

**With the sound through the scape: Sonic Mediation in the performative moment of  
proclamation in *Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai***

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**Abstract**

The paper will introduce the street play, *Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai*, which was performed by the theatre-cum-cultural group Jan Sanskriti Manch of Lucknow Unit<sup>i</sup> in the year 1978-79. Herein, the overture of the musical instrument of *nagārā* (drum) and word projection of *होशिया... र! खबरदा... र!* ( Be Alert ! Be Alarmed ! ) will try to initiate a reading into the soundscape and bring to the fore an imperative question of declaration, made as that in the Proclamation of Emergency.<sup>ii</sup> Through a prefatory opening of a proclamation, this paper attempts to undertake a study of sonic mediation to construe the means and methods of an acoustic pairing at various performative junctures in the performance. Without buying into the dominant narrative of measuring a political play by means of its success rate, the paper will deal with the reference point of Emergency. As in where, the backdrop of Emergency, will help to locate the demand and nature of exigency of such performances. Running throughout the play, the condition of precariousness of common people during the phase of Emergency, becomes a referral adjunct for a follow up in the paradigmatic reading of the play text itself. By bringing in snippets and performative moments from the play, the paper will interrogate the times of political upheaval *with* the figures of *sarkār*, *Janta*, police, *pāgal* (freak) and *through* the mediation of performative acting of these figures.

Invoking a range of discontent and grievances vis-à-vis the then central government in power, the play brings to the fore numerous situations of day to day negotiation with state machinery. Through the figure of *jantā*, the performances testify symptoms of growing disenchantment and civic concerns regarding the state of affairs of the people living hand to mouth. Whether it be the case of police officials, bureaucrats or public servants, all these characters don a mask of being on the side of *jantā*, whereas it is the figure of *jantā* that has to suffer the most. Every time, *jantā* gets an assurance from *sarkār*, it has to behave in a particular way, so as to avail the facilities. In extension, the *jantā* performs a *pose of being alert and alarmed*. Arguing around the concept of reverberation, projection of sound-letter “r” in the words like *होशिया... र! खबरदा... र!* ( Be Alert ! Be Alarmed ! ), the paper will take a cue from Jean Francois Augoyard’s seminal book, *Sonic Experience: A Guide to Everyday Experience* (2005). According to Augoyard, in the domain of applied acoustics, reverberation, as a phenomenon in itself, is embedded in the process of ‘discrepancy’ (Augoyard 2005, 111), as it unfolds a redirection of sound energies traveling via indirect ways. He draws onto the etymological

root of the word reverberation in Latin, which means, “to strike back, to reflect” (Ibid). Whereas, under the nomenclature of sociology and everyday culture, he conceives reverberation as “an indication of solemnity and monumentality”. Thus, it has a part to play in the arena of public gathering and meeting. Its association has a strong resonance ‘with various functions of power (religion, justice)’ (Ibid: 117).

Bringing out specific instances from personal anecdotes, the paper lays out context of the play in its historical grounding and will test out markers of political theatre in relation to aesthetic devices that made a performance like that of *Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai* an iconic play. One of the aesthetic devices that is commonly used and applied to at the beginning of the street play is the call for a congregation. *With* the means of methods and *through* an application of technique, these loud disclaimers will tease out an acoustic reading of performative proclamations in the due course of inquiry. Excerpts from the personal interview with Adiyog of JASAM will ground the concept of reverberation as an aesthetic concept that considers a coupling of two words – *with* and *through*. *With* the proclamation and *through* an elongated projection, the two prepositions will assist to provide a conceptual framework for an understanding of reverberation. This acoustic pairing will orient itself to study the modes of public declaration as a performative field of inquiry, where the call for congregation advocates a spatial stimulus, otherwise put on suspension.

**Key Words:** Emergency, Alert and Alarmed, Sonic Proclamation, Reverberation, *With-through*, Mediation

### **Jan Sanskriti Manch – An Introduction**

The play *Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai* credited to Shivram<sup>iii</sup>, was scripted in the year 1974 and was performed for the first time in Jhalawar, Rajasthan. It was here in Rajasthan that Shivram became active in social life and followed his conviction of pursuing a path of politics that was engaging *with* the people and *through* their concerns of livelihood and survival. In terms of praxis his voice for the marginal and downtrodden castes and classes was known for an emancipatory call within works of literature and play scripts. His creative prime came off age when the street play, *Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai* was translated to many other Indian languages as its performance started to receive appreciation. The characters in the performance became common household names of reference, within a span of one year, *Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai* made a huge impact, wherever it interacted with its audience.

Being performed widely in the region of northern India, *Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai*, as a street play tried to present a performative case pro bono, of the times of Emergency, an extraordinary time, which later on became infamously known by an expression in Hindustani language as **आपातकाल**. It was during such a period in history that the author of the play, Shivram pens down one of the iconic political plays, among a dozen other, of his time. Known for its rhetorical tone, *Janta Pagal Ho Gayī Hai*, tries to address issues and concerns of Emergency. One of the main pretext of arrests during the period of Emergency was that, anything remotely considered to be “creating disturbances”<sup>iv</sup> would be acted upon with most stringent measure. Public gathering, meetings and street performances had to face police crackdown, as these were not allowed because assembly and congregation were a means and method of “creating disturbances” in the eyes of government.

