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Indian Ālāp and Vietnamese Dạo: A Study on Teaching Individual Creativity

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Indian Ālāp and Vietnamese Dạo: A Study on Teaching Individual Creativity

Gisa Jähnichen and Chinthaka Prageeth Meddegoda

Abstract: In this study, the transmission of some essentials in music tradition from two different places in Asia, namely India and Vietnam, is taken as a metaphor to be further applied on cultural and social analysis in order to achieve a better understanding of how creativity is taught and culturally established. Indian music is asserted as a Guru centered science. The process of transmitting knowledge might be successful as far as the teacher gains satisfaction by the student's behavior and capability of receiving and applying knowledge. Similar yet different processes can be observed with teaching in the South Vietnamese music tradition. Ālāp is a part in north Indian classical music as well as the Dạo in the Vietnamese music tradition. They dominantly create the mood of a Rāga or a Điệu respectively. The final outcome is an improvisation. Individuality and creativity develop in a process of tension between rules and breaking rules. Metaphorically, there are strong parallels to other subjects of transmitting social and cultural patterns of communication.

Keywords: North Indian classical music. South Vietnamese music. Knowledge analysis. Transmission of creativity. Communication within music ensembles.

Ālāp indiano e Dạo vietnamita: um estudo sobre o ensino da criatividade individual

Resumo: Neste estudo, a transmissão de alguns elementos essenciais na tradição musical de dois lugares distintos da Ásia, a Índia e o Vietnã, é tida como uma metáfora a ser aplicada à análise cultural e social de forma a permitir uma melhor compreensão de como a criatividade é ensinada e culturalmente estabelecida. A música indiana se afirma como uma ciência centrada no guru. O processo de transmissão do conhecimento é bem-sucedido enquanto o professor está satisfeito com o comportamento do aluno e sua capacidade de receber e aplicar o conhecimento. Processos semelhantes, ainda assim diferentes, podem ser observados no ensino de música na tradição sul-vietnamita. Ālāp faz parte da música clássica do norte da Índia, assim como o Dạo na tradição musical vietnamita. Eles criam magistralmente o modo de um Raga ou Điệu, respectivamente. O resultado final é uma improvisação. Individualidade e criatividade se desenvolvem em um processo de tensão entre regras e quebra de regras. Metaforicamente, existem fortes paralelos com outros assuntos relacionados à transmissão de padrões de comunicação sociais e culturais.

Palavras-chave: Música clássica do norte da Índia. Música do Vietnã do Sul. Análise de conhecimento. Transmissão de criatividade. Comunicação dentro de conjuntos musicais

Ālāp indio y Dạo vietnamita : Un estudio sobre la enseñanza de creatividad individual

Resumen: En este estudio, la transmisión de algunos elementos esenciales en la tradición musical de dos lugares diferentes en Asia, a saber, India y Vietnam, se toma como una metáfora más aplicada al análisis cultural y social con el fin de lograr una mejor comprensión de como la creatividad es enseñada y establecida culturalmente. La música india se afirma como una ciencia centrada en el gurú. El proceso de transmisión de conocimiento puede tener éxito hasta que el maestro se sienta satisfecho con el comportamiento del alumno y su capacidad de recibir y aplicar los conocimientos. Procesos similares todavía se pueden observar diferentes en la enseñanza de la música en la tradición de Vietnam del Sur. Ālāp es una parte de la música clásica del norte de la India, así como el Dao en la tradición de la música vietnamita. Ellos crean con dominio el modo de un Raga o de un Dieu respectivamente. El resultado final es una improvisación. Individual y creativamente desarrollada en un proceso de tensión entre seguir y romper reglas. Metafóricamente, hay fuertes paralelos con otros temas de transmisión de patrones sociales y culturales de la comunicación.

Palabras-clave: Música clásica del norte de la India. Música de Vietnam del Sur. Análisis del conocimiento. Transmisión de creatividad. Comunicación dentro de conjuntos musicales.

Introduction¹

Teaching creativity in any society is everywhere strongly reflected through ways and strategies of transmitting performing arts such as music and dance, so they are in Asia. In the light of current global issues, the awareness of traditional sources in coping with dangers and challenges of any kind, is of crucial importance. This includes the awareness of social strengths as well as of social weaknesses resulting from living styles, social orders, and cultural interpretations.

