

**The Impact of Political Islam on Cultural  
Practices in Badakhshan, Afghanistan,  
during the Taliban Era**

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themselves to be an Islamic practice. Yet at the same time, this performance tradition has been regarded by the Badakhshi Sunnis as a non-religious and, therefore, reprehensible activity. This example exemplifies how performances may shift along the continua of religious/non-religious, public/private in accordance with the prevailing context.

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## **Aesthetic Performances at Semi-Public and Private Events**

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The longstanding controversy surrounding aesthetic performances in Islamic societies is by now apparent. Yet at the same time, the historical review of the positioning of cultural performances in Afghan society has shown that the contentious nature of these practices has the potential to shift – at least to some degree – in accordance with religious, political and social considerations. This somewhat fluid approach to aesthetic practices was particularly manifest in Badakhshan during the Taliban era when the integration of multiple identities – Islamic, Islamist, traditional, and local – into daily life was at the core of a prevailing state of profound cultural confusion as to the appropriateness of Afghan traditional practices in an Islamic context. At that time, the weak Afghan government under President Rabbani, which had been forced to relocate to Badakhshan, and the Badakhshi provincial administration, were both comprised of political and military leaders from Islamist parties especially the Jamiat-e Islami and Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Islami, the latter propounding ultra-conservative policies. Undoubtedly, the United Front's accommodation of such conservative Islamists reflected their over-riding priorities of maintaining an effective anti-Taliban resistance and ensuring the endurance of the Islamic State of Afghanistan in a situation marked by an intensifying groundswell of conservative Islam and substantial challenging of the Islamic State of Afghanistan's high moral ground of Islamist ideals by the Taliban's espousal of 'pure' Islam. The consequence however was a heightened degree of cultural questioning with understandings of aesthetic practices tending to reflect the social demarcations effected by education, Islamic sectarian groups, political affiliations, and ethnic identities.

With the exception of the Ismaili religious music described in the previous chapter, discussion of aesthetic performances has thus far focussed on public events that any male member of a particular community had the option of potentially attending. While sport events and amusement activities, such as those associated with the *nowruz* festivals in Faizabad and Buz Dara, did not frequently occur in Badakhshan in 1998 and 1999, when they did arise, they were performed publicly and without censorship by government or local authorities. In contrast, the infrequent and secretive performance of aesthetic practices reflects the fact that they were largely perceived by Badakhshan's conservative Islamist leaders as controversial if not 'unlawful'. Analysis of these rare performances thus inevitably brings to the fore the tenuous relationship between politics, religion and culture that existed in Badakhshan at the end of the 1990s.

### *Semi-Public Performances*

The restrictions imposed on non-religious activities by Badakhshan's religio-political leadership inevitably meant that a less public, more private domain was chosen for aesthetic performances. Performers or organisers of these events usually selected venues and timed performances in such a manner that only a select group from the broader population was present. The intention was always to exclude the general public and in particular conservative military forces. Two of the aesthetic performances I witnessed in Badakhshan occurred as semi-public events. The first performance was an indoor music recital in a public school in Chahar Deh; the second performance which included music and dance arose during a picnic in Faizabad.

Shortly before the departure of Buz Dara's high school boys for the *jeshen* parade (see Chapter Six), Sharif, the school's Ismaili maintenance worker, arrived from his village that was approximately an hour's walk away, with an instrument hidden under his shawl. Hearing of my interest in local culture and learning from a Sunni colleague that I was visiting the school for the *jeshen* parade rehearsal, he had decided to bring his Pamiri *rubab* to the school to play some local music for me. Sharif had timed his arrival and subsequent performance to ensure that the teachers and students had already left for the parade and *buzkashi* tournament. With the exception of two elderly bystanders and a school teacher who was Sharif's friend, the school was virtually empty as Sharif sat on the only bench in an otherwise unfurnished classroom and sang and played local songs as well as poems by Shamsuddin (also Shams al-Din)

Hafez (1320-1389), Saadi (1184-1291) and Nasir Khusraw.<sup>1</sup> The song “Shamsuddin Mohammad” is a *ghazal*, the excerpt of which includes a tribute to the poet Hafez who is not the classical Mohammad Shams al-Din Hafez, but another local poet who imitates his style and appropriates his name. The fact that a Pamiri *rubab* was used for this performance clearly connected this song with local Ismaili culture and religion. As the performer sings in a Pamiri dialect, the lyrics are difficult to understand and as a consequence only three of the seven baits of this *ghazal* are translated here [view song *shams.mov*; CD ROM 2].

*Shamsuddin Mohammad*

[*matla*]

The beautiful and fair royal looks at the beggar.  
Have mercy on me for I am burnt and mean.

Look at me, the dervish, and cure my illness  
with a glimpse of your flirtatious gaze that emanates from your drunken, black eyes.

The beautiful and fair royal looks at the beggar.  
Have mercy on me for I am burnt and mean.

[*shah bait*]<sup>2</sup>

Candles, flowers, butterflies and nightingales have all gathered together.  
Oh friend, be merciful and have pity on my loneliness!

The beautiful and fair royal looks at the beggar.  
Have mercy with me for I am burnt and mean.

Several of the words such as dervish, *ghamze* (flirtatious gaze), *bulbul* (nightingale), *parwana* (butterfly), *gul* (flower), and *sham* (candle), provide likely metaphoric links to Sufism and spiritual love. Some words have dual meanings for example *gul* and *sham* also symbolise the beloved, and *bulbul* and *parwana* are both symbols for lovers. In addition, the image of a *bulbul* may represent someone who loves flowers and the nightingale may thus signify a lover or a beloved, often one who is not necessarily faithful since the bird will travel from tree to tree to seduce a series of people with its beautiful singing. A nightingale may further symbolise the season of spring and be interpreted therefore as a symbol of life and renewal. Such extensive symbolic references are common features of Persian poetry.

<sup>1</sup> Both Hafez and Saadi are Persian poets.

<sup>2</sup> *Shah bait* is the main *bait* (verse or poetic line) that has become a famous proverb.

The spontaneous shouting of 'Buz Dara' by an elderly local Ismaili man following the singing of the name of his home town (2:41), may be understood as his personal affiliation with the local place of performance, but the action also fostered the listeners' "real connections with the object".<sup>3</sup> The subtle nodding of another elderly bystander in rhythm with the music (4:47) is an example of common, almost universal actions that arise when music creates solidarity or a consensual community in action.<sup>4</sup> The Pamiri *rubab* seemed to have two pitch centres and followed a triple rhythm. The song's melody resembled some characteristics of the major Arabic scale *maqam rast* (see Poché 2001a).<sup>5</sup> Using a plectrum, Sharif played his lute in a particular style of upward and downward strumming which was noticeably different from the style of the Pamiri *rubab* religious music performance in Chashma Bozurg (see [rawan.mov](#)). It is not clear if this technique represents the stylistic differences of an entertainment genre versus a religious genre, or if it simply represented the musician's individual style of playing. The fact that Sharif referred to a handwritten note to refresh his memory of the song's lyrics, may be evidence of his lack of opportunity to regularly perform. This private performance in a public space, yet organised at a time that would ensure few witnesses, confirms that performances in Badakhshan did not readily conform to the binary categorisation of private/public. Moreover, it is clear that individuals such as Sharif actively worked within the limitations of their circumstances to subvert prevailing prohibitions on aesthetic performances.

The second semi-public performance occurred at a *mela* (an outdoor picnic) which is a favourite pastime in Afghanistan.<sup>6</sup> Prior to the *jihad* against the Communist government and the ongoing warfare between the Taliban and the United Front, it was common during holidays to organise a picnic with friends or relatives in a private scenic setting such as a garden, park or an orchard. In many cities, *chahar shambe awal-e sal* (the first Wednesday of the Persian New Year) was a particularly popular occasion for picnics (see Sakata 1983:18). At such events, food was prepared and shared among the guests who

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<sup>3</sup> See Peirce (1931-1958:2.265). This affiliation may also be understood as a dicent index (a sign of actuality). In Peircean terms this shouting may also be defined as an emotional interpretant.

<sup>4</sup> In Peircean terms this physical reaction may be understood as an energetic interpretant.

<sup>5</sup> The *maqam rast* "consists of four similar and successive tetrachords, each called *rāst* and extending over two octaves. The...nature of the mode is made evident by a trichord..., a tetrachord...or a pentachord" (see Poché 2001a).

<sup>6</sup> The Dari word *mela* can be understood as a picnic, an outing in the countryside, but also a fair, fete or folk festival.

would later perform local music and solo dances. Occasionally, professional performers were also hired (see Baily 1988:143). *Melas* were extremely rare in Badakhshan during the time of my research, in part due to the economic hardships of that time but especially because of the general state of lawlessness associated with ongoing civil war, as well as a general anxiety about the tacit and sometimes more overt censorship of entertainment. Even in the event that a group of friends were in a financial position to organise a picnic, it was difficult to find musicians and instruments and to locate a suitable site that would not attract undue attention. Since people tended to subject each other to surveillance, in the event that a person held a grievance against another, he may have extracted a bribe from the concerned parties by threatening to report the event to a religious or a political/military authority. The consequences of being reported were manifold: from a fine, which in itself was difficult given the dire economic straits of most Badakhshi, to incarceration.