During and after Emergency, shows of the street play *Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai*, were performed by the number of hundreds across northern belt of India, particularly in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. Factory gates, insurance offices, and schools were the sites of performance where theatre groups would put up an extempore show. One of the theatre cum cultural wings which was active and dynamic post-Emergency was Jan Sanskriti Manch of the then underground CPI (ML).<sup>v</sup> In a personal interview with an erstwhile member of Jan Sanskriti Manch’s Lucknow Unit, Adiyog revisits their intense nature of participation in these mass movements, where they would extend their support with the Karmachari and Workers’ Union. In the industrial belt of Nadarganj in Old Lucknow, the factory gates of EverReady Battery and Vikram Cotton Mills, always simmered with protests, demonstrations and slogans. Leaders of various organisations and activists participated at these sites, whereby a “nāṭak maṇḍalī” was invited to perform and gather the crowd for meeting and other related proceedings. By expressing solidarity with the agitating factory workers, team members of Jan Sanskriti Manch used to perform *Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai*. Not only were they performing in the adjacent area of Lucknow but also toured with the team members of JASAM to other parts of the country.

We had gone to be a part of the Uttarakhand movement. The movement’s primary slogan and punch line was, "नशा नहीं रोज़गार दो" (Not Alcohol, We Need Employment). It was when we were crossing a long stretch of a rugged terrain near Bhura, that we encountered a unique situation. We were pretty tired of walking and out of hunger we sat near a roadside shop. We

then asked for some food and the person at the shop, looking at our condition told us to get the raw material from a nearby place. Meanwhile, as the food was being cooked his son, who was quietly watching us over, sneaked into our props bag and found out Nagada. He wanted to play it and we happily allowed him to do it. After he had played the instrument, within a span of fifteen minutes, all we could see was flickering flames of torches appearing from all around the mountains. Sometimes it would disappear and then again bear out its luminosity. It was an image to be captured. I wish, I had a camera. When sixty odd people holding their torches arrived at our location, they had preempted that something was going to happen. Surrounded by the scenic beauty of mountains and valleys, the percussion instrument made an everlasting impact. It was an unforgettable experience.<sup>vi</sup>

Adiyog of JASAM recollects their trip to Uttarakhand that he claims that cannot be forgotten. The incident happened during the mass movement in Uttarakhand, when team members of JASAM were travelling across the state on an invitation from Uttarakhand Sangharsh Vahini<sup>vii</sup>, a movement led by Kamla Pant and Shamsheer Singh Bisht. While taking time to narrate the situation of the incident, Adiyog relives one of the most unique experiences from the performance of *Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai*. With a passion and charm to describe the incident in a picturesque manner, he shares the mesmerizing effect that the percussion instrument, *Nagārā* had around the locale of a small village side in Uttarakhand. Among a varied range of experiences, reminiscence from many of these mass movements flashes up, while discussing particular performances from their years of activism. These peculiar instances running through the situations of precarities had an almost amateurish approach to everyday necessities of political activity.

### **Reverberation in Sonic Proclamation**

The performance of *Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai* commences with a cue in the form of a sonic proclamation via *nagārā*<sup>viii</sup>. On the thaap (beat) of *nagārā*, the proclamation begins by an alarming declaration that intervenes in the field of the performative act. It intervenes by declaring an abridged interpunction by the percussion instrument of *nagārā*, while at the same time intersects with the performance space like an alert call in the traffic. Therein, a declamatory proclamation inflates the sonic impression, as the ears on which it affects, does demonstrate to hear and act upon the verbose narration. As the propensity of sonic proclamation adjusts the alert call, an assistance of separating the call from other noises in public space, brings about the gravity of the call. And to this reason, on

the cue of a call for being alert and attentive, the co-actors are supposed to follow certain directions after listening to the sonic proclamation.

With the sonic proclamation emphasizing to draw attention of the spectator, these intercutting addressals, follow a procedural norm of elongated projection. The words like *होशिया... र! खबरदा... र!* ( Be Alert ! Be Alarmed ! ) throw a cautious call to the wind of congregation as the *sipāhī* enters within the performance space and situates the location of congregation. From a marked point of direct addressal, *sipāhī* outlines the environment of the congregation, by also filling up a graded elevation of sound with an intensification on the alphabet “r”. By forewarning and stamping his authoritative proclamation, an indexical centre of power besieges the space of congregation by allowing a reverberation (Augoyard, 2005:111) of the sound-letter “r”. And how does this reverberation take place? It takes place *with* emphasis and *through* an intensification, as a vibratory vector projects the sonic proclamation into a measure of an outreaching field. The continuance in emphasizing on 'र' makes a sound-letter perform this reverberation. And while it emphasizes the sound-letter the reverberation also performs an intensification. Both the 'r' sound in *होशिया... र* and *खबरदा... र*, are performed *with* emphasis and *through* intensification. They try to strike a unanimity of emphasis and intensification simultaneously, in the last phonic utterance.

