2).
31. T3/77/CS/15, Interview EL5, 15 Nov. (FN/37).
32. T3/77/CS/16, Interview EL6, 15 Nov. (FN/27).

"composed" for "local", right? We will call them "local" also if it's the traditional local classical, what they call "tent singing".'

'Would the traditional classical be a "local composed" or just a "local"?' I asked.

'Well, that is debatable. They will think about that. But it is definitely local, because it has been here for so long. They would say, it's "Trinidad local" or "classical". If it's locally composed in recent times, we will use the term "local", "local song", "locally composed". But to differentiate the "classical" from the classical music from India we will say "local classical".'

'So', I asked, 'within the larger category "local", you would have a smaller group, "local composed", which refers to newer things?'

'Yea, which they know definitely someone has made it up. But if it's something that has been there as far back as you can remember, they will call it "local classical". They wouldn't necessarily say "composed" for that.'[33]

Classical Singing

'Local classical' singing in Trinidad dates back to the late years of the indenture period. It is sometimes

33. LON3/80/CS/32, Interview no. 6, 10 April (FN/ 28-32). Amar, an advanced tabla student of Prof. Adesh, lives in San Juan, Trinidad.

called 'tent' singing after the marawa (Bhojpuri: 'tent' or 'canopy') in which the events, usually a wedding, take place. Tent singing is still heard from time to time in Trinidad, although no one in Felicity ever sang 'a classical'for me. Some of these tent songs have taken the names of Indian genres (gazal, thumri, dhrupad), some of well-known ragas (bihag, bhairavi, hindool), and some of talas (time cycles) common in north India (dadra, kaharwa). But they all are very different from any South Asian counterpart.[34]

34. 'Classical': Tl/74/F/54-5, 71, 31 July and 6 August (FN/250-54); T2/75/CS/1, Interview no. 2, 23 June (FN/55); T2/75/CS/3, Interview no. 5, 26 June (FN/90-91); T3/77/CS/16, Interview EL6, 15 Nov. (FN/40); T3/77/CS/45, Interview SP7, 29 Nov. (FN/41); T3/77/CS/52, Interview SP12, 1 Dec. (FN/1, 6, 18); T3/77/CS/54, Interview GL3, 3 Dec. (FN/2, 7, 10, 13, 18, 31, 35); CS/55 (FN/42); LON3/80/CS/5, Interview no. 2, 6 April (FN/18-23); LON3/80/CS/31, Interview no. 6, 10 April (FN/12); CS/32 (FN/28-33, 42-7), CS/33 (FN/79-82), CS/34 (FN/124); LON3/80/CS/36, Interview no. 7, 11 April (FN/157), CS/37 (FN/163, 171-2), CS/38 (FN/216); M.P. Alladin, 'The Folk Arts of Trinidad and Tobago' (Ministry of Education, Trinidad and Tobago, n.d.); Ramaya, pp. 5-13; Tent Singing by Sookdeo Sookhraj (Windsor Records LP/WO25, Port of Spain, n.d.); Tent Singing by Abdool 'Kush' Razack (Windsor Records LP/WO26, Port of Spain, n.d.); Tent Singing by Dev Bansraj Ramkissoon (Windsor Records LP/WO27, Port of Spain, n.d.); Tent Singing by Yussuff Khan (Windsor Records LP/WO31, Port of Spain, n.d.); Tent Singing by Sharm Yankarran (Windsor Records LP/WO32, Port of Spain, n.d.); Tent Singing by Kung Beharry Singh (Windsor Records LP/WO33, Port of Spain, n.d.).

Amar had heard a few 'classicals'.

'There is an old man that we know', he said, 'in fact he came from India, but when he was very very small. And he knows about "a bihag".'

'Does he remember that from India?' I asked.

'No, well, I don't know how he knows it because he came very small. But he puts the indefinite article. He will say "a" bihag or "a" bhairavi. Of course, they must stem from something. But it has changed along the way.'[35]

Kamini felt that local classicals couldn't compare with 'real' Indian songs. Songs from India are sung in 'proper' Hindi or 'deep' Hindi and give her a special feeling, a 'vibration', that the local songs never inspire.

'Some classical song they compose it down here and some they don't,' she explained.

'Is there a difference between the two?' I asked.

'Not really. But in Trinidad it can't really meet the standard of the real Indian classical. Because down here people not as conversant in Indian languages. They just can't pronounce the words as how the real Indian would. And then they don't do it like the Indian - real Indian people.... It don't have this real Indian beat to it. This real Indian vibration you get in the Indian songs. When they come down from India, you get a sort of vibration. You can go on listening and listening and listening. It

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35. LON3/80/CS/5, Interview no. 2, 6 April (FN/21-2).

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sort of make you feel different then. The music, you just absorb the music on your body and let your body go.'[36]

When a 'classic' isn't local, it is necessary to be more specific. Symphonies by Beethoven and Mozart are 'English classics'; a sitar performance by Ravi Shankar is an 'Indian classic' or an 'Indian classical'.

Mantras and Prayers

Books are considered a rich source of both songs and 'prayers' or 'mantras'. People in Felicity have much more confidence in the reliability of literary transmission than in oral transmission, and they have an immense respect for books and for literacy. Reading opens the door to a world of music, formerly the exclusive domain of pandits and other 'big people'. 'Who learn to read, they gonna read it and sing it.'[37]

The most important books known in Felicity - the Vedas, the Ramayan, the Mahabharata and the Bhagavad Gita, the Bible, even the Koran - come from abroad. Rookmin explained, 'When them Swamiji and them big people go out, they go anywhere to study, they get the book. They come back here and sell it for the children. The children learn it and

36. T3/77/CS/39, Interview EL12, 26 Nov. (FN/41).
37. T3/77/CS/16, Interview EL6, 15 Nov. (FN/45) .

they read it and so how they sing it at the temple and all about.'[38]

Prayers are always from books; they are never 'composed' or 'local' or 'make-up'. 'It can't be a make-up prayers,' Channu told me. 'They must learn that from some of our great books. The pandits, they are learned. They have to learn all these prayers, and they have to learn the ways in saying it, the ways in doing it, and then they will go out now so that everybody who would like to follow will follow on.'[39]

Prayers and mantras are never sung, they are 'said'. A devotee will 'say' the prayers of the havan service or the sandhya service; he will 'say' the gayatree mantra, an important Hindu prayer. I found this terminology confusing because the way they 'said' their prayers sounded

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38. T3/77/CS/9, Interview EL3, 11 Nov. (FN/43).
'Books': T3/77/CS/3, Interview EL1, 8 Nov. (FN/7-9, 31);
T3/77/CS/10, Interview EL3, 11 Nov. (FN/59); T3/77/CS/15,
Interview GL1, 15 Nov. (FN/23-4); T3/77/CS/16, Interview
EL6, 15 Nov. (FN/45); T3/77/CS/17, Interview SP2, 16 Nov.
(FN/26, 38-9); T3/77/CS/19, Interview SP3, 16 Nov. (FN/35-
6); T3/77/CS/20, Interview EL8, 16 Nov. (FN/34, 44, 52);
T3/77/CS/39, Interview EL12, 26 Nov. (FN/11); T3/77/CS/50,
Interview SP9, 30 Nov. (FN/52-60); LON3/80/CS/31, Interview
no. 6, 10 April (FN/1-9, 13-17), CS/32 (FN/53-4).
39. T3/77/CS/3, Interview EL1, 8 Nov. (FN/21).
'Prayer': T2/77/CS/23, Interview no. 15, 17 July (FN/253-
4); T2/77/CS/20, Interview 16, 19 July (FN/266-7);
T2/75/CS/21, Interview 17, 19 July (FN/279); T2/75/CS/21,
Interview 18, 20 July (FN/299); T2/75/CS/29, Interview 19,
23 July (FN/315-17); T3/77/CS/16, Interview EL6, 15 Nov.
(FN/28, 32); T3/77/CS/18, Interview EL7, 16 Nov. (FN/13-14);
T3/77/CS/20, Interview EL8, 16 Nov. (FN/36); T3/77/CS/39,
Interview EL12, 26 Nov. (FN/32-7); LON3/80/CS/5, Interview
no. 2, 6 April (FN/38), CS/6 (FN/44, 53, 58, 71-6);
LON3/80/CS/33, Interview no. 6, 10 April (FN/91).

just like singing to me, and I assumed that the prayers
were a sombre type of religious song. But I soon learned
how wrong I was. In no sense would villagers ever consider
prayers as songs or praying as singing. There are several
'ways' or styles of saying prayers; the most usual is an
inflected monotone, but the style a devotee chooses is
not thought to alter the essential nature of the prayer.
Setting a prayer to a 'tune', or melody, and singing it
would distract the mind of the worshipper from the text:
this is considered wrong.[40]

Mantras are special prayers. Usually they are short
- a line or two or just a few words such as Aum Namo
Narayanaya ('I bow to Thee Narayanaya'). The villagers
know that mantras come from the Vedas (most ancient Aryan
scriptures) and other great books. The texts of the impor-
tant puja services, such as the jhandi or Durga puja, are
composed of a series of mantras.

All the Felicity pandits have memorized hundreds of
mantras to perform the many services of the Hindu liturgy.
But each villager also has his own personal mantra, whis-
pered to him by his godfather during the christening ceremony.

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40. 'Say': T3/77/CS/20, Interview EL8, 16 Nov.
(FN/33); LON3/80/CS/37, Interview no. 7, 11 April
(FN/168-9), CS/38 (FN/213). 'Way': LON3/80/CS/6, Inter-
view no. 2, 6 April (FN/59, 71, 78).

This personal mantra should be kept secret.[41]

Jap (Hindi: 'repetition') is the performance of a single mantra many times (ideally 108), while the devotee keeps count with his fingers or with a jap mala (string of prayer beads). Jap can be performed in private or recited in unison on a monotone. There are also more elaborate performance styles, but conservatively disposed individuals consider these inappropriate to prayer. Since it is a prayer, jap is never considered a song, even if it is set to a melody.[42]

Rookmin explained, 'They does have the bead, the mala. Now you sit down to do your prayer. You check that mala hundred time. Every time you move a bead, you say "aum". Well, that is what they call jap.'[43]

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41. 'Mantra': T2/75/CS/29, Interview no. 19, 23 July (FN/316); T3/77/CS/9, Interview EL3, 11 Nov. (FN/44-5); T3/77/CS/13, Interview EL4, 14 Nov. (FN/32); T3/77/CS/16, Interview EL6, 15 Nov. (FN/29); T3/77/CS/18, Interview SP2, 16 Nov. (FN/57); T3/77/CS/18, Interview EL7, 16 Nov. (FN/13-17); T3/77/CS/19, Interview SP3, 16 Nov. (FN/22-4); T3/77/CS/20, Interview EL8, 16 Nov. (FN/42); T3/77/CS/44, Interview SP7, 29 Nov. (FN/9-10, 32), CS/45 (FN/33); T3/77/CS/46, Interview SP8, 29 Nov. (FN/46); T3/77/CS/49, Interview SP9, 30 Nov. (FN/18-19); T3/77/CS/52, Interview SP12, 1 Dec. (FN/23); T3/77/CS/55, Interview SP13, 3 Dec. (FN/25); LON3/80/CS/5, Interview no. 2, 6 April (FN/39), CS/6 (FN/41-77); LON3/80/CS/33, Interview no. 6, 10 April (FN/72-5), CS/34 (FN/110, 116); LON3/80/CS/37, Interview no. 7, 11 April (FN/185-7), CS/38 (FN/211-17).
42. 'Jap': T2/75/CS/28, Interview no. 20, 15 July (FN/349); T3/77/CS/14, Interview EL4, 14 Nov. (FN/31); T3/77/CS/16, Interview EL6, 15 Nov. (FN/28); T3/77/CS/18, Interview EL7, 16 Nov. (FN/3); T3/77/CS/20, Interview EL8, 16 Nov. (FN/41-2); T3/77/CS/39, Interview EL12, 26 Nov. (FN/25); LON3/80/CS/5, Interview no. 2, 6 April (FN/36-40), CS/6 (FN/41-9); LON3/80/CS/33, Interview no. 6, 10 April (FN/72, 77).
43. T3/77/CS/9, Interview EL3, 11 Nov. (FN/38).

'Jap is the repetition of the mantras,' Suruj Pandit explained. 'Speaking it, not singing. And you take a mala, and every time you recite one mantra, you just pull a bead.... You can recite it aloud, you can recite it in your mind, in anyhow you want.'

'Could you "sing" a jap?' I asked.

'You could say it and you can sing it,' he replied. 'But when you sing it you don't really call it a song or bhajan or dhun. You say it in a tune.'[44]

This distinction between 'saying', 'talking', and 'singing', particularly when pertaining to prayers, is difficult for the villagers to explain. Sometimes they use the term 'chant' to describe this performing style.

One afternoon, I was playing a havan puja (worship service) for Tara and Jagdai. We came to a passage where the congregation was delivering a spoken English translation of the Sanskrit prayer they had just intoned. The recitation was accompanied with a drone played on the tambura.

'Are they singing or are they talking?' I asked.

'They look like they talking,' Tara replied.

'Is it a song?' I asked.

'No', she answered, 'just praying, just talking.'

'Are they chanting?' I asked.

'Not really,' Jagdai replied. 'They just talking like, you know, when a chorus singing, all singing together.'[45]

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44. T3/77/CS/18, Interview EL7, 16 Nov. (FN/15-18).
45. T3/77/CS/16, Interview EL6, 15 Nov. (FN/30).

I played the same recording for Kamini.

'Are they talking or are they singing?' I asked.

'Talking. They're saying it in a rhythm to the music. They're timing the music and they're saying.'

'What is the difference between that kind of talking and the way we are talking now?' I asked.

'You see, they timing their words to the music. But we just talking without any music. We don't have to time anything.'

'Why isn't it singing?' I asked. 'If they are timing and there is music?'

'No, it's not.'

We continued listening to the service. After another Sanskrit prayer was 'said', I asked:

'Is this a chant?'

'It could be,' she replied. 'It depends on how you interpret it. It is really a religious chant, a prayer.'

'When you do a chant, do you sing or do you talk?'

'You see, different people have different ways of doing it. Some of them just say it out. Some of them sing it. Well, I feel I does sing it.'

'Then, chanting can be talking or singing?' I asked. 'Yes.'[46]

I asked Jagdai:

'What is the difference between a chant and a prayer?'

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46. T3/77/CS/39, Interview EL12, 26 Nov. (FN/31-5).

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'Chant is something when you sing fast', she replied, 'on a fast kind of way. When you chanting all the way round. Not slow slow slow.'[47]

I asked Kala:

'Can you talk a chant?'

'Yes', she replied, 'you could sing it, you could talk it, anything, but it sounds better when you sing it with the music, you know.'[48]

Villagers make a distinction between spoken and written Hindi. Great books like the Vedas, which contain important prayers and mantras, are written in 'deep' Hindi. The important Hindu devotional song forms such as bhajans, dhuns, and kirtan, are also thought to come from books and to be in deep Hindi. Suruj Pandit explained:

'Deep is Hindi that is written in the books. Now you observe that the people would speak a different type of Hindi. It is broken Hindi and a person is speaking broken Hindi.'[49]

I asked Kamini, 'What is deep Hindi?'

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47. T3/77/CS/16, Interview EL3, 15 Nov. (FN/29).
48. T3/77/CS/15, Interview EL5, 15 Nov. (FN/34). 'Chant': T2/75/CS/28, Interview no. 20, 15 July (FN/347-8); T2/75/CS/29, Interview no. 19, 23 July (FN/316-17); T3/77/ CS/14, Interview EL4, 14 Nov. (FN/31); T3/77/CS/18, Interview EL7, 16 Nov. (FN/6); T3/77/CS/18, Interview SP2, 16 Nov. (FN/56); T3/77/CS/19, Interview SP3, 16 Nov. (FN/22); T3/77/CS/20, Interview EL8, 16 Nov. (FN/33); T3/77/CS/39, Interview EL12, 26 Nov. (FN/5-6); T3/77/CS/49, Interview SP9, 30 Nov. (FN/29-33); LON3/80/CS/6, Interview no. 2, 6 April (FN/44-7); LON3/80/CS/33, Interview no. 6, 10 April (FN/82); LON3/80/CS/37, Interview no. 7, 11 April (FN/168, 185-7); CS/38 (FN/218).
49. T3/77/CS/18, Interview EL7, 16 Nov. (FN/10).

'Deep Hindi really come out from the scriptures and the _Bhagwat Gita_ and all this thing,' she explained. 'They use Hindi. The real Indian words, right, because they were written long ago by the saints and sages. Then they were transcript in Sanskrit, but now they have the English version. But deep Hindi is really the Hindi that was written long ago, the first set of Hindi.'[50]

'That is deep Hindi,' Rookmin explained. 'That is from the book. They print it. They sell it for the children. They read it. They know it.'[51]

'Well', Kala said, 'deep Hindi is, I should say, Sanskrit.'[52]

The opposite, both of written and spoken deep Hindi is 'broken' Hindi, the Bhojpuri dialect still spoken by the older villagers. It is thought that the songs of the Bhojpuri repertory do not come from books. Wedding songs present a perplexing case for the villagers because they are in Bhojpuri ('broken Hindi') but they relate episodes from the _Ramayan_ epic (a book). But when pressed, villagers classify wedding songs as composed Indian songs in broken Hindi. Jagdai, Tara, and Channu explained that deep Hindi is also the language spoken by all Indians born in India.

'Deep Hindi is what them India people does talk,' Jagdai said. 'Like them Bombay people and thing does talk

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50. T3/77/CS/39, Interview EL12, 26 Nov. (FN/19).
51. T3/77/CS/9, Interview EL3, 11 Nov. (FN/37).
52. T3/77/CS/14, Interview EL5, 15 Nov. (FN/29).

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deep Hindi - them Bombay in Chaguanas in the store.'

'Them Patel, them Patel people', Tara said, 'they does talk deep Hindi.'[53]

Channu explained: 'The real Indians and them from India. They talk Hindi. They talk it in a proper kind of way. My tongue won't be able to say the words as good as they would be able to say. If they will say the same thing, they will say it in a way that will sound as if it's real good English. It's a bit deeper. Now, you will talk English and your tongue will sound the English much more different than I will say it. I will say it flat. But you will say it in a way that it will sound as if it's something much higher than what I say.'[54]

The Muslim and Christian Repertory

'Muslim songs' are in a class by themselves. Because they are sung in Arabic or Urdu, not Hindi, Hindus do not consider them Indian songs. Sometimes the villagers refer

    53. T3/77/CS/16, Interview EL6, 15 Nov. (FN/26).
The 'Bombay people' in the Chaguanas store speak Gujarati.
    54. T3/77/CS/3, Interview EL1, 8 Nov. (FN/11-12).
'Deep Hindi', T2/75/CS/20, Interview 16, 19 July (FN/266-7);
T3/77/CS/8, Interview EL2, 11 Nov. (FN/45); T3/77/CS/14,
Interview EL4, 14 Nov. (FN/30); T3/77/CS/20, Interview
EL8, 16 Nov. (FN/35); T3/77/CS/39, Interview EL12, 26 Nov.
(FN/18), 23); LON3/80/CS/5, Interview no. 2, 6 April
(FN/29); LON3/80/CS/31, Interview no. 6, 10 April (FN/5,
21), CS/33 (FN/79-82); LON3/80/CS/37, Interview no. 7,
11 April (FN/188-89). 'Deep English': T2/75/CS/20,
Interview no. 14, 15 July (FN/231-2); LON3/80/CS/38,
Interview no. 7, 11 April (FN/208).

to a Muslim song as a 'Khan'. And although everyone realises that the Muslims of Trinidad are Indians, this is sometimes difficult to express, probably due to the similarity of the words Hindi, Hindu, and Indian.

'Are Muslims Indians', I asked Kamini, 'or are they Negroes?'

'Well', she replied, 'I guess they are Indians. But on the whole, Indian Indians, right, when you say Indians they are referred to as the Hindus.'[55]

There are about a dozen Muslim families living in Felicity, but most Hindu villagers don't like talking about Islam or about Muslim songs. They claim ignorance. When I tried to persuade them to tell me more, they offered a few of the facts.

'Probably we use the Ramayan, the Gita,' Indra told me. 'So they use the Koran. They write in Arabic and I think they know a few words in Arabic.'[56]

'It composed in Arabia,' Kamini explained. We were listening to a Muslim song sung by schoolchildren. 'The Muslim script is written in Arabic, right? I don't know how much B.C. that the Prophet Mohammed was born there. And from there, well, they started believing. And then in

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55. T3/77/CS/39, Interview EL12, 26 Nov. (FN/17).
56. T3/77/CS/20, Interview EL8, 16 Nov. (FN/34).

India too, it have some Muslims.'[57]

Everyone I spoke to advised tolerance:

'Because to my knowing, everybody is sectionalized in this universe,' Channu told me. 'I am a Hindu. You are a Christian maybe. Then we have Muslims and then we have Arya and then we have Seven Days and Adventists and so. But each one of them pray to God. They pray to God in their own way. So this is the way Muslim is praying to their God.'[58]

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57. T3/77/CS/39, Interview EL12, 26 Nov. (FN/13). 'Muslim song': T2/75/CS/1, Interview no. 1, 21 June (FN/24); T2/75/CS/1, Interview no. 2, 23 June (FN/56); T2/75/FN/47, Interview no. 4, 24 June; T2/75/CS/3, Interview no. 3, 24 June (FN/100-01); T2/75/CS/3, Interview no. 5, 26 June (FN/88-90); T2/75/CS/4, Interview no. 6, 27 June (FN/131); T2/75/CS/4, Interview no. 7, 27 June (FN/139-40); T2/75/CS/18, Interview no. 8, 28 June (FN/147-8); T2/75/CS/19, Interview no. 11, 14 July (FN/198); T2/75/CS/20, Interview no. 13, 15 July (FN/223); T2/75/CS/20, Interview no. 14, 15 July (FN/235-6); T2/75/CS/23, Interview no. 15, 17 July (FN/249-51); T2/75/CS/20, Interview no. 16, 19 July (FN/269); T2/75/CS/21, Interview no. 17, 19 July (FN/282); T2/75/CS/21, Interview no. 18, 20 July (FN/303-4); T2/75/CS/29, Interview no. 19, 23 July (FN/321-3); T3/77/CS/3, Enterview EL1, 8 Nov. (FN/7-8, 11); T3/77/CS/8, Interview EL2, 11 Nov. (FN/32, 44); T3/77/CS/13, Interview EL4, 14 Nov. (FN/23), CS/14 (FN/29); T3/77/CS/14, Interview EL5, 15 Nov. (FN/12-13, 28); T3/77/CS/16, Interview EL6, 15 Nov. (FN/25); T3/77/CS/17, Interview SP2, 16 Nov. (FN/14); T3/77/CS/18, Interview EL7, 16 Nov. (FN/6, 9); T3/77/CS/20, Interview EL8, 16 Nov. (FN/21); T3/77/CS/39, Interview EL12, 26 Nov. (FN/15); T3/77/CS/54, Interview GL3, 3 Dec. (FN/9); LON3/80/CS/32, Interview no. 6, 10 April (FN/34-6), CS/33 (FN/78, 83), CS/34 (FN/109-10).
58. T3/77/CS/3, Interview EL1, 8 Nov. (FN/8). 'Tolerance' : T2/75/CS/3, Interview no. 5, 26 June (FN/89-90); T2/75/CS/17, Interview no. 9, 13 July (FN/166-7); T2/75/CS/18, Interview no. 8, 28 June (FN/149); T3/77/CS/13, Interview EL4, 14 Nov. (FN/17-18); T3/77/CS/39, Interview EL12, 26 Nov. (FN/12-13).

But these conversations about Islam made people uncomfortable. What a contrast Christianity. Everybody knows something about Jesus Christ, church weddings, lighting candles, the eating of the flesh, the drinking of the blood. Most of the villagers accept 'Lord Christ' as an avatar, a reincarnation of God on earth like Lord Rama, Lord Krishna, or Lord Shiva, and his picture is often amidst theirs on the family altar or in the temple. People in Felicity do not doubt that he walked on the water, fed the multitudes with a few loaves and fishes, caused the blind to see, and raised Lazarus from the dead, for like the other saints, Christ was a 'great yogi'. This openness of thought is the strength and wonder of Hinduism.

