

Seen From Nowhere

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Mathematical perspective is a realisation that splits space into object-horizon polarity: the object locates itself in the growth of a foreground, the horizon recedes into infinity. Because perspective is not accepted as a dimension sprung on the object on account of its appropriation by the waking being, the otherwise 'motivated' sense impression appears natural, and is mistaken for spontaneous nature. Although the highly deducted contemporary forms have their origin in perspective, it can hardly be held responsible for locking the object and the being in a consuming relationship. Why does perspective resist its restoration to a unified human space?

To the object-horizon split, there is a parallel in the point-void split, parallel only to the apparent extent they both have been employed to produce notions in regard to space. In reality the two models stand in a relation of inversion to each other. Whereas the object-horizon split offers space as present, or makes available a presence outside the being, the point-void split apprehends space as an absence, perceives it through its non-availability to the being. The object-horizon and point-void splits have different unities: the point, a floating centre for the conscious being forms finite links with the void, whereas the object made conscious by the disposition of the being strives for a convergence in an infinite horizon. The word disposition causes a certain conscious shift, to my mind a minimal shift, from the I and disposes the being towards object or space in an inevitable way. In the object-horizon model the shift is maximised to culminate in the being's transference upon the object. The obvious end in view of such an endeavour is of course to infuse the object with an autonomous consciousness. Quite similar, or perhaps not so similar, is the negative outcome of the point-void split where the conscious point yearns to unite with the void through a destruction of the space that intervenes between them.

Space, when thought of as an absolute presence in object-horizon split, leads to the mistaken assumption of a subjectless universe which is not more destructive than an objectless being perpetuated by the point-void notion of absence. If in the instance of the object-horizon model there is a projection of the unreal, in the point-void model there is a veiling of the real.

The Christian mosaics resisted the Greek and Roman insights into optical properties of the natural world as a threat to their developing mysticism. But, for the Vatican, the Renaissance perspective coincided with the institution of hope: the hope of simplicity and magnificence joined together in a natural seeming whole striving in three dimensions for a convergence in the infinity. Though earlier, Abraham with Angles carried a background which was made of a neutral space, the mosaic still placed the figures as if situated *in* that space, i.e., *against* the missing third dimension.

Through a geometric appropriation of nature, perspective surfaced between cloisters and bridges, churches and fortresses, canals and hospitals, dams and instruments of warfare that the artists of the late medieval and Renaissance Europe designed and built. Among the masters, Giotto, Ucello, Leonardo, Michaelangelo and Raphael made transparent their ideas, judgements and desires and directed towards an emergent world all the objective references in what they created. The vivid presence of an intentionality towards space was soon camouflaged by the seemingly natural enjoyment of the isolated object: the apparent distances and sizes into which space broke down concealed the fact that an optical world had been deducted from a conceptual one. In different ways the cubists and Picasso were the first to break into an

unrestricted vision of the object. But in moving around the object, to release it from its optical unfreedom, they still dealt with object as situated *in* space, dealt with a reconstruction of the object from a debris of sharply angled perspectives. The radical shift for the western painting from the object to the entire space really germinated in the watercolours of Cezanne and realised itself in the theories and practice of Paul Klee.

Totally different from the cubists whose multiple perspectives brought them on the verge of destroying the object itself, the 'perspectiveless' view of space in the Moghul miniatures recovered a unity amidst the apparent planar distortions. For long we were made to believe that the imbalanced optical proportions between corresponding dimensions in the miniatures were defects in the presentation of an objective reality instead of being, as we know today methods of generating an experience of individual spaces. The apparent contradiction triggered off by the juxtaposition of varying planes and proportions within a single-perspective-orientation towards the event finds illuminating parallels in certain philosophical and musical realisations. On a lived level we have the example of Kabir whose non-dual insights into phenomena did not make him abandon the act of weaving cloth every single day. The sense of the real surging into the phenomena like the ocean into tides, wave after wave, made him never shut his eyes or close his ears to the suffering or enjoyment of a world awake. It is this deeply moving synthesis of the immediate and the ultimate that makes a single-perspective-orientation in a miniature release floating visual perspectives, much as the traditions of elaboration in the classical Indian music transform a single-scale-theme into a concert of floating auditory perspectives.

Thus to Miskina, Lal, Basawan or Keshu Kalan the transformation of Abu'l Fazl's historical text into Akbarnāmā miniatures did not involve the necessity of locating particular events in particular spaces as would be the case in any faithful illustration of a historical episode. Here, the episode was first spatialised into an event where time, not moving from one event to another as in the epical episodic panels, changed within the event itself through a certain tense suspension of the action observed in gestures between figures and objects. The event as a historical instance itself was thoroughly distinguished from the invariant content contained within the instance. In other words, to a reconstruction of an instance was preferred a new original rendering of the invariant content, now onwards termed here as invariance. If the instance indicated a historical fact, the inner invariance posited the historicity or even the facticity of a relational occurrence, an experience of space implying interdependence between figures, objects, architecture, trees, animals and the sky.