In this study, we take the transmission of some essentials in music tradition from two different places in Asia, namely India and Vietnam, as a metaphor to be further applied on cultural and social analysis. In choosing the most demanding part in terms of developing individual creativity, we focus on the mechanism of turning a definite quantity of experience into a new quality of creativity within social communication that is reflected in the transmission process. Creativity in the context of Asian societies may evolve as a culturally patterned category that calls for

specification within different cultural environments (Hemlin et al. 2004).

Main qualitative methods applied in this study are grounded theory and metaphorical analysis (Holyoak & Thagard 1995). As long-term students and researchers in the cultural practice described, both authors of this study could conduct deep analysis in performance practice. Since the study takes music transmission as metaphor, the percentage of observing and analyzing musical transmission is high compared to its application on the entire society. In order to achieve a strong metaphorical sense (Rigney 2001, 4), the focus on musical details may help to identify the concepts that work as respective social communication patterns. Insofar, the drafted social analysis attached profits from musical knowledge. However, it also requires an understanding of musical matters. Finally, concluding simile patterns implies differences as well. These differences must be subject of further researches in both sociological and musicological analyses to which this study is only a first step.

Additionally, the comparative approach of two cases in remarkably different Asian cultures that are still practiced in a rapidly changing social environment might entail the broad view on diversity within Asian cultures that are in popular media often subsumed as existing under joint conditions. Intriguingly, the differences show the parallel of metaphorical effects and the usefulness of stepping into studying performing arts to prove the existence of metaphors expressed in non-verbal communication. The way of teaching and appropriating creative skills in music practice might be an unspoken metaphor on approaching creativity in

1 This paper is based on a joint study of the authors that was first presented and then discussed in the framework of ELLTA, an organisation dedicated to Exploring Leadership and Learning Theories in Asia, mainly during their conference held on Langkawi, Malaysia, in the year 2012. After having an exchange among scholars and students his paper is to revisit a number of problems raised and to initiate further studies in this field. A draft outcome was published as Gisa Jähnichen and Chinthaka Prageeth Meddegoda, 2014, A Metaphorical Study on Teaching Individual Creativity in Asia: Indian Ālāp and Vietnamese Dạo. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4 (4), Special Issue on Contemporary Issues in Social Science, 306-315. This current development of the outcome changed to over 70%.

general within a given society. In the following, the two cases Ālāp for Indian and Dạo for Vietnamese music traditions are explicitly looked at and in a short discussion contextualized. Both cases are followed by questions raised from them and some first conclusions regarding the application of metaphorical studies deriving from culturally patterned music transmission.

Though this study cannot be comprehensive in direct application of musicological findings on social behavior, it may help to open up new interdisciplinary ways in conducting social analysis and in underlying the importance of music research beyond the primary sound events.

The North Indian Ālāp and Some Patterns of Transmitting Creativity

Even though the origin of Indian classical music is contextualized to the Sāma Vēda, it has been evolving and perpetuating through oral transmission which has been legitimized by treatises of various authors emerged in different periods throughout Indian history. In probing to different periods in the history, it can be noticed that these treatises are perceived and followed differently by different music connoisseurs as a result of divergences of cultures and their influences to transmission system of music. At present, diversities of some view points and music pedagogies are dominantly apparent in south and north traditions of classical music in India. North Indian classical music or Hindustani music is apparently a kind of music which is to be played in improvised manner while south Indian music is known as fixed though it is not absolutely fixed in some instances. The most common

feature of both music systems is that they are strongly committed as Guru Mukhi Vidyā which connotes that science which is orally transmitted to the pupil from the Guru. This passion of transmitting knowledge can be traced back to the Vedic period in India and still some traditions strictly and some traditions partially follow the respective rules given they strongly believe that unless traditional methods are not respected, it is hard to be successful in artistry. Following early scholars, Goutam puts it 'unless the student stays with his teacher and constantly learns and practices music with the teacher's guidance, it will be very difficult for him to evolve into an artiste' (Goutam 2001, 178).