At least half of the village children go to the Presbyterian school, where they say prayers, read from the Bible, and sing hymns. Everyone I spoke to understood that hymns and bhajans had a great deal in common. Often, for the purpose of explanation, they would draw an analogy from one to the other:

'Well, bhajan is hymn,' Suruj explained. 'In English, we call them hymns.'[59]

'It's somewhat similar to the bhajan because it almost have the same meaning,' Kamini told me. 'They sing

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59. T3/77/CS/18, Interview EL7, 16 Nov. (FN/3); also, T3/77/CS/13, Interview EL4, 14 Nov. (FN/27); T3/77/CS/14, Interview EL5, 15 Nov. (FN/24-5).

it in English; we sing it in Indian.'[60]

Felicity Christians feel that bhajans are 'good' songs and Felicity Hindus feel that hymns are 'good' songs. 'I love bhajans, you know,' Doday told me. 'Never mind I am a Christian. I love them. I love to sing. If I get a bhajan book, I could sing bhajans.'[61]

It is understood that Hindu songs, Christian songs, and Muslim songs are all 'religious songs', 'godly songs', and 'devotional songs'. Hindu villagers are not familiar with the names of various types of Muslim songs sung in Trinidad, for example, the qaseeda, a devotional form similar in function to the bhajan. Muslim songs are simply called Muslim songs. Another form, the gazal, which ought to be classified as a Muslim type since it is in Urdu, is usually called 'classical' or 'local classical' because it is similar to thumri. People assume that most Christian songs are hymns. Some villagers have heard of 'spirituals' or 'choruses' and several of the Christians own a 'Sankey' - the hymnal, Sacred Songs and Solos by Ira D. Sankey (1840-1908) - and can sing a Sankey or two like 'Hold the Fort for I Am Coming' or 'What a Friend We Have in Jesus'. Doday and a few others that I spoke with could remember Christian hymns with Hindi texts that they had learned in the Canadian Presbyterian Mission Schools. Channu's husband could still remember the Hindi version of 'While the Shepherds Watched

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60. T3/77/CS/39, Interview EL12, 26 Nov. (FN/4).
61. T3/77/CS/13, Interview EL4, 14 Nov. (FN/6, 26).

Their Flocks by Night', and he sang it for me.[62] Since

songs are identified primarily by the language of the

'wording', or text, I half expected these Hindi hymns to be

called bhajans - especially since it is commonplace to

describe a bhajan as a hymn. But they are not. They are

called 'Hindi hymns', and are a thing of the past.[63]

The Hindu Repertory

By contrast with Christianity and Islam, there are

many genres of Hindu devotional songs - bhajan and kirtan,

dhun, chants, Ramayan, ārtī, and so on. The bhajan is the

most important. They are sung in all the temples. Villagers

listen to them on the radio. They buy records from India

with bhajans and they go to religious films to learn new

ones. Everyone loves bhajans, and everyone knows at least

one or two by heart. But often 'copies' or books are

needed since bhajans have long Hindi texts: a one- or two-

line refrain and five or six, sometimes more, verses,

usually of four lines. Villagers prefer to sing them with

instrumental accompaniment, but they can also be performed

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62. 'Hindi hymn': T2/75/FN/72, 28 June;
T2/75/CS/19, Interview no. 11, 14 July (FN/201-04).
63. 'Hymn': T2/75/F/39, Felicity Presbyterian
School, 3 July (FN/105-6); T2/75/CS/18, Interview no. 10,
13 July (FN/185-6); T2/75/CS/20, Interview no. 14, 15
July (FN/229); T2/75"CS/21, Interview no. 17, 19 July
(FN/276).

unaccompanied or with just a <u>dholak</u> (drum).[64]

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64. 'Bhajan': Tl/74/F/1-3, Guru Purnima Day,
Bharatiya Vidya Sansthhaan, 3 July; Tl/74/F/4-5, Morning
exercises, Felicity Hindu School, 5 July; Tl/74/F/6-7,
Morning exercises, Five Rivers Hindu School, 8 July;
Tl/74/F/10, Havan Puja, Divine Life Society, Unit 1, 12
July; Tl/74/F/11-13, Sunday Service, Divine Life Society,
Unit 24, 14 July; Tl/74/F/14-15, Havan Puja, United Hindu
Organization, 14 July; Tl/74/F/16-19, Havan Puja, Divine
Life Society, Unit 24, 15 July; Tl/74/F/22, Havan Puja,
Divine Life Society, Unit 1, 18 July; Tl/74/F/24-7, Sunday
service, Divine Life Society, Unit 24, 21 July; Tl/74/F/28-31,
Sacred Thread Ceremony, Arya Sabha, 21 July; Tl/74/F/32-3,
Meditation Week, Divine Life Society, Unit 24, 24 July;
Tl/74/F/34-5, Central Secretarial Institute, 25 July;
Tl/74/F/38, Maha Bharat Yagya, Diego Martin, 26 July;
Tl/74/F/39-40, Sunday service, Divine Life Society, Unit 24,
28 July; Tl/74/F/44-6, Sunday service, St James Hindu
Mandir, 28 July; Tl/74/F/49, Maha Bharat Yagya, Diego Martin,
29 July; Tl/74/F/50-52, Eka Dassie Katha, St James Hindu
Mandir, 30 July; Tl/74/F/56, Swar Sansar, Bharatiya Vidya
Sansthhaan, 1 Aug.; Tl/74/F/60-2, Sunday morning class,
St James Hindu Mandir, 4 Aug.; Tl/74/F/63-6, Sunday service,
St James Hindu Mandir, 4 Aug.; Tl/74/F/69-70, Bhagwat Yagya,
Divine Life Society, Unit 1, 5 Aug.; Tl/74/F/74-8, Bhagwat
Yagya, Siparia, 8 Aug.; Tl/74/F/79-80, Aranguez Hindu Temple,
10 Aug.; Tl/74/F/81-2, Havan Puja, Carolina village, 11 Aug.;
Tl/74/F/83-6, Krishna Janamasthmie, St James Hindu Mandir,
11 Aug.; Tl/74/F/87, Mr Charan, Chaguanas, 12 Aug.; Tl/74/F/
88, Swar Sansar, Bharatiya Vidya Sansthhaan, 15 Aug.;
Tl/74/F/91, Sunday service, Sipiria, 18 Aug.; T2/75/F/2-5,
Havan Puja, Divine Life Society, Unit 1, 21 June; T2/75/CS/1,
Interview no. 1, 21 June (FN/20-22); T2/75/F/1, Interview
no. 1, 21 June (FN/26); T2/75/F/6-10, Sunday service,
Trinidad Sevashram Sangha, 22 June; T2/75/CS/1, Interview
no. 2, 23 June (FN/51-5); T2/75/CS/3, Interview no. 3, 24
June (FN/96-9); T2/75/F/11-14, Wednesday service, Shiva
Shankar Mandir, 25 June; T2/75/F/15-20, Sai Baba Satsangh,
Pierre Road, 26 June; T2/75/CS/3, Interview no. 5, 26 June
(FN/79-87); T2/75/CS/4, Interview no. 6, 27 June (FN/126-
130); T2/75/CS/4, Interview no. 7, 27 June (FN/133, 138);
T2/75/CS/18, Interview no. 8, 28 June (FN/143-7); T2/75/F/
23-6, Sunday service, Trinidad Sevashram Sangha, 29 June;
T2/75/F/27-32, Havan Puja, Trinidad Sevashram Sangha, 29
June; T2/75/F/33-36, Ramayan reading, Trinidad Sevashram
Sangha, 1 July; T2/75/F/40-43, Sai Baba Satsangh, Montrose,
3 July; T2/75/F/44-5, Sunday service, Divine Life Society,
Unit 24, 6 July; T2/75/CS/17, Interview no. 9, 13 July (FN/
151, 158-9); T2/75/CS/19, Interview no. 11, 14 July (FN/
187-90, 195-6); T2/75/CS/19, Interview no. 12, 14 July
(FN/205-6, 211); T2/75/CS/20, Interview no. 13, 15 July
(FN/217, 221-2); T2/75/CS/20, Interview no. 14, 15 July

No clear distinction is drawn between <u>bhajan</u> and <u>kirtan</u>.

'<u>Kirtan</u> is just a religious song, you know,' Kamini said.

(FN/228-31); T2/75/CS/23, Interview no. 15, 17 July (FN/239-40, 247-8); T2/75/F/49-51, Friday service, Divine Life Society, Unit 1, 18 July; T2/75/F/52-6, Sai Baba Satsangh, Chaguanas, 19 July; T2/75/CS/20, Interview no. 16, 19 July (FN/256-7, 260, 267); T2/75/CS/21, Interview no. 17, 19 July (FN/273-8); T2/75/F/57-8, Sunday service, Divine Life Society, Unit 24, 20 July; T2/75/CS/21, Interview no. 18, 20 July (FN/289-97, 301, 306); T2/75/F/64-8, Sandhya, Shiva Shankar Mandir Group, 21 July; T2/75/CS/29, Interview no. 19, 23 July (FN/307-8, 313-14, 325); T3/77/F/1-5, Havan Puja, Bucaro Cultural Group, 7 Nov.; T3/77/F/6-10, Lakshmi Puja, Felicity Hindu School, 9 Nov.; T3/77/F/10-16, Gobardhan Puja and Ramayan Katha, Pundit Rampersad Tiwari Ramayan Group, Gandhi Village, 11 Nov.; T3/77/CS/10-13, Ramayan Yagya, St Augustine, 12 Nov.; T3/77/F/17-22, Sandhya, Trinidad Sevashram Sangha, 13 Nov.; T3/77/CS/13, Interview EL4, 14 Nov. (FN/6, 26-7); T3/77/CS/32, Interview EL5, 15 Nov. (FN/24-5); T3/77/CS/18, Interview EL7, 16 Nov. (FN/1-6); T3/77/CS/20, Interview EL8, 16 Nov. (FN/30); T3/77/CS/21, Sandhya, Shiva Shankar Mandir, 16 Nov.; T3/77/CS/22-4, Ramayan Yagya, St Augustine, 17 Nov.; T3/77/CS/24, Interview ET1, 18 Nov. (FN/2-5); T3/77/CS/28, Singing class, Trinidad Sevashram Sangha, 19 Nov.; T3/77/CS/29-31, Sandhya, Trinidad Sevashram Sangha, 20 Nov.; T3/77/F/40-45, Sai Baba Satsangh, Montrose, 23 Nov.; T3/77/F/45-8, Sai Baba Sansangh, Pierre Road, 24 Nov.; T3/77/F/49-53, Havan Puja, Carolina village, 25 Nov.; T3/77/CS/39, Interview EL12, 26 Nov. (FN/12, 28); T3/77/F/53-9, Sai Baba Birthday Celebration, Tunapuna, 26 Nov.; T3/77/CS/40, Class, Bharatiya Vidya Sansthhaan, Aranguez, 26 Nov.; T3/77/F/59-62, Sunday service, Divine Life Society, Carlson Fields, 27 Nov.; T3/77/CS/42, Sandhya, Divine Life Society, Unit 1, 27 Nov.; T3/77/CS/47-8, Hari Krishna Group, Felicity, 29 Nov.; T3/77/CS/49, Interview SP9, 30 Nov. (FN/33-4, 47); T3/77/CS/50, Interview SP10, 30 Nov. (FN/13-14); T3/77/CS/50, Interview SP11, 30 Nov. (FN/6-12); T3/77/F/67-71, Class, Bharatiya Vidya Sansthhaan, San Fernando, 1 Dec.; T3/77/CS/52, Interview SP12, 1 Dec. (FN/7-10, 20, 24); T3/77/F/74-81, Sandhya, Trinidad Sevashram Sangha, 3 Dec.; T3/77/CS/54, Interview GL3, 3 Dec. (FN/2-20, 33, 38), CS/55 (FN/42); T3/77/CS/55, Interview SP13, 3 Dec. (FN/14-15); T3/77/F/116-18, Havan Puja, Carolina village, 11 Dec.; T3/77/F/118-122, Bharatiya Vidya Sansthhaan, <u>bhajan</u> recording session, 11 Dec.; T3/77/F/132, Chandrouti Benny, 13 Dec.; T3/77/F/133-6, Sandhya, Shiva Shankar Mandir, 14 Dec.; T3/77/F/137-42, Sai Baba Satsangh, Montrose, 15 Dec.; T3/77/F/143-7, Havan Puja, Divine Life Society,

'But sing in a different tune. It just more like a bhajan, you know. But it in a deeper sound, a deeper note they sing it in.'[65]

'All bhajans is kirtan, because they all going with drum, organ and a little put on,' Rookmin explained.[66]

'Kirtan is something they sing fast and something like a bhajan,' Jagdai said.[67]

'Our bhajans are kirtan because we use all our bhajans as kirtan,' Channu explained. 'That is how it's composed on. Kirtan is a part of the music together with the bhajan. That is what they call kirtan.'[68]

'Kirtan is bhajan,' Indra told me.[69]

Unit 1, 16 Dec.; T3/77/CS/80, Interview SP21, 17 Dec. (FN/14), CS/81 (FN/37-41), CS/82 (FN/14-48); LON3/80/CS/5, Interview no. 2, 6 April (FN/5-40), CS/6 (FN/57); LON3/80/ CS/31, Interview no. 6, 10 April (FN/3), CS/33 (FN/72), LON3/80/CS/31, Interview no. 6, 10 April (FN/3, 22), CS/32 (FN/36), CS/33 (FN/72-9, 83), CS/34 (FN/101-10); Divine Life Bhajans, Book 1, compiled by H.H. Sri Swami Satchidananda (Divine Life Society of Trinidad and Tobago, Enterprise, Trinidad, n.d.); Swami Purnananda, Aum Hindutvam: Vedic Prayer, Hindu Catechism (Swami Purnananda, London, n.d.), pp. 109-31; Pandit L. Shivaprasad and H. Seereeram, Vedic Upaasnaa (Vedic Devotions) (Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Trinidad, Inc., Port of Spain, n.d.), pp. 83-148; Jyoti (Monthly Journal of the Bharatiya Vidya Sansthhaan, Trinidad and Tobago), I-X (1970-1980).

65. T3/77/CS/39, Interview EL12, 26 Nov. (FN/2); 'Kirtan': T2/75/FN/44-5, Interview no. 4, 24 June; T3/77/ CS/8, Interview EL2, 11 Nov. (FN/37); T3/77/CS/14, Interview EL5, 15 Nov. (FN/26); T3/77/CS/34, Interview SP5, 22 Nov.; LON3/80/CS/5, Interview no. 2, 5 April (FN/3-17, 25-35); LON3/80/CS/31, Interview no. 6, 10 April (FN/22), CS/33 (FN/79), CS/34 (FN/101-3, 113); LON3/80/CS/37, Interview no. 7, 11 April (FN/171, 184, 190), CS/38 (FN/ 214-2).
66. T3/77/CS/9, Interview EL3, 11 Nov. (FN/34).
67. T3/77/CS/16, Interview EL6, 15 Nov. (FN/22).
68. T3/77/CS/3, Interview EL1, 8 Nov. (FN/9).
69. T3/77/CS/20, Interview EL8, 16 Nov. (FN/56).

The term _kirtan_ sometimes refers to a session of group singing. Some villagers told me it indicated unison singing:

'_Kirtan_ is when everybody forms themselves in a group and they sing the _bhajans_ together,' Suruj explained. 'Now sometimes you see everybody in a group and one person singing. Now it is a _bhajan_ but that one person singing and the others following. But when everybody singing together then is a _kirtan_.'[70]

Others thought it referred to responsorial singing:

'A _kirtan_ is a different sort of song then,' Kamini explained. 'Everybody don't sing it, right? One of them lead and the others follow.'[71]

Some people believe that a lengthy session in _kirtan_ style can lead the devotee to the point of ecstasy. For example, a song sheet distributed in the St James Mandir, largest Hindu temple in Port of Spain, contained the following description of the power of _kirtan_:

'Kirtan is loud chanting of God's Name. The value of this joyful exercise increases in proportion as the voice is raised to a higher and higher pitch. Kirtan is closely related to music. In Kirtan harmony of the voices is essential in the beginning.

'No words can describe the glory of Kirtan. The thrill of joy that it sends into the heart is known only

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70. T3/77/CS/18, Interview EL7, 16 Nov. (FN/18).
71. T3/77/CS/39, Interview EL12, 26 Nov. (FN/2).

by those blessed souls who practice it.'[72]

Amar's explanation drew on his knowledge of the classical tradition of India, learned in Professor Adesh's classes.

'Kirtan is devotional singing, but the songs would be short and repetitive, just repeating the name of the Lord over and over. And in a fast tempo. Usually kaharwa tala /rhythmic cycle of eight beats divided into 4 + 4/ or dādra tala /six beats divided into 3 + 3/.'

'And bhajan?' I asked.

'Bhajan is different. Bhajan is a song. A devotional song.'

'But Indra told me "kirtan is bhajan".'

'Well, you see, they are closely related. There is a fine difference between them, a subtle difference. Kirtan is like what they sing at the Sai Baba sessions.'

'But some villagers call the Sai Baba songs dhun,' I said.

'No, they are not dhuns really. Perhaps they may say so, but it isn't really. A dhun is a little melody, usually in kaharwa tala or dādra tala ... whereas a bhajan is a complete song, devotional song. But it's a song, a whole song with sthāyī /antecedent phrase or verse/, antarā /consequent phrase or chorus/, and so on.'[73]

The Felicity villagers had many different definitions

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72. Song Sheet, St James Hindu Mandir, Port of Spain, July 1973, p. 1.
73. LON3/80/CS/5, Interview no. 2, 6 April (FN/4).

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for the term dhun. Some agreed with Amar that the term referred to a short repetitive melody similar to kirtan. Channu, however, thought of it as a mood or state:

'When you concentrating, that mean you in a dhun. You have to get into a dhun to concentrate or to sing something.'

Channu also used the term to indicate 'style' (possibly also 'tune').

'The dhun in Sai Baba is a little bit different than the dhun in ordinary bhajan that we sing. They use a lot of clapping and meditating and more tempo like. They put some more action to them. They take on more speed.'[74]

Rookmin also used the term to refer to singing style.

'Well, dhun ain mean nothing. Dhun is only just you carrying it. How you carrying it. I mean what tune you carrying it.'[75]

Jagdai used the term dhun to refer to old songs.

'A classical is like when them old man and them singing now. The old dhun.'[76]

Some of the bhajan, dhun, and kirtan are 'from every since' - brought with the original indentured labourers from India - but most have been learned from recent films and records. Many new popular bhajans have also been composed by Professor Adesh. Most of the familiar bhajans

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74. T3/77/CS/3, Interview EL1, 8 Nov. (FN/2, 6).
75. T3/77/CS/9-10, Interview EL3, 11 Nov. (FN/47).
76. T3/77/CS/16, Interview EL6, 15 Nov. (FN/40).

in Felicity are from older films (from the 1940's and 1950's)
and might also be identified as 'film songs' (by the
younger generation) or 'theatre songs' (by the older).
Or they will be identified by the name of the famous play-
back singer who first sang the song, hence 'a Lata', 'a
Mukesh', 'a Rafi' (see ex. 23), 'a Manna Dey', 'a Hemant
Kumar', 'a Talat', or 'a Mohindra Kapoor'.

The Bhojpuri Repertory

Many of the songs sung in Felicity have been passed
on in oral tradition and date back to the rural culture
of nineteenth-century north India. This Bhojpuri reper-
tory includes wedding songs, sohar sung six or twelve days
after childbirth, godna songs for administering the arm
tattoo, ahirwah songs of the ahir 'nation' (caste of cattle
minders), pachrāt songs for the Kali puja (goat or pig
sacrifice), lori lullabies, kajri songs for rice planting,
and chowtal, ulaara, chaitee, and jhumar songs for the
springtime Phagwa festival. Of these many types, only
wedding songs and the genres for Phagwa have any real sig-
nificance in the musical life of Felicity today. The
villagers do not have a particular term to distinguish
this old traditional material from newer songs learned
from films, records and books. Local scholars like Usha
and Ramaya classify them as 'folk songs'. A foreign scholar
might regard this repertory as the 'authentic' music of

Felicity, but the villagers would disagree, since to their ears it sounds less 'Indian', less authentic than a song from a recent Indian film or record.

Most of the old songs are sung only by women, for in Trinidad, as in so many parts of the world, custom dictates that men don't sing wedding songs or lullabies There are two important types of songs for the wedding, byāh ke gīt and lachārī. When a villager refers to 'wedding songs', she is probably thinking of the more serious byāh ke gīt, unaccompanied responsorial strophic songs with long texts that comment on the various stages in the wedding ceremony.[77]

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77. 'Wedding song': T1/74/F/9, Felicity Group, 12 July; T1/74/F/42-3, 47, Moon Ramnarine, 28 July; T1/74/F/67-8, Mrs and Mrs Permanand, 5 Aug.; T2/75/F/1, Siewrajiah Lochan, 21 June (FN/26-9), CS/1, Interview no. 1, (FN/21); T2/75/CS/1, Interview no. 2, 23 June (FN/52); T2/75/CS/3, Interview no. 3, 24 June (FN/97-8); T2/75/FN/44-5, Interview no. 4, 24 June; T2/75/CS/3, Interview no. 5, 26 June (FN/80-81); T2/75/F/21, Channerdaye Ramdhanie and Rankallia Samooj, 26 June; T2/75/CS/4, Interview no. 6, 27 June (FN/127-8); T2/75/CS/4, Interview no. 7, 27 June (FN/134-6); T2/75/CS/18, Interview no. 8, 28 June (FN/144-5); T2/75/F/46-7, Rajia Sooknanan, 2 July; T2/75/CS/17, Interview no. 9, 13 July (FN/152-3); T2/75/CS/18, Interview no. 10, 13 July (FN/169-70); T2/75/CS/19, Interview no. 11, 14 July (FN/188-9); T2/75/CS/19, Interview no. 12, 14 July (FN/206); T2/75/F/27, Rajia Sooknanan, 14 July; T2/75/CS/20, Interview no. 13, 15 July (FN/218-19); T2/75/CS/23, Interview no. 15, 17 July (FN/241); T2/75/F/48, Moon Ramnarine, 17 July; T2/75/CS/22, Interview no. 21, 17 July (FN/ T2/75/CS/20, Interview no. 16, 19 July (FN/258-9); T2/75/ CS/21, Interview no. 17, 19 July (FN/274-5); T2/75/CS/21, Interview no. 18, 20 July (FN/291-3, 306); T2/75/F/62-3, Sahodare Nanan and Bhagmania George, 21 July (FN/vi); T2/75/CS/29, Interview no. 19, 23 July (FN/309-10); T2/75/CS/27, Elicitation Cassette from the Myers Trinidad 1974 Collection; T3/77/CS/3, Interview EL1, 8 Nov. (FN/31); T3/77/CS/8, Interview EL2, 11 Nov. (FN/4-5); T3/77/F/22-6, 13 Nov.; T3/77/CS/15, Interview GL1, 15 Nov. (FN/20); T3/77/CS/18, Interview EL7, 16 Nov. (FN/11); T3/77/CS/37,

The lachārī are fast lively songs with instrumental accompaniment; the villagers often describe them as 'hot' or 'chutney'. The terms are similar but not synonymous. Both hot songs and chutney songs can have risqué texts, but the villagers do not think that these 'suggestive' poems are as 'bad' as the 'rude' calypso texts.[78]

Interview ET4, 24 Nov. (FN/14-20, 31); T3/77/CS/40, Interview EL12, 26 Nov. (FN/63); T3/77/CS/47, Interview SP8, 29 Nov. (FN/47); T3/77/CS/49, Interview SP9, 30 Nov. (FN/46); CS/50 (FN/54-62); T3/77/CS/50, Interview SP10, 30 Nov. (FN/6-15); T3/77/CS/50, Interview SP11, 30 Nov. (FN/10-12), T3/77/CS/52, Interview SP12, 1 Dec. (FN/11-17); T3/77/CS/54, Interview GL3, 3 Dec. (FN/26-31); T3/77/CS/57, Interview SP14, 3 Dec. (FN/21-7); T3/77/CS/57, Interview SP15, 4 Dec. (FN/1-4); T3/77/CS/69, Interview SP19, 11 Dec. (FN/1-7); T3/77/F/123-130, Felicity Group, 12 Dec.; T3/77/F/130-132, Chandroutie Benny, 13 Dec.; LON3/80/CS/34, Interview no. 6, 10 April (FN/100, 122-3); LON3/80/CS/37, Interview no. 7, 11 April (FN/175-9), CS/38 (FN/217).