In April 1998, the predominantly secularly- or even university-educated Sunni Afghan staff of an international aid organisation in Faizabad, who were mostly local Tajik and Uzbek Badakhshi but also some Pushtuns from other northern provinces, organised a *mela* to be held on *joma* on behalf of their NGO's European project manager. The majority of these workers were not aligned with any of the major Islamist parties; a few had fought as *mujahideen* on the side of the Jamiat-e Islami during the *jihad* against the Communist regime but in 1998 they were no longer actively politically involved. Each staff member was excited about the prospect of a *mela*, as it was almost impossible to hold such an event without the patronage, security and logistical support of an international organisation. The *mela* was held in Khushbad, a village located near the riverbed of the Kokcha and approximately an hour's drive from Faizabad. A small meadow lined with shady poplars was selected as the picnic site. Hence, similar to the context of the performance of the Ismaili musician Sharif in Buz Dara, this *mela* was an exclusively private event, yet it occurred in a public space. However, apart from some children and men from the nearby village who watched at a distance from behind a mud-brick fence, the picnic was virtually concealed from potential onlookers.

The NGO was staffed by nine Afghans and three Europeans. Two of the foreigners as well as one of the local staff were female, all of whom attended the picnic, the latter at the insistence of the European women. In Badakhshan, as elsewhere in Afghanistan, the inclusion of women at a picnic was not a typical cultural practice and in the rare event that they were to attend, they would have been usually seated separately from the men in a specially

designated area.<sup>7</sup> Sayyid Rahman, one of the Tajik Badakhshi staff members, had been asked by the other Afghan employees to bring his battery-operated Casio keyboard to the picnic.<sup>8</sup> Another employee, Mohammad Sang, had brought along a locally-made *zirbaghali* (clay drum). The keyboard was powered by one of the NGO's car batteries and was connected through a complicated wiring system to their ghettoblaster. I had initially planned not only to film the event but also to record the music separately with a small walkman and for that reason, I had a professional microphone. This was claimed by the amateur musicians, however, and although it was not possible to successfully connect the microphone to the sound system, the musicians, enjoying the fact that it looked professional, insisted on using it. The Casio keyboard which had been purchased during the singer's university years in Mazar-e Sharif, was especially popular among the Afghan staff and seemed to be valued as an image of modernity.

The entertainment began with a musical section that was followed by the *mela's* highlight: improvised solo dances and a concluding group dance. Sayyid Rahman, an amateur musician and the singer at this event, was supported on *zirbaghali* by either Mohammad Sang or Wali Jan, and sang mostly improvised cover-versions of songs by Afghan expatriate musicians, while most of the other Afghan staff members sang along and clapped.<sup>9</sup> Sayyid Rahman's use of a Western battery-operated keyboard may be indexically associated with his desire to belong to a modern society, but alternatively may have simply been the only instrument he was able to purchase. In line with the custom of Afghan picnics, every male was required to perform a solo dance. Many of these dances were traditional in content, particularly those performed by the non-university-educated local staff. In contrast, the employees who had been educated at universities in Kabul or Mazar-e Sharif performed improvised solo dances that combined traditional and modern styles. The movie clip of this

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<sup>7</sup> Yet this was not always the case. During the 1960s to the 1980s, in urban centres such as Kabul, Herat or Mazar-e Sharif, *melas* were at times organised as women-only events, whilst in some more elite circles, they were attended by both women and men.

<sup>8</sup> The instrument was a pirated copy of a Japanese Casio, possibly made in Iran or Uzbekistan.

<sup>9</sup> Farhad Darya is an example of such a musician. A Pushtun originally from Kunduz in northern Afghanistan, he now lives in the United States. Drawing on his northern Afghan heritage, Farhad Darya's music incorporates Western pop trends and is very popular in Afghanistan and in Afghan expatriate communities around the globe. As a result of an intensification of extremist Islamic policies and the subsequent censorship of music, audiotapes by Farhad Darya which were once obtainable in the bazaars of larger Afghan cities were no longer available, their importation having been stopped at Taliban checkpoints of overland trade.



picnic was selected on the grounds that it shows a traditional Badakhshi dance which to a degree resembles the traditional dances recorded during the Stuttgart expedition in 1963 (see **localsolodance(od)Fzb.mov**).<sup>10</sup>

Wearing a *pakol* (woollen cap), the staff member Yusuf, another Tajik Badakhshi, had an upright posture and used a narrow stance whilst dancing mostly in-place. In fact, he paid little attention to his foot placements and rarely changed his direction and focus throughout his improvised solo dance. Unlike the dancers in the public performances, he did not use any spinning in his repertoire, although he did perform some incomplete turns. Through a combination of arm rotations, his upper limbs created curvy and wave-like movements in a gestural manner. When Yusuf briefly and simultaneously touched both of his shoulders before again extending his arms (0:19), a trace of an older dance tradition became noticeable. Although Yusuf is a Sunni Badakhshi, this type of gesture was also a common characteristic of the public dances of the Ismailis from Munjan recorded in 1963 and of those that I recorded in Chahar Deh. Again reminiscent of the performances in Munjan, Yusuf bowed slightly towards the musicians and some of the VIPs at the end of the performance, signifying a customary gesture of respect. His limited repertoire of movements may have been indicative of the increasing unfamiliarity of Faizabad's populace with this cultural performance tradition, given the prevailing political climate. Indeed, and perhaps again reflecting the lack of opportunities to perform, it seemed that in comparison with the other performers discussed thus far, Yusuf was not an accomplished dancer.

In Afghanistan, many special events such as picnics or weddings typically concluded with the performance of an *atan-e meli* (national dance). This was also the case in Khushbad. While the musical accompaniment was loosely based on the Pushtun *atan* melody, the use of a modern battery-operated keyboard and a *zirbaghali* made this performance rather unconventional since a Pushtun *atan* is traditionally performed with a *dhol* (frame drum) and a *surnai* (double reed instrument).<sup>11</sup> The characteristics of the *atan*'s movements

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<sup>10</sup> Sayyid Ali's keyboard performance in this piece was characterised by his choice of an almost Phrygian scale (E, F, G, A) with a 2/4 rhythm (see Appendix One for further comments on the Phrygian scale). The song's tonal structure was also limited and did not go beyond a tetrachord.

<sup>11</sup> In the 1960s, when the German ethnomusicologist Felix Hoerburger (1969) first heard of a harmonium – at that time considered to be a modern instrument in Afghanistan – being used during an *atan* in Ghazni Province in southern Afghanistan, he described this occurrence as

differed greatly from the other dances discussed thus far. By following a leader who supposedly knew the choreographic structure of the *atan* well, the dancers travelled mostly in a circle by stepping sideways, but also forwards and backwards into and out of the circle whilst executing a clapping routine. Initially, the tempo of the dance started slowly, then gradually increased. The dancers fully accessed their potential kinespheres by extending their bodies diagonally from the lower left to upper right quadrants of the space around them. Compared to the more curvy and wave-like actions of the previous dances, the *atan* was characterised by 'directional' and 'spoke-like' movements, the latter particularly evident during the strong clapping of the dancers. Whilst stepping into and out of the circle, the dancers 'shaped' their torsos through growing and shrinking actions of their trunks, arms and knees. Unlike the solo dances, the *atan*'s effort qualities were predominantly 'direct', 'strong', 'sudden', and 'bound'. To complement these actions, 'indirect', 'light', 'sustained', and 'free-flowing' movement qualities were to a lesser degree also incorporated, but with a general preponderance of the movement qualities 'strength' and 'directness'.

The fact that the Afghan NGO workers had not practised or performed this dance for some time was evident in their uncertainty about the movements and lack of coordination as individuals and as a group. The stepping and clapping actions of the dancers did not always follow a regular rhythm. For example, when they stepped into the circle, a double and sometimes even a triple clap per time was executed, whereas when the performers stepped out, a single clap per time was used. In fact, it seemed that every dancer performed the clapping in his own time. Even so, when some of the basic patterns of the *atan* were eventually remembered, they were greatly appreciated by the audience [view [dance attan\(od\)Fzb.mov](#); CD ROM 2].

The choice by predominantly non-Pushtuns to conclude a Badakhshi cultural event with a Pushtun dance signified the participants' general approval of this dance as a national symbol, and further reflected the multi-ethnic nature of Badakhshi society. Although not officially invited, local villagers were able to observe the picnic from a distance. For them, the *atan* most probably constituted a spectacle which was no longer a part of their contemporary cultural practice; ultra-conservative doctrines towards non-religious entertainment as well as harsh economic conditions did not often allow any

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rather 'grotesque' (1969:40). Such Orientalist perspectives, in which traditional art was perceived to be virtually fixed by convention, are now rare.

villagers the luxury of engaging in such leisure pursuits. The inability of these Afghans – Tajiks, Uzbeks and Pushtuns – to recall the choreography of Afghanistan's national dance is further testimony to the marginalisation of the performing arts throughout Afghanistan, including Badakhshan, with prevailing religious attitudes since 1992 having constrained the performance of aesthetic practices. When later interviewed, the participants assured me that they once knew how to perform this dance well. During the Communist regime, the *atan* had been performed more regularly and without restrictions. Prior to the emergence of the Taliban, the *atan* had been a well-known Pushtun and national group dance that had implicitly reflected the historical dominance of Pushtuns in Afghan political and cultural life.<sup>12</sup> Since the taking of Kabul by the Taliban and the general state of cultural confusion during the exiled Rabbani Presidency, this once-familiar dance had become an unfamiliar practice. Whereas the Pushtun-dominated Taliban had banned the *atan* altogether, the performance of an *atan* in an area under the control of the United Front was only possible because of the semi-public nature of its performance and the remoteness of its location from Faizabad's conservative religious and political authorities.