Usually termed as the “cathedral effect” (Ibid: 116) reverberation in the context of *Jantā Pāgal Ho Gayī Hai* will bring to the fore a reading of musical acoustics, as in when a proclamation via *nagārā* and utterance of words like *होशिया... र! खबरदा... र!* ( Be Alert ! Be Alarmed ! ) are performed.

Keeping two registers of observation open – one, of the text and the other of an anecdotal reference as narrated by Adiyog from a tour of JASAM, the term reverberation will be tested against the grain of sound energies in an open space. By referring to an example from the personal telephonic interview with Adiyog, the term reverberation will be given a task for elucidation to illustrate how a performative moment of a drum beat, guarantees an intense way of inviting people into a congregation. Thereby becoming a benchmark for the collective congregation of people. And at the same time, presenting an inexplicable orientation of ‘performing politics’, instrumental in political theatre.

The play, *Jantā Pagal Ho Gayi Hai* on one hand inaugurates a grand opening, whereas on the other hand addresses its audience to be alert and attentive. Because the style of addressal is itself lofty, the extent to which the proclamation heightens, in effect promises to initiate an engagement. And what sort of engagement is this? An engagement that operates between the *actor-sarkār* and *actor-jantā* and declares the command of congregating one vis-a-vis the other in a peremptory (assertive) manner. The move towards an engagement in the proclamation, seeks to draw and spur the attention of actors in common, alike. By superimposing deep thuds of the drum an addressal like that of a warning, the engagement seemingly appears to convoke the co-actors in the space of performance. The call in convoking is a call of coming together, which promotes a proportion of being alert and attentive.

सरकार : (बेचैन होकर) पुलिस !

आ गयी घडी निकट चुनाव की अकाल की चपेट है, जनता भूके पेट है

महँगाई की मारी है बेकारी भारी है

गली-गली में शोर है, विरोधियों का जोर है ।

मिलेंगे हम अवाम से

चले न जायें काम से

जनता है जनार्दन

करेंगे उसका कीर्तन

पुलिस! हम तुरंत जनता से मिलना चाहते हैं ।

Government: (restless) Police!

starving

Nearby are elections, famine has gripped over and masses are  
on empty stomach

Expenditure is expensive and unemployment costly

Clamour is in every street, opposition are on the beat

Will meet people and the common

So that dont we loose their summon

Public is like an organ

Will chant their slogan

Police! I want to meet the 'janta' immediately. (Translation mine, Shivram, 2016: 10)

The *actor-sarkār* enters the stage with all the splendor like that of a feudal lord in his coronation. His 'benign-ness' rubs off a sense that of a royal highness who considers all that is there in the land, which he governs. His subjects are the common people presented here as *actor-jantā*. They are here in the congregation to listen and obey the duties, sanctioned by the *actor-sarkār*. For them, the first duty to fulfill the order becomes an act of complying to what the police officer says, on the direction of *actor-sarkār*. Not only does the *actor-jantā* have to complete the obligation of the order but it has to meet out the vital principle of performing those duties, as a work to be done in common. Here, the field of the common space is that of performative space and the work which needs to be carried out becomes a common act. Thus, the first and foremost task for the *actor-jantā* becomes that of coming together in the common act. Where does the common act happen? It happens *with* the performative space of the congregation, and *through* the mediation of *actor-sarkār* and *actor-jantā*. And how does the common act cut through both the representative figures of *sarkār* and *jantā*? Precisely by *with-through-ing*<sup>ix</sup> the medium actors of both the figures.

Although both the tropes have a different grouping by which they are defined. In the case of *actor sarkār* (government), the grouping is based on the exercise of actions directed by the community it forms to administer. The body which governs the state of the affairs of a community is the government of its subjects. It is a unit with a capital 'U', which is the basic political body of the community. *Actor-sarkār* forms the system, to ascertain the performing capacity and executing the function and action of governance. In the scenario of *sarkār*, its inception is outlined as an honorific gratuity, legitimised from the masses (*jantā*) that has been called to congregate. The bonus which gets discharged *with* the body of *sarkār* finds the mediation of performance *through* the actor. That is why, *with* the body and *through* the actor, *actor-sarkār* commands an unwavering combo of presenting a clique.

A clique which corresponds only to its accidental bonhomie with a group/coterie of "capable actors". Their capability of acting together as a clique does not come from a motivational drive of forming an organisation, but through a force of organised anarchy – the lord like status of *actor-sarkār*; towers over any political association. Not only does it avoid any sort of criticism but balms the *actor-jantā* with smooth talks. Within the congregation, according to his whims and fancies, the *actor-sarkār* can appear at any given point in time and make a proclamation. As if, attending to the



congregation fulfil the duties of a monarch, who addresses his entourage of courtiers in a common whole. The common whole has a part in the whole of his kingdom. Wherein, within the domain of this *common-dom*, the personal effulgence of *actor-sarkār* (like that of a filmstar) carry the same old- fashion retinue (ठोट-बाट) around whom, revolves the exercise of power. The company which keeps the common-dom intact, are none other than the dignatories who provide the status of retinue as that of a confidant. They keep everything close to themselves and act independently many a times. At times the clique can act like an emissary and sometimes as mercenaries. They are what one can today call as personnel of ‘deep state’. These personnel not only perform or carry out their required duties but look out for the chief-dom’s subsistence. They are alert and alarmed always, all the time, ready to act. The character of the police officer reflects and resonates with such a tendency.