The word 'rendering' reveals crucial connections between the historicity of the event, the vertex of pictorial means and the disposition of the artist. The act of painting the miniature may well be described as the rendering of a way, and interestingly, also as a way of rendering. Hence space can hardly be thought of, contemplated upon or actively constructed outside the perceiving eye. When for instance the means of composing include writing and constructing of a musical object, the process is distinctly different from the non-notational rendering, i.e., improvising elaboration of a restricted but individual musical space. The quality of attention that directs the two methods is in other words differently disposed. I should first move specifically to show the parallel of invariance in the Indian music and later return to postulate a similar principle in regard to miniature painting. It may be felt that speaking about the principle of invariance only in relation to a set of Moghul miniatures (from *Akbarnāmā*) may lead to a blind generalising about the Indian painting on the whole. My approximations may not add up to a universal principle but they are formulations based upon certain cultural realisations significant and universal to the practice of rendering a *raag* and perhaps to the practice of rendering a miniature.

It is also suggested that painters in the court of Akbar may have been already aware of the developments in perspective in Europe. If they were, it speaks volumes for them to have proceeded in the direction they did enriching their own traditions in order to develop a capacity to formulate new visual symbols:

The leap of Gregorian chant and the European polyphonic music into symphonic construction was marked by a passion to *build* music in magnitudes that would overwhelm the exterior space. Based on an awakened spatial appropriation the music obviously internalised spaces with an attitude inclined towards the object's becoming rather than disposed towards the object's being as was happening to say Dhrupad Aalap in Raja Mansingh Tomar's court in Gwalior, at that time.

In order to understand the Indian preoccupation with individuation the question of the object's individuality assumes significance. Stefan Brecht, in the context of Robert Wilson's theatre, made experiments with visual and auditory objects by studying in them the relationship between their integral whole and individual features. Strangely, his findings precisely describe the achievements of Indian music in the area of rendering individual *raags*, in contrast to that of creating auditory objects.

Brecht feels that 'one will, tho' one won't notice them much, still be aware of the specific features of the object,—they won't change, of course,—but any generic identification one might have made will have receded in the background, and one becomes aware of its features as *its*, as its *specifically*, rather than being aware of it in terms of its specific features: sees them relative to the whole, instead of vice-versa. The experience, not a mystic one, is that of an object's redefining itself before one's eyes: as tho' one *observed* its—its integration of itself: *by* its specific features. Its particular features take on the character of instrumentalities. It seems to change without changing in any particular regard.' But Brecht does admit that unlike the experience of human individuality, an experiment involving a visual or an auditory object requires 'a special effort or a special mood' and then if one succeeds 'one feels one is participating in the object's being' (From The Book I, *The Theatre of Vision*: Robert Wilson). The object in Brecht's case implies in my mind a whole space which is not tangibly present but permeates, by a perceivable absence, every bit of the musical or visual matter.

The concept absolutely central to the *raag* elaboration in Indian music is summed up by a single word: *Shruti*. The Greek *tonos* and the Latin *tonus* carry two different meanings: one of tone or pitch, the other of tension, or the act of stretching. Shruti is what is heard and what makes you hear through an act of stretching. In a 13th century text, *Sangeet Samayasara*, Parshvadeva explains the value of shruti by suggesting the following experiment: tune the strings of two instruments to an identical pitch until they begin to sound indistinguishably alike. Then lower the strings of one of the instruments of the next *possible* pitch so that the intervening musical space between the two pitches becomes indivisible. When the two instruments are again played together, the slight shift would produce a sound that may be termed as shruti or what is heard. To the ears seeking schematic harmony this auditory distortion may well sound as an unbearable dissonance, but to a discerning audience the process of thus lowering or raising the tension in a note from its harmonious position with the drone, forms the crux of emotional experience in Indian music. As a formal technique shruti alone permits an accent or an inflection of the *svara* (i.e., the self-resonant note) and adapts it, makes it relative, to the particular emotional modulation that the *raag* is addressing itself to. Shruti or tone-facture is an act of progressively stretching a pitch into varying chromatic saturations (or desaturations) and also the manner in which the continuous tension is handled. Continuous movement between the two notes of a phrase may therefore be differently characterised and may develop different specificities through different tone-factures. Shruti in a specific *raag* is then felt to be free of any phrase/notes configuration it is meant to deal with, though it is the peculiarity of rendering the phrase that contains the particular shruti.

It is a characteristic curve that spreads on an entire elaboration causing the minimal displacements of the symmetrical structures repeated in almost every *raag*. A child's cry is certainly not easily notated in musical terms but can be said to contain the semblance of a shruti that I am attempting to identify. To describe the characteristic quality in the shruti curve as made up of certain proportions would be reductive of its resonant richness and its individuated figure but

what it forms itself of is definitely a proportioned measure, a way that enables the phrase to remain relative to the whole, but be itself a whole at the same time.

Contrary to popular and certain academic beliefs shruti is not a highly specific condition of the note or notes in a raag. It is in fact the source and origin of that specific condition of the note or notes in that raag. In the manner in which the milk curdles, suggests Parshvadeva, shruti transforms the schematic to an individual state of rendering. A particular scale carrying five, six or seven notes in various ascending and descending combinations is emotionally opaque until subjected to the illuminating shruti. The scale in question then transgresses the state of an object to enter the state of a being, that would remain individual whatever stance it adopts.