The following excerpt from a 1963 documentary film of a semi-public celebration in the Lake Shiwa district (Kussmaul et al. 1963), a high-altitude plateau circa 3000m above sea level in north-eastern Badakhshan, demonstrates a typical outdoor performance of the *atan-e meli* by Pushtun nomads from Kataghan, present Kunduz province (see Kussmaul 1965:14, 18; Snoy 1996:115). Again there is no sound, but the complex choreography of this group dance is clearly apparent and gives some idea of how the *atan* was once performed in Badakhshan [**view dance historicalatan.mov; CD ROM 3**]. The reason for the performance is not entirely clear, but according to Peter Snoy (Personal Communication, 2000), it was staged by the locals for the visiting anthropologists, as was the case in the previous historical examples from Munjan. This performance was a purely male entertainment event. The female members of the nomad community can be seen in one section of the movie clip, occupied with weaving (2:11).

This *atan* was much more structured and coordinated than the attempt at the picnic in Khushbad. As is common with traditional Pushtun *atans*, two musicians, a *surnai* and a *dhol* player, were located within the circle of

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<sup>12</sup> One of its outstanding characteristics, when performed by Pushtuns, was the shoulder-length hair of the dancers which they would swirl in the air as they danced.

performers and accompanied the dance. The dancers wore local clothing similar to contemporary *shalwar qamiz* and their headwear consisted of *taqins* and turbans that were wrapped differently from typical Badakhshi turbans. Scant costumes such as that of the leading dancer who wore only *tombons* (baggy trousers) and a vest that barely covered his upper body and that of another dancer who did not wear a shirt would not have been tolerated anywhere in Afghanistan in the late 1990s. The pistol used by one of the performers functioned as a conventional symbol of the power, strength and tribal unity of the Pushtun nomads. The group's unison indicates the dancers' familiarity with the choreographic complexities of the *atan*. Indeed, in comparison with the other dances described herein, minimal improvisation took place. Using a complex stepping pattern, the dancers moved their whole bodies in an integrated fashion, and elaborately and energetically turned in an anti-clockwise direction (1:33). Their strong double clap was executed with great precision and clarity. Some of the dancers, especially the barely-clothed dancer (2:25), extended to the limits of their kinespheres by skilfully elongating their bodies diagonally. Towards the end of the performance, as the music's tempo seemed to increase, the dancing became more ecstatic. The dancers who followed the two leading performers were not always in perfect synchrony, but occasionally leapt into the air slightly after the leaders.

### ***Music and Dance Performances at Four Mehmanis***

As previously emphasised, the public and semi-public aesthetic performances that I observed during field research eventuated either in the absence of military commanders and religious authorities or in situations when local authorities were more tolerant of aesthetic entertainment. Historically throughout Afghanistan, *mehmanis*, or parties, would include a sumptuous feast and in addition often a program of aesthetic entertainment, commonly the performance of music and dance. Yet as discussed in Chapter Five, dance in particular and music to a lesser degree were mostly interpreted as un-Islamic practices especially during the final period of the Rabbani Presidency in Kabul. It seems however, that traditionally, interpretations to the contrary were relatively uncommon and tended to be espoused by members of Afghanistan's elite families who had been secularly-educated in Kabul, Mazar-e Sharif, or abroad. For that reason, special strata of society such as *salmanis* (barbers), *kesbis* or *maslakis* (professional performers) traditionally fulfilled the role of

artisans specialising in the genre of entertainment and were hired to perform on occasions such as weddings.<sup>13</sup> In an everyday social context, however, the families of entertainers rarely mixed with other families in the community. Certainly, intermarriage of these families was rare. Only during the later modern period of the late 1960s to the early 1990s when the status of performers, especially classically-trained artists, was enhanced by the rise of popular artists like Ahmad Zaher, did some members of various ethnic and socio-economic groups have the opportunity to interact more freely during public and to a lesser degree private entertainment events. From 1992, with the rise of religious orthodoxy in Badakhshan due to the influence of the conservative factions of the Jamiat-e Islami as well as the radical Hezb-e Islami and ultra-conservative Ittehad-e Islami and as a consequence of the limited secular education available in more rural areas of the province, *mehmanis* were still held, but generally without aesthetic accompaniments. Hence, in the rare event that a more traditional *mehmani* was planned, it occurred amidst much secrecy. In 1998, I attended four *mehmanis* in four different locations in Badakhshan, each of which was accompanied by music performances and three of which (in Dasht-e Islam, Buz Dara and Faizabad) even included both music and dancing.

### Bagh-e Zard

The *mehmani* to feature music only took place in Bagh-e Zard at the end of May 1998. The Afghan program manager of an international aid organisation in Faizabad invited me to join him on a visit to one of their rural sub-offices in Bagh-e Zard, western Badakhshan. I immediately accepted this invitation as motorised transport to the region was otherwise infrequent, mainly because the tracks were only manageable with a four wheel-drive vehicle. Upon arrival in Bagh-e Zard, I inquired about local musicians, in particular Abdullah whose name had been given to me by a Badakhshi informant in Pakistan. Under the pretext of celebrating my visit to this relatively remote community, the Afghan managers of the office decided to organise a *mehmani* which provided them with the opportunity of inviting Abdullah for a meal and to then request a

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<sup>13</sup> During my fieldwork in 1998 and 1999, the expression *maslaki* was the most common term used to refer to professional musicians. *Salmani* were not only employed for their artistic abilities, but also for other duties such as blood-letting, circumcisions etc.

music performance in my honour, as well as for the agency's resident Sunni Afghan officers.<sup>14</sup>

The local staff of the NGO knew Abdullah from the time when he had been a well-known Badakhshi personality and much-loved for his music. During the various political periods from the late 1960s to the 1980s and before the intensification of conservative Islam in Afghanistan and the consequent bans on non-religious entertainment, Abdullah had performed regularly at official government events in Badakhshan as well as in neighbouring provinces. However, the political upheavals during the Rabbani and Taliban eras had virtually ended Abdullah's once flourishing music career and his status as one of northern Badakhshan's most sought-after musicians. In the Bagh-e Zard region, he had particularly felt the influence of ultra-orthodox Islam. Since the district of Bagh-e Zard was under the control of the Baluch Badakhshi Bohadar, an ultra-conservative Hezb-e Islami commander aligned with the United Front, bans on aesthetic performances had been vehemently enforced in the entire region. With his public engagements closely monitored by loyal local extremist military sub-commanders and their soldiers, Abdullah had been compelled to become a full-time farmer and understandably, was particularly anxious that his presence at the compound of the international organisation went unnoticed. Moreover, my visit coincided with the region's main wheat harvest and as Abdullah had become economically dependent upon his occupation as a full-time farmer, it was not possible for him to socialise or to perform music during daylight working hours. Yet, in spite of these complicated circumstances, Abdullah was overjoyed at being invited to perform at the *mehmani*, although he sadly commented that in the past, he would have invited me to his own house. This was no longer possible due to the ever-watchful eyes of neighbours and soldiers who may have reported his 'illicit' musical activities.

Like Abdullah, the NGO was also concerned about potential misinterpretations of this performance and as a consequence did not publicise it. The organisation did not in any way want to undermine their tenuous working relationship with Commander Bohadar and some of his sub-commanders. Further, for security reasons, it was not feasible for the international organisation to engage a music ensemble which under less stringent Islamic edicts, would have typically included a *zirbaghali*, *dutar* (two-stringed lute), Afghan *rubab* (multi-stringed

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<sup>14</sup> Three senior Sunni Afghan officers worked in this office. Two were Pushtuns from southern provinces and one was a Tajik Badakhshi worker.

lute), and harmonium musicians. But since the nature of ensemble music would have been more audible to the local neighbourhood and thus would have attracted more attention,<sup>15</sup> in 1998, Abdullah arrived alone after dusk at the NGO office with a *ghichak* hidden under his woollen shawl.

During the course of the simple, yet plentiful feast, Abdullah confessed to having retired from the music profession. In addition to his occupation as a farmer, he claimed that he had become a *rish safid* (white-bearded elder).<sup>16</sup> He described how he had been inspired to become a musician when as a military conscript in Faizabad in the 1960s, he had attended a performance by Faiz-e Mangal (see Chapter Six), a well-known Badakhshi musician who Abdullah declared to be his greatest musical influence, although he stressed that they did not share the same political views. Within a few years of his release from the army, Abdullah had gained a reputation in Badakhshan as a skilful musician. Yet his music career waned during the 1970s when Afghanistan's elite preferred to patronise North Indian classical (Hindustani) music and instruments as well as Western classical music, jazz and pop and respective instruments.<sup>17</sup> Unfamiliar with Badakhshi culture and seemingly disinterested in the local music genres and instruments, the Pushtun administrators from Kabul who had been given senior government positions in Badakhshan, tended to dismiss Abdullah as a simple local musician and derived much amusement from his *ghichak*, an instrument that is unique to northern Afghanistan.

With the change of regime in the late 1970s and the beginning of a *jihad* against the Communist government, *mujahideen* leaders targeted Abdullah's music, in part because of his performance for Communist authorities. Indeed, the appalling conditions for artistic expression that existed in Badakhshan from 1992 onwards led Abdullah's two sons who are also musicians, to leave Afghanistan. Music had rapidly disappeared from both public and private arenas of Bagh-e Zard since the region had come under the control of ultra-conservative commanders who were nominally loyal to the Rabbani government. In fact, during my visit in 1998, there were only two or three musicians who occasionally secretly performed for private parties or weddings. Abdullah emphasised that in such difficult circumstances, it is essential that

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<sup>15</sup> These instruments will be discussed in more detail in the description of the next *mehmani* in Dasht-e Islam.

<sup>16</sup> This Persian expression denotes an elder who is respected in the community for his knowledge and experience.