Conditioned by a situation of being alert and attentive, the police officer receives an anxious call from the *sarkār*, as the reasons for such uneasiness expresses the gravity of anticipated discontent. The sheer matter of elections being around the corner somehow, *sarkār* fears about the growing discontent and wants the issues of unemployment, price rise, famine to be addressed as soon as possible. On top of these issues, political capitalisation by the opposition on the distress and discontent concerning people’s livelihood, make the *sarkār* fret even more than the concerns at hand. It is afraid to lose power and does not want to provide an iota of chance to the opposition. As the proclamation imbricates (overlaps) both the soundscape of the drum and the addressal, the figure of *sarkār* wishes to meet with *jantā*. A directive follows up with the wish wherein, at the behest of *sarkār* (government) this alarming declaration professes a summon at *jantā*.

The summon starts off, by manifesting an authoritarian and benign attitude to the congregation. Wherein an authoritarian stance possesses the power of proclaiming a series of announcements and declarations. Directed at the congregation, the clamorous manifestation of announcements suffices to introduce a necessity of an encounter in the play. An encounter, in which one has to oblige by the fact that a favor is being granted to the listener. And what kind of favour is this? A favour that unexpectedly comes to the aid of the corporeal *actor-listener*. As if, the palette has been austere of drippages so as to only allow the oak to succumb into designs. S/he bears witness as a composed palette that is proleptic in its tactility, to constitute a medium-actor. In the same way, the listener who has to see through the series of announcements attests to the corporeal *actor-jantā*. Does a listener, hear also?



पुलिस अधिकारी: बेचैन होकर आपने, जनता को पुकारा

कहते हैं अकल्मन्द को, काफी है इशारा

जनता को हुक्म देता हूँ, दरबार में आये

सरकार याद करते हैं आदाब बजाये

सरकार आपके कहने से, मैं बस्ती-बस्ती जाता हूँ

नालायक जनता की बच्ची को मैं अभी पकड़ कर लाता हूँ

(जाने लगता है) सिपाहियों !

Police Officer: Being restless, you called the 'janta'

person

Often it is regarded that a gesture is enough for a clever

I order the people, come to the court

The government summons them, gather in support

As per your wish my 'sarkar' I shall go to every corner

And catch hold of this worthless 'janta' by your order

(Departs) Sepoys!

(Translation mine, Shivram, 2016: 10)

With the coterie of people around the *actor-sarkār*, the police officer informs His majesty about his own rodomontade. Expressing his sympathies with *actor-sarkār*, the police officer takes it upon himself to hoard together the *actor-jantā* as attendees in front of the presence of royal power. Without the blink of an eye, the police officer brags about his own capabilities in taming the unruly people. And even goes on to the extent of taking a pledge that on his command, the common masses must pay respect and offer their thanksgiving. He spells out the salutation of "आदाब बजाये", which needs to be offered to the royal *sarkār*. The gesture आदाब, in itself, functions like an etiquette for greeting, that involves the palm movement reaching up to the forehead. But the expression "आदाब बजाये" rather is a bit more forceful and gives a sense of following a compelling order under duress.

It is somewhat like the posture of kowtow, where one is supposed to bend forward on the floor so as to touch the ground with the head.

Whether or not any gratitude is actually complemented through a return gesture, the obligation to hear out in any case, is brought upon in these series of announcement. This encounter, nevertheless, galvanises the proclamation to pierce the ears, by setting on a mood which is attentive and alarming at the same time. That too, being done in a manner which looks to be throttling down a pose. Followed up by an order or decree the police officer's utterance at the beat-set, the directive enjoys an elongated rhythm of a shrill call to fall in queue for a congregation. Not only does the shrill call manage to energetically line up an appearance of control and power but also assumes a physical attitude of the same. The first posture to be attentive rakes up an impervious nature of control and the second one being bombastic, reveals a kind of boisterous indulgence. Both the pretension and attitude of the police officer demands the *actor-jantā* to come forth and behave in a particular manner. The demand is an indirect way of asking to *strike a pose* of allegiance and loyalty to the congregation in front of *actor-sarkār*.

Asking to *strike a pose* of allegiance and loyalty, *actor-sarkār* continues to assert an authoritarian hierarchy, as the declaration becomes a pertinent tool to maintain a demeanour of composure and grace. Through this declaration, not only the demeanor conveys a behavioural impression of putting up a falsity but also masquerades a disposition of 'benign-ness' on part of the *actor-sarkār*. While an attitude of 'benign-ness' comes from the position of withholding an antithetical execution to compassion or grace, the purpose of 'benign-ness' continues to baffle its execution. Because the containment in withholding not only usurps the seat of power but also doesn't let go the position of carrying the enigma.