The North Indian classical music encompasses several genres besides two of them are wide spread i.e. Dhrupad and Khyāl which are practiced in both vocal and instrumental classical music. It is hard to separate the improvisation methods of Ālāp singing from Ālāp playing. The physical structure and sound production methods of musical instruments may not support imitating vocal renderings explicitly and vice versa. Certain Ālāp aspects like *nom tom* Ālāp is said to be adapted by Dhrupad singers from having been played (Sanyal and Widess 2004, 26). Even though Khyāl appears as independent, in practice, it borrows elements mainly from Dhrupad, Thumri and Tappa of northern India. Therefore, in this paper, Ālāp in instrumental music will not be separated as it is done for Dhrupad or Khyāl. The methods of teaching Ālāp can vary according to the teacher in terms of his own principles, taste, current mood, and disciple's condition. The standard charge leveled at Gharānā musicians around the turn of the century was that they taught in bits and pieces without telling even their own students the name of

the Rāga. Gharānā pedagogy, its critics asserted, trafficked a little too much and a little too deliberately in obfuscation (Bakhle 2005, 231). Mostly in Hindustani classical traditions, the mood of Rāgas is taught through Ālāp while the Carnatic tradition initiates teaching Rāgas from the main compositions, which contain the essence of the Rāga in abstract shape. The teacher's choice always decides what kind of strategies could be suitable for the disciple to approach the Rāga. The pedagogy of Ālāp in the Dagar Gharānā is very important in this matter as it emphasizes the Ālāp rather than other sections of Dhrupad recitation. Sanyal and Widdess describe two approaches to the teaching of Ālāp in the Dagar Gharānā which are also omnipresent in other Indian traditions.

- Teaching phrase by phrase to memorize so that memorization leads ultimately to a process of recreation or teaching one or two phrases that encapsulate the Rāga which can be called path to the Rāga. These phrases can be sung at or near the beginning of Ālāp.
- Teaching by example and imitation. In this process, the student is expected to sing by keeping to the grammar of the Rāga and style of the Gharānā rather than imitating exactly the teacher's renderings (Sanyal and Widdess 2004: 132).

Today, non-conservative teaching approaches are followed by many musicians, especially in the matter of teaching students from abroad and part time learners. Most of traditional classical musicians have switched to adopt non-traditional pedagogies in the case of convenience and requirement of

distance learning. Chaurasia, a teacher at the conservatoire in 2003, is sensitive to the situation of the students at the conservatoire. She said that she does not want anybody to use [notation], but she won't be in class all the time, so, students have to record the music and they have to write it down (Schippers 2007, 5).

The final objective of these various methods of teaching is the disciple to become a musician who is capable to perform creatively even though the learning and the teaching approaches have not initially required the student's creative ability. Initially, the disciple should be able to imitate the Ālāp singing of the Guru and must have musical sensitivity towards rhythm and meter. Most importantly, the disciple must have humbleness and other good qualities in his personality, which is judged according to the community standards of the respective time period. That is how the traditional Gurus in Hindustani music expect the pupils to be at the initial stage which were gradually brought up to a widened horizon of creativity. Creativity is a very important quality which is inherent or can be developed within a person, especially who learns arts like north Indian classical music. Sharma cites Mammata's (1050-1150) idea that there are three elements i.e. inborn talent, proficiency, and training that cumulatively contribute to poetic creativity. This idea similarly functions also towards one's creativity in music (Sharma 2000, 382). In Ālāp singing, creativity is exhibited through improvisation that is performed in a given framework which can be only achieved through experience and training. Here, the word 'training' can be perceived as a combination of two words i.e. leaning and rehearsing. The term 'Riāz' is used in the field

of Indian music that connotes not merely self-training in developing skills, but also a process of self-navigation in discovering one's own specialization regarding the subject through employing psycho-physical expressions of oneself. That means that individuality is an essential principle in achieving creativity.

There is a strong belief amongst some musicians and scholars in India that one's singing reflects his own nature². Similarly, it is observable that a well-trained classical musician embodies his nature through Ālāp for it allows a wide range of renderings which is produced in a certain framework maintaining respective moods of rāgas in Hindustani music tradition. Tradition here does not mean something static or rigid; it is a continuous flow of creativity that finds room within a given framework (Sharma 2000, 385). Sharma states:

in Indian music, the three functions of creativity, viz., imagination, execution and evaluation are discharged simultaneously while in western art music, these functions are performed at three different stages by different persons. (Sharma 2000, 385).