<sup>17</sup> The music of the Kabuli performer Ahmad Zahir is a good example of this period.

any aspiring musician be passionate about music itself, rather as a source of potential income.

After this introduction to his musical life and his reflections on the state of music in the region, Abdullah closed his eyes and began his performance. He initially accompanied his songs with a harmonium that belonged to one of the agency's Afghan staff members, but later performed on his trademark instrument, the *ghichak*. As the evening progressed, it became apparent that he was not only a musician but a story teller and comedian. His songs were mostly socio-critical, commenting on contemporaneous issues and the actions of local military commanders. Many of the songs had been written by a local Sufi poet Sikander Gul. The piece selected for this movie clip is a Badakhshi love song, a *ghazal* entitled "Gardener" which Abdullah performed on his *ghichak* later in the evening.<sup>18</sup> The song has a range of themes including love, mystical Islam and Badakhshi cultural heritage [[view track bache.mov](#); [CD ROM 1](#)].<sup>19</sup>

*Gardener*

[*ghazal*]

...a drunken eye [the eye of the beloved]...

During the morning, she flirts, at noon she is violent  
and in the evening she shows contempt.

She is well known to evoke fear and in the face of her gaze is challenging  
and perturbing the fame of the eye of the planet Venus.

She is walking fearlessly, flirtatiously and arrogantly.  
Oh minstrels! Keep me awake until dawn.  
Such an occasion may never occur again.

It is a pity because the gardener is ignorant of the flowers,  
Instead, he imagines thorns and spiky, grassy bushes and pulls out the flowers,  
making the garden look like a desert.

Everyone who is rejected in love like Mahmud Farkhari,  
must withdraw from the tavern completely.  
Now he must keep away from the taverns completely.

Not only is Khwaja Shah Wali unknown at the moment of his fever-like love,  
but also Hares is like him – that is expressed by me – Besmel,

<sup>18</sup> The melody produced by the *ghichak* was short and repetitive. The central pitch of A acted as a drone in this song. The quality of Abdullah's voice seemed to favour short, rhythmic phrases with little ornamentation.

<sup>19</sup> The title of the movie clip is incorrectly listed on CD ROM 1 as "Bache Mahmud". Due to a lack of ongoing access to the software used for the creation of titles for the QuickTime clips, it has not been possible to change the title from "Bache" to "Gardener" on the CD ROM. Hence, the main text will use the correct title of "Gardener", while the identification on the movie clip remains [bache.mov](#) and the title on the track "Bache Mahmud".



someone who is killed and betrayed by his beloved  
and who utters many groans of unknowingness and helplessness.

I appreciate someone who takes the veil from the face of my beloved  
and if someone does this today, he will resurrect the world like at the Day of Judgement.

Many of the poetic symbols used here appeared to have a Sufi origin: the term *gulzar* (flower garden), for example, often pertains to Paradise or to the sensuousness of a beloved; *bagh-e ban* (gardener) is often understood as a spiritual guide or a metaphorical lover. The reference to *khar khas* (thorns and straw) may symbolise competition, in that there are other people who also love the same flower (the beloved) with the consequence that the lover may become disillusioned, feeling that his love is not being reciprocated. The term *kharabat* (tavern) is also imbued with Sufi symbolism, often signifying “pure unity” (Arberry 1950:113) but also standing for Sufi meeting places and fountains of knowledge.<sup>20</sup> In a more profane sense, however, a tavern may also represent a venue for forbidden pursuits such as dancing, sex, or other immoral practices. In this *ghazal*, the poet must stop visiting the *kharabat*, since he has lost his status as a lover and is therefore no longer worthy to mingle with others at the tavern. The mention of a *chadri* (veil), another ambiguous term, is also a common Sufi metaphor, denoting impediments to spiritual realisation. Here, it directly refers to the beloved who must always remain veiled and may thus be seen as a comment on the restrictions of women in Afghan society whose absence from public life was lamented by the more moderate Muslims of Bagh-e Zard.

During virtually the entire performance, Abdullah kept his eyes closed. Common to singers in many traditions, this action may have been a means by which Abdullah eliminated the distractions of the present situation, thereby intensifying his focus on the meaning of the lyrics and music and perhaps also drawing upon his own experiences. This “experiential quality” is what Peirce associated with ‘Firstness’, “the conception of being or existing independent of anything else” (Peirce in Buchler 1955:322-323). Abdullah’s performance lasted until midnight. As the strict guidelines of the host NGO did not permit him to stay overnight, he then returned home despite the existing curfew, approximately an hour’s walk.

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<sup>20</sup> The *kharabat* is a purely male environment where fringe dwellers (bohemians, those who are in love, Sufis) meet for drinks and spiritual and profane discussions. The meetings may include, for example, discussions about their beloveds who are, however, never present in the *kharabat*. In some cases, *kharabat* may also refer to a *shahid khane* (see Chapter Five).

## Dasht-e Islam

In mid-April 1998, I was invited to my first *mehmani* in the medium-sized town of Dasht-e Islam in central Badakhshan. This party was my first experience of a private event that featured a music and dance program. Upon my arrival several days prior, I had enquired in the bazaar about local musicians. Within an hour, a message was sent to Yasin Jan, the leader of a local music ensemble, who came to my residence later that day and offered to perform a few songs that evening.<sup>21</sup> As I later discovered via one of my informants, Yasin Jan and his ensemble members had actually been invited to perform by the four local Sunni Tajik Badakhshi staff members of the international NGO who, in the absence of official personnel, had taken the liberty of interpreting my interest in local music as a valid excuse for a *mehmani* which they hosted on behalf of their employer. They were extremely excited about the proposed performance, especially since, as they later told me, aesthetic events had become very rare in Dasht-e Islam. Like the previous case of Abdullah in Bagh-e Zard and in spite of the existing curfew, the musicians were only able to arrive under the cover of night, which allowed them to conceal and safely transport their instruments. Once on the premises of the NGO, they felt protected from the attention of the ubiquitous soldiers who in that region were loyal to the Sunni Tajik Badakhshi Najmuddin Khan, a senior member of Massoud's *shura-e nazar* who had banned all entertainment activities in the areas of his fiefdom.

After dusk, the members of the music ensemble consisting of four Sunni Tajik Badakhshis, arrived: the band leader Yasin Yan who sang and played the Afghan *rubab*, harmonium and *zirbaghali*; Baba Jan, the most senior musician of the ensemble, who was also a vocalist, Afghan *rubabnawaz* and harmonium player; Nasrullah who played the *dutar*; and Aminullah, the youngest member of the ensemble, who was a vocalist and *zirbaghali* player.<sup>22</sup> These musicians were all *shauqi* (amateur) musicians,<sup>23</sup> with the exception of Baba Jan who was alleged by one informant to be a *kesbi* (professional, hereditary) performer. The Afghan *rubab*, a multiple-stringed plucked lute, is Afghanistan's

<sup>21</sup> In Dasht-e Islam, I was accommodated in the compound and office of a relatively modern and isolated international NGO.

<sup>22</sup> The Persian noun *nawaz* (performer) is often adjoined to an instrument's name to indicate the accomplishment and skill of a performer. The three instruments mentioned here will be discussed in more detail below. For further detailed discussion see also Slobin (1976), Sakata (1983) and Baily (1988).

<sup>23</sup> A *shauqi* is a Dari noun for an amateur performer who has an intense passion for his art.

quintessential national instrument. Originally introduced from the Middle East, possibly with the advent of Islam, this instrument is mostly associated with Pushtun music, but is also very popular among other ethnic groups. It is commonly used in regional folk music, as in Dasht-e Islam, or for Kabuli radio music. In comparison with the six-stringed Pamiri *rubab* which is a fretless lute with a retracted peg box, protruding spurs and a small bowl-shaped belly covered with a membrane, the Afghan *rubab* has a deep, waisted membrane-covered body and has a shorter and fretted neck.<sup>24</sup> It is plucked with a flat, wooden plectrum and has three main nylon playing strings that are tuned an interval of a fourth apart.<sup>25</sup> The additional fifteen sympathetic wire strings are strung to pegs in the peg box. The combination of these main and resonating strings creates both soft and hard sounds that provide the lute with a unique mellowness. Common throughout northern Afghanistan and the trans-Oxus regions, the *dutar* is also a lute, but with two metal strings. It is a fretted, deep-bellied and spoon-shaped instrument with a long, narrow neck. Like the Afghan *rubab*, it is played with a plectrum and usually tuned to a fourth, but sometimes also to a fifth (see Beliaev 1975:206).

After partaking of a larger-than-usual meal of spinach, rice and mutton, the ensemble performed for the small audience of the NGO's female European worker-in-charge, its four local employees, and me. Vocal and instrumental pieces were performed, including folk songs from Badakhshan, Kataghan,<sup>26</sup> as well as from the Kabul and Logar regions. Some of the songs were reminiscent of the once-popular genre of Kabuli radio music. The music example selected here is a song that combines the poetic structures of a *ghazal* and *rubai*. One of the central musical features of this song was the Afghan *rubabnawaz*'s

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<sup>24</sup> The neck of the Afghan *rubab* is usually elaborately decorated with cow bone inlays. The entire instrument has the appearance of a horse, especially due to the shape of its retracted peg box.

<sup>25</sup> With its two sound chambers and numerous sympathetic strings which often act as drones, the *rubab* is the ancestor of the Indian *sarod*. Before the availability of nylon strings from Pakistan, the three main playing strings would have been made from animal intestines.