In order to make explicit the concept of a total musical space, I employ Akbar Padamsee's formulation of the included/excluded space in painting. The notes included in the melodic structure constitute the consonant space whereas the excluded make up the remaining into a dissonant and absent space. The melody when restricted to its 'sweet' character, in fact, excludes the excluded space and therefore in its elaboration fails to achieve the status of what has been earlier termed the perspectiveless totality. The absent notes impinge on those present and threaten to disintegrate that melodic structure if brought out in the open. Between any two included notes in a raag lies in darkness the excluded area. But in a way similar to how all rational discourse has eternally addressed itself to the irrational, the structured melody addresses itself to the unstructured dissonance. The dissonant area for a specific raag permits a specific path to be traversed by the luminous shruti and of course traversed in a certain way. When the included-excluded space is thus brought together to actively shape the elaboration, the total space, the unified space or the integral whole seems to emerge from the individual features of a raag, without in any manner mutilating the sensuous extensions of these individual features. Though the position appears fraught with controversy, I shall continue to maintain that the original word for the excluded notes, *vivadi*, meaning argumentative, is more appropriate than the later *varjit*, meaning prohibited. As briefly touched upon earlier, *vivadi* is best described as an absence which is arguing with the invariant presence, with invariance itself. But it is an argument never brought out into the open to become a conflicting feature of the musical object since no concert or rather no rendering of Indian music aims at providing a finite musical object. Internally, the debate between the consonant and dissonant groups takes on severe turns, at times quite disagreeable to untrained ears.

To the whole form of perspectiveless rendering, a duration or half and quarter of that duration prescribes no structural measures to be faithfully observed. Nor working within a finite space of time, the music obviously does not, in terms of its expansion, strive for an infinity. On the contrary, absence is felt as a real experience of space and the purpose of such an experience is to unfold an ultimate quality in attention.

Out of six ways of perceiving objects in space as developed by various philosophical schools in India, the first five deal with the perception of object as present, beginning with *Pratyaksha Pramana*, the sensuous perception. But the sixth called the *Anupalabdhi*, the non-availability, deals with the perception of the absent object i.e. with the perception of an object because it is absent. The notion of non-availability in the word *Anupalabdhi* is precise because it not only makes the absence necessary but also its perception plausible. Within the integral musical space stretching on a scale of twelve notes, a specific or individual melodic theme becomes present only because that theme is absent elsewhere in that integral space. Now, in the system of raag elaboration that particular musical theme, as an object made of distinguishable individual features, is constantly present and never abandoned. The features that are alien to the individual object are also thus constantly absent, receding or advancing together with those present like the light and the shadow. This constancy of absence is more marked in the Indian system than it would be in a musical construction that does not preserve a single melodic theme for an entire rendering and keeps multiplying melodic dimensions upon an expanding object. At any rate the absence once made constant has not only lived but played a crucial part in directing the very

content of Indian music. It is not a matter of surprise that absence has been deeply linked to emotions of envy and gratitude which are encountered in almost every curve a musical phrase takes as it yearns for a union with that absent object in the grain of its voice. The ultimate absent object is of course the Self.

In his book *Attention and Interpretation*, Dr. W.R. Bion states: "I shall now use the geometrical concepts of lines, points and space (as derived originally not from a realisation of three dimensional space but from the emotional mental life) as returnable to the realm from which they appear to me to spring. That is, if the geometer's concept of space derives from an experience of the place where something was it is returned to illuminate the domain where it is in my experience meaningful to say that 'a feeling of depression' is 'the place where a breast or other lost object was' and that 'space' is 'where depression or some other emotion, used to be'."

Pragabhava, *Pradhvamsabhava* and *Atyantabhava* reveal the three states of object's absence in space. In the fourth *Anonyabhava* which has been already dealt with, the object, on account of its difference and separateness from all else, on account of its individuality, is perceived absent in all other spaces.

To conceive the presence of an individual or even a specific space, to think of that space as one will of a being, is to draw a distinction by arranging a boundary with separate sides so that a point on one side cannot reach other side without crossing the boundary (from *The Laws of Form* by Spenser Brown). The cloven space is where the absent object is born setting off an outer from an inner space. The space outside constantly present is from the point of view of the space or the being inside, a space *constantly* absent.