78. 'Hot': T3/77/CS/14, Interview EL4, 14 Nov. (FN/55); T3/77/CS/20-21, Interview EL8, 16 Nov. (FN/60); T3/77/CS/37, Interview ET3, 19 Nov. (FN/11); T3/77/CS/37, Interview ET4, 24 Nov. (FN/20); T3/77/CS/50, Interview SP 10, 30 Nov. (FN/5-11); T3/77/CS/54, Interview GL3, 3 Dec. (FN/16-17); LON3/80/CS/31, Interview no. 6, 10 April (FN/12, 24); CS/32 (FN/52-5), CS/33 (FN/59-74); LON3/80/ CS/37, Interview no. 7, 11 April (FN/161, 175-9, 181-2), CS/38 (FN/202). 'Chutney': T2/75/F/46, Rajia Sooknanan, 2 July; T2/75/CS/23, Interview no. 15, 17 July (FN/244, 253); T2/75/F/47, Rajia Sooknanan, 14 July; T2/75/F/63, Sahodare Nanan and Bhagmania George, 21 July, CS/26, Nanan and George; T3/77/CS/27, Interview ET3, 19 Nov. (FN/16); T3/77/CS/37, Interview ET4, 24 Nov. (FN/15-16); T3/77/CS/50, Interview SP10, 30 Nov. (FN/5-12); LON3/80/ CS/31, Interview no. 6, 10 April (FN/24), CS/32 (FN/54-5), CS/33 (FN/59-70, 75), CS/34 (FN/118); LON3/80/CS/37, Interview no. 7, 11 April (FN/160, 175-9, 181-2), CS/38 (FN/202).

Amar explained 'hot' and 'chutney' for me.

'When we say chutney, we mean the rhythm is peppy, fast, and fast tempo. Chutney, right? But hot means spicy enough, full and suggestive. For fun, you know? ... Chutney describes more the melody, the rhythm or the melody. Hot implies the contents, the text, the meaning.'

'What is pop?' I asked.

'Pop? Well, songs we hear on the radio or like these pop groups. Songs from England or America.'

'Are there any pop songs that are not English songs?' I asked.

'Local? No, no,' Amar replied.

'Can pop songs be hot?' I asked.

'No, no. We'll just call them pop songs. We wouldn't describe a pop song as being hot.'[79]

Theory and Aesthetics

There are three criteria by which villagers evaluate the different 'ways' (styles) of singing : the 'timing' (rhythm and tempo), the 'scaling' or 'tune' (melody), and the 'wording' (text).[80] They can also identify a song by

79. LON3/80/CS/22, Interview no. 6, 10 April (FN/ 53-58, CS/33 (FN/59-70).
80. 'Timing': T3/77/CS/3, Interview EL1, 8 Nov. (FN/28); T3/77/CS/39, Interview EL12, 26 Nov. (FN/34); T3/77/CS/49, Interview SP9, 30 Nov. (FN/30, 35-6); LON3/80/CS/33, Interview no. 6, 10 April (FN/85), 'Scaling': T3/77/CS/3, Interview EL1, 8 Nov. (FN/230);

its 'beat'.

'A <u>kirtan</u> is a different sort of song then,' Kamini explained. 'It have a different sort of beat.'

'<u>Bhagwat</u> song?' she continued. 'No, that different. They have a sort of a faster music beat, a faster beat to it.'

Later she explained, 'In Trinidad, when it composed down here, it sort of don't really have a good rhythm or a good beat to it. Nothing really lively. It could be lively in how they saying it, but I find when they come out from India they have a more lively beat to it.'[81]

'Beat' can also be used as a verb:

'For calypso time, they sing and they beat pans, steel pans,' Indra explained.[82]

'They telling the drummers to beat the drum now at its full pitch,' Kalawatee said. 'Come on drummers, our brother, beat the drum!'[83]

Songs and songsters may also be identified by their 'pitch':

'They sing it at a normal pitch,' Channu said.[84]

'They is classical singers does sing these things,'

T3/77/CS/49, Interview SP9, 30 Nov. (FN/35). 'Wording':
T2/75/CS/20, Interview no. 16, 19 July (FN/263-4);
T3/77/CS/14, Interview EL5, 15 Nov. (FN/26),CS/15 (FN/38);
T3/77/CS/20, Interview EL8, 16 Nov. (FN/27, 53); T3/77/
CS/49, Interview SP9, 30 Nov. (FN/35-6).
    81. T3/77/CS/40, Interview EL12, 26 Nov. (FN/2, 3, 63).
    82. T3/77/CS/20, Interview EL8, 16 Nov. (FN/56).
    83. T1/74/F/67, 5 Aug.
    84. T3/77/CS/3, Interview EL1, 8 Nov. (FN/34).

Dolan explained. 'They is a very high pitch in singing.'[85]

Beautiful songs, especially Indian songs, are described as 'sweet', 'smooth', or 'nice':

'They recite it as a song so it sound sweet,' Kala said.[86]

'You can carry something smooth, slowly, and nice,' Rookmin told me. 'Well, the dhun is like, I talking hard,' she continued. 'It mean that I speaking loud. If I speak soft, it mean I speaking soft. That goes smooth and nice. ... Raga is something slowly and a smoothly and very nice.'[87]

'It is slokas [scriptural passages]', Kala said. 'But they recite it as a song so it sound sweet.'[88]

'So the man who is playing the organ, he is just giving a smooth, soothing kind of background with the organ alone,' Channu explained. 'And then that corresponding together with the pandit's voice.'[89]

A beautiful song is 'pleasant' and 'enchanting'. Serious songs can be 'dry'. Hot songs, chutney, and lachārī 'does have a nice taste'.[90] A song that is performed badly is 'harsh' or 'loud':

'A harsh and a loud singing voice, you know, a heavy

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85. T3/77/CS/18, Interview EL7, 16 Nov. (FN/25).
86. T3/77/CS/14, Interview EL5, 15 Nov. (FN/30).
87. T3/77/CS/10. Interview EL3, 11 Nov. (FN/30, 47, 50).
88. T3/77/CS/14, Interview EL5, 15 Nov. (FN/30).
89. T3/77/CS/3, Interview EL1, 8 Nov. (FN/16).
90. 'Pleasant': T3/77/CS/40, Interview IN3, 26 Nov. (FN/12). 'Enchanting': T3/77/CS/19, Interview no. SP3, 16 Nov. (FN/49). 'Dry': T3/77/CS/19, Interview SP3, 16 Nov. (FN/22). 'Nice taste': T3/77/CS/37, Interview ET4, 24 Nov. (FN/20).

voice,' Kamini said.[91]

A 'good' song is a meaningful song:

'It have meaning in it,' Indra explained. 'It is just something make up, not hot, but meaningful, right? So I feel it is good.'[92]

'"Mother's Love". That is a good song,' Ramesh said. 'That is the only song on this record with meaning. That has a lot of meaning.'[93]

A good song 'catches the ear quickly', for example, the Sai Baba tunes that 'make you feel joy' because they are 'catchy' or 'lively' and are sung in a 'sing-song way'.[94] 'Catchy' songs are often 'fast', that is they accelerate and are accompanied by loud handclapping. They 'put some more action', Channu explained, 'they take on more speed: fast, fast, fast.'[95]

Tempo is an important criterion by which the villagers judge a performance. While we were talking about the Sai Baba songs, Indra commented, 'Anywhere I hear them, I hear them fast.' Later, when I played her a bhajan recorded in Felicity, she said, 'It's a bit slow I find.'[96] When I played a sohar sung by a group of Felicity ladies for Mrs Maharajh, she commented, 'This is slow motion. Some bhajan they sing it, you know, in a nice way. Not in

91. T3/77/CS/39, Interview EL12, 26 Nov. (FN/3).
92. T3/77/CS/20, Interview EL8, 16 Nov. (FN/60).
93. Conversation with Ramesh Maharajh, 25 Aug. 1980.
94. T2/75/FN/49-50, Interview no. 4, 24 June.
95. T3/77/CS/3, Interview EL1, 8 Nov. (FN/6).
96. T3/77/CS/20, Interview EL8, 16 Nov. (FN/26, 30).
97. T3/77/CS/15, Interview EL5, 15 Nov. (FN/43).

slow motion.'[97]

The opposite of fast is 'slowly and soft', Channu explained, 'more concentrating, in a smoothing kind of way, you know.'[98]

A performance might be 'a bit too fast':

'Well, you see, I would say it's too fast,' Indra commented when she heard my recording of a <u>bhajan</u> recorded in the Divine Life Society temple. 'Probably different groups sing it in different way. Because in our temple /Trinidad Sevashram Sangha/ we didn't learn it so, right? We learn it as slow and easy way.' When we discussed the Sai Baba songs, she explained, 'In the temple, if we have to sing one /a Sai Baba song/ we sing it very slow.' When I played the recitation of a Hindu prayer, she remarked, 'Yes, it could be a chant, if they say it slow. They could be slowing down.'[99]

<p style="text-align:center">✳   ✳   ✳   ✳   ✳</p>

After many days and hundreds of hours of tape record-ing, we found we were still speaking of music. My village friends had become accustomed to the many questions and to

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97. T3/77/CS/15, Interview EL5, 15 Nov. (FN/43).
98. T3/77/CS/3 , Interview EL1, 8 Nov. (FN/6).
99. T3/77/CS/20, Interview EL8, 16 Nov. (FN/25, 26, 33).

the intrusion of a live microphone in their homes and temples and schools. I was much more aware than they that a recording was being made, and I soon came to feel as if I were living on two planes: the real-now world of people and places and that little-forever world of recorded sound. Before long, I had collected enough data to construct the taxonomy of folk terminology given in Table I. But in the midst of these many conversations about music, I found myself thinking ahead to the playback, the listening-after-the-event, the hours of analysis and transcription to come, the repeated review of those fleeting moments in Felicity.

CHAPTER 8

WEDDING DAY

Those who lovingly sing or hear the story
of Sītā and Rāma's marriage shall ever
rejoice; for Śrī Rāma's glory is an abode
of felicity.

Goswami Tulsidas
Śrī Rāmacharitamānasa

On Sunday morning, half-way through my stay, I woke
up full of expectation. Today I would not be making my
usual dawn visit to one of the Felicity temples. This
Sunday was the wedding of Sankey's son, and it would be
my first opportunity to hear many songs of the traditional
wedding repertory. I walked down Cacandee Road and could
see at a distance the crowd of women gathered outside
Sankey's house. As I arrived she was seated in the centre
of the group, amidst her many friends and relatives. Her
sun-toughened skin, prematurely aged, and her furrowed brow
revealed the toll paid for many years of labour in the cane

fields. She held her small body rigid and upright. Only
her eyes were turned downwards. She was wearing a new dress,
made especially for the occasion; on her head was the maur,
the crown of Rama, white and sparkling with bits of mirror
and glass.

Her son was dressed entirely in white in the costume
of Rama, the prince. He sat at his mother's feet, facing
away from her, looking out towards Cacandee Road. As I drew
near and began to photograph the scene, I could see that
with her right hand, Sankey was touching her son's head with
the end of her orhani (veil, in India ãcharawā, the end of
the sari; plate 7). His face showed no emotion. The couple
remained silent and motionless as the aunts, the sisters,
and the sisters-in-law came forward one by one to perform
the ritual washing and dressing of the groom - bathing his
feet, offering him socks and shoes, placing rings on his
fingers and gold malas (chains) around his neck. The singers,
a group of older women, stood behind Sankey. (At other
village weddings, Sankey herself, one of the finest singers
in Felicity, would have been the leader of this group.)
When the crown was taken from her head and placed on her
son's, the ladies began to sing one of the many traditional
wedding songs about Sita and Rama.

Rama is believed to be the seventh incarnation (avatar)
of Lord Vishnu, the 'preserver'. The story of Rama is as old

Plate 7 (following). Sankey offering her son the
protection of her veil on the morning of his wedding.
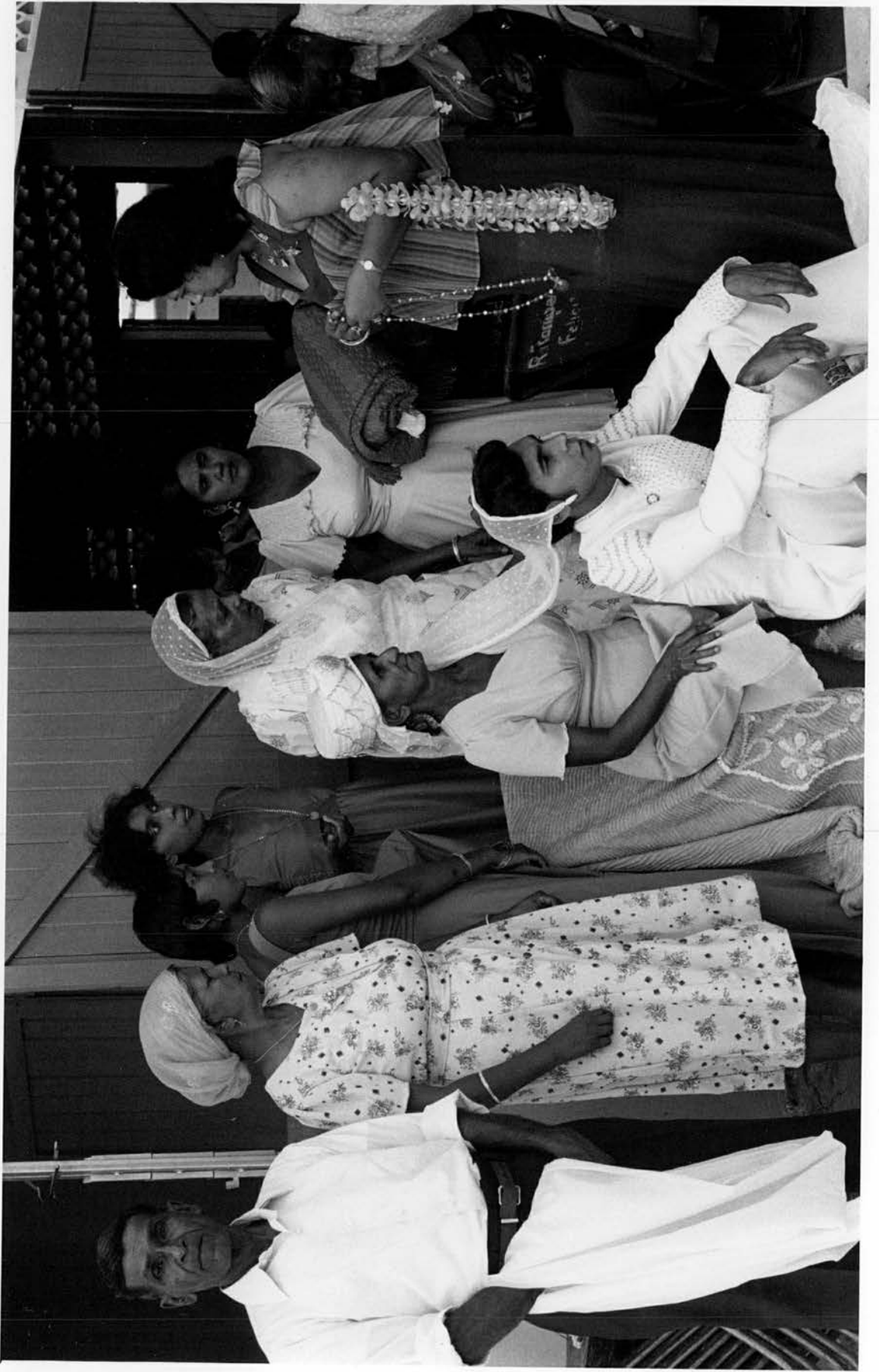
as the Homeric epics of the Western world, and, like Homer's

Iliad, it is the tale of a ravished bride and her rescue.

There are two important versions of the Ramayan. As far

as is known, the first was written in Sanskrit some two

thousand years ago by the sage, Vālmīki, a shadowy figure

in Indian literary history. But it is the later version,

the Rāmcharitasmānasa ('Wonderful Lake of the Life of Rama')

of Goswami Tulsidas (1552-1623), written in the Hindi vernac-

ular, that is known and loved by Hindus throughout north

India.[1]

From childhood, everyone in Felicity learns the

lifestory of Rama, the prince and hero. Everywhere in the

village, there are reminders of his presence: statues and

pictures in the temples, schools, and at the family altar.

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1. The Ramayuna of Valmeeki in the Original
Sungscrit (Serampore, 1806-10); The Rámáyan of Vālmīki,
trans. R.T.H. Griffith, 5 vols. (Benaras, 1870-74); An
English Translation for Nirvachanothara Ramayanum /i.e.
the Uttara Rāmāyaṇa attributed to Vulmīki/ (Sree Nilayum
Press, Madras, 1880); The Ramayana, trans. and ed. by
Manmatha Nath Dutt (R.K. Bhattacharji, Calcutta, 1889);
The Ramayana of Valmiki, trans. C.R. Sreenivasa Ayyangar
(M.E. Press and A.L.V. Press, Madras, 1910); The Ramayana
of Valimiki, trans. Hari Prasad Shastri (Shanti Sadan,
London, 1952). The Rámáyana of Tulsi Dás, trans. F.S.
Growse (Allahabad, 1883); The Ramayan of Tulsi Das
(Rambhooshan Press, Agra, 1909); Book of Ram: The Bible
of India, trans. Hari Prasad Shastri (Luzac and Co., London,
1935); The Holy Lake of the Acts of Rāma: An English
Translation of Tulsī Dās's Rāmacaritamānesa, trans. W.
Douglas P. Hill (Oxford University Press, London and
Calcutta, 1952); Śri Rāmacharitamānasa ('The Mānasa Lake
Brimming over with the Exploits of Śri Rāma'.) With Hindi
Text and English Translation, 3rd ed. (Gita Press,
Gorakhpur, India, 1976); Ramayana, ed. C. Rajagopalachari
(Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1983).

There are comic books illustrating the life of Rama and
films from India (with English subtitles) dramatising the
legendary events of his career. Rama Noumi, the commemora-
tion of Rama's birth, is observed on the ninth day of the
second half of the month of Cēt (around March). During the
ten-day Ramlila festival (in the month of Kūār, around
October) his entire life story is re-enacted by the brahmin
(upper caste) children of the village: his birth; his
marriage to Sita; the jealousy of his stepmother, Kekahi;
Rama's exile in the forest of Ban; the abduction of Sita by
the demon Rawan and their flight to Lanka; the loyalty of
Hanuman, the king of the monkeys, and his army of monkeys;
the rescue of Sita; the slaying of Rawan; and Rama's tri-
umphal return to the kingdom of Ayodhya. Ramayan yagya
(week-long readings of the Ramayan) are held throughout the
year and are very popular. Bhajan dedicated to Rama and
relating many of the episodes of his career are sung at these
yagya, as well as at weekly temple services (see ex. 23).
At birth, sohar from the Ramayan are sung, and at the time
of death in the village, passages from the Ramayan are
chanted all through the night. And on Sundays during the
summer months, the wedding season in Felicity, the perfect
love of Rama and Sita is renewed and celebrated in the trad-
itional Hindu marriage ceremony.

Thirty or forty years ago, Hindu weddings in Trinidad
always took place at night. The complex process of calculat-
ing an 'auspicious' date for the marriage was undertaken by
the family pandit. In order to determine the exact time of

year and day of the week when conditions would be most
favourable for the ceremony, he had to check and analyse
the horoscopes of the dolahin ('bride') and the dolaha
('bridegroom') in the Patra, his great astrological compend-
ium. Then, following a week of ritual preparation, the
couple was married at the home of the bride's parents.
These weddings 'under the bamboo' (so named for the marawa,
the wedding canopy or 'tent', erected for the celebration)
were not recognized by the British colonial government in
Trinidad until 1945. In recent years, the traditional week-
long ceremony has been shortened. Whatever day and date
the horoscope suggests, for convenience, the ritual prep-
arations almost always begin on a Friday night with the tassa
procession to a village well for the maatikonwaa ceremony.
This is followed by the hardi uthaaway (application of the
saffron to the bride and groom). Saturday night is the
bhatwaan ki raat ('cooking night' - preparation of the
khechree, special wedding foods), and Sunday is the day of
the wedding with ritual, feasting, and celebrations at the
home of the bride and groom. 'Every Sunday is a wedding
day. Every Sunday is auspicious day now,' Suruj Pandit
told me.[2]

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2. Myers Trinidad Collection 1977, Cassette no.
44, Interview SP7, 29 Nov. (transcribed in Field Notes,
p. 8), hereafter referred to as T3/77/CS/44 (FN/8). Kamini
described the maatikonwaa and hardi uthaaway as follows:
'Friday of the wedding: Mother prepare a tray with sindur,
koorma, dhal (split peas), pan leaves, oil. Proceed with
a procession of ladies accompanied with tassa drumming
and singing to a well or a house some distance away from
wedding house. The tray is carried on the bride/groom

Every Hindu wedding in Felicity includes an enormous
variety of music - both live and recorded. Music is performed

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unmarried sister's head. If no unmarried sisters an
unmarried cousin (person must be unmarried). Sister also
carry a 'cutlass'. A clean site is chosen, mother dips
ring finger in oil and place in five places, then she
places five pan leaves on top of oil (one leaf for one
drop of oil). Mother places dhal soaked in sugar koorma.
Sister dig a hole in the dirt (earth) in five places and
give some dirt to mother who tie it to her orhani (head
tie) and place it on the tray. Sister then share koorma
with all guests present. Mother places sindur on all
married women heads who husband had already put sindur
for them on the wedding day. Return to wedding house.
On arrival father's sister take dirt and place it on a kalasa
/see text of exx. 16, 17_7. Mother brings lota of water
from well and put the water in a kalasa and light a diya
and pandit (priest) starts the puja. Five girls (unmarried
and who do not have any children) each rub the bride/groom
from head to toe with hardi (saffron - a yellow powder
mix with water).' For the Saturday Kamini explains: 'Mother,
aunts, neighbours, friends, sisters, relatives help peel
mangos, melongenes (bigan), shitagine, pumpkin, and other
things to cook. Night - put saffron 3 times x 5 people.
Once before breakfast. Once before lunch. Once before
supper.' For the bhatwaan ki raat she says: 'Father
sister(s) patch "lawa" (dan - rice in skin/jacket). Sing
and dance. Mother give aunt gifts and money for patching
lawah /text of exx. 16, 17_7. Indian orchestra if desired.
Mike is playing Indian records.' For the Sunday morning lawa
ceremony she explains: 'Mother, sister with tray on head,
accompanied by ladies singing to beat of tassa drums return
to well or house they went to on Friday night. The same
process is repeated (the one done for Friday night).
Return to wedding house. Sindur is put (rubbed on 3 times).
Boy washes and after, saffron is rinsed off. Some of
the water from final wash is collected in a bottle. Boy
(groom) dresses and accompanied by his father and sister
in the wedding car to proceed to bride's (girl) home.
The sister takes the ring and gift for bride. They are
accompanied by mike, tassa and guests to bride's home.
Groom's mother, friends, and relatives beat drum, dance
and sing while waiting for groom to bring his bride home.
At the bride's home, the groom arrive, bride's father
goes out on road to welcome groom and father. Kanyaa
daan, puja with bride wearing yellow saree, ceremony with
bride now wearing red saree and groom in khurta and dhoti.
Paarv puja, khechree, bride then change into white wedding
dress and groom change into a suit, or bride remain in
red saree and groom in khurta and dhoti. Bride and groom
leave for groom's home. Welcome by groom's mother. Friday
night, Saturday night and Sunday morning is the same
procedures for both bride and groom.'

at the home of the bride ('the girl's side') and at the
home of the groom ('boy's side'), and also in various
processions from one side to the other, as shown in Table
II.