Currently, most musicians of Indian classical music have adorned their performance by adhering musical elements such as vibrato, harmonic progressions and equally tempered scales, which are on the one hand considered unique to western art music and taboo in Indian classical music on the other. They do so in order to individualize their performance and to adapt to singing styles that are increasingly consumed through a large audience throughout the country. Global competitiveness is one cause of

² Personal communication with Kavimandan Sarayu Sonni and Gyanesh Chandra Panday at Banaras Hindu University on 25 April, 2007.

breaking rules seen from the perspective of Indian music culture. Another cause is mainstreaming in order to become more similar to successful productions from the perspective of the global market. The experience of exclusion from the global market when keeping musically unchanged leads in many cases to self-correction that contradicts traditional musical behavior. In result, those, who sustain within the frame of traditional musical transmission, move to the periphery of the regional music market. They can succeed only through a relatively stable audience that depends on relatively stable social constructs given through set conditions such as the cast system implying educational preferences. Representing conservatism, these musicians will further limit their individual creativity for the sake of memorializing past idols.

Seen as an allegory to social communication and in relation to changing social needs in India, one could understand the transmission process as balancing stability on the one hand and breaking rules through performing creativity beyond the learned phrases thus serving in the context of changing needs on the other hand. The scheme at Figure 1 may visualize this still very basic idea.

The scheme implies a number of questions asked in social sciences on social stability and changing social conditions in India. Good examples are Krishna (2004), who said about the interrelation of traditional knowledge and innovation:

New middle-level institutions are more likely to succeed if they are linked with what villagers already have, especially if they are able to hold the leaders accountable using local knowledge and everyday understandings of right and wrong. Different agency types have developed indigenously,

and it is worth examining whether these can be strengthened and helped to acquire value and stability” (Krishna 2004, 304).

His interpretation was given from a practical viewpoint of an Agrarian society. Whereas Bhawuk (2003, 19), who investigates Indian spirituality and creativity saying the following:

Since creativity can be construed as a socio-cultural behavior, as is apparent from the study of geniuses, it is important to study the influence of culture on creativity, else we may make the mistake of imposing the western notion of creativity on other cultures and find people in other cultures not creative. Therefore, future research should examine the socio-cultural aspects of creativity.

Discussing this statement from the perspective of a cultural participant in music practice, the most important part is the call for a specification of creativity in its cultural and historical boundaries. So far, traditional music practice sets the transmission of Ālāp into the highest category of creativity within a given societal frame. Voice colour, dynamics, the actual order of phrases, as well as micro-melodic patterns can vary individually thus representing the creative understanding of the taught music carrying on the reputation of the teacher and the school. Seen from the perspective of the globally embedded music production in which many contemporary musicians try to integrate in order to follow their profession under the pressure of changing economic rules, the range of creative possibilities within the traditional frame is demanding on the one hand due to strict learning processes

over a long period of time and finally with limited distribution options. On the other hand, modernizing musical expressiveness on the costs of traditional refinement may take only a short time and increases the possibility to reach out into large social strata that are not very familiar with traditional delicacy. Though not all, many take the fast lane to survive instead of holding up inherited musical wisdom.

In whatever direction a musician presenting Ālāp is moving, he or she will always construct new exclusions and take a high risk in professional acceptance. Seemingly, the teaching and learning process of creativity in music practice leads currently to a shifting of decisions made regarding the type of creativity that might be portrayed within one’s Ālāp performance. The main difference is expressed musically by using or not using of harmonic progressions, vibrato and an equally tempered scale in order to achieve these changes. Without wording the allegory, there is a clear decision perceived through the audible sense.

In extension of proposed views on Asian symbols (Holyoak and Thagard 1995, 183-184), their existence can be expressed through non-verbal performance and they are subject to gradually changes instead of serving an unspecified or generally ingrained philosophy. If Tilley (1999) discusses the application of analogies for material culture, here should start a development of applied metaphorical studies taking immaterial culture as a mean of communication and discourse.