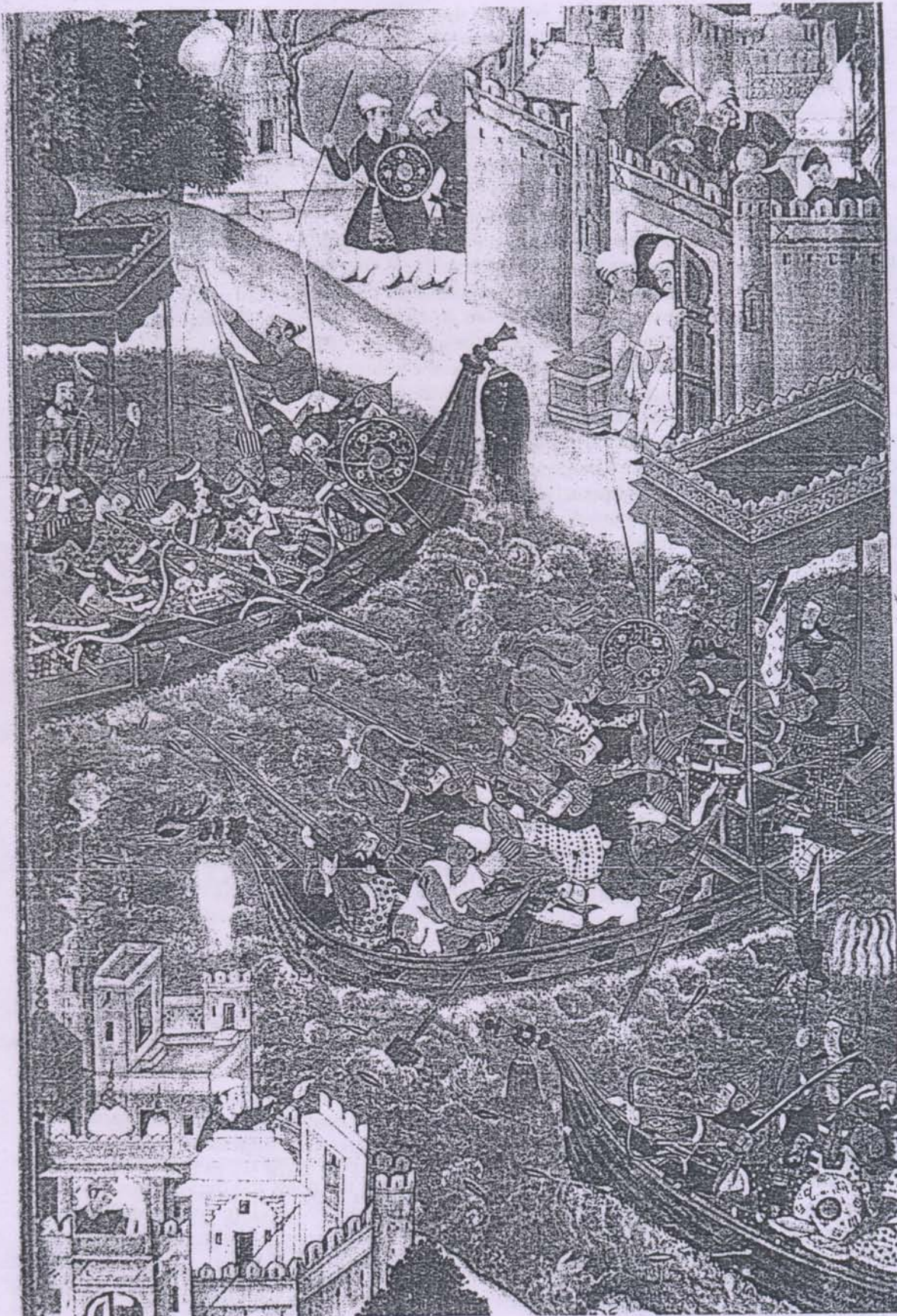
What matters are the links that may be discovered between the present and the absent space, between the included and the excluded space, between the consonant and the dissonant space, between the inner and the outer space.

I first consider the absence of the object before it matures into an appearance and, then, the second absence when the object is splintered, and, finally, the third when the destroyed object is totally absent. *Pragabhava* is literally a prior absence, as the absence of a melody in a space of silence or of a figure on a plain drawing paper, somewhat in the nature of how a child's mouth may experience the absence of breast inside the womb, i.e., missing the breast before its sensuous experience. The shape of the void in the mouth was, as it were, the shape of the breast. That specific space is already a material out of which the future object would be formed: the material is marked by the particular absence. The absent object would then be formed not *in* that space but *of* that space. Once formed, it finds for itself an experience of being in that space and therefore severed from the very material it is made of and torn between an inner and an outer presumption. The prior-absence in and of the Yearning Space is terminable with the formation of the object. However, when the object is later split into pieces as would a jar break and disappear into the splintered bits (characterised by the intervals in breast feeding for the child), the second absence of the object, the splintered absence, is experienced in a way inverted to the first where the jar was felt absent in a lump of unformed clay. The splintering of the object is yet another account of its yearning to expand, to embrace the void (or in a pathological sense just an envy of sharing). It is named *Pradhvamsabhava*. Identical to the manner in which the object was earlier formed within the space where a prior-absence was felt, the splintering into pieces really occurs within and therefore in the formed object. Again it is the void between the splintered bits where the third absence called the total absence is known to take place. The vast space that contained the bits of the splintered object is now itself contained by the being.

The waking-being takes hold of object's presence which happens to be sandwiched between the first prior-absence where the object is ever arriving into a future and the second splintered absence where the object is ever lost into a past. Ironically, the prior-absence from where the object has emerged is, in fact, its past and the splintered absence towards which it is moving its future. The dream-being synthesises the splintered absence of the object through the presence of subtle and real sensuous object on one hand and on the other the object's total absence. And the



CP. XI. 1. Akbar hunting in a *Qamurgha* near Palam near Delhi in 1568. Outline: Mukand. Painting: Manohar.