This enigma of executing a 'benign-ness', captures the magical motion of power by making an exclusivity of the same. Being exclusive maintains a method to market the product of 'benign-ness'. It's packaged for one and all in the same manner as a product, but yet asks the buyer to grab it with both hands, because it is advertised as, "exclusively for you". The sole possession becomes that of the buyer, whose exclusive buying uses the execution of purchase and acquires the leverage of 'benign-ness'. This leverage has the capacity/ability of influencing a decision of a buyer standing next to her/him. It affectively sways the decision of other buyer to grab an advantage of position and strike a pose of a winner. Thus, by the same gesture of exclusivity, 'benign-ness' excludes the

buyer from even having the minimum capacity to determine, and let go of his part of share in the product.<sup>x</sup>

‘Benign-ness’ although has the inherent quality of compassion and grace, its execution mediates with the power and through an exclusive form of endowment. Thus, more than the inherent nature of ‘benign-ness’ the demeanour of authority and ‘benign-ness’ can be here called as affectation. Precisely because, affectation indulges in the pretence of possessing a quality, which it does not have at the first place. what makes the affectation more than itself is the mode of *striking a pose* in bowing to a ‘benign-ness’. But at the same time affectation does panoply (dazzling display) a magical sense. The conspicuous nature in affectation does not let have a simultaneous bearing of listening *with* hearing out the order and *through* the anticipation of unbelievability. Therefore, the amazement carried through an excitement merely coincides with a nod of the head. To nod would be to react on part of the audience, but to miss the bus of submission to pretension only offers an exchange of sulking with the splendour. Thereby, concatenating the unbelievable reaction of the audience into an impossible nod. One has to be alert to an alarmed nodding.

A response to proclamation, acted upon hearing the drumbeat and the addressal, follows an alarming directive at the behest of *sarkār* (government), this alarming declaration professes a summon at *jantā*. As a decree by the police officer’s utterance the alarming directive catapults a rhythm of a call, to fall in line for a congregation. Whereby the call, officiates a response from the subjects of a summon, while delivering an appearance of control and power. Such a posture of putting up the show of pretension and attitude, undertakes a task of behaviour on part of the *actor-jantā*. The task is a demand in a direct way of asking to *strike a pose* of loyalty and allegiance. Herein, the pressure to act upon the call for congregation will adduce expressions of performance that compels the common gentry to strike a *pose of being alert and alarmed*.

### **Sonorous Soundscape**

Analysing into these modes of public declaration, the call for congregation will be articulated *with* the sound and *through* the scape of the medium (air). Thus reverberation will be read, holding the lens of soundscape, wherein the drum-beat and proclamation can be observed as performing a reverberating effect in the medium of air. Both, the word “r” and in sound-scape are capable of producing sounds overtime in conjugation with each other. As in where, the reverberation orients *with* the medium and discovers itself *through* the scape of air, the soundscape will be argued as a

coming together of medium and its exploration over time. Not only the soundscape brings onto one over each other but also allows a magical mediation to take place – *with* the medium *through* a mediation.

( ढोलक की थाप पर सिपाही नाट्य स्थल पर आता है और ऐलान करता है )<sup>xi</sup>

सिपाही: होशिया... र ! खबरदा... र ! लोकतंत्र के शहंशाह ! हज़ूरो के हुज़ूर ! जन-  
गण-मन अधिनायक! भारत भाग्य विधाता ! सरकारों के सरकार श्रीमान  
भारत सरकार पधार रहे हैं । होशियार ! खबरदार !  
श्रीमान भारत सरकार पधार रहे हैं... ताका-झांकी, कूदा-फांती, छींका-पादी  
बंद... होशिया... र ! खबरदार खबरदार !

(On the beat of drum, the Sepoy comes at the performance site and makes a proclamation)

Sepoy: Be Alert...! Be Alarmed...! Emperor of Democracy! Lord of the  
lords! Jan-Gan-Man Adhinayak! Bharat Bhagya Vidhata!  
Government of India is ascending! Be Alert!Be  
Alarmed! Mr. Government here it comes... Peeping, lampooning  
and farting stops now... Be Alert! Be Alarmed!

(Translation mine, Shivram, 2016: 9)

Stopping over and continuing over the last alphabet “r”, the reverberation of the sound-letter, “r” highlights the clutch of graphematic recognition over a simple emphasis of the sound “r”. While emphasising on the phoneme of alphabet “r”, an exemplification in recognising the importance of stressing over the sound “r” performs a stretch that has a longer affect, post cessation. Even after the words *होशिया... र ! खबरदा... र !* ( Be Alert ! Be Alarmed ! ) gets propagated, its emission beholds a residual energy in the milieu of performance space. The sound-letter “r” reverberates *with* the proclamation and *through* an elongated projection, as it assists to provide a mainstay for these addressals. The addressal on the one hand echo and reechoes with the help of drum-beat. Whereas on the other hand, as the musical instrument of *nagārā* takes over the rhythm of declarations it

swerves (deviate suddenly from its direct course) the loud disclaimer by their own propensity of projection.

As a percussion instrument, the *nagārā* is applied to the effect of complimenting the content in proclamation. Wherein the projection of drum-beats, influence the milieu and makes an amenable condition for a leap in the content of proclamation. Although the beats of the drum fill up the scape of the medium with an overwhelming sound, the content in proclamation just manages to fade itself out. By means of the musical instrument *nagārā*, bass and treble<sup>xii</sup> sets the motion of order in an astute manner. In that order, space of the performance becomes adequately more than audible (ventriloque). This happens mainly because of a reverberating affect of what remains to be heard in the sonorous soundscape<sup>xiii</sup>.