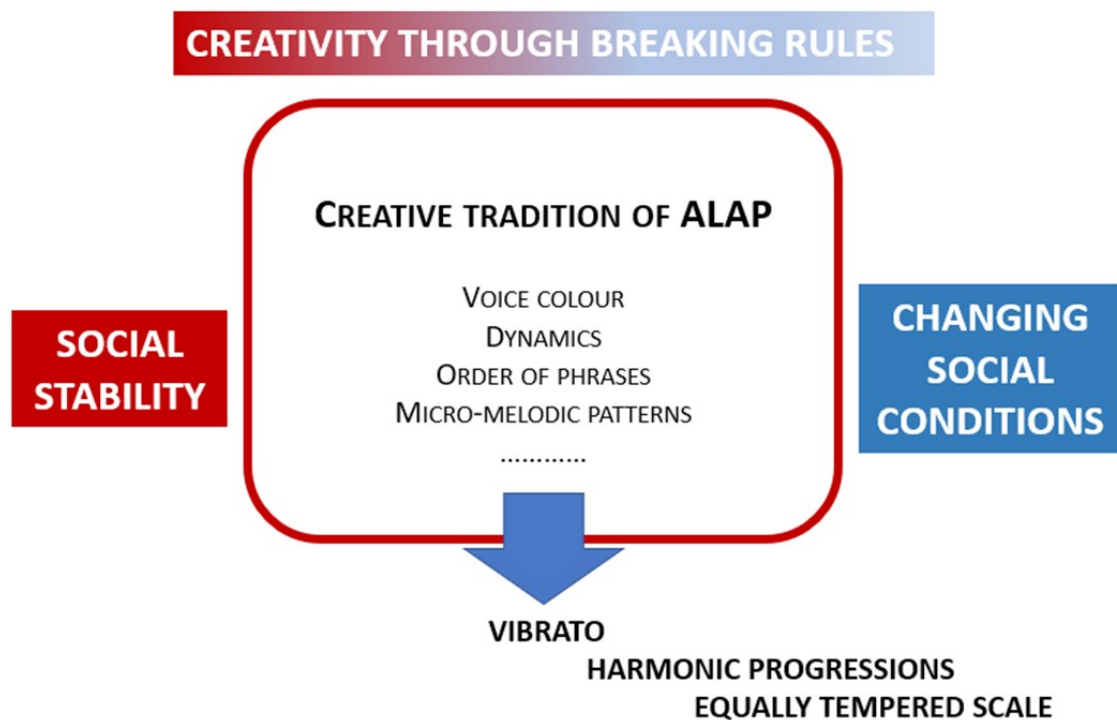


Figure 1: Scheme showing interconnections between different types of creativity: the traditional creativity and the creativity through breaking rules. Both serve different aims of social communication. (Scheme by the authors).

The Vietnamese Dạo as an Example for Reflected Social Networking

A Vietnamese Dạo introduces a piece of music in its essential mood defined by various interval relationships, timbre qualities of different pitches, structural orders within the piece, micro-melodic patterns and in setting a tempo at the end of this introductory section.

Though a Dạo is only considered to be the “prelude”, the “abstract” or the pre-positioned “summary” of a traditional musical piece, a music student has to work hard on its shape and expressive strength. Playing a Dạo well needs much longer studies than following the basic framework of a metrically solid

piece. The culture of playing a Dạo prior to any instrumental, vocal, or mixed piece developed over the time and was not always in the same way difficult. Early investigations into court music have shown that various ensemble arrangements could not establish a necessary division between sound functions. The achievement of the South Vietnamese ensemble music tradition is a specific professionalization in this regard (Jähnichen 1997). The following elaborations are, therefore, if not indicated otherwise, related to this kind of South Vietnamese ensemble music tradition.

If we put the conditions and requested knowledge of playing a Dạo into a table and find parallels in social communication, we

may understand better, why this prelude is so demanding among Vietnamese musicians and important it is to be socialized in the context of such an ensemble in order to be accepted.

The effort to meet all requirements of playing a Dạo well is measurable in terms of appreciating its originality. This originality derives from the deep understanding of primary rules within the represented *Điệu* (the given musical system), and its individual interpretation.

But yet another set of rules overlaps the dealing with musical determinants. This secondary set of rules includes the rule of not being imitative or not copying each other. The broadly varying ensemble sound is more important than the single achievement in playing a solo Dạo. Further, the individuality has to adopt to one's own musical position that considers experience in musicianship, age and status within the local community of musicians. A young newcomer who just arrived cannot 'overplay' an experienced musician from that position. However, not a few newcomers obtained their first public recognition by breaking this rule and turning orders and hierarchies, such as Cao Van Lau in Bac Lieu, who not only played over, but composed a piece in a newly created *Điệu*, that became later on dominating in a renovated tradition of musical drama (Kiều Tấn 1993).