CP. XI. 2. Shuja'at Khan pursuing Asaf Khan
on the Ganges in 1565. Outlines: Tulsi Kalan.
Paintings: Jagjivan. I.S. 2-1896 47/117.

being in deep dreamless sleep, as observed earlier, sinks into a space containing a total absence of the object by remaining suspended between the realisation of a splintered absence of the object and the promise of its futurity in the prior-absence.

Because, between these three states, space is caught in a sequential experience of its occurrences, the simultaneity of these occurrences in each of the three states remains unknown. The seemingly perpetual and returnable waking-I drives a wedge into the mass of unconscious space and makes the experience of all spaces relative to the experience of its own highly motivated realism. In reality the waking and I are relative to that whole space. For I am not the dreamer and the dreamer is not the one asleep.

A circle draws the distinction between the inner and the outer. I may penetrate into the inner spheres by creating a series of circles of decreasing diameters inside, and I may also penetrate into the outer spheres by creating a series of circles of increasing diameters outside. What began as inner and outer dialectic, withholding of the inner space by the outer and of the outer by the inner space ends in terminations where I cannot any longer penetrate. The contraction condenses into a point of indivisible saturation and the expansion spills into an unthinkable void. I and space are identified by what intervenes between the point and the void. The progress is no longer dichotomous. As an impenetrable dense body the point forms the centre of being who is alluded to as Radha. The void in its inconceivable formlessness thought of as Krishna is an eternity of attraction. Because the space and I mediate between them, the point and the void form an inseparable couple; but because the space and I at the same time intervene between them they remain in a state of perpetual disunion. In a sense the dense point is a clear opposite to the empty void and yet together they make a model as primordial or contemporary as the mouth-breast model. The gradual separation from the mother's breast constitutes the first formed experience of space and marks its absence as the most primary absence of a source of enjoyment, nourishment and knowledge. The lone moment when Krishna set his mouth on a breast was upon Putana's poisoned one. The child sucked the ogress dry. The effect was startling: her body began to expand and covered an enormous space. However, in a different instance, when Krishna's mother attempted to fasten the mischievous child with a string, his body began to expand. The strings fell short until the mother abandoned her efforts to contain him. He finally opened his mouth into which was witnessed the entire universe. But in a moment he assumed the sensuous stature of a child to blur his mother's memory of the terrifying and vast universal vision.

As long as I appropriate space, the point and the void can never unite. Unlike the object-horizon split, where the parallel lines hope to converge at an imaginary point in infinity, the point-void split offers an eternal disunion in an eternal couple. It is through separation in union (or union in separation) that I am able to sense the fact of space, the contradictions and the anguish in space.

अनादि अनन्त विहार करें
लाल प्रिया सों भई न चिन्हारी ॥

Though playing together without a beginning or an end
Krishna and Radha haven't struck an acquaintance yet.

The void permits no location and the point no entry.

But when the circularities that I and the space have together formed are disrupted, displaced and ultimately individually disposed, a coiling passage between the point and the void materialises. The communication set up between the point and the void is therefore not despite but through the mediating space and I. That is, the spiral remains 'harmless' to the spaces in the universe, nature and the world, and to the I, made relative to the whole being.

The first link with the progressively contracting or expanding spiral is made possible by the experiment of the minimal displacement between the two instruments as described earlier. The shortest interval of sound produced between the two instruments is in fact the beginning of the spiral space. Of the two instruments the one that remains unchanged is the stable drone-space and the one lowered ultimately elaborates into the raag itself, relative to the invariant drone! However what I wish to present is the subtler invariance within the variant raag itself.

In the *svara-shruti* equation the notes jettisoned on a musical scale are circles of varying proportion, and the passage through these circles/notes called the *Antarmarg*, the inner path, is traversed by the *shruti* in the form of a spiral. Between the space and I, the space traversed in the structurally included circles provides the first limit to the notion of invariance. The second being the syntactical occurrences between the circles adding up into a certain behavioural whole which carries meanings as made of dominant emotional states. The spiral that connects the circles in a definite and individual way is made of the progressively contracting or the progressively expanding *shruti*. The third limit that characterises the invariance by the *shruti* which is both opening and at the same time enclosing musical space actually shapes the unstructured dissonance and locates the notes at specifically lowered or raised positions for a particular raag. Though the connecting spiral presents itself in modulated expressions of characteristic phrases, it remains free and pervasive as a form unto itself. For it is the same specific spiral and its corresponding forms in a raag that invite and dispose the I towards the space in an unchanging and inevitable limit upon the invariance. The musician's disposition thus discovers in himself the being-turned-into-I. The process of an expressive individuation guides the production of a musical object here and not the production of a musical object structuring an objective individuality.