Tassa and Lachārī

On that particular Sunday, I felt very happy as I
walked home after the wedding. I had never before heard
the lachārī, lively responsorial songs, some with bawdy
texts, accompanied by dholak, manjeera, kartal and shak shak.
And I had never before joined the ladies in their dancing.
I had been to several weddings with Matti and Mesho, but
as it had happened, we had always been guests of the bride.
Then we had watched the bride, dressed in her red wedding
sari and adorned with jewels (plate 8). We had witnessed
the sombre rituals of the marriage ceremony, together with
the unaccompanied byāh ke gīt, the principal genre of
wedding song (exx. 5-17). Like the lachārī they are respon-
sorial, but they are altogether more serious, relating as
they do events from the great Ramayan epic. The wedding
at Sankey's was the first time I had spent the entire day
at the groom's house, and my bag was bulging with record-
ings of the laughter and the shouting, the singing and the

Plate 8 (following). Felicity bride.

Table II: Music for the Wedding, Felicity

FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Evening (bride and groom):	Evening (bride and groom):	Morning (bride and groom):
Maatikonwaa Ceremony (Procession to the well)	Bhatwaan Ki Raat ('Cooking night')	Lawa Ceremony (Parching of Rice)
procession with tassa lachārī byāh ke gīt dancing	hired Indian Orchestra (live Indian film songs)	procession with tassa lachārī byāh ke gīt dancing
	- or -	
Hardi Uthaaway (Chumay Hardi) (Rubbing of Saffron)	'Mike' playing recorded Indian film songs	Hardi Uthaaway (Rubbing of Saffron)
byāh ke gīt	lachārī dancing	byāh ke gīt
		Afternoon (bride's house):
		Wedding Ceremony Proper (including khechree khawaryaa, paarv puja, and kanyaa daan)
		byāh ke gīt hired Indian Orchestra (Indian film songs)
		Afternoon (groom's house):
		Ladies' Party
		lachārī dancing

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drumming.[3]

After the ritual of dressing the groom had been
completed, Sankey performed ārtī (the offering of fire)
for her son by waving a diyā before him with a circular
motion. While she did this, the ladies sang the appropriate
byāh ke gīt for the offering of ārtī. Then he was driven
off in a procession (bharat) with the other men of the family
to the home of the bride. The entourage usually includes
musicians and guests on foot as well as the groom's car and
other cars with wedding guests. The bharat is led by drummers.

Two men play tassa (clay kettledrums about 35cm in
diameter and 20cm deep) and one plays a large double-headed
cylindrical drum known in Felicity as 'the bass' (plate 9).
The tassa are suspended from the player's neck by a strap
and struck with two sticks ('chupes'). The bass is hollowed
out from a solid section of tree trunk. The heads are about
60cm in diameter. The drum is suspended on a strap slung
over the shoulder and across the back, and is struck with
a short curved stick. Both tassa and bass have goatskin

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3. The distinction between serious and light-hearted
wedding songs derives from north Indian practice. The
unaccompanied ritual wedding songs of Uttar Pradesh are
called vivāha (vivah) [विवाह , विवह], a term that is cognate
with the Felicity term byāh [ब्याह]. The bawdy and abusive
type are known by various names including lachārī, nakaṭā,
and gārī or gālī. Vivāha and gārī are discussed in Laxmi
Ganesh Tewari, 'Folk Music of India: Uttar Pradesh' (Ph.D.
thesis, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut, 1974),
pp. 49-78, and Edward O. Henry, 'The Meanings of Music in
a North Indian Village' (Ph.D. thesis, Michigan State
University, 1973, pp. 31-82.)
    Plate 9 (following). Wedding drum ensemble performing
at the lawa ceremony, with (from left to right) jhal (brass
cymbals), two tassa (clay kettledrums), and bass (double-
headed cylindrical drum).

heads. The bass weighs about 50 lbs and therefore, I was
told by village drummers, could not be held and played for
more than 20 minutes. The tassa is tuned by heating the
head over an open fire; this process must be repeated about
every 20 minutes, so both bass and tassa players need to
interrupt their drumming with the same frequency. In the
procession, the drums were accompanied by two men playing
jhal, brass cymbals about 20cm in diameter.

There are more than a dozen rhythmic styles (with
variations), known as 'hands', that are played by Felicity
drummers on the tassa (and also on the nagara and dholak).
Many are identified by the name of the principal genre that
they accompany, for example, tilana, thumri, gazal, chowtal,
jhumar, laig, naichal, kabir, and olaaraa. Some are named
after religious festivals with which they are associated
('wedding', 'Ramlila', 'Hosay'). Some hands have old
Bhojpuri names (such as bharatee, a popular dholak hand
often used to accompany bhajans) and others modern English
titles ('one-way drum', also for dholak). Some have been
borrowed from popular Indian films ('Kohinur'); others
take their names from Creole culture ('kalinda', 'calypso-
steelband'). Hands may also be named after the type of
drum on which they are most frequently played such as the
nagara and tassa. 'Tassa hand' has several sub-categories
including 'wedding drum', 'olé', tikura, and 'steelband'.[4]

_____

4. T3/77/F/102-3, Dhanlal Samooj, dholak, 10 Dec.;
T3/77/CS/65-6, Dhanlal Samooj explains drumming hands, 10
Dec.; Moon Rambahal and the Paradise Bell Tassa Group, East
Indian Traditional Drums (Port of Spain, Windsor Records,
n.d.) /disc notes/.

The drumming which accompanied the wedding proces-
sion for Sankey's son typifies _tassa_ style (ex. 2). It
consists of a series of different hands, each usually last-
ing two or three minutes. The leading _tassa_ player intro-
duces every new hand ('to cut'); the bass and _jhal_ join in
as soon as the complete pattern has been played once. The
second _tassa_ 'takes up' the pattern played by the lead
player ('to fulay'), another example of the responsorial
form that typifies the music of Felicity village. Both
tassa may play variations on the basic pattern. Sometimes
the two _tassa_ play in unison, but interlocking patterns
are more common.[5]

Every hand is subdivided into several sections (20-
50 seconds long), each ending in a cadence that village
drummers call the _tal_. After several subsections in a
particular hand have been played, the lead drummer moves
on, without break, to the next hand. Usually this involves
a change in tempo, as with ex. 2., in which hand 1 is
always around ♪ = MM 176 and hand 2 ♪ = MM 144.

The _bharat_ procession had left Sankey's house around
one o'clock. Hindu custom dictates that Sankey and her
sisters would not witness the actual moment of marriage,

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5. It was not possible to discriminate between the
two _tassa_ parts on the recording. A composite transcription
of the resultant rhythm has been given.

Example 2

(Hand 1)

Title: Tassa Drumming   Type: Wedding

Tape No: T3/77/F/72   Coll: HM   Trans: HM

Area: Felicity

Example 2

(Hand 2)

Title: Tassa Drumming **Type:** Wedding

Tape No: T3/77/F/72 **Coll:** HM **Trans:** HM

Area: Felicity

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when the couple are covered with a large cloth and the groom smears the blood-red _sindur_ (vermillion) in the parting of the bride's hair. Sankey had said farewell to a bachelor son, and there were now three or four hours to occupy before she would greet him for the first time as a married man. And nothing to do but eat and drink, sing and dance.

So engaged, the hours passed rapidly for our group of ladies. Seven or eight of them soon gathered around Sankey with their instruments - _dholak_, _manjeera_, _shak shak_, _dhantal_, and began to sing _lachārī_ songs (plate 10). As they sang, some of the other women stopped to listen to the song; most continued to chatter, eat, and drink. As the laughing and shouting increased, women began to dance, sometimes alone, sometimes in pairs, dragging their friends up to join them. Usually no more than two or three danced at the same time. I was surprised to see Felicity women behaving so candidly. No men were present; perhaps the women felt more free to joke, and many of the comments (and nearly all the gestures of the dance) were explicitly sexual. I ate a little, drank rum with the others, and watched the dancing. Then the ladies dragged me up to dance with them. The _lachārī_ songs were fast, hot, and exciting.

The _lachārī_ generally have rhythmic groupings of 4 (2+2; see ex. 3, p. 257). Each line of the Bhojpuri text is

_____

Plate 10 (following). Village women dancing and singing _lachārī_, accompanied by the _dholak_ (lower right), during the wedding celebrations at Sankey's house.

repeated responsorially many times (as with ex. 3: saiyắ
lāge hamār/kaise ke mārõ nazariyā...; 'he is my husband/
how can I blink at him?...). The texts are based on jɔkes
and abuse, as with the gārī tradition of Uttar Pradesh.
Āre Nadiyā Kināre tells of a wife's jealousy of her sister-
in-law (nanadī). She complains that her husband is in love
with someone else, possibly the nanadī. She casts a spell
of night blindness (ratắũnī) on him so that he will not
love another woman. The wife eventually removes the spell
and sings, 'Oh I love him, I love him, I love him....'
(repeated as a refrain; followed by hearty laughing).
Lachārī such as this are sung with a loud harsh vocal timbre.
The women sang some 17 lachārī during the festivities at
Sankey's house.

Perhaps the byāh ke gīt repertory is dying out, but
the lachārī repertory seemed very much alive. The ladies
have no difficulty in recalling the texts (a common problem
with the byāh ke gīt), probably because the lachārī texts
have shorter lines and more repetition. The tunes are well-
known to the women, perhaps due in part to their metrical
regularity. The accompaniment of drum and idiophones
together with the frequent repetition of short lines and
the overlap of parts (often two beats) lend the performance
a vitality and immediacy lacking in the byāh ke gīt. As
the party progressed some women began singing both parts,
starting with the leader's part and then jumping immediately
to the chorus part. Because of this enthusiasm the lachārī
repertory might outlast the byāh ke gīt were it not that

Example 3

Tape No: T3/77/F/25   Title: Āre Nadiyā Kināre   Type: Lachārī

Area: Felicity, Trinidad   Performer: Sankey   Coll: HM   Trans: HM

♩ = MM 132

Leader and group

Chorus

Dholak

Dhantal

Shak Shak

Ā-re na- di- yā ki- nā-re chhā-ye bā̃-ga- lā, O-par
('On the bank of the river there is a bungalow.')

etc. with variations

etc. with variations

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Example 3

Title: Āre Nadiyā Kināre

Tape No:　　　　Type:

Area:　　　　Coll:

Performer:　　　　Trans:

('On top of that a king is sitting.')

('How can I blink at him?')

('He is my husband.')

Example 3

Title: Āre Nadiyā Kināre

Tape No:

Area:

Type:

Coll:

Performer:

Trans:

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Example 3

Tape No:

Area:

Title: Āre Nadiyā Kināre

Performer:

Type:

Coll:

Trans:

Leader

Chorus

sã- i- yā lā- ge ha-mār sã- i- yā lā- ge ha-mār O

za-ri- yā A-re kai- se ke mã- rõ na- za-ri- yā

Pitch   Range

FORM

	A	B	B		D	D	D	DE		E	F	F	FG		H	H
Leader	Text	a	b	b		d	d	d	a d e		d	d	d	a d e		H	H
	Tune																
Chorus	Text		C	C	C	C	C	C	C C	C	C	C	C	C C	C	c	c
	Tune		c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c c	c	c	c	c	c c	c	c	c

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Example 3

Āre Nadiyā Kināre[6]

1. आरे न्दिया किन्नारे छाये

   āre   nadiyā   kināre   chhāye

   बँगला

   bagalā

2. ओपर बइठे न्बाब, ओपर

   opar   baiṭhe   nabāb,   opar

   बइठे न्बाब

   baiṭhe   nabāb

3. आरे कइसे के मारॉ न्ज़रिया,

   āre   kaise   ke   mārŏ   nazariyā

   ओ कइसे के मारॉ न्ज़रिया

   o   kaise   ke   mārŏ   nazariyā

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6. T3/77/F/25, Lachārī, Sankey and her group, Felicity, 13 Nov.

4. सइयाँ लागे हमार
   saiyā̃   lāge   hamār

5. कइसे के मारों नज़रिया
   kaise   ke   mārõ   nazariyā

6. बाके हमार जिया लागे हमार,
   bāke   hamār   jiyā   lāge   hamār

   जिया लागे हमार
   jiyā   lāge   hamār

7. कइसे के मारों नज़रिया, ओ
   kaise   ke   mārõ   nazariyā   o

   कइसे के मारों नज़रिया
   kaise   ke   mārõ   nazariyā

8. हाय हमार कइसे के चरइया
   hāya   hamār   kaise   ke   charaiyā

9. नन्दी के भतार, नन्दी के
   nanadī   ke   bhatār   nanadī   ke

   भतार
   bhatār

10. अरे सइयाँ के आवे रतौंनी, ओ
    are   saiyā̃   ke   āwe   ratā̃ũnī   o

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सइयाँ के आवे रतौंनी
saiyā̃ ke āwe ratã̃ũnī

11. हाय दिना टूटे न रार [रात]
hāy dinā ṭūṭe na rār [rāt]

12. सइयाँ के आवे रतौंनी
saiyā̃ ke āwe ratã̃ũnī

13. टूटे न रार दिना टूटे न रार
ṭūṭe na rār dinā ṭūṭe na rār

दिना टूटे न रार
dinā ṭūṭe na rār

14. सइयाँ के आवे रतौंनी, ओ
saiyā̃ ke āwe ratã̃ũnī o

सइयाँ के आवे रतौंनी
saiyā̃ ke āwe ratã̃ũnī

15. काहे क झारों जगहिया
kāhe ka jhārõ jagahiyā

16. कइसे के बोखार, कइसे के
kaise ke bokhār kaise ke

बोखार
bokhār

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17. आरे कइसे के झारौं रतौनी,
    āre kaise ke jhārõ ratãũnī

    ओ कइसे के झारौं रतौनी
    o kaise ke jhārõ ratãũnī

18. हाथ दिन्हा टूटे न रार
    hāy dinā ṭūṭe na rār

19. कइसे के झारौं रतौनी
    kaise ke jhārõ ratãũnī

20. आरे बाहौं से झारे जगहिया
    āre bāhõ se jhāre jagahiyā

21. मंतर से बोखार, मंतर से
    mantra se bokhār mantra se

    बोखार
    bokhār

22. आरे अँचरा से झारौं रतौनी,
    āre ãcharā se jhārõ ratãũnī

    ओ अँचरा से झारौं रतौनी
    o ãcharā se jhāro ratãũnī

23. हाथ दिन्हा टूटे न रार
    hāy dinā ṭūṭe na rār

24. अँचरा से झारों रतौंनी

   ə̃charā   se   jhārõ   ratə̃ũnī

25. दिना सूझे न रात

   dinā   sūjhe   na   rāt

26. अँचरा से झारों रतौंनी

   ə̃charā   se   jhārõ   ratə̃ũnī

27. दिना सूझे न रात, दिना सूझे

   dinā   sūjhe   na   rāt   dinā   sūjhe

   न रात, दिना सूझे न रात,

   na   rāt   dihā   sūjhe   na   rāt

   दिना सूझे न रात

   dinā   sūjhe   na   rāt

28. अँचरा से झारों रतौंनी, ओ

   ə̃charā   se   jhārõ   ratə̃ũnī   o

   अचरा से झारों रतौंनी

   ə̃charā   se   jhārõ   ratə̃ũnī

29. दिना सूझे न रात, सासु के

   dinā   sūjhe   na   rāt   sāsu   ke

   थोरे जगहिया, ननदी के

   thore   jagahiyā   nanadī   ke

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बोखार, नन्दी के बोखार

bokhār   nanadī   ke   bokhār

30.   सइयाँ के छोरे रतौनी, ओ

saiyā̃   ke   chhore   ratã͂ũnī   o

सइयाँ के छोरे रतौनी

saiyā̃   ke chhore   ratã͂ũnī

31.   हाय दिना सूझे न रात

hāy   dinā   sūjhe   na   rāt

32.   सइयाँ के छोरे रतौनी

saiyā̃   ke   chhore   ratã͂ũnī

33.   हाय मन लागे हमार

hāy   mana   lāge   hamār

34.   सइयाँ के छोरे रतौनी

saiyā̃   ke   chhore   ratã͂ũnī

35.   आरे बोके पलावाँ के टोपी

āre   boke   palāwe   ke   topī

36.   गल बाँधे रूमाल, गल बाँधे

gala   bā̃dhe   rumāl   gala   bā̃dhe

रूमाल

rumāl

37. अरे लटकत [लचकत] आवे
    are   latakata   [lachakata]   āwe

    गलिन में, ओ लटकत
    galina   mẽ   o   latakata

    आवे गलिन में
    āwe   galina   mẽ

38. हाय मन लागे हमार
    hāy   mana   lāge   hamār

39. लटकत आवे गलिन में
    latakata   āwe   galina   mẽ

40. मन लागे हमार
    mana   lāge   hamār

41. लटकत आवे गलिन में
    latakata   āwe   galina   mẽ

Example 3

Āre Nadiyā Kināre

Translation

1. On the bank of a river there is a bungalow.

2. On top of that a king is sitting. On top of that a king is sitting.

3. Oh, how can I blink at him? Oh, how can I blink at him?

4. He is my husband.

5. How can I blink at him?

6. He is my beautiful one. I have lost my heart to him. I have lost my heart to him.

7. How can I look at him? Oh, how can I look at him?

8. How can he come, because he is fickle /meaning unclear/?

9. The husband of my sister-in-law, the husband of my sister-in-law /line of abuse/.

10. Oh, my husband will suffer from the night blindness /nystalopia/. Oh, my husband will suffer from the night blindness.

11. Oh, I cannot count days and nights past.

12. My husband will suffer from the night blindness.

13. All day and night this spell does not break. All day and night this spell does not break. All day and night this spell does not break.

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14. My husband will suffer from the night blindness. Oh, my husband will suffer from the night blindness.

15. How can I sweep the place?

16. How can I remove the fever? How can I remove the fever?

17. Oh, how can I dispel the night blindness? Oh, how can I dispel the night blindness?

18. Oh, all day and night this spell does not break.

19. How can I dispel the night blindness?

20. Oh, I will sweep the place with my hand.

21. With mantras, I will remove the fever.

22. Oh, with my ãcharā /end of the sari/ I will dispel the night blindness. Oh, with my ãcharā I will dispel the night blindness.

23. Oh, all day and night this spell does not break.

24. Oh, with my ãcharā I will dispel the night blindness.

25. He does not see in day or night.

26. With my ãcharā I will dispel the night blindness.

27. He does not see in day or night. He does not see in day or night. He does not see in day or night. He does not see in day or night.

28. With my ãcharā I will dispel the night blindness. Oh, with my ãcharā I will dispel the night blindness.

29. He does not see in day or night. My mother-in-law has a small place. The sister-in-law will suffer from the fever. The sister-in-law will suffer from the fever.

30. My husband will be free from the night blindness. Oh, my husband will be free from the night blindness.

31. Oh, he does not see in day or night.

32. My husband will be free from the night blindness.

33. Oh, I love him.

34. My husband will be free from the night blindness.

35. Oh, I will give him a cap.

36. He puts a beautiful hankie around his neck.

37. Oh, he is walking pendulously along the road. Oh, he is walking pendulously along the road.

38. Oh, I love him.

39. He is walking pendulously along the road.

40. Oh, I love him.

41. He is walking pendulously along the road.

both types are in Bhojpuri; therefore both will survive only as long as that language is spoken in Felicity village.

Towards evening, the ladies began listening for the return of the wedding procession. Around five o'clock, we could hear the 'mike', a hired car with an enormous horn-speaker mounted on the roof, turning onto Cacandee Road and proceeding slowly towards the house, blaring out the distorted image of an Indian film song. As the sound drew nearer, the dancing stopped but the singers went on regard-less and finished their song.[7] When the pedestrians arrived and the line of cars began to pull up in front of the house, Sankey stepped forward to greet her son. Her many friends quickly set off for home pausing only to catch a glimpse of the bride, who had changed from her traditional red sari into a Western-style white wedding dress and veil. This was the end of the wedding celebration. I packed up my recording equipment and walked lazily down Cacandee Road. I had laughed hard and, like all the other ladies, had drunk too much rum. I felt at one with the world and full of insight into the human condition.

'Hard to imagine a wedding, any wedding in any land, without music,' I thought. 'All mankind seems agreed that marriage calls for song. To be more specific, calls for two kinds of songs: the fun variety like these fast and lively _lachārī_ and the more serious types like the unaccompa-nied and subdued _byāh ke gīt_ they sang during the ritual

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7. T3/77/F/22-6, 13 Nov. (FN/4, 99).

portions of the ceremony.'

Matti had supper waiting, and while I ate, she listened to the lachārī songs through the headphones. Later, Mesho came in and listened too, hearing those bawdy women's songs at a distance, just as he had all his life: from down the road, from the next room and now, from a tape recorder. For they were not intended for a male audience. After he had listened, he smiled and said, 'Now you've really got what you came for.'

'Yes', I said. 'I believe I have.'

'All mankind seems agreed'? It is easy to reject ideas like these, the occasional intuition that tells us we do share feelings with all men of all times. Here in the West, we are estranged from the thoughts of universality that are the very foundation of Eastern philosophies. We Westerners are trained to be cautious specialists, and being specialists we tend to ignore what is common to all. Consequently, ours is an age for scientists, not humanists. 'All mankind seems agreed'? Probably not. Yet I couldn't resist the thought, on that particular Sunday evening, that the laughter and the singing at Sankey's was as ancient as love itself, and that despite the barriers of culture and race, of dialect and habit, I did belong in Felicity.

I had been spending a great deal of time recording the byāh ke gīt. The style of this repertory conforms with that described by Tewari and Henry for the wedding songs of central and eastern Uttar Pradesh. All of the songs are in a leader-chorus responsorial form. Most have a range of

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less than an octave (none more than a 9th) and the melodic

movement is primarily conjunct, although upward leaps of

a 3rd and 4th are fairly common. Although a drone is absent,

a strong sense of tonicity is clear in all of the examples.

The character of the melodies depends on the tonic; they

end on the tonic and generally move above and around the

tonic. The melodies are often constructed from short

repeated motifs, characterized by upward leaps followed by

a slow downward drift, as shown in ex. 4 below.

Example 4

Melodic Motifs of Byāh Ke Gīt

upward leap   downward drift

downward drift

Many of the songs have a metrical pattern based on four

syllables (often one short and three long); rhythmic groupings

of 3+4 and 2+3 are most frequent, and 2+2 occurs in several

examples. In some songs the regular pattern of 3+4+3+4

resembles dīpchandi tala (Professor Adesh pointed this out

to me). In other examples the groupings of seven might be heard to resemble rūpak tala. Interruptions in the regularity of these patterns can usually be explained by the taking of breath or the overlap of the leader and chorus part. (Tewari also found most wedding songs he collected to have metric structures of 2+2 and 3+4.) Some of the Trinidad wedding songs take the form of sthāyī (chorus) and antarā (verse), the sthāyī lying in the lower half of the octave and the antarā in the upper (exx. 9, 10, 12, and 15).

When I asked the villagers what they thought of the byāh ke gīt, I encountered mixed reactions. Some girls giggled with embarrassment when they heard a wedding song. Others were confused and thought that any song the ladies sang was for the wedding. Since the girls did not understand the Bhojpuri texts, they sometimes told me that a sohar (for childbirth) or a kajri (for rice planting) was a wedding song. But many people told me that their favourite songs were wedding songs. Some villagers told me they always cried when they heard wedding songs because they were so beautiful. Many people in Felicity felt it was important for this repertory to be recorded for posterity and they were glad I had undertaken this task. As I worked my enthusiasm for these songs grew, and before long I found that, like the folk-song collectors of the late nineteenth century, I too was caught up by that special fascination with a vanishing tradition.

I say vanishing tradition, but in fact, I have no proof that this is a correct appraisal of the situation regarding

Indian wedding songs in Trinidad. Perhaps it only seems
that way. The villagers would tell me that the songs were
dying out because the young girls were not learning them.
And often enough during weddings it really did seem as if
they were disappearing right then and there as they were
drowned out by the tassa drummers or interrupted by a film
song played by the hired orchestra on electrically amplified
instruments. At university, it had been easy enough to
dismiss the death of a tradition as a natural feature of
culture change, but at close proximity, it became a horrible
prospect.

Byāh Ke Gīt

At daybreak the following morning, I went to Port of
Spain. I had arranged to meet with Dhanpat and Kalawatee
Permanand - two sisters who had married brothers. They were
both nearing 70 and everyone affectionately called them Aji,
('grandmother'). I had heard many wedding songs in Felicity
but people in the village had encouraged me to record these
two unusually fine singers from Port of Spain.