Music teachers who are committed to transmit all these different layers of rules and determinants see themselves in the situation that they have to first work out the various *Điệu*s in detail. Then they may come step by step to its implications and – considering the individuality of their students – to an

individual proposal of interpretation. Zhu (2003, 254) points out that:

One of the outstanding values among the Vietnamese enterprises was maintaining harmonious relationships within the enterprise even though they operated in a market environment. [...] in Vietnam, the bonus computation does not reflect a large degree of influence by personnel evaluation, but via organizational performance.

Then he summarizes that, for example, the incentive scheme is still following a collective orientation, thus marking a fundamental social tradition.

One can clearly find this way of thinking in traditional ensemble performances in which the joint outcome is superior to the performance skills of single musicians. In some cases, musicians outstanding in virtuosity are perceived as disturbing or even contra-productive within a traditional music ensemble³. From this viewpoint the secondary rule set of not being imitative while joining a group performance has to be seen as a demand for creativity that can only be carried out through co-socialization within and adaptation of a performance environment. Therefore, we can observe a field of tension between adaptation to a group and the strict demand for individualization. Both parts depend on each other. Without further musicians, the Dạo becomes a solo performance that calls for a non-group type of playing.

3 Personal communication between Lê Văn Phổ, the dean of the Faculty of traditional Music of the Vietnamese State Conservatory, and the author, 19 July, 2010, Hanoi, ICTM Study Group Meeting on 'Music and Minorities'.

Musical conditions within a Dạo and the requested knowledge of a primary Điệu rule set	Needed to solve which musical problems	Parallel application examples
Interval relationships	Identifying the system (the tonality)	Learning through observing and acting
Timbre qualities of different pitches	Hierarchies defined by pitch quality	Differentiating qualities in social status
Structural orders within the piece	Hierarchies defined by timely order	Experiencing social power orders
Micromelodic patterns	Interconnectedness within a frequency space	Social reality check
Setting tempo	Setting the speed of the following process that must fit to the production mode and to the perception by the audience	Creative adaptation to “doing the most out of a given chance” within society

Table 1: Table showing musical determinants within a dạo representing a điệu’s primary rule set, the implied problems to be solved and possible applications in Vietnamese society.

This kind of practice is taught namely in formal music education for the purpose of solo staging in a rather less traditional context of performance. On the other hand, a Dạo appears not only tasteless but wrong, if instruments parallel each other in melodic patterns and rhythmic accentuation. That means, too, that a musician has to know more than his own preferred way to play a Dạo in order to avoid imitative playing. The sharing of musical functions such as keeping an arching melodic line (assigned to bowed string instruments, the flute or the one-string box zither; in Vietnamese: cò, sáo, tiêu, or bầu), the rhythmic exploration of the metric space (assigned to the plucked string instruments which often are specialists in keeping the metrically important little slit drum for marking time units; in Vietnamese: kim, tỳ bà, sến, or nhật. The kim-player keeps mostly the so called song lang, a small flat slit drum with an integrated wooden beater that is played with the foot) and the filling of sound spaces (assigned to the 16-string half

tube zither or the Vietnamese guitar; in Vietnamese: tranh and ghita phím lõm), helps in structuring one’s own interpretation (Jähnichen, 2007). Nevertheless, becoming a good musician, cross-functionality and individual identity in approaching a Dạo played in ensemble is of utmost importance.

Here we may find another allegoric access to how social networks operate that require intimate knowledge about production modus, preferences, accessibility and the specific status of participants. Accordingly, musicians shift during playing the Dạo their musical function as described above (in the following scheme marked with different signs) or they explore spatial density in narrow intervals, then again moving away from closeness to distance. One very interesting principle is the tendency to balance between different musical functions and individual interpretations of the other participating musicians. This type of networking is also symbolic for social

relationships as being named typical for the Vietnamese social context. Nguyen Thanh Tuyen calls this phenomenon the 'bamboo fence' construct that provides shelter of traditional values in balancing distances between rural and urban, between global and national and between generations (Nguyen Thanh Tuyen 2010, 74-75). While Tannen (1998, 258) argues that Asian rhetoric was devoted not to devising logical arguments but to explicating widely accepted propositions, the case of teaching, learning and finally practicing a Dạo is far more complex than just following blindly a

rule set that is historically imposed on a cultural situation in change.