For an end to communicate about proclamation, the beat of the drums are deployed in a manner which is satiated with echoes of sonorous soundscape<sup>xiv</sup>. Because the drum-beat has a resonating effect in the medium of air, its capability of producing the sound overtime is conjugal with the scape. The sound orients *with* the medium and discovers *through* the scape of air. Just to keep at the back of mind, the scape is a simultaneous scape. Precisely because on one hand the sound created between the hollow wooden trunk alleviates the air. While on the other hand, simultaneously, the scape is technically providing a segment like an antenna. Like that in entomology, a scape is the base of an antenna in an insect, similarly, the segment of the scape of sound, enjoys an imaginative picturesque par sensorium. Thus, the soundscape is coming together of the medium and its discovery over time. Not only the soundscape brings onto one over each other but rather, allows a magical mediation to take place – *with* the medium *through* a mediation. And that to that extent a magical mediation is not just to be studied or observed but to perform without the necessity of showcasing any sort of ability. Rather than designating what a performance ought to be, *withrough* can be read with an analogy of the hands over the surface of membrane sublates *with* rhythm, as and when it gets affected *through* the resonance of sound. Therefore, the expression *perform-e-bility*. That means to perform learning while performing, even with or without the discretion of knowledge.

Rather than being a modal soundscape, the sonorous soundscape attends to a dynamic order of things. It fills the medium completely, without forewarning a necessity of playfulness in the soundscape. Moreover, affirming that its playfulness can be one among many ways of mediation, let

alone a singular claim in listening to the soundscape. And yet the only way to listen is to hear *with* oneself *through* yourself. Here the only way of mediation does not imply a solipsist approach towards the medium, instead takes a skip *withrough* the medium. Thus, the dynamism in the medium comes from this melodic skip, as it trains to fulfill the sound of drumbeat without the need of reproducing a circularity of sound. On a principle of energetic disbursement, the soundscape outpours the vibrations in a manner which is free in terms of putting an ancillary (added support) factor. This ancillary factor is not a wanton support, precisely because of the reason that it comes without the gaudy nature of a helping hand. Its conviction lies in the manner of utmost carefulness in considering the free play of vibration, without any sort of restraint.

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- <sup>i</sup> In a personal telephonic interview with Adiyog of Jan Sanskriti Manch, Lucknow Unit, he divulges the fact that prior to the formation of JASAM, as it was popularly referred to, a theatre group by the name of “Navchetna” was active during the period of 1973-74. Later on, in during the time of Emergency, some where between 1976-77, “Navchetna” was merged with JASAM.
- <sup>ii</sup> Often termed as *the* Emergency in India the *Constitution of India* in Part XVIII under Article 352 lays down the provision for the ‘Proclamation of Emergency’ – “If the President is satisfied that a grave emergency exists whereby the security of India or of any part of the territory thereof is threatened, whether by war or external aggression or 1 [armed rebellion], he may, by Proclamation, make a declaration to that effect 2 [in respect of the whole of India or of such part of the territory thereof as may be specified in the Proclamation]. Here 1 stands for Forty-fourth Amendment of 1978, which substituted the previous terminology of “internal disturbances” and 2 represents the Forty-second Amendment of 1976 which was inserted and became a law w.e.f. 3-1-1977. For further reference, See *Constitution of India*, p-218.
- <sup>iii</sup> Born on 23 December, 1949 in Karauli Rajasthan, Shivram was a laureate in his own right. He completed his diploma in mechanical engineering meanwhile being a voracious reader of Hindi literature, History, Political Economy and Philosophy. Apart from studies in academic discipline, Sivram was influenced by Marxist-Leninist stream of thought which made him politically socially active in the public domain. He was also the founder member of “Vikalp”, “Janwādi Saanskritik-Samaajik Morcha” and also served as president of “Rangkarmi Ekta Sangh”, “Shramjivi Vichaar Manch”, “Pragatisheel Naagrik Morcha”. Among his published works, an anthology of collected plays have been published, which are namely -- “Janta Pagal Ho Gayī Hai” (2001), “Ghuspaitiye” (2001), “Punnarv” (2009), “Ghatak Churma” (2009). Whereas two poetry collections also have been published -- “Maati Mulkegi Ek Din” (2009), “Kuch Toh Haanth Gaho” (2009).
- <sup>iv</sup> In relation to the context of Emergency, the term “internal disturbance” was invoked under Article 352 of Part XVIII in the Constitution of India, by the then Prime Minister of India, Mrs. Indira Gandhi. On 26 June, 1975 All India Radio broadcasted Mrs. Gandhi’s infamous declaration of Emergency in which she laid out her government’s legitimacy to impose Emergency on controversial ground of “internal disturbances”. On legal front the imposition had prohibited, “the right of free speech and expression, right to assemble peacefully, to form associations and unions; to move freely throughout the territory of India; to reside and settle in any part of the territory; to acquire, hold and dispose of property and to practice any profession, or to carry on any occupation, trade or business, which were guaranteed under clause (1) of Article 19, could not thereafter be exercised.” (p-6). See *Constitution of India*. What immediately followed post declaration was a complete lack of democratic space and freedom in the domain of public life. Opposition leader were arrested on frivolous charges under the draconian law of MISA (Maintenance of Internal Security Act. It was passed by the Parliament in 1971; giving power to the Indian law enforcement agencies to detain, seize property without a warrant etc.)
- <sup>v</sup> In the aftermath of Naxalbari uprising, the All India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries was formed which was then followed up with the formation of Communist Party of India [Marxist-Leninist] on 22 April, 1969. The CPI [ML] conducted its First Congress in Calcutta in the month of May 1970 where in-total a 21 member Central Committee was formed, headed by its first General Secretary, Charu Mazumdar. Following Charu Mazumdar’s death in 1972, CPI [ML] started splintering into numerous other outfits.