Dhanpat and Kalawatee had agreed to sing wedding songs
for me so that I would have good recordings of the most
important songs of the cycle. We realized that this tape
in many respects would be a false record since it would
lack the usual eight to ten singers as well as the rich if
confusing mixture of real wedding sounds. But the tunes

and the texts would be preserved for future generations; and without the background noise or the other wedding music from the 'mike' or the hired Indian orchestra or the <u>tassa</u> players, these archaic Bhojpuri songs would be easier for me to transcribe.

As the villagers often explained to me, every important moment in the elaborate Hindu marriage has a designated <u>byāh ke gīt</u>. The texts comment on the ritual or draw an analogy between the wedding taking place and that of Rama and Sita. Some <u>byāh ke gīt</u> do both. From Friday afternoon to Sunday evening, a wedding guest might hear 30 or 40 different <u>byāh ke gīt</u> (plate 11). That, at least, is the ideal. In actuality, I noticed that songs were often omitted, or considerably shortened, especially if the group of singers was small or if the orchestra or the mike was playing. The orchestra plays arrangements of Indian film songs, it usually consists of electric guitar, electric keyboard, drum set, vocalists (male and female), and sometimes trumpet, flute, violin, accordion, and other Western instruments. This loud ensemble often interrupts the <u>byāh ke gīt</u>, making it difficult for the ladies to complete their songs.

I was hoping that Dhanpat and Kalawatee would help me to translate the <u>byāh ke gīt</u> texts. This Bhojpuri material is extremely difficult to translate since the accent, pronunciation and vocabulary have changed over the years, resulting in a Trinidadian Creolized version of this Hindi

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Plate 11 (following). Village women singing <u>byāh ke gīt</u> as they watch the wedding ceremony at the home of the bride.

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dialect with different pronunciation of 'm', 'z', 'd', and 't', and different case and verb endings. The Felicity women found it practically impossible to translate the texts into English. Since they all spoke English very well, it surprised me at first that what they invariably offered was only what they called the 'meaning', the gist of the song. I soon caught on that this was a practiced skill they had learned from their mothers and grandmothers - the generations of exiled Indian women who had tried to offer simple explanations of this complex Asian heritage to Africans and Englishmen.

The meaning often begins 'this is when ... ' for the wedding songs do not have names or titles. The singers associate them with the particular moments in the wedding ceremony that they accompany. The ceremony cues the song and not vice versa. The ladies are commentators, likening the here and now, the imperfect and real, to the ideal, to the splendour of the ancient past, and to the perfect wedding of the perfect individuals, Rama and Sita.

Once I was seated in their house on Dundonald Street, Port of Spain, Kalawatee asked me what I would like them to sing.

'Just some wedding songs would be fine,' I said, knowing that they would automatically assume, as did the Felicity ladies, that by 'wedding song' I was referring to the serious byāh ke gīt repertory.

The Permanand sisters then sang for me 11 byāh ke gīt,

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all normally performed at the bride's home on the Sunday

of the wedding (exx. 5-15; pp. 280-361). And for each

song they explained the meaning.

Example 5

Tape No: T1/74/F/67, Item 1 **Title:** Sankara Koriyā **Type:** Byāh Ke Gīt (Wedding Song)

Area: Trinidad **Performer:** Mrs and Mrs Permanand **Coll:** HM **Trans:** HM

('Sweep the way, Pandit Rama, sweep the way, Pandit Rama')

('They bring the elephant in')

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Example 5

Tape No: Type:

Title: Sankara Koriyā

Area: Coll: Trans:

Performer:

b'

ha- thi- yā̃̄—— lī- /i/- na pa- i- thā̄- ri

b

ki da-la u- ta- re- le ā- ma——a- mi- lī ta- re

b

ā- ma——a- mi- lī ta- re

('The whole wedding party will come under the mango tree or the tamarind tree')

2.

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Example 5

Tape No:

Area:

Title: Sankara Koriyā

Performer:

Type:

Coll:

Trans:

ki- yā re___ka- da- ma ju- rī___chā- ? ha___

('Or under the shadow of the kadam tree')

ā- ho ki- yā re___ka- da- ma ju- rī___chā- ? ha

o- hī da- la u- ta- re___pan-ḍi- ta rā-ma ḍu- a- ra- wā___pan-

('Pandit Rama, the wedding party will come to the door')

3.

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Example 5

Title: Sankara Koriyā

Type:

Coll:

Trans:

Tape No:

Area:

Performer:

di- ta rā-ma du- a- ra- wā____ ho

ji- nih gha- ra____kan- yā ku- wā- - ri ho

('Of that house where there is a girl to be married')

ji- nih gha- ra____kan- yā ku- wā- - ri

Example 5

Sankara Koriyā[8]

1. सँकर कोरिया बहरो हो पंडित राम
   sankara   koriyā   baharo   ho   paṇḍita   rāma

   बहरो हो पंडित राम
   baharo   ho   paṇḍita   rāma

   हथियाँ लीन पइठारि हो
   hathiyā̃   līna   paiṭhāri   ho

   हथियाँ लीन पइठारि
   hathiyā̃   līna   paiṭhāri

2. कि दल उतरेले आम अमिली तरे
   ki   dala   utarele   āma   amilī   tare

   आम अमिली तरे
   āma   amilī   tare

   किया रे कदम जुरी छाह
   kiyā   re   kadama   jurī   chhāha

   आहो किया रे कदम जुरी छाह
   āho   kiyā   re   kadama   jurī   chhāha

3. ओही दल उतरे पंडित राम दुअरवा पंडित
   ohī   dala   utare   paṇḍita   rāma   duarawā   paṇḍita

   राम दुअरवा हो
   rāma   duarawā   ho

---

8. Tl/74/F/67, Item l. Dhanpat and Kalawatee Permanand, 5 Aug.

जिन्हि घर कन्या कुवांरी हो

jinih ghara kanyā kuwā̃rī ho

जिन्हि घर कन्या कुवांरी हो

jinih ghara kanyā kuwā̃rī ho

Sankara Koriyā

FORM

```
Verse  |1            |2              |3            ||
Tune   |a b b b' b' |a b b b' b' |a b b b' b' ||
Text   |A B B C  C  |D E E F  F  |G H H I  I  ||
```

Pitch   Range

Example 5

Sankara Koriyā

Translation

1. Sweep the way, Pandit Rama, sweep the way, Pandit Rama. They bring the elephant in. They bring the elephant in.

2. The whole wedding party will come near the mango tree or the tamarind tree or under the shadow of the kadam tree, or under the shadow of the kadam tree.

3. The marriage party will come only to the door of the house where there is a girl to be married.

Example 5

Sankara Koriyā

Meaning
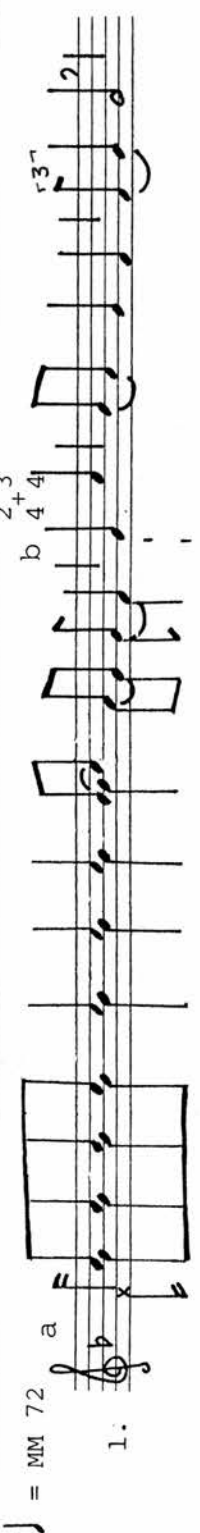
Dhanpat: 'When the bridegroom is coming he's entering and then they sing this song.'

Kalawatee: 'They ask the bride's father to sweep the way. Sweep the way that the bridegroom is coming. So then they are asking the question, how is the bridegroom coming? They say he is coming with horses and elephant. How he is coming in? And the answer is that when he came, when he is coming, where he is going to? So they say he is going to the house where that girl is to be married. Jinih ghara kanyā kuwã /जिन्हि घर कन्या कुवाँ/.'

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Example 6

Tape No: T1/74/F/67, Item 2 **Title**: Leu Na Paṇḍita Rāma   **Type**: Byāh Ke Gīt (Wedding Song)
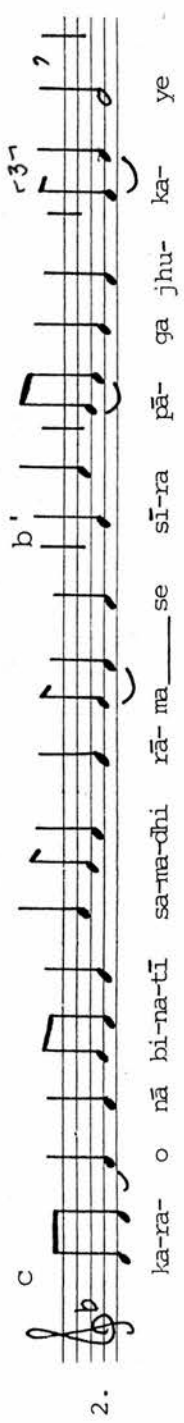
Area: Trinidad   **Performer** Mrs and Mrs Permanand   **Coll**: HM   **Trans**: HM

le-u na pan- ḍi- ta   rā- ma   gẽ   rū- wa   hã-the   pā-   na   ke   bī-   ra

('Pandit Rama, take a jug of water in the hand, betel leaves in the hand')

hã-the   pā-   na   ke   bī-   ra

ka-ra-   o   nā   bi-na-tī   sa-ma-dhi   rā- ma___ se   sī-ra   pā-   ga   jhu- ka-   ye

('Go and request of Rama's father, bow your head and pray to him')
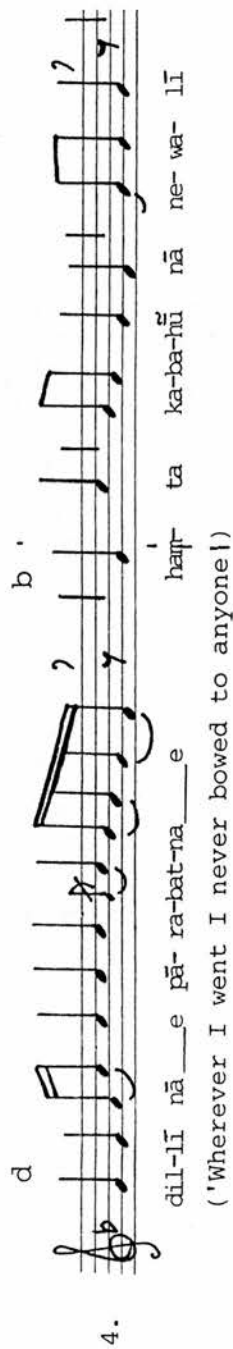
Tape No:

Area:

Example 6

Title: Leu Na Paṇḍita Rāma

Performer:

Type:

Coll:

Trans:

3.

c   b

ka-ra- o   nā bi-na- tī sa-ma-dhī   rā-ma___ se sī- ra pā-   ga jhu- kā-   ye

4.

d   b .

dil-lī nā___ e pā- ra-bat-na___ e   haṃ- ta   ka-ba-hŭ   nā   ne- wa- lī

('Wherever I went I never bowed to anyone!)

b '

haṃ- ta   ka-ba- hŭ   nā   ne- wa- lī

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Tape No:

Area:

Example 6

Title: Leu Na Pandita Rāma

Type:

Performer:

Coll:

Trans:

5.

be- tī ka-wa-na dei ke kā- ra- na | ā- ju sī- sa ne wā- yõ

('Due to my daughter, today I bowed')

6.

be-tī. ka-wa-na dei ke kā- ra- na ā- ju sī- sa ne- wā- yõ

Metre of phrase beginnings indeterminate

FORM

Verse	1		2		3		4		5		6		
Tune	a	b	c	b	c	b	d	b	c	b	c	b	
Text	A	B	B	C	D	E	F	F	G	H	G	H	

Pitch

Range

Example 6

Leu Na Paṇḍita Rāma [9]

1.
    leu   na   paṇḍita   rāma   g͂erūwā

    h͂athe   pāna   ke   bīrā

    h͂athe   pāna   ke   bīrā

2.
    karao   nā   binatī   samadhī

    rāma   se

    sīra   pāga   jhukāye

3.
    karao   nā   binatī   samadhī

    rāma   se

    sīra   pāga   jhukāye

9. Tl/74/F/67, Item 2. Dhanpat and Kalawatee Permanand, 5 Aug.

4. दिल्ली ज्या र पारबतना र
    dillī   nā   e   pārabatna   e

हम्त कबहुँ ज्या नेवली
    hamta   kabahū̃   nā   newalī

हम्त कबहुँ ज्या नवली
    hamta   kabahū̃   nā   newalī

5. बेटी कवन देइ के कारन
    beṭī   kawana   dei   ke   kārana

आजु सीस नेवायो
    āju   sīsa   newāyo

6. बेटी कवन देइ के कारन
    beṭī   kawana   dei   ke   kārana

आजु सीस नेवायो
    āju   sīsa   newāyo

Example 6

Leu Na Pandita Rāma

Translation

1. Take a jug of water in your hand and betel leaves in your hand.

2. Go and request of Rama's father. Bow to him and request of him.

3. Go and request of Rama's father. Bow to him and request of him.

4. Wherever I went, I never bowed to anyone.

5. Because of my daughter, today I bowed.

6. Because of my daughter, today I bowed.

Example 6

Leu Na Panḍita Rāma

Meaning

Kalawatee: 'They're asking the girl father. Now he is
going to meet the bridegroom and his ... esplanage
[entourage] that coming into the wedding. So he going to
meet them now. He carries a lota with water. And he is
going to meet. Now he is saying that in all my life, I
have never bowed my head. But to marry my daughter now,
I have to bow my head to the bride and bridegroom.'

Example 7

Tape No: T1/74/F/67, Item 3 Title: Dasa Sakhī Type: Byāh Ke Gīt (Wedding Song)

Area: Trinidad Performer: Mrs and Mrs Permanand Coll: HM Trans: HM

('Ten female friends are in front, ten female friends are following,')

('ten female friends are following,')

('ten female friends are beside /the bride7.')

Example 7

<u>Dasa Sakhī</u> [10]

1. दस सखी अँगवा दसही सखी पछवाँ दसही

dasa   sakhī   angawā   dasahi   sakhī   pachhawā̃   dasahī

सखी पछवाँ हो

sakhī   pachhawā̃   ho

दस सखी गोहने लगाइ

dasa   sakhī   gohane   lagāi

ओ दस सखी गोहने लगाइ

o   dasa   sakhī   gohane   lagāi

2. कँचन थार कपूर के बाती कपूर के

kanchana   thāra   kapūra   ke   bātī   kapūra   ke

बाती हो

bātī   ho

राम जी के अरती उतारे

rāma   jī   ke   artī   utāre

ओ राम जी के अरती उतारो

o   rāma   jī   ke   artī   utāro

3. परिछन चललो हो सासु कवन देई

parichhana   chlale   ho   sāsu   kawana   deī

सासु कवन देई

sāsu   kawana   deī

---

10. Tl/74/F/67, Item 3. Dhanpat and Kalawatee
Permanand, 5 Aug.

परछत बर के लिलार

parachhata bara ke lilāra

ओ परछत बर के लिलार

o parachhata bara ke lilāra

4. पाहले मैं परछओं माथे के माउर माथे

pāhale mãĩ parachhaõ māthe ke māura māthe

के माउर

ke maura

पीछे से बर के लिलार हो

pīchhe se bara ke lilāra ho

5. अपन राम मइ अपने परीछिवो मइ अपने

apana rāma mai apane parichhiwo mai apane

परीछिवो

parichhiwo

जनि कोइ परीछइ मोरे राम

jani koi parichhi more rāma

जनि कोइ परीछइ मोरे राम

jani koi parichhi more rāma

FORM

Verse	1				2				3				4			5					
Tune	a	b	b	b'	b'	a	b	b	b'	b'	a	b	b	b'	a	b	b	b'	a	b b b' b'
Text	A	B	B	C	C	D	E	E	F	F	G	H	H	I	I	J	K	K	L	M N N O O

Example 7

Dasa Sakhī

Translation

1.   Ten female friends are in front of the bride, ten female friends are following her, and ten female friends are beside her, and ten female friends are beside her.

2.   Now you take the golden tray and the lighted camphor and offer artī to Rama, and offer artī to Rama.

3.   The girl's mother comes to perform the parchan [ritual to drive away evil spirits] for the groom, the girl's mother.

4.   She performs the parchan of the bridegroom's forehead, the parchan of the bridegroom's forehead.

5.   First I will perform the parchan of the bridegroom's crown and after that the parchan of his whole head.

6.   I will do the parchan of the bridegroom myself.

7.   If no one else does this parchan don't do it. I will do it myself.

Example 7

Dasa Sakhī

Meaning

Kalawatee: 'There he's put the name in the place of Rama and the bride is Sita. Because this is how we look at them.'

Helen: 'Is this from the Ramayan?'

Kalawatee: 'Yea, is from the Ramayan. The wedding of Rama and Sita. This is the meaning. That when the women came out to greet him, this is the mother-in-law. So she came with the artī. And she did that, right? [She demonstrated by waving her hand in a clockwise direction.] So this is what she did the artī to Rama with all her women folks together with her. [She turned to Dhanpat.] You say it naa. You want to say too?'

Dhanpat: 'She's saying that I am going to greet my beloved son-in-law to be. And I am going to do the artī myself. I don't want nobody to take part in that. I am going to greet him my own self (plate 12).

Plate 12 (following). Mother of the bride offering a lota of water as a ritual greeting to the groom, while horn loudspeaker (upper right) broadcasts recorded Indian film song.
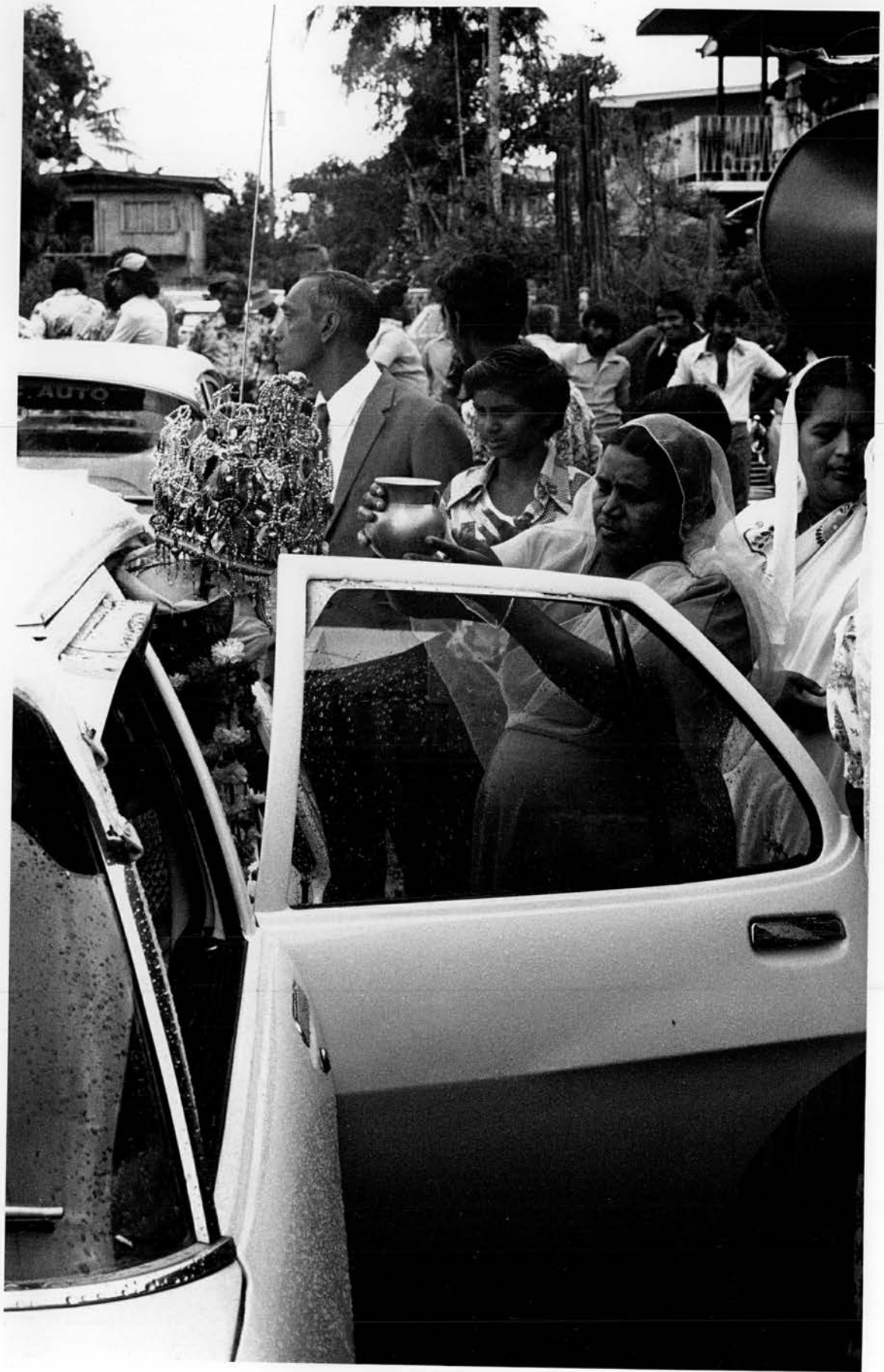
Example 8

Tape No: T1/74/F/67, Item 4 **Title:** Sānjhe Chha Sukawā, Verses 1-2 **Type:** Byāh Ke Gīt (Wedding Song)

Area: Trinidad   **Performer:** Mrs and Mrs Permanand   **Coll:** HM   **Trans:** HM

♩ = MM96 Freely

sān- jhe chha su- ka- wā u- da-ye bhaye sān-jhe chan-dra u-day-e bhaye su-ka- wā u- ge ā-dhī rā- ta --

('In the evening six stars come out; in the evening the moon comes out, and the Evening Star comes out in the middle of the night.')

2.

rā-ma ā- ye bi- ā- han   rā-ma ā- ye bi- ā- han __ sa-ja-na sa- hi-ta chā-ro bhā- i- rī   etc.

('Rama has come to wed; Rama has come to wed with his friends and his four brothers.')

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Range

Pitch

FORM

Verse	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
Tune	a'	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	
Text	A	B	C	C	D	B	E	B	F	B		

Tune and metre not established in 1st verse
Possibility that 1st verse displays vestigial antarā tune
sthāyī = refrain B?
Structure would indicate that song is incomplete

Example 8

<u>Sānjhe Chha Sukawā</u> [11]

1. साँझे छ सुकवा उद्ये भ्ये
   sānjhe   chha   sukawā   udaye   bhaye

   साँझे चन्द्र उद्ये भ्ये
   sānjhe   chandra   udaye   bhaye

   सुकवा उगे आधी रात
   sukawā   uge   ādhī   rāta

2. राम आये बिआहन
   rāma   āye   biāhan

   राम आये बिआहन
   rāma   āye   biāhan

   सजन सहित चारो भाइ री
   sajana   sahita   chāro   bhāi   rī

3. राम आये बिआहन
   rāma   āye   biāhan

---

11. Tl/74/F/67, Item 4. Dhanpat and Kalawatee
Permanand, 5 Aug.

राम आये बिआहन

rāma   āye   biyāhan

सजन सहित चारो भाइ री

sajana   sahita   chāro   bhāi   rī

4. माँथे म्अउर जो सोहै

māthe   mawara   jo   sohai

माँथे म्वर जो सोहै

māthe   mawara   jo   sohai

गल बइजन्ती के माला जी

gala   baijantī   ke   mālā   jī

5. माँथे मौर [म्वर] जे सोहै

māthe   maura   /mawara/   je   sohai

माँथे म्वर जे सोहै

māthe   mawara   je   sohai

गल बइजन्ती के माला

gala   baijantī   ke   mālā

6. कान्ने कुण्डल झलके

kāne   kuṇḍala   jhalake

कान्ने कुण्डल झलके

kāne   kuṇḍala   jhalake

चनन खोर ललाट लसी
chanana khora lalāṭa lasī

7. राम आये बिआहन
rāma āye biāhan

राम आये बिआहन
rāma āye biāhan

सजन सहित चारो भाइरी
sajana sahita chāro bhāirī

8. दाँते झलके बतिसिया
dā̃te jhalake batisiyā

दाँते झलके बतिसिया
dā̃te jhalake batisiyā

पानन ओठ के लाली जी
pānana oṭha ke lālī jī

9. राम आये बिधाहन
rāma āye biyāhan

राम आये बिधाहन
rāma āye biyāhan

सजन सहित चारो भाइ री
sajana sahita chāro bhāi rī

10. हाथे धनुस जो सोहै
hāthe dhanusa jo sohai

हाथे धनुस जे सोहै

hāthe dhanusa je sohai

पीताम्बर से कमर कसी

pītambara se kamara kasī

11. राम आये बिआहन

rāma āye biāhan

राम आये बिआहन

rāma āye biāhan

सजन सहित चारो भाइ री

sajana sahita chāro bhāi ri

Example 8

Sānjhe Chha Sukawā

Translation

1.   In the evening six stars come out; in the evening the moon comes out, and the evening star comes out in the middle of the night.