<sup>26</sup> Kataghan is the former name for the province in northern Afghanistan that included Kunduz, Baghlan and Takhar (see Chapter Three). In northern Afghanistan, a shared musical culture exists between the former province of Kataghan and contemporary Badakhshan (see Slobin 1976). Until 1992, the Kataghani performance style was performed publicly, semi-publicly and privately throughout the trans-Oxus region as far as the north-western provinces of Balkh, Jawzjan and Samangan. Logar is a predominantly Pushtun province, directly south of Kabul. The province is famous for its music and dance styles. Kabuli radio music is a combination of Hindustani-influenced classical music and Afghan folk music that has emerged since the 1920s, the end result being a generic form of contemporary Afghan art music (see Baily 1994:52).

execution of embellishments such as tremolos and rhythmic figures which are common features of Arabic lute music (see Poché 2001b). Yet unlike Arabic music's prevalent quadruple rhythms, this song was characterised by more local types of triple rhythms, which used lower and upper tetrachords in an ascending and descending order [view song [homeland.mov](#); CD ROM 1].

*Homeland*

[*matla*]

The spring of independence has arrived in our country.  
Return from the foreign countries, my brothers!

We are your soldiers, we are your hosts playing with our lives.  
We are your supporters and your confidants.  
Return to the homeland! Oh my brother!  
Return to the homeland! Return to the homeland!

...return to the homeland is welcome.  
If he comes to see the flowers in the garden, he is welcome.

From our hearts and souls, we are your friends.  
We are the nightingales of your garden.  
We love to see you again  
Return to the homeland!  
Return to the homeland!

Because of the enemy of religion, you have migrated and become homeless.  
You have become helpless in foreign cities and countries.

The spring of independence has arrived in our country.  
Return from the foreign countries, my brothers!

The lyrics of this song communicated a powerful and contemporary political message: a request for Afghan refugees to return from their countries of exile, to overcome their political differences and to rebuild their Afghan homes. The use of the words *mihan* and *watan* (homeland), *baradar* (brother), *azadi* (independence),<sup>27</sup> and *din* (religion) created a strong sense of Afghan identity, marked by religious and political unity. The fact that the noun *baradar* was used in this song is important as it has a religious meaning and refers to the sayings of the Prophet. Afghans are thus encouraged to unite as Muslim Brothers since it was this union that had so greatly helped them to defeat the Communist regime. Such images were pertinent to all participants on the basis of their own personal experiences of decades of civil war. But while the song's references to compassion and forgiveness could be read as a positive message

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<sup>27</sup> In this case, the word *azadi* refers to independence, but more generally has the meaning of freedom.

for all Afghans to put aside their religious and political differences, the realisation of a peaceful Afghanistan was clearly improbable at that time. Indeed, even with the current military intervention in Afghanistan led by the United States, such a positive political outcome still remains an imaginary possibility.

In addition to the music program, the entertainment during this *mehmani* included a number of solo dances that were spontaneously performed at what appeared to be an agreed appropriate time. The four musicians as well as the five male audience members all performed a number of solo dances. The movie clip presents a solo dance by Abdul Shakar, one of the staff members. Shortly after the music ensemble played the initial tunes of “*Shish Kebab*” (literally ‘Fried Lung and Liver Pieces’), he entered the tiny available space in the centre of the room and began to perform [view dance *kateghaniBahrk.mov*; CD ROM 2].

This performance was later referred to by audience members as a ‘Kataghani’ dance. Abdul Shakar executed half and three quarter turns around his body axis in an anti-clockwise direction.<sup>28</sup> His repeated shoulder and side-to-side neck movements in combination with his perpendicularly outstretched arms appeared to be rather effeminate and may have been indices of the *bache bazi* genre. However, the controversial nature of this practice in conservative Badakhshan made it impossible to either confirm or repudiate this hypothesis through discussion with local informants. Similar effeminate qualities were also noticeable in a number of dances at the *mehmanis* in Buz Dara and Faizabad and will be discussed at length later in this chapter. Members of the audience were characteristically and pragmatically engaged with Abdul Shakar’s dancing; they laughed and clapped and made onomatopoeic sounds such as ‘ha’ (1:08). Musically, “*Shish Kebab*” shared stylistic qualities with the Arabic musical mode *maqam hijaz* as evident in the sharing of ‘sound images’ such as the stopping and starting of the musical phrase by the melodic instruments (the Afghan *rubab*, *dutar* and harmonium), and the use of a

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<sup>28</sup> Responding closely to the tunes of the ensemble, Abdul Shakar’s movement characteristics included predominantly free-flowing actions which were combined with a shuffling type of gait. In order to emphasise some of his gestures, he isolated certain actions by periodically holding still various body parts such as his arms, neck and trunk (0:39, 1:21). Throughout the dance, Abdul Shakar moved his arms in an ‘arc-like directional’ fashion, although ‘spoke-like directional’ actions, such as the lateral movements of his neck, were also executed (0:44). Abdul Shakar’s trunk remained generally erect and he utilised a narrow body stance.

dominant duple meter (see also Poché 2001a).<sup>29</sup> But it seemed that the musicians drew predominantly on local musical structures and incorporated these Arabic stylistic qualities chiefly to embellish their local repertoire.

## Buz Dara

On 30 April 1998, the second day of the *jeshen* festival in Buz Dara (see Chapter Six), I attended a *mehmani* that was organised by the Ismaili community leader, Habib Shah. In response to my expressed interest in local culture, he had indicated that in addition to the public music performance which he had arranged to accompany the *buzkashi* tournament, he would try to organise an evening of music entertainment whilst I was in the area. Given that the region was not without its own considerable political and sectarian tensions between Ismaili authorities trying to serve the interests of an Ismaili majority, and Islamist commanders and government officials representing a Sunni minority, I could not imagine how such a program could possibly be organised, especially given their divergent views on aesthetic practices.

The ostensible reason for the *mehmani*, to celebrate *jeshen* and the defeat of the Communist regime, provided Habib Shah with the liberty to hold an indoor evening function and a program of aesthetic performances. Thirty-five people filled Habib Shah's cramped, carpeted *khushkhana* (guest quarters) and comprised mostly relatives of the host, fellow elite-Ismailis, Ismaili soldiers who were aligned with Massoud's *shura-e nazar*,<sup>30</sup> and a few secularly-educated Sunni Tajik aid workers who were employed by an international NGO and who were originally from other districts within Badakhshan, as well as from Kapisa province. These Afghan humanitarian aid workers were not overtly political but were supportive of Massoud. Noticeably, none of the district's ruling Sunni Badakhshi political or military authorities or Pushtun aid workers, who were educated in either secular schools or state-controlled *madrassas*, were in attendance. It was only in the absence of local Sunni political authorities that Habib Shah was able to organise a *mehmani* at which

<sup>29</sup> It is important to appreciate that the harmonium was not tuned to a Western music's notion of a concert pitch. The scale employed by the musicians in this piece was (A Flat), B Flat, B, D, E Flat, (F), with B Flat acting as the song's key note.

<sup>30</sup> These soldiers, mainly one commander and some of his soldiers, were at that time accommodated as guests by Habib Shah since their valley, Surkh Dara, was under the control of a Taliban-friendly commander.

local cultural heritage could be proudly displayed through a program of music and dance performances.

With the exception of the host's two daughters who were both under the age of twelve years, all members of the audience were adult or adolescent males.<sup>31</sup> A brief prayer by Habib Shah signified the end of the feast and the beginning of the evening's program. One of the guests, the local poet Hafez Mohammad, formally announced that the evening's entertainment was being held in my honour. The same musicians who had performed earlier that day during the public *jeshen* celebration at the *buzkashi* tournament, were invited by Habib Shan to the *mehmani*: the *dambura* virtuoso, Ahmad Ali, the *dafnawaz*, Hasan, and the *ghichak* player, Karim. Throughout the evening, numerous songs were performed across a range of genres including local Badakhshi, Kataghani, Kabuli radio and traditional music from the Kabul and Logar regions. The music was strictly entertainment in style.<sup>32</sup> While the repertoire of the music program was similar to that during the *mehmani* in Dasht-e Islam, it was stylistically less complex.

Ahmad Ali sang mostly from memory, with the exception of the lyrics of one or two songs which he read from small pieces of paper. The first musical excerpt from this *mehmani* is a *ghazal* entitled "Badakhshan" which was the first song to be performed after the evening program was formally introduced. The movie clip begins with half of a *dobaiti* (quatrain) and may be possibly attributed to the eleventh century Persian poet Omar Khayyam. The second and main part of the song consisting of three *dobaitis*, was written by an anonymous local poet [[view song badakhshan.mov](#); CD ROM 2].

*Badakhshan*

[half of a *dobaiti*]

Oh God! You broke my wine's ewer.

Oh God! You closed the door of pleasure to me.

[3 *dobaitis*]

From the source of the river in Taloqan and all the way to Angar

I have heard that my beloved has taken another lover/friend.

She did not take a friend like me.

Instead of taking a bunch of flowers,

she took a bundle of thorns!

<sup>31</sup> I have been told that the female members of households greatly enjoyed listening to the music of *mehmanis* from their adjoining quarters (Personal communication with female Badakhshi expatriate, 2001).

<sup>32</sup> Religious Ismaili music is only performed during religious festivals and never associated with dancing.

If you become mean in the enclosure of loyalty,  
 If you suffer from the unkindness of your beloved,  
 You would never complain badly,  
 never, even if you hurt so much.

You've come from Koh-e Bland Jora to Abab.  
 You've come to inquire about my wounded heart.  
 Put down the jug and sit down in front of me.  
 Regardless of your intention of wanting to collect water.