Different from surrounding social practices, the Vietnamese concept represented through the audible result embraces high flexibility and an interpretation of individual creativity that bases on a holistic understanding of an actual culture that is moving in a global stream. It seems to be less vulnerable and offers many possibilities for re-interpretation. Thus, rule breaking such as shown in solo representations of former ensemble music within the boundaries of the given society can be easily translated as substitutive performance.

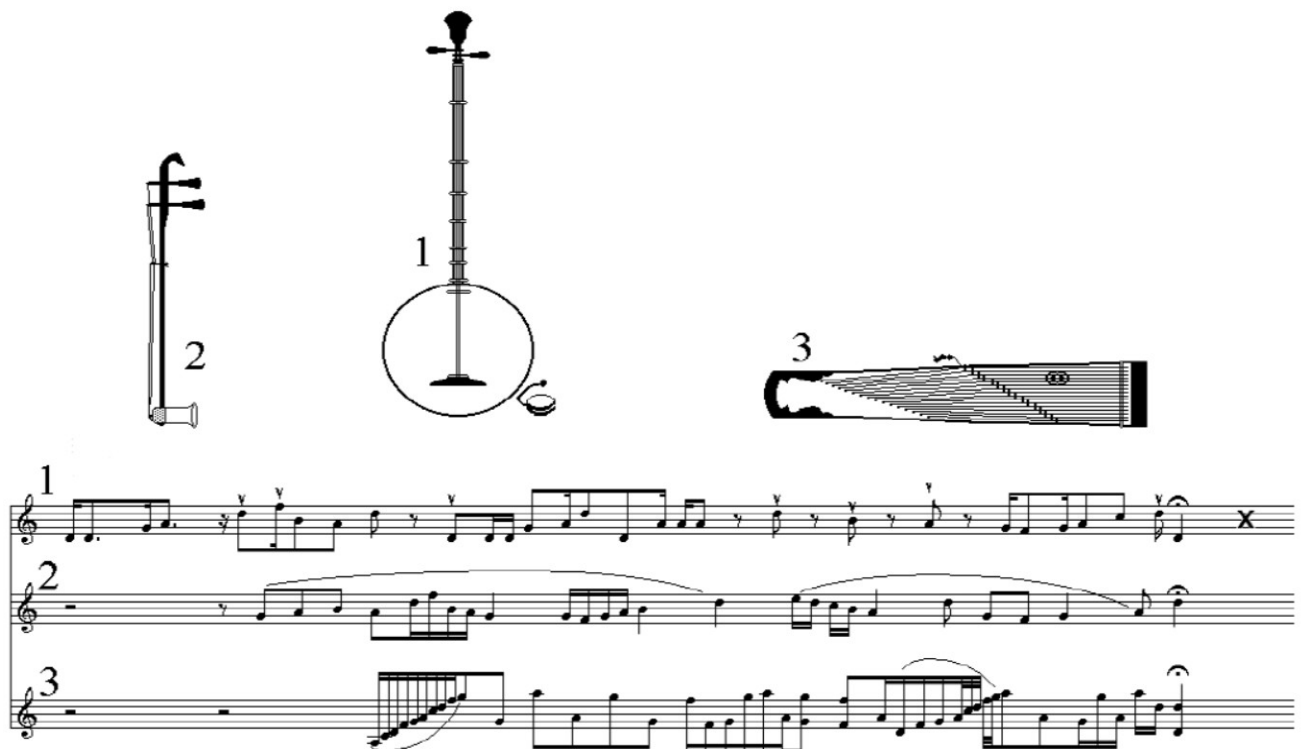


Figure 2: Musical functions within a standard ensemble – 1= rhythmic accentuation (+ use of small slit drum song lang that follows the fermata with the last joint note, see x at the end of the first staff); 2= melodic line; 3= 'sound filling' over the whole space of frequencies. (drawings and transcription: Gisa Jähnichen).