2.   Rama has come to wed; Rama has come to wed with his friends and his four brothers.

3.   Rama has come to wed; Rama has come to wed with his friends and his four brothers.

4.   On the bridegroom's forehead there is a beautiful crown; around his neck he has the garland of five colours.

5.   On the bridegroom's forehead there is a beautiful crown; around his neck he has the garland of five colours.

6.   In his ears earrings are resplendent; the sandalwood paste adorns his forehead.

7.   Rama has come to wed; Rama has come to wed with his friends and his four brothers.

8.   His lips are red with the betel leaves; in this way he has come to wed.

9.   Rama has come to wed; Rama has come to wed with his friends and his four brothers.

10. In his hand he has the bow; around his waist he is wearing the yellow cloth.

11. Rama has come to wed. Rama has come to wed with his friends and his four brothers.

Example 8

Sānjhe Chha Sukawā
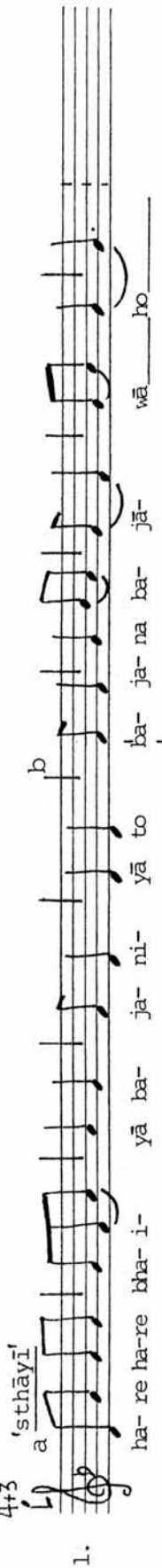
Meaning

Kalawatee: 'Rama is here to get married. He came with himself and his three brothers, Latchman, Satrughan, and Bharat. And he come with his friends. Sajan [सजन] mean friends and bhāi [भाइ] mean brothers. And then you describing Rama, how he is dressed. He has the crown [maura, mawara, म‍उर म‍वर] on his head. And he has the mālā [माला, gold beads] around his neck.... And then they saying he has the earring [kundala, कुण्डल] in his ears. And the chandan [चन्दन, beauty mark of sandalwood paste] on his forehead.... And then you saying that they drill the teeth and fill it with gold. That is shining. And the lips are red when they eat the pān [पान, betel leaf]. And then he has the dhanusha [धनुस, bow] in his hand. The bow and arrow. And his waist is tied with the yellow pītambar [पीतम्बर, sash]. So this is how he describes him.'

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Example 9

Tape No: T1/74/F/67, Item 5　Title: Hare Hare Bhaiyā, Verses 1 and 2　Type: Byāh Ke Gīt (Wedding Song)

Area: Trinidad　Performer: Mrs and Mrs Permanand　Coll: HM　Trans: HM

♩ = MM126

4+3

'sthāyī'

1.

ha- re ha- re bha- i-　yā ba-　ja- ni-　yā to　ba- ja- na ba- jā-　wā___ho

('Oh, oh, brother who plays the musical instruments, play the instruments.')

'antarā'

2.

bhai- yā___ā- i gai- le___rā- - jā ke___ku-　wā___ta ba- ja- na ba-　ja-　wā___ho___etc.

('Oh, brother, son of the king, play the instruments.')

Range

Pitch

FORM

Verse	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Tune	a	b|c	b|a	b|c	b|a	b|c	b|
Text	A	B|C	B|D	E|F	E|G	H|I	H|

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Example 9

Hare Hare Bhaiyā [12]

1. हरे हरे म्हइया बजनिया तो बजन
   hare   hare   bhaiyā   bajaniyā   to   bajana

   बजावा हो
   bajāwā   ho

2. म्हइया आइ गइल्ने राजा के कुवा
   bhaiyā   āi   gaile   rājā   ke   kuwā

   त बजन बजवा हो
   ta   bajana   bajawā   ho

3. हरे हरे बाबा कवन्न राम तमुवा
   hare   hare   bābā   kawana   rāma   tamuwā

   तन्नाव हो
   tanāwa   ho

4. बाबा भीजे ना राजा के कवर
   bābā   bhīje   nā   rājā   ke   kuwara

---

12. Tl/74/F/67, Item 5. Dhanpat and Kalawatee
Permanand, 5 Aug.

तम्सुवा तन्नावउ
tamuwā   tanāwau

5. अरे अरे म्याई कवन देइ अँचरवा
are   are   māī   kawana   dei   ãcharawā

तु तान्उ
tu   tānau

6. म्इया भीजे ना राजा के कूवर
maiyā   bhīje   nā   rājā   ke   kūwara

अँचरवा तूँ तानि देउ हो
ãcharawā   tũ   tāni   deu   ho

Example 9

Hare Hare Bhaiyā

Translation

1.   Oh, oh, brother who plays the musical instruments,
play the instruments.

2.   Oh, brother, the son of the king is coming, play
the instruments.

3.   Oh, oh, Rama's father, put up the wedding canopy.

4.   Put a canopy so that the king's son will not get wet
from the rain.

5.   Oh, oh, mother of the bride, come now and give the
protection of your ãcharwā [end of the sari].

6.   Give the protection of your ãcharwā so that the son
of the king will not get wet.

Example 9

Hare Hare Bhaiyā

Meaning

Kalawatee: 'This is when they telling the drummers to beat the drum now at its full pitch. The bridegroom is coming. And they're telling the father, the bride father, well, put the canopy over him, that he is coming in. And they're telling the mother, the girl's mother, to put her orhani /ắcharwā/ over his head. That he is coming in....'

Dhanpat: 'So that he must not get the drizzle of rain.'

Helen: 'So the ladies are sitting singing inside on the girl's side, and the /tassa/ drums are coming?'

Kalawatee: 'That's right. Hare hare bhaiyā bajaniyā to bajana bajāwā ho / हरे हरे भइया बजनिया तो बजन बजावा हो /. This is "Come on drummers, our brother, beat the drum!"'

Example 10

Tape No: T1/74/F/67, Item 6   Title: Surāiyā Gaiyā Ke Gobara, Verses 1-5   Type: Byāh Ke Gīt (Wedding Song)

Area: Trinidad   Performer: Mrs and Mrs Permanand   Coll: HM   Trans: HM

♪ = MM120

1.

'antarā?

su-rā-i-yā ga-i-yā ke go-ba-ra man-gā - yo chā-'ro kho-tā__ be-di- yā-li- pā- ye__ho

('Get the dung of a beautiful cow, smear it on the four corners of the square altar.')

2.

'sthāyī'

so- ne ke ka-la- sā dha- rā-ye mo- re bā- - bā   su-ru- ja__chha- ki- ta ho- i__ jāy/â/

('My father, put the golden pot on top /of the altar/; the sun will be surprised /at the beauty/.')

3.

'sthāyī'

so- ne ke ka-la- sā dha- rā-ye mo- re bā- - bā   su-ru- ja__chha- ki- ta ho- i__ jāy/â/

('My father, put the golden pot on top /of the altar/; the sun will be surprised /at the beauty/.')

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Example 10

Title: Suraiyā Gaiyā Ke Gobara, Verses 1-5

Tape No:

Area:

Performer:

Type:

Coll:

Trans:

4. 'antarā'

jai-se ba- jā- re___ke mo- ṭī jo jha-la- ke a- wa- ru da- khi-na-wā___ke___chī- ra___ho

('As the pearl in the bazaar shines, and the silk cloth from the south,')

5. 'sthāyī'

rā- ma la- chha-na do-no___ma-ra- ye mẽ jha-la- ke su- ru- ja___chha- ki- ta ho- i___jāy/a/___ etc.

('So both Rama and Latchman shine in the wedding canopy; the sun will be surprised.')

Pitch   Range

FORM

Verse	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Tune	a	b'	c	b d	c b d	e b'	c b d	c b d	e b'	c b d	c b d	e b'	c b d	c b d	c b d
Text	A	B	C	D	E	F	D	F	H	H	I	J	K	L	M

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Example 10

Surāiyā Gaiyā Ke Gobara [13]

1. सुराइया गइया के गोबर मंगायो
   surāiyā   gaiyā   ke   gobara mangāyo

   चारो खोटा बेदिया लिपाये हो
   chāro khoṭā bediyā lipāye ho

2. सोने के कलसा धराये मोरे बाबा
   sone   ke   kalasā   dharāye   more   bābā

   सुरुज छकित होइ जाय
   suruja chhakita hoi jāya

3. सोने के कलसा धराये मोरे बाबा
   sone   ke   kalasā   dharāye   more   bābā

   सुरुज छकित होइ जाय
   suruja chhakita hoi jāya

13. Tl/74/F/67, Item 6. Dhanpat and Kalawatee
Permanand, 5 Aug.

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4. जइसे बजारे के मोटी जो झलके
   jaise bajāre ke moṭī jo jhalake

   अवरू दखिनवा के चीर हो
   awaru dakhinawā ke chīra ho

5. राम लछन दोनो मरये में झलके
   rāma lachhana dono maraye mẽ jhalake

   सुरुज छकित होइ जाय
   suruja chhakita hoi jāya

6. राम लछन दोनो मरये में झलके
   rāma lachhana dono maraye mẽ jhalake

   सुरुज छकित होइ जाय
   suruja chhakita hoi jāya

7. देखन आये रे सखिया सहेलरि
   dekhana āye re sakhiyā sahelari

   सयनन गइले मुर झइ हो
   sayanana gaile mura jhai ho

8. कवन कवन तप किहलों सीतल देइ
   kawana kawana tapa kihalõ sītala dei

   राम से होवेला बिआह
   rāma se howelā biāha

9. कवन कवन तप किहलों सीतल देइ
   kawana kawana tapa kihalõ sītala dei

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राम से होवेल बिआह
rāma se howela biāha

10. गँगा न्हाओँ सरूज माथा लागौँ
gãgā nahāãu suruja māthā lāgãu

बीसे रहउ एतवर हो
bīsa rahau etawara ho

11. निबुला सराफल ब्राम्हन के दिहलौँ
nibulā sarāphala brāhman ke dihalãu

ओही से मोरे राम से बिअह
ohī se more rāma se biaha

12. निबुला सरापल ब्राम्हन के दिहलौँ
nibulā sarāpala brāhman ke dihalãu

ओही से मोरे राम से बिअह
ohī se more rāma se biaha

निबुला सरा ...
nibulā sarā ...

13. भुखल दुखल हम बिप्र जेँवइलौँ
bhukhala dukhala hama bipra jẽwailõ

ओही से मोरे राम से बिअह
ohī se more rāma se biaha

14. ओहरे ते बाबा मोरे बछिया
ohare te bābā more bachhiyā

सँकलपेँ
sãkalapẽ

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ओही से मोरे राम से बिआह

ohī   se   more   rāma   se   biāha

15.   ओहरे ते बाबा मोरे बछिया

ohare   te   bābā   more   bachhiyā

सँकल्पेँ

sãkalapẽ

ओही से मोरे राम से बिआह

ohī   se   more   rāma   se   biāha

Example 10

Surāiyā Gaiyā Ke Gobara

Translation

1.   Get the dung of a beautiful cow; smear it on the four corners of the square altar.

2.   My father, put the golden pot on top /of the altar/; the sun will be surprised /at the beauty/.

3.   My father, put the golden pot on top; the sun will be surprised.

4.   As the pearl in the bazaar shines, and the silk cloth from the south.

5.   Both Rama and Latchman shine in the wedding canopy; the sun will be surprised.

6.   Both Rama and Latchman shine in the wedding canopy; the sun will be surprised.

7.   The female friends of the bride have come to see; they are stunned /to behold the beauty/.

8.   Sita Dei, what are the penances you performed that you might wed Rama?

9.   Sita Dei, what are the penances you performed that you might wed Rama?

10. I bathed in the Ganges. I bowed my head to the sun. I fasted for 20 Sundays.

11. I fed the brahmins who received a bad spell; that is why I am going to wed Rama.

12. I fed the brahmins who received a bad spell; that is why I am going to wed Rama.

13. I fed the hungry sad brahmins; that is why I am going to wed Rama.

14. On top of this, my father gave a young cow; that is why I am going to wed Rama.

15. On top of this, my father gave a young cow; that is why I am going to wed Rama.

Example 10

Surāiyā Gaiyā Ke Gobara

Meaning

Kalawatee: 'They are asking - see, when Rama and Latchman walking, well, you see, they have the bride and they have the bridegroom together with his littler brother. So Rama and Latchman walking now to go and take this seat. So they describing how he is looking. So they say he is shining like the sun. Rama is shining like the sun. And just as you have diamonds sparkling in the bazaars, so he is shining. So they asking Sita what penance [तप , tapa] she did to get such a bridegroom. So she is describing her penance. She say, "I bathe in the Ganga [Ganges] every Sunday and I give alms to the brahmin and I give food to the poor brahmins and my father in the land of ... the cane-lands, he give away a calf. So this, all this benefits are what I derive from doing this thing. That is why I'm getting married to Rama."'

Example 11

Tape No: Tl/74/F/67, Item 7 Title: Āi Gaile Dala, Verses 1-3 Type: Byāh Ke Gīt (Wedding Song)

Area: Trinidad Performer: Mrs and Mrs Permanand Coll: HM Trans: HM

♩=MM120 'antarā' 3+4

1. ā- i ga-i- le ___ da- la mau- nī ā- i ga- i- le ___ si- ra mau- rī

('The wedding party has come; the crowned head /radiant bridegroom/ has come.')

2-3. 'sthāyī' ā- i gai-le be-tī ke sī- gā- ra ta be-tī mo-ra par- ā- i bhi- le   etc.

('The ornaments of the daughter have come; now my daughter belongs to somebody else.')

Pitch   Range

FORM

Verse	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Tune	a a	a	b	a a	b	b	
Text	A A'	B C	B C	D D'	E C'	E C'	

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Example 11

<u>Āi Gaile Dala</u> [14]

1. आइ गइले दला मउनी आइ
   āi   gaile   dala   maunī   āi

   गइले सिर मउरी
   gaile   sira   maurī

2. आइ गइले बेटी के सिँगार त
   āi   gaile   beṭī   ke   sĩgāra   ta

   बेटी मोर पराइ भइले
   beṭī   mora   parāi   bhile

3. आइ गइले बेटी के सिँगार त
   āi   gaile   beṭī   ke   sĩgāra   ta

   बेटी मोरि पराइ भइले
   beṭi   mori   parāi   bhaile

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14. T1/74/F/67, Item 7. Dhanpat and Kalawatee
Permanand, 5 Aug.

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4. बाँसे डलवा सोना अइले रूपे
   bā̃se   ḍalawā   sonā   aile   rupe

   डलवा रूप अइले
   ḍalawā   rupa   aile

5. बाँसे डलवा धिया के सिंगार त
   bā̃se   ḍalawā   dhiyā   ke   sĩgāra   ta

   धिया मोर पराइ भइले
   diyā   mora   parāi   bhile

6. बाँसे डलवा धिया के सिंगार त
   bā̃se   ḍalawā   dhiyā   ke   sĩgāra   ta

   धिया मोर पराइ भइले
   dhiyā   mora   parāi   bhile

Example 11

Āi Gaile Dala

Translation

1.   The wedding party has come; the crowned head /radiant bridegroom/ has come.

2.   The ornaments of the daughter have come; now my daughter belongs to somebody else.

3.   The ornaments of the daughter have come; now my daughter belongs to somebody else.

4.   They bring gold and silver in the big cane basket.

5.   They bring the ornaments of the daughter in the big cane basket; now my daughter belongs to somebody else.

6.   They bring the ornaments of the daughter in the big cane basket; now my daughter belongs to somebody else.

Example 11

<div align="center">

Āi Gaile Dala

Meaning

</div>

Kalawatee: 'This is when they bring the gifts for the bride in the <u>dal</u> [दॉल]. They call the <u>dal</u>. This basket business. And then they say that well now she get her gifts, now my daughter is for somebody else. From now on, she's belong to somebody else.... She's not mine anymore.'

Example 12

Tape No: T1/74/F/67, Item 8 **Title:** Hariyara Bãsawã Kaṭāye, Verses 1-5 **Type:** Byāh Ke Gīt (Wedding Song)

Performer: Mrs and Mrs Permanand **Coll:** HM **Trans:** HM

Area: Trinidad

4+3 ♩=M120 'antarā'?

1.

ha-ri-ya-ra bã̄ sa- wā̄ ka- tā̄ ye ro- re bā̄ bā̄ pā̄ na- na mara wā̄ cha- wā̄ ye ṭā̄ ho

('My father has cut the fresh green canes, and he has thatched the wedding canopy with betel leaves.')

2. 'sthāyī'

te- hī ṭa- re ba- i- the le be tĩ ke bā̄ bā̄ ā- i gai dha- ra- na wā̄ ke jūn

('The daughter's father is sitting underneath the wedding canopy; the time for the religious ritual has arrived.')

3.

te- hī ṭa- re ba- i the-le be tĩ ke bā̄ bā̄ ā- i gai dha- ra- na wā̄ ke jūn

('The daughter's father is sitting underneath the wedding canopy; the time for the religious ritual has arrived.')

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Example 12

Tape No:

Area:

Title: Hariyara Bǎsawā Kaṭāye, Verses 1-5 Type:

Performer: Coll:

Trans:

4. kǎ- pe- lā dho-ti- yā̃— au— kǎ̃— pe- lā lo-ti- yā̃— kǎ̃- pe- lā ku-sa-wā̃ ke— gā— bha— ho

('His loincloth is trembling, his brass pot is trembling, the bunch of kus grass is trembling.')

5. ma-ra- ye rě̃— kǎ̃— pe- lā— be- ṭī ke bā— peˈ lā be- ṭī ke bā kai-se kai— se— de-bo kan-yā̃— dān— etc.

('In the wedding canopy the daughter's father is trembling. How will I give away my virgin daughter?')

Pitch   Range

FORM

Verse	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Tune	a b'	c b d	c b d	e b'	c b d	c b d	e b'	c b d	c b d
Text	A	B	B	C	D	D	E	F	F

Example 12

Hariyara Bā̃sawā Kaṭāye [15]

1. हरियर बाँसवा कटाये मोरे बाबा

hariyara   bā̃sawā   kaṭāye   more   bābā

पानन मरवा छवायेला हो

pānana   marawā   chhawāyelā   ho

2. तेही टरे बइठेले बेटी के बाबा

tehī   ṭare   baiṭhele   beṭī   ke   bābā

आइ गइ धरमवा के जून

āi   gai   dharamawā   ke   jū̃n

3. तेही टरे बइठेले बेटी के बाबा

tehī   ṭare   baiṭhele   beṭī   ke   bābā

आई गई दरमवा [धरमवा] के जून

āi   gai   daramawā   charamawā   ke   jū̃n

---

4. कँपेला धोतिया अउ कँपेला
   kã̃pelā   dhotiyā   au   kã̃pelā

   लोटिया
   loṭiyā

   कँपेला कुसवा के गाभ हो
   kã̃pelā   kusawā   ke   gābha   ho

5. मरये में कँपेला बेटी के बाबा
   maraye   mẽ   kã̃pelā   beṭī   ke   bābā

   कइसे कइसे देबो कन्यादान
   kaise   kaise   debo   kanyādān

6. मरये में कँपेला बेटी के बाबा
   maraye   mẽ   kã̃pelā   beṭī   ke   bābā

   कइसे कइसे देबो कन्यादान
   kaise   kaise   debo   kanyādān

7. सोनवा अउ रूपली के गुप्त
   sonawā   au   rupalī   ke   gupṭa

   संकल्पों
   sã̃kalapõ

   देओ गउरादेइ के दान हो
   deo   gaurādei   ke   dāna   ho

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8. हमके टू मोरे बाबा जँघा बइठाओ

    hamake ṭū more bābā jã̄gā baiṭhāo

  वइसे वइसे देओ कन्यादान

    waise waise deo kanyādān

9. हमके टू मोरे बाबा जँघा बइठाओ

    hamake ṭū more bābā jã̄ghā baiṭhāo

  वइसे वइसे देओ कन्यादान

    waise waise deo kanyādān

Example 12

Hariyara B̃́asawā Kaṭāye

Translation

1. My father has cut fresh green canes, and he has thatched the wedding canopy with betel leaves.

2. The daughter's father is sitting underneath the wedding canopy; the time for the religious ritual has arrived.

3. The daughter's father is sitting underneath the wedding canopy; the time for the religious ritual has arrived.

4. His loincloth is trembling, his brass pot is trembling, the bunch of kus grass is trembling.

5. In the wedding canopy the daughter's father is trembling. How will I give away my virgin daughter?

6. In the wedding canopy the daughter's father is trembling. How will I give away my virgin daughter?

7. I will make secret offerings of gold and silver to Parvati [Gaurā Dei]; after that offering you can give me away. (Permanand interpretation)

   I will offer gold and silver secretly; in that way I will give away my daughter [likened to Gaurā Dei]. (Pandey interpretation)

8. My father, you can put me on your lap; in this way you can give away your virgin daughter.

9. My father, you can put me on your lap; in this way you can give away your virgin daughter.

Example 12

Hariyara Bãsawā Kaṭāye

Meaning

Kalawatee: 'Bãsawā kaṭāye more bābā [बँसवा कटाये मोरे बाबा]. My father is cutting green bamboos. And then he is putting up a tent [marawā, मरवा] where he is covering it with the leaves of pan.... And then that, hariyara bãsawā kaṭāye more bābā pānana marawā chhawāyelā, tehī ṭare baiṭhele beṭī ke bābā [हरियर बँसवा कटाये मोरे बाबा पान्न मरवा छवायेल्ा, तेही टरे बइठेल्े बेटी के बाबा], underneath that tent my father is sitting. Beṭī ke bābā [बेटी के बाबा] is sitting. And now the time come for he to give away his daughter. Now he is trembling. How he is going to give away his daughter? Everything is trembling. The lota is trembling, his body is trembling, his dhoti is trembling. Everything that he touches is trembling.... Kãpelā dhotiyā kãpelā loṭiyā कॉपेल्ा धोतिया कॉपेल्ा लोटिया]... The kus grass that he has inside there, you know this fine

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grass? That and all, everything is trembling. How is he going to give away his daughter? Kā̃pelā dhotiyā kā̃pelā loṭiyā kā̃pelā kusawā ke gābha ho. Maraye mē̃ kā̃pelā beṭī ke bābā [काँपेला धोतिया काँपेला लोटिया काँपेला कुसवा के गम्भ हो। मरये में काँपेला बेटी के बाबा]. He's trembling. How I'm going to give away my daughter? And then the daughter is replying, "Get gold and silver ... and put it in the flour and give that away. And me now. Take me and put me on your leg, and then give me away. Sonawā au rupalī ke gupta sã̄kalapõ deo gaurādei ke dāna [सोनवा अउ रूपली के गुप्त सँकलपों देओ गउरादेइ के दान]. Give it to the Gods. And then me, hamake tū more bābā jã̄ghā baiṭhāo [हमके टू मोरे बाबा जँघा बइठाओ]. Put me on your leg and so give me away. Waise waise deo kanyādān [वइसे वइसे देओ कन्यादान].