The lyrics in this Sufi song again evince a powerful connection to Badakhshan and its cultural heritage. A number of Sufi symbols such as *mai* (wine) and *ebriq* (clay ewer) may be understood to represent pleasure, leisure, or happiness. Such controversial terms would undoubtedly have contributed to orthodox Muslims' dislike of Sufi poetry. While the word *nazanin* (delicate) implies the notion of 'the beloved', *yar* (beloved) may refer to the beloved of the poet's beloved, suggesting that the poet's lover may have fallen in love with someone else. Similarly, the terms *guldashte* (bunch of flowers) and *khahr* (thorn) are linked symbolically to the lover and the lover's beloved. The metaphor of a bunch of flowers refers to love and happiness, but when combined with the negative symbols of weeds and thorns, symbolises that life is filled with happiness but also with sorrow.

Ahmad Ali's "Yar Yar Yar" ('Darling, Darling, Darling') was another rendition of a Badakhshi *ghazal*, a colloquial love song, which was performed at the same *mehmani*.<sup>33</sup> When Habib Shah noticed that I was filming the event, he quickly arranged for a vase of artificial flowers to be placed in front of the musicians.<sup>34</sup> The only girl present in the room during this song was seated near the *ghichak* player and the community leader.<sup>35</sup> Unlike the males in the audience, she did not express any obvious physical or emotional response to the music. This appearance of detachment from the performance event is consistent with the etiquette of an Afghan girl when in the company of males.

<sup>33</sup> The pitch A served as the song's tonal centre, whereas the modal execution of the tetrachords A, B<sup>b</sup>, C, and D resembled the Arabic *maqam kurd*. In this piece, Ahmad Ali's singing seemed simpler and less ornamented than in his previous songs. The audience, however, was even more engaged as evident in their clapping, laughter and general animation. Some members of the audience clapped a complex and syncopated beat to the ensemble's main 6/8 rhythm, reflecting their familiarity with this musical tradition. The vocalisation of a number of symbols, such as *bulbul* (nightingale), *eshaq gashtan* (falling in love) and *marg* (death) again reiterates the Sufi influence in this song.

<sup>34</sup> The vase can be seen in the right hand corner of the film excerpt.

<sup>35</sup> At the beginning of the *mehmani*'s music program another young daughter of the community leader had also been present and was seated behind the girl who appears in this movie track.



Her presence at the party was permissible only because of her status as the daughter of the patron Habib Shah, and since she was within an acceptable age range, not having reached menarche [view track yaryaryar.mov; CD ROM 2].

*Yar Yar Yar*

[*fard*]

Oh Nightingale! Bring the good news of the spring  
and leave the bad news at the far end of the roof.

[*rubai*]

Don't scorn us because we are heart-broken.  
We are ashes and we are sitting on the surface of the fire.

We haven't killed anyone, nor have we hurt anyone.  
This is our fault that we fall in love because of your beautiful face.

[*matla*]

Now that I became despised, you left me.  
Darling, darling, darling, I am sinful, sinful.  
Darling, darling, darling, I am loyal, loyal.

You don't know that I was joking.  
Darling, darling, darling, I am sinful, sinful.  
Darling, darling, darling, I am loyal, loyal.

Go and tell my beloved that Maftun is lonely,  
Darling, darling, darling.

There are some days in which he is ill in Shatak [village name].  
Darling, darling, darling.

The doctors have said that there is no treatment for me.  
Darling, darling, darling.

Maybe the day of my death is drawing close.  
Darling, darling, darling.

Now that I became despised, you left me.  
Darling, darling, darling, I am sinful, sinful.  
Darling, darling, darling, I am loyal, loyal.

About an hour and a half into the evening's concert, Hafizullah, an audience member sitting next to the *ghichak* player, exchanged glances with Habib Shah, the community leader, who nodded. This nonverbal communication seems to have signified the transition from purely musical entertainment to a dance and music performance. A second exchange of glances followed, this time between Habib Shah and Hasan who seemed to seek the community leader's permission to begin his performance. Again Habib Shah nodded and the tea cups and kerosene lamp in the centre of the room were immediately put

aside. Hasan passed his *daf* to Hafizullah, who appeared to act as the ensemble's support musician, and in the meantime, the ensemble's increase in the tempo of the music had been echoed by the clapping of the audience. Hasan, who seemed to be as excited to perform as the audience was to watch, then began his performance [view dance *kateghani11km.mov*; CD ROM 3].<sup>36</sup>

In his new role as a dancer, Hasan stood up and immediately removed his waistcoat. This may have signified to the audience that the room was 'getting too warm' or that in order to dance, he had to remove his restrictive coat which may have otherwise inhibited the quality of his performance. The removal of the waistcoat may also be seen to have metaphorically implied the casting off of the official deportment imposed by Sunni Islamic authorities in Badakhshan. Hasan's part-undressing in a dimly lit room could also be understood to connote eroticism and to be suggestive of the controversial and even forbidden (*haram*) performances which would have typically occurred in the *serais* and *chaikhana*s along the main trade arteries.<sup>37</sup> In this instance, the audience immediately reacted by cheering and clapping; they knew what was to come.

Hasan's improvised solo dance included spinning and wave-like movements which were generated by his whole body, especially his trunk. 'Free-flowing', 'indirect' and 'sustained' movements were executed in a coordinated, integrated and sometimes even exuberant fashion, giving his solo performance a fluid, yet confident air.<sup>38</sup> Large circling and turning motions took place in the tiny centre of the room and were accompanied by Hasan's minimal locomotion of forward and sideways steps. This limited footwork was a direct result of the lack of space in the overcrowded *khushkhana* and was a common feature at the other *mehmanis* that I attended. In contrast, Hasan moved his upper limbs in a less restricted fashion, frequently performing horizontal movements in an 'arc-like' manner, and reaching into almost all directions of his kinesphere. Further, his opening and closing arm movements as well as the flexion and rotation of his trunk regularly facilitated shaping actions.

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<sup>36</sup> I was later told that Hasan was known in the community to be an excellent dancer and he was especially sought after to perform at weddings.

<sup>37</sup> Personal communication with member of Badakhshi elite, Buz Dara, July 1999. For earlier comments on trade routes see Chapter Three.

<sup>38</sup> To a degree, some 'bound' actions were also performed, especially during shoulder shrugging and sideways neck movements (3:12).

His anti-clockwise spinning may iconically evoke the whirling of Sufi dances. However, the majority of Sufis in Badakhshan are members of the Naqshbandiya order which strictly disapproves of music or dancing. While it is likely that Sufi practices would have been incorporated in Ismailism since early times (see Chapter Five) and may also have been performed in local *ziarats* during special occasions, in the political and historical context of my research, local Sufi dances had become rare and if they existed at all, it was most probably in the memories of some members of the community. During Hasan's whirling and spinning movements, his clothing, a *shalwar qamiz*, almost seemed to resemble a type of Sufi garment but at another level, the costume-in-motion shared resemblances with a woman's dress. This, when combined with Hasan's mimetic actions, brought issues of effeminacy to the fore. A similar sartorial effect was observed in the historical performances in Wilgue that were discussed in Chapter Six. The spinning of the white-turbaned boy (see **historicalboys'dance.mov**) as well as the adult solo dancer (see **historicalsolodance.mov**) made their costumes fan out around them and it thus appeared as if they were wearing skirts. Indeed, the commonalities of movement repertoires and the performers' particular use of their garments may indicate that Hasan's solo dance drew on an historical, cultural performance genre.

Hasan's lateral neck movements (1:49, 2:47), upward and downward shrugging of shoulders (3:51) and the shaking of his pectoral muscles – which appeared to function as 'imaginary breasts' – were iconically suggestive of female gestures. Expressed through 'light', gentle and 'indirect' movement qualities, these actions were evocative of an image of a female Indian classical dancer that audience members may have seen at an urban cinema during the later modern period or under the Communist regime, or in Indian movies broadcast on television during the latter era (see Baily 1988:142). Alternatively, this apparent resemblance to an Indian dancer may represent qualities of a local performance tradition. Indeed, these gestures were not only suggestive of an Indian woman,<sup>39</sup> but also reminiscent of a *bache bazigar* (dancing boy) from the *bache bazi* genre in which boys mimic stereotypical female movements and are sometimes thought to engage in homosexual activities.

The *bache bazi* tradition invokes the controversial yet ambiguous issues of gender, maleness and sex. The fact that *bache bazi* was once a relatively

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<sup>39</sup> In a Peircean context, this particular resemblance may be thought of as a rhematic icon.

common practice in Afghanistan is attested to by Ingeborg Baldauf who conducted field research on Uzbek folk songs in the provinces of Faryab, Jawzjan and Balkh in north-western Afghanistan in the 1970s up until mid-1978. She estimates that at that time, from one third to one half of the male Uzbek population was in some way exposed to or associated with this tradition (Baldauf 1988:9). Based on her observations of the dances of both girls and boys during her research, Baldauf clearly differentiates between the performance qualities of a dancing boy and those of a dancing girl, commenting that whereas dancing boys typically use their hands in an elaborate and extensive fashion and often intentionally appropriate their shirts as aprons, dancing women and girls tend to use their hands in a much less pronounced manner.<sup>40</sup> Whilst I was initially hesitant to categorise any of the dances I observed as 'effeminate', my discussions with Baldauf confirmed that the movement characteristics of Hasan's performance and those of Abdul Shakar's at the *mehmani* at Dasht-e Islam (see [kateghaniBahrk.mov](#)), as well as the qualities of several other dancers whose performances will be discussed shortly, were similar to the dances of a *bache bazigar*. In her opinion, therefore, these dances were undeniably effeminate.<sup>41</sup>

At face value, therefore, the effeminacy of these movements which I witnessed only during performances in the private domain may be seen to be making a joke of women. But concomitantly, these gestures may be indirectly related to the spiritual dimension of this dance genre, which seems to have in some form institutionalised the Sufi practice of *shahid*. As discussed in Chapter Five, through the act of *nazar* (gazing, contemplation), a *shahid* (witness) – a young, attractive and beardless male – implicitly comes to represent or embody the divine, and to thereby induce in the observer a state of religious ecstasy and love. The focus of this Sufi tradition was not the satisfaction of sensuality, and if sexual relations did arise at all, they were most probably associated with the final stage of the relationship between the *bache baz* and *bache bazigar*. Many local cultural practices in Badakhshan, such as the visiting of shrines as well as the performances of music and poetry evince elements of Sufi praxis. Likewise, the effeminate movements observed in a number of private dances in *mehmanis* may have been linked to *bache bazi* traditions which in themselves were historically embedded in a particular form of Sufi aesthetic practices.