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vi Personal Telephonic Interview with Adiyog on 24 June, 2018.

vii Uttarakhand Sangharsh Vahini was formed under the stewardship of dozens of activists which played a crucial role during the Chipko Andolan and the demand for a separate statehood for Uttarakhand. Working with a range of political outfits, since the Vahini was formed in the year 1977 (Kumar 2006, 187), the period of 1980's till 2000, saw a new charge of female activists throughout this phase of the movement. The front including firebrand feminist leaders like Kamla Pant, Uma Bhatt and Sheela Rajwar among many other women activists who championed a space for women movement. The Vahini was active among the people of the region for the cause of prohibition against liquor consumption and articulated women's voice from the underprivileged section of the society. Uttarakhand Sangharsh Vahini also had a leader like Shamsher Singh Bisht who back in 1972, got elected as the President of Kumaon University. Later on, he along with Pradeep Tamta, P.C. Tiwari and others had already made a huge impact against forest deforestation, under Parvatiya Yuva Morcha formed in 1974 (Joshi 2016)

As an anecdotal reference, Adiyog chips in with an interesting fact about this trip. Prior, to this tour, JASAM members were rounded up by the party leadership of CPI (ML). The reason, primarily was stated to be the split between Uttarakhand Sangharsh Vahini and IPF (stands for Indian People's Front which was formed in the year 1982. It was conceived as an experimental front, floated to work on issues of national minorities, women/gender question, environment, religious reforms and civil liberties).

viii Nagārā is a percussion instrument, which functions as a complete drum system. It has a hollow trunk cut out of wood that serves as an air cavity with two surfaces of bigger and smaller size membranes made out of animal skin. In most of the cases, it is either goat skin or buffalo skin that makes for the counterpart membranes. See, Neville H. Fletcher and Thomas D. Rossing, *The Physics of Musical Instruments*. The authors in chapter no. 18 on drums classify two groups of modern drums, one which has "a strong sense of pitch and those that do not. In the former group are the kettle drums, tabla, boobams,; in the latter group are the bass drums, snare drums, tenor drums, tomtoms, bongos, congas and countless other drums...". Thus the categorisation of nagārā as a percussion instrument is slightly different and kept outside the ambit of those of the likes of snare drum, bass drums, mṛdaṅg (mridang) that have two membranes which are paired together by an empty hollow air cavity.

Going further, the authors take the case study of CV Raman, who in his published paper titled, "The Indian Musical Drums" for Proc. Indian Academy of Science (1935) argues that there are five overtones which are fundamental to harmonics rather than the established four tones. Studying the acoustic properties of mṛdaṅg (mridang), C.V Raman contended that there are five successive tones coming from nine modes of vibration in harmonic sequence. This study at that point in time had moved away from a physical oriented study of mṛdaṅg (mridang), and had observed key departure points in the manner of how the tones in harmonic sequence does superpose forms of vibration. The experiment one by one notes down all the five modes of tone by putting together a detailed observation of how the membrane vibrates. This detailed observation is derived out by applying the technique and method of strewing fine sand over the top of the membrane. And in turn carefully infer the results from the behavior of membranes. In the first case, the tone is produced "by bringing down the flat of the palm of the hand smartly on the centre of the drum-head and then quickly removing it." In the second one, tone from the membrane is obtained by striking the edge, that in turn expresses "strewed" fine sand on the membrane along a nodal diameter. This scattering or splintering over the membrane along a nodal diameter or in some cases along the nodal line formulates a "relationship between the normal modes of vibration and the series of harmonic tones". From these observations a pattern emerges so as to suggest that the modes of vibration acquire distinct and almost identical similarity to that of a stretched string.

ix By picking up on concerns these debates would be considered for a redressal mechanism. Through a redressal mechanism, issues related with acting in theatre and direction of plays, will make sure to put to test foreclosure of debates. Since concerns became debates, as part of an ongoing discussion around various streams of activity in theatre, performative expressions in these documentations becomes an imperative index to explore modes of redressal. In a way, a redressal and examination of debates will look out for possible stimuli to *affectively sublimate* new initiations in understanding what went missing while forming the debates. Which means that the fault lines will just not be automatically explicated in debates but rather explored affectively with the concerns and through the debates. Herein, the concerns are brought into a discipline of examination without forgoing, how the concerns became a catalyzing force at the first place. Because the category of concern will inspect the impediment to debates of theatre, performance, acting styles, their repetitive motif asks to skim across the peculiarities of expression in theatre-making. As to how these peculiarities are to be effectively suggested through the debates is, by placing disparate register of concerns. To that extent, placement of contradistinction takes cognizance of the fact that glancing at these hypotheses, will invariably assume the premise of 'how to look for?'