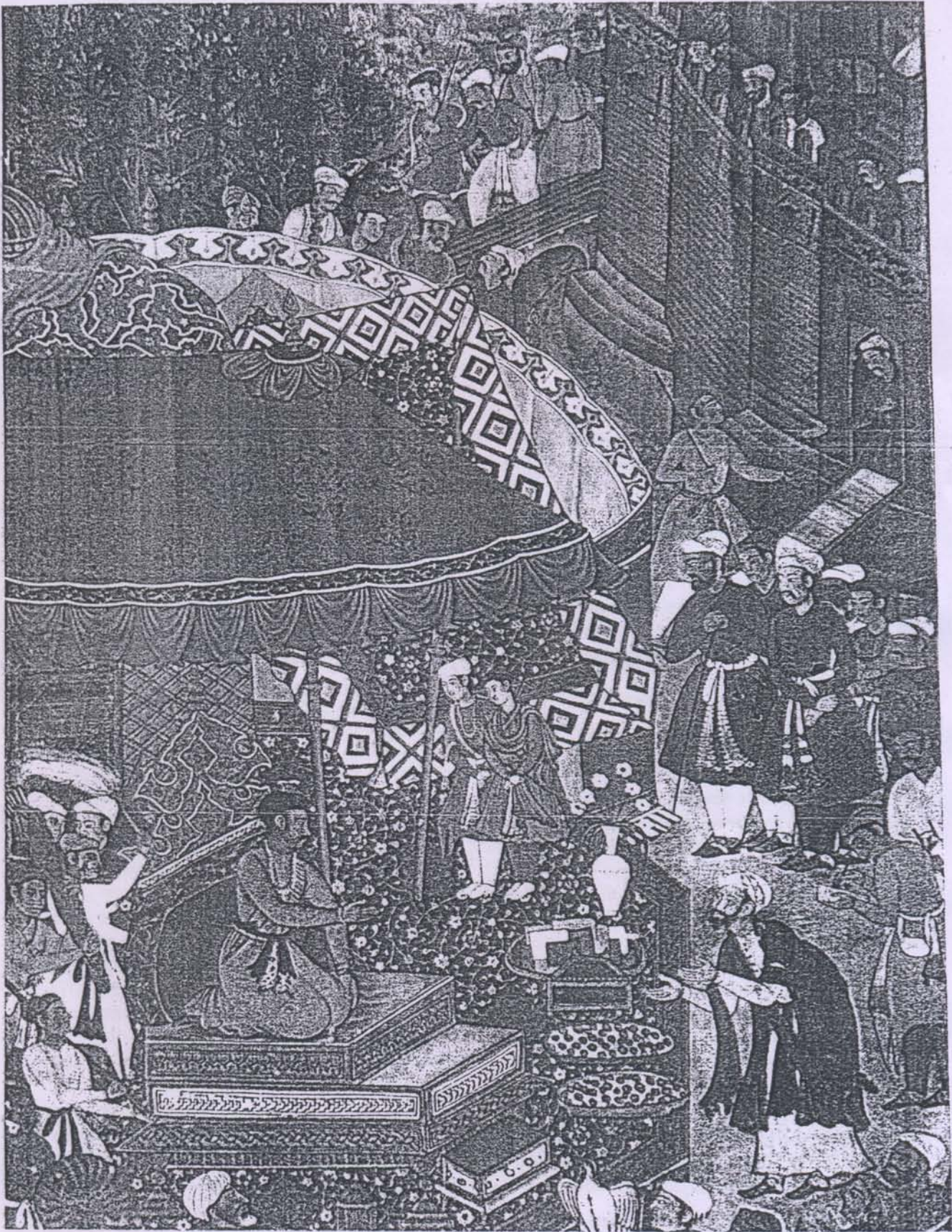
The 'rendering' enables the musician to alter the planes in a single phrase by delving deep into the restricted melodic areas in continuous and rhythmic displacements. In other words, the elaboration results not from amassing different impressions or patterns upon the single phrase but from opening that phrase and plunging within. Not constructed from either one or multiple dimensions, the reflective perspectiveless whole is suddenly heard from nowhere as an envying individual presence. One may remember that the generic identification with the obvious spiral curves of a melody as norms in music and as we would see in a miniature, 'recede into background'.

The object of multiple perspectives and the perspectiveless object share a common goal: to bring in view the integrating absent whole. Whereas the door in my house seen from a particular angle is made sensuous because it presents to me a partial view alone, the whole door lies not in a combine of all the angles placed around that door, but in travelling *into* or *within* the available single angle by minimal displacement. The waking-door may present multiple perspectives in a sequence but the simultaneity of these perspectives is directly given to the dreaming-door only. The sleeping-door disappears into an absence in space and is perceived by the fact that in my house the waking and the dreaming-doors are no longer there. What may be grasped at this moment is the understanding that a dream space is available only inside the waking space, and the sleep inside the dream space. With a single step, by entering into dream, I dissolve into a dreamer in the twilight space between the waking and the dream. Upon waking I review the dream from its fading traces left upon the morning mental film and from the waking axis I reconstruct the inner and the outer.

What may therefore appear as subtle distortion in a miniature to the eyes of a realist or sound a disagreeable pull of the string on a veena to the ears that seek plain harmony, makes for the discerning eyes and ears the most articulate passage into the very interiority of images and sounds. The event as portrayed in an *Akbar-nāmā* miniature, for example, abstracts the physical to the extent where it may both anchor the viewer's sensuous attention as well as absorb the so-called distortions enabling him to thereby enter *into* the picture. From the unsettling proportions, planar distortions and visual shifts the way to the whole or the emotional realm is paved



CP. XL 3. Reconstruction of a tower destroyed by the explosion of a mine during the siege of Fort Chitor in 1567.
Outline: Miskin. Painting: Sarwan.