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<sup>40</sup> Personal communication with Ingeborg Baldauf, Berlin, 2000.

<sup>41</sup> In August 2000, I gave a seminar at the Zentralasien-Seminar, Humboldt University, Berlin, during which I presented some of my audiovisual footage.

The apparent effeminacy of Hasan's movements and their stylistic association with *bache bazigar* was further supported by the fact that audience members referred to the performance style as 'Kataghani', a genre commonly associated with *bache bazi* performances by young and occasionally cross-dressing boys.<sup>42</sup> With the exception of this reference to the Kataghani genre, however, neither local nor expatriate Afghans were willing to otherwise comment on the nature of Hasan's performance. Indeed, I found this avoidance of discussion of dance performances to be a typical pattern during my research. Yet certainly, the audience's familiarity with this type of entertainment and their immense enjoyment of such performances was evident in their active participation in singing the song's refrain and by making iconic onomatopoeic sounds. Moreover, throughout the performance, a strong interaction was evident between the dancer and his audience. Hasan constantly made eye contact with audience members and used his body to communicate by moving to and from various individuals. This was met with considerable laughter and clapping, the audience's enjoyment exemplified in their facial and bodily expressions (1:24), which in turn seemed to lead Hasan to execute even more ecstatic whirling movements (1:25). The offering of money to the dancer situated the performance in direct relation to monetary value, which was particularly significant given that both dancing and money were among the rarest commodities in Afghanistan. Hasan, in turn, showered the musicians with the money – an action which may have pertained to his status and duties as a member of Ahmad Ali's ensemble. At other times, however, Hasan danced with the money delicately held in his hands. This action is frequently seen in the wedding dances of the neighbouring countries of India, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Iran, and as a semiotic possibility may be a symbol for 'giving away' but also 'for being available to those who can afford it'.

The musical accompaniment to this improvised solo dance had an ambiguous rhythm.<sup>43</sup> The second beat 'pushed' ahead a little, that is the beat was anticipated by the musicians and gave the sense of moving forward, thereby creating an 'edge' over the music. Such a rhythm is generally uncharacteristic

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<sup>42</sup> Personal communication with member of Badakhshi elite, Buz Dara, July 1999.

<sup>43</sup> The second half of the five beat rhythm gave the impression of being somewhat longer than the first half. This musical characteristic can also be observed in jazz music. When the pulse was performed as a triple metre, the pulse seemed to 'swing', thus further providing ambiguity in the rhythm. The second beat of some of the audience members' clapping was usually accentuated. As a syncopated beat, it created the effect of providing additional 'space' in between the beats of the main rhythm. The pitch of a 'straight' A was chosen by Ahmad Ali as the *dambura*'s tonal centre, and seemed additionally to act as a drone in this song.

of Arab music and further emphasises the truly local music tradition of this performance. The audience also participated in the music soundscape by clapping an 'offbeat' as well as some syncopated rhythms. Vocally, Ahmad Ali's singing included some vibrato, while he used a higher pitch when emphasising certain poetic phrases.

During Hasan's solo dance, the atmosphere in Habib Shah's *khushkhana* was almost at boiling point. Yet the climax of the evening was still to come when a second improvised solo dance was performed by Ahmad Ali, the *damburanawaz* and ensemble leader, as if to reassert his status as the district's best dancer. At the conclusion of Hasan's dance, Ahmad Ali immediately passed his *dambura* to Hafizullah, who not only replaced him as the lute player, but who later sang a local song about Buz Dara (2:03). As in Hasan's performance, Ahmad Ali's dance was characterised by a multitude of signs expressed through a range of gestures and movement routines which local participants referred to as 'Kataghani' [view dance *kateghani2Ikm.mov*; CD ROM 3]. During his improvised routine of loosely structured movement sequences, Ahmad Ali used his body in a fluid fashion.<sup>44</sup> Compared with Hasan's routine, his spins were less elaborate and not as sustained. Twice he shuffled with an almost military demeanour (0:33-0:39, 3:33-3:37) by flexing his right arm forward and holding his right wrist in a salute close to his forehead, whilst extending his left arm backwards so that his left wrist touched the small of his back. During this action, he minimally moved his neck from side to side, effecting a 'homing in' gesture that he directed to a particular audience member towards the end of the dance (3:33-3:37).<sup>45</sup>

Unlike the dances discussed previously, Ahmad Ali's performance incorporated an extensive mimetic component which gave rise to an erotic yet ludic air. Numerous gestures imitated a woman who appeared to be placing objects into her skirt (2:00), combing her hair in front of an mirror (2:08, 2:56), sensuously stroking and washing her face (2:12), and applying make-up and lipstick (2:20, 2:23). Ahmad Ali's other suggestive gestures included his provocative sideways protrusion of his hips and simultaneous side-flexing of his trunk (2:33), and the lifting of his *qamiz* 'like a skirt' (1:54, 2:54). His

<sup>44</sup> In order to emphasise certain expressive gestures, however, he sporadically held his trunk and neck in a fixed position. Throughout the dance, Ahmad Ali used curvy 'directional' movements, especially when performing wave-like arm actions during spinning and in-place dancing.

<sup>45</sup> To emphasise these marching gestures further, he performed a range of 'direct' and 'bound' movements with his arms, legs and head (especially 3:33-3:37).

exaggerated lateral head and neck movements were at times executed with a touch of military precision (3:34), but at other times, these actions were performed humorously and were reminiscent of a female Indian classical dancer (3:05).<sup>46</sup> Several effeminate gestures hinted at *bache bazi* performances: the lowering of his body to the ground whilst shaking his 'imaginary breasts' (3:18), his backward trunk arches while placing both wrists at the sides of his body (3:12), the ecstatic swaying of his trunk whilst kneeling on the floor (3:19-3:21), and his apparently flirtatious eye contact with one member of the audience (2:14).

Many of these gestures and movements were catalysts for a range of effects. It seemed that Ahmad Ali was poking fun at the 'stereotypical woman',<sup>47</sup> whose idiosyncrasies and sensualities were in some way – through jokes or all male discussions – known to every man present. His 'homing in' on a particular member of the audience could be reflective of power relations such as patron/artisan, master/slave or in the specific genre of *bache bazi*, patron/client (*bache baz/bache bazigar*). Through the use of iconic mimicry, Ahmad Ali's gestures also mocked social conventions, given that in most settings, this performance would have been strictly improper and profoundly unacceptable. But as a performer from a lower socio-economic background and marginalised sectarian community in Badakhshan, Ahmad Ali had some licence to allude to contentious issues albeit in a humorous manner. When understood as symbols, the iconic images of his gestures can be seen to provide a covert commentary about socio-critical issues in a religio-political environment when overt criticism was impossible and even dangerous.

Ahmad Ali's performance of a salute with his right arm and hand evoked images of the military. Yet when juxtaposed with the placement of his left hand at the lower part of his spine and seemingly 'effeminate' neck movements, it created an incongruously humorous and clearly provocative effect. Since every Afghan had been exposed to the military in one way or another since 1978, Ahmad Ali was possibly drawing on his own personal experiences as a soldier. However, it seemed that he was also making fun of the actions of a disciplined soldier by explicitly connecting them with those of women. This mockery highlighted issues of discipline, aggression and war that have predominated in all provinces of Afghanistan and at the same time, the serious impact of ongoing civil war on the lives of most if not all Badakhshis was momentarily

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<sup>46</sup> Personal communication with Ingeborg Baldauf, Berlin, 2000.

<sup>47</sup> Such a generic type is considered by Peirce to be a qualisign.

lightened through the playful, ironic combination of the normally opposed qualities of the military and the feminine.

Ahmad Ali later performed a prayer-like gesture (3:17) by clasping his hands together and flexing his head towards his chest. While this action may be understood as reminiscent of religious practices such as the veneration at Sufi shrines, given that it was performed in a non-religious and humorous context, it is possible that it was also derisive. Ahmad Ali's subsequent swoon to the ground – a dramatic and effeminate end-marker – may have functioned as an index with the aim of 'pulling' himself back to the present, in this case to the entertaining event in which he, as a low-status musician, performed for mostly elite guests. As with Hasan's solo dance, Ahmad Ali was also offered money and at one point (1:28), was even showered with a wad of Afghani notes by a soldier, one of the audience members. This bestowal of money may be interpreted in a number of ways. Most obviously, it can be read as an index of the soldier's appreciation and enthusiasm for Ahmad Ali's dance. It can also be seen as a sign of power and as related to the soldier's wish to improve his status by impressing his peers in the audience, or in seeking to impress the dancer. Since the actual monetary value of the gift was extremely low (only 1000 Afghani notes were used),<sup>48</sup> it may also have been ridiculing the dire economic state of the region. Certainly, his limited income as a United Front soldier would not have allowed him to impress the dancer financially, even if he had wanted to do so. Hence, he may have opted to use his virtually worthless money in a humorous fashion.