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- <sup>x</sup> Fetishism ('Warenfetischismus' drawn by Marx from Charles de Brosses's book *The Cult of Fetish Gods*, 1760) if understood only as a prolepsis (thought provoked by sense perception) to a greedy attainment of 'thing of things', it would not be able address an *asinine* characteristic – that of a unificatory logic of an individual to society as a whole. Such a unification, although is not religious, proper to the supreme attainment of that state, but moreover has a fetish for this sacrificial loss that must be performed as an apodictic act (necessary act which logically has to be certainly true. And it is distinct from longing or desire, as in which one doesn't need to be ancillary to a figure of apotheosis. Earlier centuries relate fetishism with a sense of something which can be attained... the new rule of demonitisation is fetishism of "missing money" and the myth of altruism toward society. Hence the nature of commodity changes in this phase of Globalisation ("missing sovereignties" is another angle eg. Brexit, Trump, Le Penn). It is more and more abstract "value" for which people are literally paying the "price" for a commodity called as contours of compliance.
- <sup>xi</sup> For clarification, I have kept the word dholak instead of nagārā, as it was scripted in the play script. Although the text refers to the use of a dholak, the performance in Uttarakhand had incorporated nagārā.
- <sup>xii</sup> Herein, bass and treble are identified by the vernacular expression of 'थाप और गत'. These are the two patterns of strike on the membrane of nagārā. The smaller one for treble and the bigger surface is for bass. In many of the popular forms of performance like Nautanki, Swang, Nāc, Maach of Madhya Pradesh, just to name a few, nagārā is an integral instrument. See, *Madhya Pradesh Sampurna Adhyayan* (With Latest Facts and Data) by Upkaar Prakashan. In the section on Maach, the book describes how nagārā as an instrument is put to use with other components of the performance. " ढोलक माच का महत्वपूर्ण वाध है। गायक, कलाकारों के बोल नर्तक तथा टेक झेलने वालों की सामूहिक स्वर-संगीत ढोलक की गत पर चलते हैं। जिस तरह नौटंकी में नगाड़ा और कथकली में चेंडा की आवाज खानगी पैदा करती है, उसी तरह माच में ढोलक की थाप और गत रंग प्रदर्शन में प्राण फोनक देती है।" Being a concise database of the region of Madhya Pradesh, Upkaar publishing house have been instrumental in bringing out series of general knowledge editions. These compilation of facts and data are extensively read for competitive exams in particular. (p-260)
- <sup>xiii</sup> See, Jean- Francois Augoyard and Henri Torgue, *Sonic Experience: A Guide to Everyday Sounds*. The author in his long list of thematic nomenclature on sound effects, identifies phonotonie under the psychomotor effects. Out of the five effects – Elementary Effects, Composition Effects, Effects Linked to Perceptive Organization, Psychomotor Effects and Semantic Effects, each of them puts together a "common scheme" between the relationship of environment and human beings. The fourth one, which is termed as psychomotor effect explicates the categories of acoustic effect and is defined as that which "imply the existence of a sound action (be it a minimal movement) of the listener, or a scheme in which perception and the motor function interact, examples: chain, niche, attraction, phonotonie" (p – 17). Hereby, phonotonie is understood in terms of an effect that "characterizes the feeling of euphoria provoked by a sound perception. Sometimes it induces a behaviour directly, such as a renewed activity, a collective movement, or a reflex gesture. Musical listening often plays this functional role in individual or collective work". (p – 86). The purpose of going at such length is to bring to notice, the area of study around sonic reception and its understanding which continues to baffle and challenge that how does the affect of phenomenon in attention unravels through a duality of attraction and repulsion. ■
- <sup>xiv</sup> See Christoph Cox, "Beyond Representation and Signification: Towards a Sonic Materialism", Here in this article, Cox argues that in Pierre Schaeffer's work on sound, the word "objet sonore" means sonorous object. This sonorous object stands out from the paradigm of "both its source and the listening object". Which means that neither the sonorous object is the instrument nor the "medium in or on which it exists" and moreover not even "the mind of the listener." And for this reason Cox proposes that although there have been recent studies on sonic art particularly dealing with the relationship of sound and listening, his concurrence with sonorous object takes a diagrammatic cut. It proposes that sound may be approached as a "complexes of forces materially inflected by other forces and force-complexes". The point in bringing out this concern of sonorous object is precisely because the problematik of medium needs to be foregrounded when clubbed up with the term soundscape. The point of departure here becomes that of coming together of the word sonorous soundscape, which portends towards the working of, how the medium (thing) in-itself operates. Thus outlining a proposition, where the sound object in this case the soundscape, explores with the medium and discovers through the scape.

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