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with curved and linear spaces produced by what may be termed as *drishti*, the gaze that in a facture identical to that of the shruti generates the individual space in a miniature.

While I travel on points, lines and planes I discover in the painted space itself the presence of a perspectiveless gaze, present by its marked absence, a *drishti* suggesting unpremeditated links between spaces otherwise not disposed to come together. These links in turn constitute movements that develop in my eyes a beholder's gaze. *Drishti* electrifies the whole, i.e., the artist, the art and the art-lover as also the waking, the dreaming and the sleeping object.

From in between planes and angles inside the painting it peers at me and from me flows, in molten attention, to pour itself into visual formations. The *drishti* modulates spaces, organises voids and spatialises a world of specific dimensions and of an individual nature.

I present here a pictorially useful legend to illuminate what I sense in it as *drishti*. Lal Ded was, before wandering stark naked in the valley of Kashmir, married to a man burning with envy. She was lost to the steps that led into the water, lost to the water that filled into the pot, to the pot that submerged into the water. The man suspecting her prolonged absence from home once carried a stick to the lake. While Lal returned with a pot full of water on her head, her husband struck her in a moment of frenzy. The clay broke and fell into pieces. But the husband's envious eyes gazed upon an extraordinary sight: she still carried the water shaped in the form of a transparent pot.

A tradition has it that the way a house sits upon a specific piece of land is not the way in which another absolutely identical house is believed to sit at a stone's throw. The house is known to possess a *drishti* if it gazes delighted at men, women and children occupying its empty space. The individual features that cut into a wall to make a window or enclose, in the shape of walls, the room itself, begin to characterise the empty space with a specific 'look' and yet respond differently to different human movements and positions.

At the peak of perspective's optical domination in European painting, Hogarth made a caricatured work called 'The False Perspectives'. This distorted picture would be, to a miniature lover, no visual nightmare. On account of their planar interpenetration, the false perspectives immediately achieve the floating presence of a dream space. Between the object and horizon the contained-container axis is either entirely abolished or results in transferences and transformations.

However, in the painting 'The False Perspectives' the perspectivelessness is won at the expense of the sensuous and waking specificity, whereas in the *Akbarnāmā* a unique synthesis of a historical space with a dream one is thorough and distinct.

Particularly in the *Akbarnāmā*, miniatures which follow a vertical format space are first orientated towards lower, middle and upper regions without their apparent division or reduction to a foreground, middleground and background. The area proportion between the orientations varies in accordance to the invariance, the invariant content within the historical instance. Quite a few miniatures dealing with battle scenes lend themselves to greater elaboration in say the lower regions than the middle and the upper. This happens more or less in the way a raag finds finer and detailed expression in the *mandra saptak*, the lower octave rather than the *madhya* or *taar*. Some contain a large lower-region pressing against an immediate upper reducing the middle to a zone of transition. Yet others concentrate on the middle rendering the upper and the lower peripheral. The presentation of a front and a behind is treated in relation to how I orient an up and a down, a left and a right: in other words all areas and movements continue to maintain a particular sense of direction in the context of the vertical paper on which the miniatures were made and its principal two-dimensional surface.

If a grid were developed following the horizontal and the vertical extremities of the miniature and placed upon the painting it would be observed that very few lines fall parallel to the lines on the grid. These few lines that fall parallel to the grid function like the unchanged musical drone, the *sā-pā* horizontal-vertical stable musical space. The diagonal moves to provide the dynamic directions and the spiral a contracting-expanding progression. In fact, the

two basic visual norms that appear to have influenced the *Akbarnāmā* miniatures are the *spiral* and the *diagonal*. In their enclosed and open forms spirals give rise to curved shapes such as the serpentine or the horseshoe whereas diagonals to triangular and combinations of triangular forms.

Nearly all the *Akbarnāmā* paintings must bear the names of two artists, perhaps the outcome of a guild. To the first artist is ascribed the *tarah* of the painting and to the second the *amal*. The word *tarah* literally and I think practically means the way. *Amal* is the practice of the way. If we translate the word *tarah* as composition we may fail to understand the facture characteristic suggested in the word *tarah* which lies beyond the compositional arrangement of a painting. In the Urdu poetry *tarah* is the first line of a couplet usually presented to a rival as the way following which he must construct the second line. *Tarah* is the way that reveals itself in the direction the basic norm takes to spatialise intersecting the three regions. Figures and objects instead of being arranged in a space are made relative to the directing way of the *tarah*. When the objects and figures are thus rendered, the entire or the whole space is preserved and the split between the object/figure and horizon does not take place.

Interestingly, amongst the painters included in Geeti Sen's *Paintings from the Akbarnāmā* there is an example of a painter, Farrukh Beg, whose two paintings entitled by the author as 'Akbar's triumphant entry into Surat' and 'An Interview between the royal emissary and the rebel Bahadur Khan' are worked in intensive decorative details but lack the aspect of *tarah* or the way. In these paintings, for example, one may discover a number of parallel lines, parallel to the hidden horizontal-vertical grid. This symmetry leads the two paintings to acquire an ahistorical character and makes them verge on becoming portraits rather than renderings of historical events. It may be mentioned in passing that the two paintings in question do not carry the usual inscription: *tarah*.