Example 13

Tape No: Tl/74/F/68, Item 2 **Title:** Lauwā Na Parichho, Verse 1

Type: Byāh Ke Gīt (Wedding Song)

Area: Trinidad

Performer: Mrs and Mrs Permanand

Coll: HM   **Trans:** HM

3+4   ♩ = MM132

la- u- wā na pa- ri-chho ka- wa-na bha-ri-yā ho___ o- to___ba-hi nī___ to. hā- - i ra- - i ho.___ etc.

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('Brother, welcome the popped rice; that is your sister.')

Pitch

Range

FORM

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Verse							
Tune	a	a	a	a	a	a	
Text	A	A	B	C	D	D	

Example 13

1. भउवा न परिछो कवन भइया
   lauwā   na   parichho   kawana   bhaiyā

   हो, ओटो बहिनी टो
   ho,   oṭo   bahinī   ṭo

   हारइ हो
   hārai   ho

2. भउवा न परिछो कवन भइया
   lauwā   na   parichho   kawana   bhaiyā

   हो, ओटो बहिनी टो
   ho,   oṭo   bahinī   ṭo

   हारइ हो
   hārai   ho

---

16.   Tl/74/F/68, Item 2, Dhanpat and Kalawatee
Permanand, 5 Aug.

3. हल्ल बल्ल हल्लबल्ल दुल्हा चले
   hala bala hala bala dulahā chale

   हरवाहे के पुतउ हो
   harawāhe ke putau ho

4. ठुमुकी ठुमुकि मोरि धीया चले
   ṭhumukī ṭhumuki mori dhīyā chale

   रजवारे के धीयाउ हो
   rajawāre ke dhīyāu ho

5. अँमुठन मारो दुल्हे रामा हो,
   ãmuṭhana māro dulahe rāmā ho

   उटो बोहिनी टोहारइ हो
   uṭo bahinī ṭohārai ho

6. अँमुठन मारो दुल्हे रामा हो
   ãmuṭhana māro dulahe rāmā ho

   उटो धनिया टोहारइ हो
   uṭo dhaniyā ṭohārai ho

Example 13

Lauwā Na Parichho

Translation

1.   Brother, welcome the popped rice; that is your sister.

2.   Brother, welcome the popped rice; that is your sister.

3.   The bridegroom walks clumsily because he is the son of a plowman.

4.   My daughter is walking slowly and delicately because she is the daughter of a king.

5.   Hit the bridegroom Rama on the toe; that is the sister /the sister still belongs to the bride's family/.

6.   Hit the bridegroom Rama on the toe; that is the wife /the sister has been given away/.

/Song incomplete/

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Example 13

Lauwā Na Parichho

Meaning

Dhanpat: 'That is when they throwing the <u>lawa</u>.'

Kalawatee: 'When they going around the fire and they throwing the <u>lawa</u> ... the parched rice.'

Dhanpat: 'The paddy rice.'

Kalawatee: 'It burst like the corn.... So that one was explaining, "Don't <u>parchhe</u> the <u>lawa</u> because this is your sister. When you do that you're giving away your sister.

<u>Lauwā na parichho kawana bhaiyā ho, oṭo bahinī ṭo hār</u>

[लउवा न परिछो कवन भइया हो ओटो बहिनी टो हार]. It's your sister. Why you doing that for? You give away your sister. Don't do it."'

Example 14

Tape No: T1/74/F/68, Item 3 **Title:** Bābā Bābā, Verses 1 - 3 **Type:** Byāh Ke Gīt (Wedding Song) **Trans:** HM

Area: Trinidad **Performer:** Mrs and Mrs Permanand **Coll:** HM

♩=MM132-144

('She is calling 'father, father', but the father does not speak.')

('Oh, by the authority of the father the groom is putting the vermillion.')

Example 14

Title: Bābā bābā, Verses 1-3   Type:

Tape No:
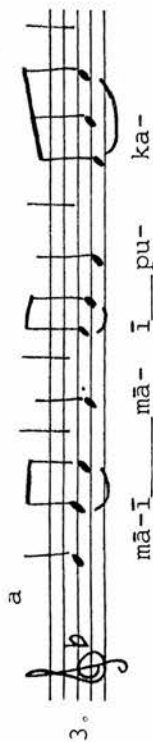
Area: Performer: Coll:

Trans:

a
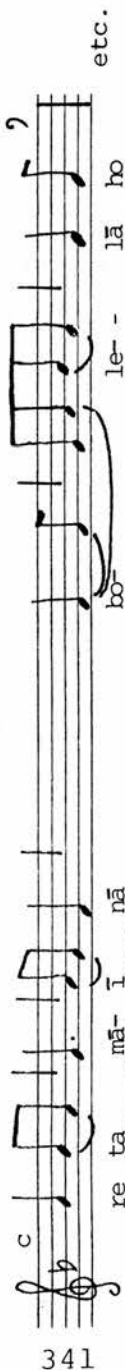
mā-ī___ mā- ī___ pu- ka-

('She is calling 'mother, mother', but the mother does not speak.')

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c

re ta___ mā- ī___ nā   bo—   le - -   lā ho   etc.

Range

Pitch

FORM

Verse	1	2	3	4	5	6
Tune	a'	b|a	a b|a	c|a	a b|a	a b||
Text	A	B|C	D E|A'	B'|C'	D' E'|A'	B'|C' D' E'||

Example 14

Bābā Bābā [17]

1. बाबा बाबा पुकारे त बाबा ना

   bābā   bābā   pukāre   ta   bābā   nā

   बोलेला हो

   bolelā   ho

2. आहो बाबाइ के बरियाई स्िंदुर

   āho   bābāi   ke   bāriyāī   sĩdura

   बर डारेइ हो

   bara   ḍārei   ho

3. माई माई पुकरे त माई ना

   māī   māī   pukare   ta   māī   nā

   बोलेला हो

   bolelā   ho

---

17. T1/74/F/68, Item 3, Dhanpat and Kalawatee Permanand, 5 Aug.

4. आहो म्याईय के बरियाइ सिंदुर
   āho   māīya   ke   bariyāi   sĩdura

   बर डारे भा हो
   bara   ḍāre   lā   ho

5. म्याई म्याई पुकारे त म्याई न
   bhāī   bhāī   pukāre   ta   bhāī   na

   बोलेला हो
   bolelā   ho

6. आहो म्याईय के बरियाइ सिंदुर
   āho   bhāīya   ke   bariyāi   sĩdura

   बर डालेला हो
   bara   ḍālelā   ho

Example 14

Bābā Bābā

Translation

1.   She is calling 'father, father', but the father does
not speak.

2.   Oh, by the authority of the father the groom is
putting the vermillion /in the parting of the bride's hair/.

3.   She is calling 'mother, mother', but the mother does
not speak.

4.   Oh, by the authority of the mother the groom is
putting the vermillion.

5.   She is calling 'brother, brother', but the brother does
not speak.

6.   Oh, by the authority of the brother the groom is
putting the vermillion.

Example 14

Bābā Bābā

Meaning

Dhanpat: 'That is the end of the wedding.'

Kalawatee: 'This is when he is going to put the sindur
/vermillion/ on her hair. She is calling on the father.
He's not answering. She say, "By the strength of you is
that is why he's doing me this now. I'm all will belong
to him; that go nothing to you." She is calling the
mother and the same thing she is repeating. Is through
the strength of the mother that the bridegroom is putting
the sindur. And she is calling the brother and the same
thing she is repeating. By the strength of the brother
he has the authority to put the sindur on her. They give
him the authority to now put the sindur on her.'

Dhanpat: 'So she is all gone!'

Kalawatee: 'Now she is his.'

Example 15

Tape No: T1/74/F/68, Item 4 Title: Sãjhai Type: Byāh Ke Gīt (Wedding Song)

Area: Trinidad Performer: Mrs and Mrs Permanand Coll: HM Trans: HM

♩ = MM 112
4+3

1.

sã-jha-i ba-ḍha- - rā u- ma-ri ai- - le ā-dhi rā-ti ba-ra- sa- i ____ ho

('In the evening the clouds come in the sky and at midnight it starts to rain.')

2 - 3.

b mai-yā ____ kho- le u de- u cha-na- ____

2)
('Mother, open the sandalwood door and let Rama enter the kohabar.')

3)
('Mother, open the sandalwood door and let Sita enter the kohabar.')

b na ke wa- ri- yā ____ 2)ra- mai- yā ____
                        3)si- ta- la ____

c jai- hāi ____ ko- ha- ba- ra ho

FORM

Verse	1	2	3	
Tune	e	b b c	b b c	
Text	A	B	C	

See also example 16

Range

Pitch

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Example 15

<u>Sãjhai</u>[18]

1. साँझइ बढ़रा उमरि अइले
   sãjhai   baḍharā   umari   aile

   आधि राति बरसइ हो
   ādhi   rāti   barasai   ho

2. मइया खोले देउ चन्नन केवरिया
   maiyā   khole   deu   chanana   ke wariyā

   रमइया जइहँइ कोहबर हो
   ramaiyā   jaihãi   kohabara   ho

3. मइया खोलि देउ चन्नन के वरिया
   maiyā   kholi   deu   chanana   ke   wariyā

   सीतल जइहँइ कोहबर हो
   sītala   jaihãi   kohabara   ho

---

18. Tl/74/F/68, Item 4. Dhanpat and Kalawatee
Permanand, 5 Aug.

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Example 15

<u>Sãjhai</u>

<u>Translation</u>

1.   In the evening the clouds come in the sky and at
midnight it starts to rain.

2.   Mother, open the sandalwood door and let Rama enter
the <u>kohabar</u> /room in which wedding rituals are performed/.

3.   Mother, open the sandalwood door and let Sita enter
the <u>kohabar</u>.

Example 15

Sãjhai

Meaning

Dhanpat: 'It say the rain is set up and it will fall just now. So open the big door which is make of sandalwood. And let Rama enter. And let Sita enter to the kohabar. This is where they go inside.'

After I thanked the sisters for singing these songs
of the wedding day, I asked, 'Do you know the hardi song,
the one about the swans, the male swan and the female swan?'
I sang a line or two from the very first song that Moon
had taught me. This surprised them a little.

'That is for the Friday,' Dhanpat said.

'That is when I telling you,' Kalawatee said. 'They
putting this saffron and thing /the uthawe hardi, 'rubbing
in of saffron'/ and they fixing that kalasa /clay pot/.
They sing it when the lady is fixing the kalasa.'

She went out of the room and returned with a kalasa
to show me. It is a small earthenware pot, about six inches
high, tapered at the top and with a small lip.

'So', Kalawatee continued, 'this is what they sing
while they fixing that.'

Moon had already explained to me what was meant by
'fixing'. She had said:

'The nanad /Bhojpuri: 'sister-in-law'/ have to gotay
/Bhojpuri: 'decorate', 'braid'/ that kalasa. Mean they have
to put gobar /Bhojpuri: 'cow dung'/ on the kalasa, that is
so and so and so /in eight or so rows from the top of the pot
to the bottom/ and chook /Creole: 'place', 'stick'/ dhan
/Bhojpuri: 'paddy rice'/ inside it /the gobar that is/.

Dhanpat turned to her sister and asked quietly,
'Are we singing the hansā /'male swan'/ hansin /'female
swan'/? That is what she sing.'

Kalawatee simply nodded and then they started to sing
(ex. 16).

Example 16a

Tape No: T1/74/F/68, Item 1 Title: Ādheya Talawa, Verses 1-2 (Hardi Song)

Type: Byāh Ke Gīt (Wedding Song)

Area: Trinidad   **Coll:** HM   **Trans:** HM

Performer: Mrs and Mrs Permanand

♩=MM116

4+3

'antarā'

e
ā-dhe-ya ta-la— wa mẽ nā- ga lo— ṭe__ ā-dhe_ mẽ na-gi- nī lo- ṭe__ ho

('The male snake is moving in half of the pond and the female snake is moving in half of the pond.')

'sthāyī'

'R'

2. ā- ho__ta-ba- hõ__nā ta-la-

wa chu- hi- la bhai- le e- ka__

re ka- ma-   la bi- na ho   etc.

('Oh, even then the pond is not pleasant without the lotus leaf.')

Range

Pitch

351

Example 16b

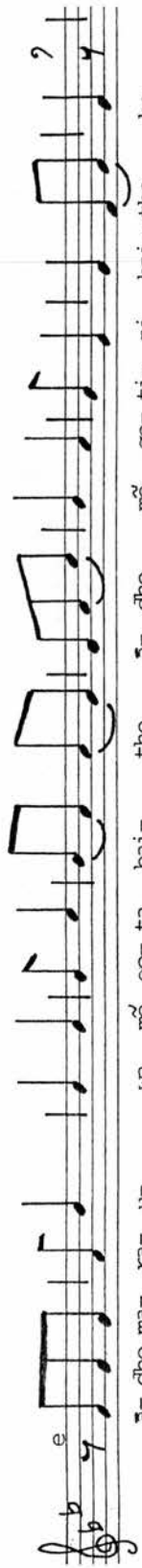Tape No: Tl/74/F/68, Item 1   Title : Ādheya Talawa, Verse Variants   Type : Byāh Ke Gīt (Wedding Song)

Area : Trinidad   Performer : Mrs and Mrs Permanand   Coll : HM   Trans : HM

Example 16

Ādheya Talawa [19]

1. आध्येय तल्लव मैं नाग लोटे

   ādheya   talawa   mẽ   nāga   loṭe

   आधे मैं नीगिनी लोटे हो

   ādhe   mẽ   naginī   loṭe   ho

2. आहो तबहाँ ना तल्लव चूहिल म्हइले

   āho   tabahõ   nā   talawa   chuhila   bhaile

   रक रे कमल बिन हो

   eka   re   kamala   bina   ho

3. आहो तबहाँ ना तल्लव चूहिल म्हइले

   āho   tabahõ   nā   talawa   chuhila   bhaile

   रक रे कमल बिन हो

   eka   re   kamala   bina   ho

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19. T1/74/F/68, Item 1. Dhanpat and Kalawatee
Permanand, 5 Aug.

4. आधे मरउवा में गोट बइठे आधे
   ādhe   marauwā   mẽ   goṭa   baiṭhe   ādhe

   में गोतिनि बइठे हो
   mẽ   gotini   baiṭhe   ho

5. आहो तबहोँ ना मरवा सोहावन एक
   āho   tabahõ   nā   marawā   sohāwana   eka

   रे नन्द बीन हो
   re   nanada   bīna   ho

6. आहो तबहोँ ना मरवा सोहावन एक
   āho   tabahõ   nā   marawā   sohāwana   eka

   रे नन्द बीन हो
   re   nanada   bīna   ho

7. अरे अरे गाँउ के नउनिया नन्द
   are   are   gãu   ke   nauniyā   nanada

   हमरे लागउ हो
   hamare   lāgau   ho

8. नाउनि बइठो ना माँझ मारउवा
   nāuni   baiṭho   nā   mãjha   mārauwā

   कलस हमरे गोँठउ हो
   kalasa   hamare   gõṭhau   ho

9. नागिनि बइठो ना माँझ मारउवा
   nāgini baiṭho nā mā̃jha mārauwā

   कलस हमरे गोँठउ
   kalasa hamare gõṭhau

10. इतना बचन जब कहले अउ
    itanā bachana jaba kahale au

    कहउ ना पवलइ हो
    kahau nā pawalai ho

11. आहो लिली घोड़ी आवे नन्दोइया
    āho lilī ghoṛī āwe nanadoiyā

    त दौड़िया नानदि हमरे हो
    ta dã̄riyā nānadi hamare ho

12. आहो लिली घोड़ी आवे नन्दोइया
    āho lilī ghoṛī āwe nanadoiyā

    त डोलिया नानदि हमरे
    ta ḍoliya nānadi hamare

13. आवहू र नन्दी आव हू आइ के
    āwahū e nanadī āwa hū āi ke

    सुनवउ हो
    sunawau ho

14. नन्दी बइठो ना माँझ मरउवा
nanadī   baiṭho   nā   mā̃jha   marauwā

कलस हमरे गोठउ हो
kalasa   hamare   gō̃ṭhau   ho

15. गोठिला र भउजी गोठिला अवरु
gō̃ṭhilā   e   bhaujī   gō̃ṭhilā   awaru

से गोठिला हो
se   gō̃ṭhilā   ho

16. भउजी का देवो हमर के दान
bhaujī   kā   dewo   hamara   ke   dāna

रँहसि घर जाइब हो
rã̄hasi   ghara   jāibā   ho

17. माँगउ रे नन्दी माँगहु माँगि
mā̃gau   ai   nanadī   mā̃gahu   mā̃gi

के सुनावउ हो
ke   sunāwau   ho

18. नन्दी जो कछु हदय समाई
nanadī   jo   kachhu   hadaya   samāī

सोइय कब मागउ
soiya   kaba   māgau

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19. अपन के चटकी चुनरिया भयनवा
apana ke chaṭakī chunariyā bhayanawā

के मोहर हो
ke mohara ho

20. भउजी प्रभु जी के चढ़ने के घोड़वा
bhaujī prabhu jī ke charhane ke ghoṛawā

रहाँसि घर जइबउ हो
rahāsi ghara jaibau ho

21. आहो प्रभु जी के चढ़ने के घोड़वा
āho prabhu jī ke charhane ke ghoṛawā

रहाँसि घर जइबउ हो
rāhasi ghara jaibau ho

22. नाहिँ हमें चटकी चुनरिया नाहीँ रे
nahī̃ hamẽ chaṭakī chunariyā nahī̃ re

हमें मोहर हो
hamẽ mohara ho

23. ननदी नाहिँ हमें चढ़ने के घोरवा
nanadī nahī̃ hamẽ charhane ke ghoṛawā

नउजि रहाँसि घरे जाउ
nauji rāhasi ghare jāu

24. बोलत रहलीँ हस बोलना के अवरू
    bolata rahalī̃ hasa bolanā ke awaru

    ठिठोलना से हो
    ṭhiṭholanā se ho

25. प्रभु नेवतउ तू कुल परिवार बहिनि
    prabhu newatau tū kula pariwāra bahini

    जनि नेवतउ
    jani newatau

26. डुट हरवा ही के बेटी चरवाही के
    ḍuṭa harawā hī ke beṭī charawāhī ke

    बहिनी तू हो
    bahinī tū ho

27. धना एकइ कोख के बहिनिया
    dhanā ekai kokha ke bahiniyā

    बहिनि कसना नेवतउ हो
    bahini kasanā newatau ho

28. अपने मैँ बहिनी के चुनरी
    apane maī̃ bahinī ke chunarī

    बसइहौ भयनवा के मोहर
    basaihai bhayanawā ke mohara

29. आहो प्रभु जी के चढ़ने के
aho prabhu jī ke charhane ke

धोरवा रहँसि घर जइहँउ हो
ghorawā rãhasi ghara jaihãu ho

30. आहो प्रभु जी के चरने के
aho prabhu jī ke charane ke

धोरवा रहँसि बोहिनि घर
ghorawā rãhasi bahini ghara

जइबो हो
jaibo ho

Example 16

Ādheya Talawa

Translation

1.   The male snake is moving in half of the pond and the female snake is moving in half of the pond.

2.   Oh, even then the pond is not pleasant without the lotus leaf.

3.   Oh, even then the pond is not pleasant without the lotus leaf.

4.   In half the wedding tent (canopy) the male relatives are sitting and in half the female relatives are sitting.

5.   Oh, even then the tent is not beautiful without the one sister-in-law.

6.   Oh, even then the tent is not beautiful without the one sister-in-law.

7.   Oh, wife of the village barber, serve as my sister-in-law.

8.   Wife of the barber, sit in the middle of the wedding canopy and decorate my pot.

9.   Female snake, sit in the middle of the wedding canopy and decorate my pot.

10. As she said all these words, she could not finish.

11. Oh, my brother-in-law is coming on the mare and my sister-in-law in the palanquin.

12. Oh, my brother-in-law is coming on the mare and my sister-in-law in the palanquin.

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13. Oh, my sister-in-law come and tell me your news.

14. Sister-in-law, sit in the middle of the canopy and decorate my pot.

15. I will decorate your pot, sister-in-law, I will decorate it, I will decorate it.

16. Sister-in-law, what gift will you give me so that I will go home happily?

17. Sister-in-law, ask and let me know your demands.

18. Sister-in-law, tell what you want.

19. For myself, I want a deeply coloured bride's sari, for my son a gold coin.

20. Sister-in-law, for my husband I want a horse to ride so that he will go home happily.

21. Oh, for my husband I want a horse to ride so that he will go home happily.

22. I do not have a deeply coloured bride's sari, I do not have a gold coin.

23. Sister-in-law, I do not have a horse to ride; I don't care if you go home happily.

24. Until now she had been talking nicely and joking.

25. My husband, invite your whole family but do not invite your sister.

26. Daughter of the farmer whose plow has broken and sister of a herdsman.

27. My wife, we are born of the same parent. How can I not invite my sister?

28. I will buy a sari for my sister and a gold coin for my nephew.

29. Oh, I will buy a horse to ride for my brother-in-law, and they will go home happily.

30. Oh, I will buy a horse to ride for my brother-in-law, and they will go home happily.

They omitted the verse about the swans that I had
already sung. As soon as I heard the first line, I realised
that their version began with a different tune than the one
Moon had taught me. I wondered if they had misunderstood
and were singing some other song for the Friday of the
wedding. But then they sang the second and third lines to
the melody I knew, and I began to recognise portions of the
text that I had carefully memorized. The fourth line used
the new melody again, but by then I could hear that it was
the same song after all. When they finished, Kalawatee
began to explain the meaning.

'The male swan is feeding in half of the pond and
the female is feeding in the other half, yet the pond is
not beautiful without the flowers of the kamal, the lotus
flowers,' she explained, even though their version mentioned
snakes, not swans. 'When the time come for the sister-in-
law to fix the kalasa [कलस] for the wedding, she was
not there. So the sister-in-law, the brother's wife ...
the nanad [ननद] - the husband's sister is called nanad
and the husband's wife is called bhauji [भउजी] ... this
is between two sister-in-law....She was not there. She
didn't reach in time. So the lady who goes all about and
do the fixing up the bedi and everything for the wedding,
she is asking her that my sister-in-law is not here so who
can do her part and do it for me?... The house-lady is telling
her - well, my sister-in-law is not here, but you can do
the part for me. So while she was saying that, the sister,
she saw the sister-in-law and her husband coming. Itanā

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bachana jaba kahale au kahau nā pawalai [इतना बचन जब कहले अउ कहउ ना पवाल्इ]. She says she did not say until she see. Āho lilī ghorī āwe nanadoiyā ta dā̃r̥īyā nānadi hamare [आहो लिली घोड़ी आवे ननदोइया तदँडिया नानेदि हम्पर]. Till she see the horse her brother-in-law's coming and the panqualin [palanquin]. How they carrying. The sister-in-law is coming. So she say, well come and do your bidding. So she say, yes, well, I'm coming to do it. But what you going to give me for doing it? So she said, ask. So she say "I want a very beautiful sari and I want a gold piece for my son and I want a horse for my husband." So she turn to the husband and she said that "I was telling you not to invite you sister, because we don't have all these things to give!" So then he turn around to curse and tell her that "You, you're a gardener's daughter and you're a grass cutter's sister." Charawāhī ke bahinī [चरवाही के बहिनी].'

'"Feeding cattle"', Dhanpat added, '"your brother is feeding cattle and your father is ... "'

'"Cutting grass,"' Kalawatee continued with the story. '"This is the kind of home you come from!" He say, "I'm going to give my sister the sari, and I'm going to give my nephew the gold piece, and I'm going to give my brother-in-law the horse, and they will be happy and return home." So he say, "How you don't want me to invite them. She's my own sister from one father and mother. How dare you tell me not to invite her?" He curse her and he say, Ekai kokha ke bahiniyā bahini kasanā newatau [एकइ कोख के बहिनिया बहिनि कसना

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न्ेवत्उ *J.* We come from one mother and father. How you don't want me to invite them? I am going to get everything she ask for and she will go back, leave my house pleasing."'

That was the end of the 'meaning' and they both burst out laughing.