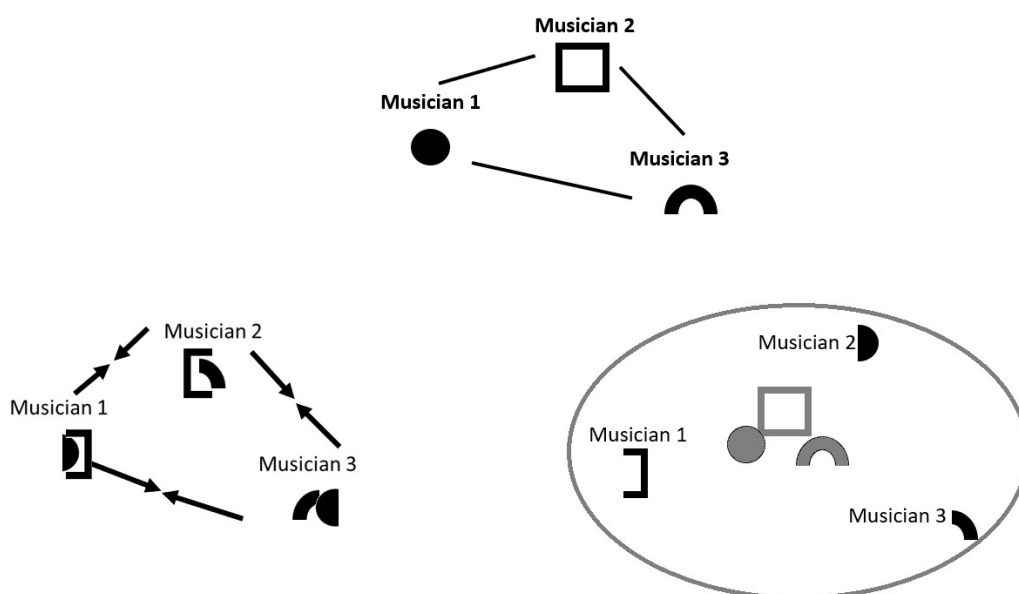


Figure 3: Scheme showing orientation during ensemble playing of a Dạo. mostly, instruments start to play one after another, then adopting to each other and finalizing the Dạo in a way that indicates a tempo on which each musician agreed upon (Schemes by the author).

Discussion and Conclusion

Taking both examples in their similarities of orally transmitted traditional creativity and their differences in social implications as symbolic, we may ask the following questions:

- Are all changes caused through creativity and creativity caused through changes in social conditions welcome in the same way by the communities concerned? If yes or no, then why?
- How can we effectively interact within the field of tension among traditional and rule-breaking creativity?
- What could be the outcome of a more analytical approach to the 'quality of

changes' within society and what of it is already reflected in music practice?

- How do roles in culturally patterned creativity change through varying conditions in social life?
- How are individuals positioned within a society that requires continuous adaptation to changes and how do they express their view on these changes in self-positioning?
- How are these individuals represented within music practice?
- What can we draw from observation of all named processes above with regard to social changes within large cultural areas?

The Indian Ālāp practice shows alternatives within a traditional concept yet a narrow way for breaking rules. Many new creative elements within Ālāp derive from Western art music models thus they will only work within parts of the society which are less bound to tradition and who do not differentiate in communalities of culture. The Vietnamese Dạo practice may indicate that individuality has different levels in reaching creativity. Playing solo means not only being solely responsible for the creative outcome, but the combination of different musical roles that have to be taken over within the performance. In result, collectivism as a still highly favoured precondition of creativity is a preferred model in which the single person is creative in terms of network strategies. Changing roles call for the ability to steadily adapt to changing conditions.

Finally, one may consider the growing consciousness for life quality that makes changes becoming an object of consideration instead of an imposed cultural behaviour. People, both in India or in Vietnam, are going to make cultural and communicative choices even under changing conditions. In music practice, especially in those traditionally very creative parts such as Ālāp in India and Dạo in Vietnam, alternatives are given and continuously negotiated.

Creativity is in summary a culturally patterned category that depends on communication strategies given in a society. The perception of creativity may always change though a cultural typicality can sustain over a long period of time. Those parts of a cultural practice that are recognized as highly involving creativity are potential indicators of transmission methods in relation to the resulting impact on society.

Though any other performance detail may call for creative development, the chosen elements show clearly how multi-layered and different Asian cultures deal with creativity in their very own understanding. Therefore, it is proposed to look further into micro-social fields of studies such as music practice, to find answers to the questions raised in this context. Considering most recent developments, it also seems very important to better integrate knowledge on specific time periods regarding social developments and some corresponding cultural features. The situation of changes has a tremendous impact on visions and symbols that are culturally employed. So has the nation state, as it was seen, rather little impact on individuality in processes that involve adaptations to creativity.

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