Tarah is immediately reckoned on viewing a miniature painting not merely as a schema but as a generic movement guiding the whole space. In music we are similarly able to grasp the primary melodic scale of a *raag* on hearing the first few phrases of a concert without remaining bound to that scale behind the elaboration. As we begin to hear the music with a continuous attention and then connect the leaps between the notes, we also gaze with an unbroken eye movement at the continuous visual details to understand the pictorial jumps. In my view, *amal*, which literally means practice, is really concerned with the elaboration of *tarah*.

It is clear from one of the simpler paintings by the great master Basawan that the spiral *tarah* in 'Akbar slays a tiger which attacked the royal cavalcade' has been rather faithfully practised, elaborated or rendered by Tara Kalan. In the word *amal* I otherwise suspect the presence of a practice of violation of the norm. The obvious spiral norm in this painting forms the significant included space. Figures are however made to horizontally, vertically and diagonally move in to penetrate and move out to spill the spiral. But by deflecting the spiral movement the painting is able to include the excluded space (excluded by the spiral norm) as an aspect of its own entire space. It further makes the spiral characteristic of the painting to become spatially dominant. After I identify the basic norm, the real experience of the painting begins only when I observe the detailed transgressions of the norm itself. These transgressions rather than mutilating the original character of the norm, in fact, reveal its absent interiors. In the details are found different ways of reasserting the norm, with the result it is difficult to reduce the miniatures to a straight part-whole division. From a tape of the *raag* Yaman Kalyan if I were to at random lift out a four second bit, I should easily identify that as a Yaman Kalyan bit, much as the entire two hour concert is identifiable as Yaman Kalyan. The fragment is therefore a phase perfectly imbued with the whole and not an isolated part in a certain mechanism.

In experiencing the details within the spiral space the miniature painting encourages a view of its facture quality rather than the schematic presence. For example, in the same painting the spiral is finally split into two terminations: one ending in the tiger's tail curling upon the tree and the other moving up in the upper region.

A more complex example of the use of spiral by Basawan may be seen in 'Battle between two

rival groups of Sanyasis at Thanesar', a double page painting. The left page integrates the spiral with two intersecting triangles, a *mishra* norm. The basic spiral shape is shown to contain the entire space of the left page, whereas on the right the spiral has been contained. Akbar who is never featured inside a spiral is given a distinct position and direction to depict him as intervening in the battle. The origin of the contained spiral in the bottom of the right page coincides with the sword cutting into the shoulder of the leader of Kurs who had fraudulently taken the place of the Puris. Akbar's soldiers support the followers of Kesu Puri in a movement basically from left to right, ending in spiral-like curves. The painting is dominated by the middle region, the upper and the lower playing a peripheral part.

The deep elaboration of a lower region is found in Miskina's 'The Imperial Army besieges Ranthambor fort'. Here the middle region is practically absent as the lower is seen to immediately graduate into the upper. Quite a few of Miskina's paintings employ the diagonal to be the basic norm. If the diagonals in this miniature are traced, they would appear to follow increasing angles from the base to the side. These diagonals obviously result in triangular areas. Other paintings by Miskina that show a deeply felt preoccupation for the diagonal are 'Bullocks drag the cannons uphill during the siege of Ranthambor', a double page 'Building operation at Agra Fort', 'Akbar orders punishment of his foster brother' and even 'Akbar stages a shikar near Lahore' which is otherwise circular in conception.

It may be enough to demonstrate that Lal painted the horseshoe organisation of figures in paintings like 'Daud Shah of Bengal is taken prisoner', 'Akbar offers Thanksgiving on the news of victory', and 'The Battle of Sarnal in Gujarat'.

Keshu Kalan seems to meditate upon what I have termed as the serpentine norm in 'Rejoicing on the Birth of Prince Salim in Fatehpur', 'Akbar's victorious return to Fatehpur Sikri', and 'Akbar's pilgrimage on foot to Ajmer in Thanksgiving'.

Ustad Zia Mohiuddin Dagar, the Dhrupad Rudra-Veena exponent, recalls that in his childhood it was not unusual to associate a gharana with certain chosen raags; for example, the Aladias, he says, were then quite famous for rendering various kinds of the Nata raag. It may not be surprising to discover a parallel in the miniature painting when we observe Basawan's spiral, Miskina's diagonal, Lal's horseshoe and Keshu Kalan's serpentine. Only those who do not quite appreciate the immeasurable depth of individuation, of realising one's own disposition in the elaboration of a raag or a miniature would find my formulation rather restrictive.

With individuation the three experiences of waking, dreaming and deep sleep, the *jagrat*, *swapna* and *sushupti*, acquire a universal significance. Ved Prakash, philosopher and teacher, wonderfully states that when the dream and the sleep have entered into the waking, when the waking and the sleep have been experienced in the dream and when the waking and the dream have been known/accepted in the sleep then alone the fourth state *turiya* would emerge.

I believe that the model of the three states is not only perfectly secular but quite a universal model for space.

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