The Hardi Song

That evening, back in Felicity, I browsed through the Ramayan of Tulsidas that Pandit Basraj had suggested I read. The description of Rama and Sita's marriage is in the first book, Bālakāṇḍa, beginning around the 286th doha (verse). As I read the long section, the similarities between this epic tale and the story Dhanpat and Kalawatee had sung for me were obvious. Of course there are many differences as well, but the basic story is identical. Rama arrives in a magnificent wedding procession, Sita's father greets Rama and bows to him, gifts are exchanged, Rama amazes everyone with his beauty, Sita's mother greets him and performs ārtī, Sita is given away by her father, and so forth.[20]

It would be the work of a lifetime to determine the precise relationship between the text of the Tulsidas Ramayan and the wedding songs in Felicity. But there is no reason to doubt that the songs were either taken directly from the

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20. Śrī Rāmacharitamānasa, 3rd ed. (Gita Press, Gorakhpur, India, 1976), pp. 226-84.

text (and have changed since), or (perhaps more likely) that songs and text both sprang from a common source in oral tradition. In either case, I had discovered this great epic tradition of the Gangeatic plain in a Trinidad village. How the texts and tunes had changed when transported to the New World was a puzzle.

One method of tracing change was to examine variants. For instance, the version of the hardi song that the Permanands sang (ex. 16) had a tune ('e') for the verse (antarā) that I had never heard in Felicity (variations in tune 'e' are given in ex. 16a). Moon's version of the hardi song is a typical example of the Felicity style (ex. 17, p. 367). The range is narrow. The antarā melody 'e' is absent. And neither sthāyī nor antarā explore the upper portion of the saptak ('octave'). Moreover, in Moon's version, the sthāyī and the antarā tunes are almost identical (sthāyī - a b c; antarā - b b c). Because melody 'e' is at a higher tonal level, we hear in the Permanand version the typically Indian juxtaposition of sthāyī and antarā phrases as question/answer or antecedent/consequence. Nearly all the examples in Tewari's collection have this contrasting tonal level in sthāyī and antarā phrases. This melodic tension is almost entirely absent in the Felicity version, where sthāyī and antarā are nearly identical. But several of the other Permanand examples have this juxtaposition of sthāyī and antarā at different tonal levels (see exx. 9, 10, 12, and 15).

The responsorial organization of Moon's and the Permanand's versions would be identical in an actual wedding.

The lady (or group) who 'carries' (leads) the singing would
begin with a verse. Then she would sing the chorus. The
ladies who 'take up' would repeat the chorus. The leader
would repeat the chorus a third time; the group would repeat
the chorus a fourth time. Then the leader would go on to
the second verse line and the second chorus line. Hence
the form is as shown on Table III. With so many repetitions,
the songs are self-teaching. A lady who is singing on the
side that takes up has two chances to learn the words of
the chorus before a new verse is introduced. If she knows
the chorus, then she can concentrate on learning the verses.
All that is required for this tradition to survive is one
strong singer in any generation. As long as there is one
lady to 'carry' the rest can take up. Responsorial patterns
of this nature are common throughout the world because they
allow for the universal situation that any one community
always has strong as well as weak tradition bearers.
Tewari and Henry found the same self-teaching mechanism in
the folk songs of Uttar Pradesh. As one of Tewari's female
singers told him, 'Jaise bani paḍā vaise gā bajā leita hai
/We sing and play, the best we can/. We are not aware of
any specific pitches or rhythms. We are concerned only
with imitating the person who knows the song. This is how
we learn new songs.... Not all of us know the songs, but
we try to go along with the lead singer.'[21]

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21. Tewari, p. xi.

Example 17

Tape No: T2/75/F/48, Item 49 Title: Ādhe Talaiyā, Verses 1 - 3
(Hardi Song)

Type: Byāh Ke Gīt (Wedding Song)

Area: Felicity, Trinidad   Performer: Moon Ramnarine   Coll: HM   Trans: HM

♩=MM108   4+3

1. ā-dhe ta-la-i--yā mẽ__ han-sin chu-ne   ā- - dhe mẽ__ han-sā chu-ne ho

('The male swan is feeding in half of the pond and the female swan is feeding in half of the pond.')

2. a-re___ ta-ba- - hī__na ta-la-

wā so- - hā- wa-na e-ka- - hī na- na-da bi-na ho

('Oh, even then the pond is not beautiful without the one sister-in-law /sic; lotus leaf/.')

Example 17

Title: Ādhe Talaiyā (Hardi Song)

Performer:

Tape No:

Area:

Type:

Coll:

Trans:

a- re____ta- ba- hū___na ta- la-

wā so- hā- wa- na e- ka- hī na- na-da bī- na ho

('Oh, even then the pond is not beautiful without the
one sister-in-law /sic; lotus leaf/.')

Pitch

Range

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Example 17

Ādhe Talaiyā [22]

Moon Ramnarine

1. आधे तलइया में हैंसिन चुने आधे में
   ādhe   talaiyā   mẽ   hansin   chune   ādhe   mẽ

   हँसा चुने हो
   hansā   chune   ho

2. अरे तबहू न तलवा सोहावन सकही
   are   tabahū   na   talawā   sohāwana   ekahī

   ननद बीन हो
   nanada   bīna   ho

3. अरे तबहू न तलवा सोहावन सकही
   are   tabahū   na   talawā   sohāwana   ekahī

   ननद बीन हो
   nanada   bīna   ho

4. आधे मड़उवा मोरे नइहर आधे
   ādhe   maṛuwā   more   naihara   ādhe

   ससुरारे के हो
   sasurāre   ke   ho

5. अरे तबहू न मड़वा सोहावन सकही
   are   tabahū   na   maṛawā   sohāwana   ekahī

   ननद बीन हो
   nanada   bīna   ho

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22. T2/75/F/48, Item 49. 17 July 1975.

6. अरे तबहू न मड़वा सोहावन एकही

are tabahū na maṛawā sohāwana ekahī

ननद बीन हो

nanada bīna ho

7. आल्हर बसवा कटावे भइया मड़वा छवावेला हो

ālhara basawā kaṭāwe bhaiyā maṛawā chhawāwelā ho

8. अरे ऊचे चढ़ि भइया मोरे चितवे बहिनी

are ūche chaḍhi bhaiyā more chitawe bahinī

मोरे आवेला हो

more āwelā ho

9. अरे ऊचे चढ़ि भइया मोरे चितवे बहिनी

are ūche chaḍhi bhaiyā more chitawe bahinī

मोरे आवेला हो

more āwelā ho

10. भीतर हउवा कि बाहर र मोरे

bhītara hauwa ki bāhara e more

धनियाँ हो

dhaniyā ho

11. धना आवेला बबा के दुलारी गरब

dhanā āwelā babā ke dulārī garaba

नहीँ बोलबउ हो

nahī̃ bolabau ho

12. धाना आवेला बबा के दुलारी गरब

dhāna āwelā babā ke dulārī garaba

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नाहीँ बोलबउ हो
nahī̃ bolabau ho

13. आव आव ननद गोसाईनी मोरे
āwa āwa nanada gosāĩnī more

ठुकुरईनि हो
ṭhakuraini ho

14. ननदी बइठो मोरे चनन पीढ़इया कलसा
nanadī baiṭho more chanana pīḍhaiyā kalasā

मोर गोँठउ हो
mora gothau ho

15. ननदी बइठो मोरे चनन पीढ़इया कलसा
nanadī baiṭho more chanana pīḍhaiyā kalasā

मोर गोँठउ हो
mora gõṭhau ho

16. गोँठब र भउजी कलसा गोँठउनी
gõṭhaba e bhaujī kalasā gõṭhaunī

कुछ चोहेल हो
kuchha chahela ho

17. गोँठब र भउजी कलसा गोँठउनी
gõṭhaba e bhaujī kalasā gõṭhaunī

कुछ चोहेल हो
kuchha chahela ho

18. तोहरे जोगे लहर पटोर बबुल जोगे
tohre joge lahara paṭora babula joge

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हँसुली हो
h̃asulī   ho

19. ननदोइया जोगे चढ़ने के घोरवा हँसत
nanadoiyā   joge   chadhane ke   ghorawā   h̃asata

घरे चली जइबा हो
ghare   chalī   jaibā   ho

20. ननदोइया जोगे चढ़ने के घोरवा हँसत
nanadoiya   joge   chadhane ke   ghorawā   h̃asata

घरे चली जइबा हो
ghare   chalī   jaibā   ho

21. कहाँ पइबों लहर पटोर कहाँ मैं
kah̃a   paib̃o   lahara   paṭora   kah̃a   m̃ai

पइबों हसुली हो
paib̃o   hasulī   ho

22. अरे कहाँ पइबो चढ़ने के घोरवा
are   kah̃a   paibo   chadhane   ke   ghorawā

कलसा मोरे नाही गोठ हो
kalasā   more   nāhī   goṭha   ho

23. रोवत निकरे ननदिया त सुसुकत
rowata   nikare   nanadiyā   ta   susukata

भगीनवा हो
bhagīnawā   ho

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24. अरे हँसत के निकरे नन्दोइया भले रे

are hãsata ke nikre nanadoiyā bhale re

मनवा टूटल हो

manawā ṭūṭala ho

25. अरे हँसत के निकरे नन्दोइया भलेरे

are hãsata ke nikre nanadoiyā bhalere

मनवा टूटल हो

manawā ṭūṭala ho

26. चुप रहु से धना चुप रहु आवरू से

chupa rahu ai dhanā chupa rahu awarū se

चुप रहु हो

chupa rahu ho

27. धना जइबो मैं राजा के नौकरिया

dhanā jaibo mãi rājā ke naukariyā

सबहे चीज़ बसेहब हो

sabahe chīza basehaba ho

28. तोहरे जोगे लहर पटोर बिटिवा

tohre joge lahara paṭora biṭiwā

जोगे हँसुली हो

joge hãsulī ho

29. अरे अपने जोगे चढ़ने के घोरवा

are apane joge chadhane ke ghorawā

त सार के देखइब हो
ta   sāra   ke   dekhaiba   ho

30. अरे अपने जोगे चढ़ने के घोरवा
are   apane   joge   chaḍhane   ke   ghorawā

त सार के देखइब हो
ta   sāra   ke   dekhaiba   ho

31. बजर परे तोहरे चुनरी बजर परे
bajara   pare   tohre   chunari   bajara   pare

हाँसुली हो
hãsulī   ho

32. अरे बजर परे तोरे घोरवा नइहर
are   bajara   pare   tore   ghorawā   naihara

ना बिसराइब हो
nā   bisarāiba   ho

33. अरे बजर परे तोरे घोरवा नइहर
are   bajara   pare   tore   ghorawā   naihara

ना बिसराइब हो
nā   bisarāiba   ho

Example 17

Ādhe Talaiyā [23]

(Text Corrections by Moon Ramnarine)

1a. आधे तलइया में हँसिन चुने
     ādhe   talaiyā   mẽ   hansina   chūne

     आधे में हँसा चुने हो
     ādhe   mẽ   hansā   chūne   ho

1b. अरे तबहू न तलवा सोहावन एकही
     are   tabahū   na   talawā   sohāwana   ekahī

     पुरइन बीन हो
     puraina   bīna   ho

1c. अरे तबहू न तलवा सोहावन एकही
     are   tabahū   na   talawā   sohāwana   ekahī

     पुरइन बीन हो
     puraina   bīna   ho

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23 . The three opening lines of this song were sung
incorrectly. Moon supplied the correct opening lines
above (1a, b, and c).

Example 17

Ādhe Talaiyā

Translation

1.   The male swan is feeding in half of the pond and the female swan is feeding in half of the pond.

2.   Oh, even then the pond is not beautiful without the one sister-in-law /sic/.*

3.   Oh, even then the pond is not beautiful without the one sister-in-law /sic/.

4.   In half of the wedding tent (canopy) is my mother's side and in half is my father-in-law's side.

5.   Oh, even then the tent is not beautiful without the one sister-in-law.

6.   Oh, even then the tent is not beautiful without the one sister-in-law.

7.   My brother is cutting green bamboo to cover the wedding tent.

8.   Oh, my brother climbs to a balcony, watching - is my sister coming?

9.   Oh, my brother climbs to a balcony, watching - is my sister coming?

10. Are you inside or outside, oh my wife?

11. Wife, the pet child of my father is coming; don't speak rudely to her.

12. Wife, the pet child of my father is coming; don't speak rudely to her.

13. Come on, come on sister-in-law, you are my queen and mistress.

14. Sister-in-law, come sit down on my sandalwood board and decorate my pot.

15. Sister-in-law, come sit down on my sandalwood board and decorate my pot.

16. I will decorate the pot oh sister-in-law, but I want something for decorating it.

17. I will decorate the pot oh sister-in-law, but I want something for decorating it.

18. I want a very beautiful sari and a locket for my son.

19. For the brother-in-law a horse to ride going laughing back home.

20. For the brother-in-law a horse to ride going laughing back home.

21. Where will I get a silk sari? Where will I get a locket?

22. Oh, where will I get a horse? Don't decorate my pot.

23. The sister-in-law is coming out crying and the nephew sobbing.

24. Oh, the brother-in-law comes out laughing. It is a good thing your pride has perished.

25. Oh, the brother-in-law comes out laughing. It is a good thing your pride has perished.

26. Be quiet my wife, be quiet, be quiet.

27. Wife, I will go and serve the king and buy everything.

28. For you I will buy the silk sari, for the daughter a locket.

29. Oh, for myself a horse to ride to show my brother-in-law.

30. Oh, for myself a horse to ride to show my brother-in-law.

31. To hell with your sari, to hell with your locket!

32. To hell with your horse! I will not forget my mother's house.

33. To hell with your horse! I will not forget my mother's house.

1a. The male swan is feeding in half of the pond and the female swan is feeding in half of the pond.

1b. Oh, even then the pond' is not beautiful without the lotus leaf.

1c. Oh, even then the pond is not beautiful without the lotus leaf.

* A mistake. The text should be '<u>are tabahū na talawā sohāwana ekahī puraina bīna ho.</u>' Moon pointed out the mistake and supplied the correct opening lines (1a, b, and c).

TABLE III

STRUCTURE AND RESPONSORIAL FORM OF THE HARDI SONG

		FELICITY VERSION text	tune	PERMANAND VERSION text	tune
Solo	antarā	A	a b c	A	e
Solo	sthāyī	B	b b c	B	b b c
Group	sthāyī	B	b b c	B	b b c
Solo	sthāyī	B	b b c	B	b b c
Group	sthāyī	B	b b c	B	b b c
Solo	antarā	C	a b c	C	e
Solo	sthāyī	D	b b c	D	b b c
Group	sthāyī	D	b b c	D	b b c
Solo	sthāyī	D	b b c	D	b b c
Group	sthāyī	D	b b c	D	b b c
Solo	antarā	E	a b c	E	e

With only two variants to study, I was unable to
resolve the question raised by melody 'e': the importance
of melodic tension between sthāyī and antarā phrases in
the Felicity wedding-song repertory. I set out to collect
as many examples of the hardi song as possible. One evening
in Felicity, Phakani, Rajeeyah, Ramdaye, Tulsiah, Siewrajiah,
and Dhanmati sang it for me. That made three versions I
had collected in 1974. In 1975, Moon sang the hardi song
for me a second time. One afternoon when I was visiting
Channu and her aunt, Ramkalia sang it. Then Rajia, who
lived across the street from Mesho, sang it. Soloman's
mother, Siewrajiah, sang it, and Mesho's aunts Sahodare and
Bhagmania sang it. These together with the three from 1974
made a total of eight versions. By 1977, Moon had died.
I went to visit her daughter, Chandroutie, and she sang
the hardi song. Unfortunately, she had trouble remembering
many of the verses her mother had taught her. Rajia sang
it for me a second time. Ravi's grandmother sang a portion
of it. Rookmin sang it. And just before I left Felicity,
Matti invited a group of ladies for a party, and they all
sang it for me. This made 13 versions in total.[24]

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24. T1/74/F/9, Phakani Bedassie, Rajeeyah Ramserran,
Ramdaye Bhaswandeen, Tulsiah Ramcharran, Siewrajiah Lochan,
Dhanmati Lochan, 12 July; T1/74/F/42, Moon Ramnarine, 28
July; Myers Trinidad Collection 1975, Open-reel Field Tape
no. 1, Siewrajiah Lochan, 21 June, hereafter referred to
as T1/75/F/1; T2/75/F/21, Ramkalia Samooj, 26 June;
T2/75/F/46, Rajia Sooknanan, 2 July; T2/75/F/48, Moon
Ramnarine, 17 July; T2/75/F/62, Sahodare Nanan and Bhagmania
George, 21 July; T3/77/CS/57, 4 Dec.; T3/77/CS/69, Aji
Ramsamooj, 11 Dec.; T3/77/F/123, Phyman Ali and Group,
12 Dec.; T3/77/F/130b, Chandroutie Benny, 13 Dec.

The variants differed in several respects. Most obvious was the length of the text. The longest variant had 36 lines of text, the shortest only 13. In the shorter examples, lines of text had been omitted, for example, some began with the description of the wedding tent, omitting the opening lines about the swans feeding in the pond or snakes moving in the pond. The singers also differed in the intonation of the 3rd and 7th degrees of the scale; in some of the examples these degrees are flattened, and in others more nearly natural. Also singers differed in their interpretation of rhythm 'R' (see exx. 16, 17). Some rendered this as a triplet figure, others as two nearly equal quavers.

Each time I asked another lady or another group to sing the hardi song, I expected I might hear melody 'e', the antarā phrase. But I never found that tune again. A second suprise is that of the total of over 100 wedding songs I collected during this project, the tune and structure of Moon's version of the hardi song (sthāyī - a b c; antarā - b b c) recurred in nearly one half of them (as in exx. 14 and 15). This too was a contrast with Tewari's collection of wedding songs from Uttar Pradesh in which no two songs had the same melody.

There are a number of possible explanations for these facts. Professor Adesh felt that antarā melody 'e' might have been copied from a film song. I asked him:

'The Indian wedding songs in Trinidad, where do you think they come from?'

'Most of them are from Uttar Pradesh in India,' he
replied.

'Are they still sung there today?'

'Yes, many of these tunes are the same.'

'Here in Trinidad many of the songs have the same
tune,' I commented. 'There are many texts but few tunes.'

'Yes', he said, 'in India there are plenty more
tunes and each with a text. However, certain songs are in
the same tala. If the meter is the same, sometimes people
start to sing them on the same tune as people do here. But
in India you hardly find this. There the songs are different
- different texts and different tunes. In every province,
you will find traditional song. But here people sing their
own texts on the same tune.'

'Do you think any of the wedding-song texts were
composed in Trinidad?' I asked.

'I haven't heard any that were,' he replied.

'Do you think they've all been brought from India?'

'Yes, carried on. No doubt some of them have lost
their original flavour, but they are carried on.'

'It seems that in some cases they have lost the
upper tetrachord - pa dha ni sa - that part of the tune.'
I commented. 'But some singers in Port of Spain know verses
that go into the upper tetrachord.'

'The antarā', he said, 'the antarā part, yes. You
see generally these folk songs, they go from sahraj to panchan,
sa to pa.... The antarā will go like a verse and the sthāyī
like a chorus. But some people feel it is nice to sing the

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antarā high in order to give improvisations. They do their own.... But with the impact of films and film music, folk songs are changing. They put the music director's own version and they carry it towards the high octave now.'

'But do they hear wedding songs in films here in Trinidad?' I asked.

'Yes, you will get wedding songs in films. These songs are all in kaharwa. Kaharwa is the tala for light music and folk music. Eight beats divided four by four.'

'But sometimes these Felicity ladies sing in another tala.' I sang the first two lines of the hardi song ('a b c', 'b b c').

'This is dīpchandi,' he said. 'This is the 14 beats. Three, four, three, four:

dhā	dhīn	dhā	ge	tīn	tā	tīn	dhā	dhā	dhīn
X		X			0		X		

'This is dīpchandi. In Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Bihar you will find songs in kaharwa and dīpchandi. Because this is the rhythm of three and four, three and four. It is also called chāchar. Because the folk singers in the village, these people they don't know /the term/ dīpchandi. They know chāchar.'[25]

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25.   T3/75/CS/52, Interview SP12, 1 Dec. (FN/12-16).

Another possible explanation is that _antarā_ melody
'e' was not learned from a film but is an older melody now
forgotten in Felicity. Which explanation is more accurate?
What forces influenced this repertory of wedding songs?
When the Indians arrived, they brought with them a rich song
tradition. In the New World, this repertory was subject to
the forces of conservation and the forces of change. Of the
forces of conservation the greatest was the Indian's love
for their culture and their need to cling to it under the
oppressive conditions of the indenture. This is the theory
of marginal survivals, a theory of preservation and stagna-
tion according to which a people when at home generally allow
their traditions change with the times; whilst away from
home they tend to preserve their traditions unchanged. In
this state of suspended animation, cut off from its source,
a song repertory may be passed on virtually unchanged from
one generation to the next.

That is the case for conservation, supported only
by a love of traditional ways. The case for change is much
stronger. Firstly, acculturation - the influence of other
racial and cultural groups in Trinidad, particularly the
African Negroes and the English. Secondly, the pressure
for the Indians to conform to the norms of plantation life
(this accounts, for example, for the breakdown of many caste
restrictions). Thirdly, forgetfulness with the passage of
years. Finally, the virtual loss of contact with the culture
of India. It would be incorrect to say that there was no
contact at all, for new recruits continued to arrive in

Trinidad up until 1917. This steady influx of indentured labour from India must have affected the wedding song tradition, but I doubt if there is any way to know just what the effect was. Do the wedding songs in Trinidad in the 1970's and 80's reflect the repertory of a typical village in eastern Uttar Pradesh of 1845 or one of 1917? A woman who left India in 1917 may have known different versions of songs from her great-great-grandmother who immigrated in 1845, for we would not expect the musical life of an Indian village to remain static for over 80 years. Did the newcomer to Trinidad bow to the ways of the established immigrants or did the established immigrants count on her to replenish their repertory? And what happened to the songs of women from non-Hindi and non-Bhojpuri-speaking areas - western Uttar Pradesh, Bombay, Madras, Madhya Pradesh? Their traditions do seem to have been lost.

Inevitably, some of the wedding song texts must have been forgotten once they had been brought to Trinidad. Exceptional singers like Moon no doubt remembered a great deal. But she was exceptional. We can be fairly certain that once the text of a song is forgotten, the song is lost forever. But what about songs whose texts were remembered but whose tunes were forgotten? A simple solution would be to substitute a well-known tune with an appropriate metric structure. This, I think, is what has happened with the hardi song. The antarā melody 'e' has been forgotten in Felicity and replaced with the simpler antarā 'a b c'. In some cases antarā melody 'a b c' is not as well suited to

the metre of the text as melody 'e'. This can be seen in the frequent interpolation of vowels, as in ex. 17, line 1, तलइया (talaiyā, 'pond') in Moon's version rather than the more usual pronunciation, तलव (talawa), in the Permanand version, ex. 16, line 1. This tiny adjustment of the text may lend evidence to the theory that antarā 'a b c' was substituted when antarā 'e' was forgotten. Antarā 'a b c' and sthāyī 'b b c' have also apparently been used to substitute for other forgotten tunes in the Felicity repertory; then this would explain why these tunes also occur in nearly half of the Trinidad wedding songs I collected.

I don't know what will happen to the wedding songs of Felicity. Many of them have doubtless already died out in India, the land of their origin. Tewari has commented on the loss of traditional folk songs in central Uttar Pradesh:

> I remember one old widow named Bahureu Amma, who lived in my hometown of Kanpur, just twenty yards away from our family home. My mother always called for her at every ceremony, as did the other neighboring families, for she knew hundreds of songs for each ceremony, as well as all of the rituals. At every religious occasion, my family offered sīdhā to her. Unfortunately, she died before my field trip, taking with her all the songs she knew. My vague memories of her singing style and song texts do not correspond with the songs of the present collection. In my opinion, folk songs have undergone revolutionary changes within two generations. The old generation is dying out and young people have not learned the old songs; many young couples have moved away from their family homes and modern trends have caused a lack of interest in the old traditions.[26]

The villagers of Felicity fear that traditional wedding songs will not survive past the next two or three

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26. Tewari, p. 63.

generations, but their view may be overly pessimistic.
When ever did it seem that the younger generation was
picking up the right sort of songs? Yet somehow traditions
do survive - at least they have in the past.