This dance consisted of two musical sections delineated by a non-structural pause in which a brief period of silence accompanied the stillness of the dancer (1:31) before leading into the next section of the dance. The first musical section was entirely instrumental and utilised a duple meter which accompanied the 'straight' clapping of the audience.<sup>49</sup> The second section was performed with a more ambiguous rhythm, the second pulse of the duple metre giving the illusion that the second half of the metre was somewhat longer, whereas in fact it was not.<sup>50</sup> The entertainment program of the *mehmani* did not conclude, however, with the dances of these two musicians, but continued well

<sup>48</sup> During that time, one US dollar was valued at approximately 100,000 Afghanis.

<sup>49</sup> The clapping was largely a 'straight' rhythm on the first of the two pulses, but not on the second. Only those members in the audience who were familiar with this musical style and who may have been amateur musicians themselves, clapped on the anticipated second pulse.

<sup>50</sup> Appearing almost a little too early, the second last beat seemed to be a sluggish rhythm of three beats (1 2 3).



into the early hours of the morning. It is important to note that as with the public entertainment in the other Ismaili village of Chahar Deh, only two dancers who seemed to be known as specialists, performed at this event, and not each participant as at the private Sunni events in Dasht-e Islam and Faizabad. As a result of the curfew which began at dusk throughout Badakhshan, all of the guests and performers present at the *mehmani* slept in the small *khushkhana* and in the morning, were served a traditional breakfast of *nan* (bread), *shir chai* and eggs.

### Faizabad

The third *mehmani* which included a music and dance program took place in Faizabad in mid-May 1998 to celebrate Sayyid Rahman's offer of a permanent position with an international organisation. Sayyid Rahman has been mentioned earlier in this chapter for his role as an amateur musician during the semi-public *mela* in Khushbad. In Faizabad, as elsewhere in Badakhshan and Afghanistan, the impoverished local economy and provincial administration had meant that few job opportunities existed for skilled Afghans. This appointment was therefore an excellent reason to celebrate with a major *mehmani*. Since it is impossible to hire indoor venues in Faizabad, he asked his co-residents, two relatives and their extended families, to vacate the two rooms they occupied in his small house for the duration of the party.

Sayyid Rahman invited twenty male guests from his close circle of friends and relatives, most of whom were ethnic Sunni Tajik Badakhshi like himself, but some were Sunni Pushtun Badakhshis and others Sunni Pushtuns from neighbouring provinces. Many guests were employed at international aid organisations; none were at that time affiliated with any of the Islamist parties. Sayyid Rahman had also invited Nasrullah Sherzad, a Tajik friend and amateur *zirbaghali* player, to assist him with the after-dinner entertainment.<sup>51</sup> With the exception of one participant who was educated at a state-controlled religious institution, all others had been secularly-educated at either secondary and/or tertiary level. Although the host of the *mehmani*, Sayyid Rahman was also the

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<sup>51</sup> The dinner on this occasion was prepared by the women of the household whom I neither saw nor heard. The feast consisted of Kabuli *pilaw*, a long grain rice dish cooked with onions, shortening and boiled meat, sultanas and pistachios, *kofta* (ground meat dish) and kebabs. This was accompanied by a yoghurt and fried eggplant dish, and *sabzi* (a spinach and yoghurt dish), as well as servings of the common snacks of raisins, pistachios and *noql*.

evening's primary performer, singing local songs and contemporary cover versions by expatriate musicians, whilst accompanying himself on a Casio keyboard that was connected to an old truck battery.<sup>52</sup> In addition to his supporting role as percussionist and backing vocalist, Nasrullah Sherzad performed several songs alone.

After a series of introductory songs, a suitable atmosphere for the dance program seemed to have been established. Indeed, dancing proved to be the central feature of this *mehmani*. Each guest was required to perform a solo dance to the accompaniment of the musicians and the clapping of the other guests. The dance styles ranged from traditional improvised solo dances, not unlike the ones seen during the *mela* in Khushbad, to what appeared to be a combination of traditional and modern influences performed in an improvised style. I have selected two dances for discussion: the first is a representation of a commonly performed and well accomplished Badakhshi solo dance, and the second dance is an excellent example of the influence of 'modernity' and Western culture upon local dance traditions. The *zirbaghalinawaz* Nasrullah Sherzad performed the first of the two improvised solo dances. When it was his turn to dance, Wali Jan, another guest, took over the drumming [**view dance kateghaniFzb.mov; CD ROM 2**].

Nasrullah Sherzad danced in a Kataghani style, not unlike Ahmad Ali's solo dance at the *mehmani* in Buz Dara. His performance consisted of four interconnected sections which shared stylistic similarities with the public dances at Munjan and Chahar Deh, as well as with the private dances at Buz Dara and Dasht-e Islam. The musical accompaniment was supplied by the keyboard player Sayyid Rahman and the percussionist Wali Jan who performed a 'straight' triple rhythm (6/8) as well as a more ambiguous duple metre (2/4).<sup>53</sup> The first section of the performance seemed to act as an introduction (0:00-0:58) to establish an appropriate mood during which Nasrullah Sherzad executed relatively sustained movements of slow forward shuffling, and inward and outward rotations of his palms. An increase in tempo marked the beginning of the second section (1:00) when the dancer began to rotate and flex his trunk. It was in this section that he performed several 'effeminate' gestures: flirtatiously 'gazing' into the distance, brushing his hair (1:28), and provocatively moving his hips and head from side-to-side (1:40). The playful

<sup>52</sup> Sayyid Rahman's favourite expatriate musician was Farhad Darya.

<sup>53</sup> The triple metre's first beat was accented (1 2 3 4 5 6). As with the performance at the Khushbad picnic, Sayid Rahman again used a Phrygian scale with E as the key note.

nature of these gestures was confirmed by Nasrullah Sherzad's humorous expression. The third section in which the performer mostly danced in place was accompanied solely by the percussionist's drumming that ranged from a duple to a triple meter (1:52-2:20). In the final section of this solo dance (2:21), the keyboard player Sayyid Rahman rejoined the percussionist. Nasrullah Sherzad concluded his dance with an anti-clockwise spin (2:42) and acknowledged Sayyid Rahman, the patron of the *mehmani* and one of the musicians, by bowing forwards and bringing his right hand towards his heart. In spite of the use of a battery-operated Casio keyboard as the prime musical accompaniment and which was clearly an index of 'modernity' and hence, the "commodification of imported cultural property" (Neuenfeldt 1998), most of Nasrullah Sherzad's movements were performed in a traditional Badakhshi style.<sup>54</sup> His iconic mimicking of a woman functioned similarly to the previous dances by Hasan and Ahmad Ali in Buz Dara and seemed again to be a style that was familiar to the audience.

As is customary during intimate *mehmanis*, the last dance of the evening was performed by the host, Sayyid Rahman [view **dance modernsolodance.mov**; **CD ROM 2**]. To accompany his dance, he selected a pre-programmed tune on his Casio keyboard, a medley of tunes that centred around the Western melody of 'Jingle Bells'. To a researcher of European origin, this melody naturally evoked Christmas in a particularly kitsch form, but it was unlikely that these associations existed for Sayyid Rahman and his guests. Indeed, it is more likely that they equated these tunes with the positive implications and benefits of modernity. The audience was obviously extremely impressed with the use of this 'electronic' instrument and its 'modern' music, which starkly contrasted the Afghan music performed throughout the rest of the evening. As in all of the aesthetic performances, although perhaps for different reasons, the audience members responded by clapping in rhythm and by laughing at Sayyid Rahman's 'modern' performance.

In contrast to the other solo dances at this event, and for that matter the dances previously discussed in this chapter, Sayyid Rahman's performance was characterised by a juxtaposition of traditional and contemporary dance styles and may thus be understood as a type of '*bricolage*'.<sup>55</sup> While the other dances I

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<sup>54</sup> His general movement characteristics were executed by free-flowing and arc-like directional movements, interspersed with some occasional bound and direct actions.

<sup>55</sup> The term *bricolage* was coined by the structural anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (1966) and serves as a descriptive tool "when no other means is available" (Payne 1996:79). Drawing

observed in Badakhshan tended to share some common stylistic features such as extended wrists and rotating palms, spinning and limited travel across the dance space, this solo performance was more individual and included a number of improvised themes whose exact influences are unclear.<sup>56</sup> Sayyid Rahman laughed during most of his dance; he was also clearly having fun (1:22). His mimicking of an imaginary 'air lute' player may be interpreted as an acting out of the film image of a 'pop star' in modern Western society (1:52). The inclusion of such elements in his performance may be understood as an indexing of his time at university in one of Afghanistan's cities before ultra-conservative Islamic rule took hold. In fact, this dance served as a medium through which Sayyid Rahman could express his body in a less restricted or more 'liberated' way and which was not so removed from the nature of an improvised solo dance that could be safely performed in a Western or liberal Muslim society. The embodiment of military signs in an almost choreographed marching routine (0:57-1:06) may have related to Sayyid Rahman's time as a government soldier for the Communist regime during the civil war with the *mujahideen*. These movement qualities seemed to indicate that even in a playful context, war was never far away. Indeed, the great sense of enjoyment that was clearly experienced by the dancers and audiences in all of the performances may be understood as reflecting their desire and need to have fun and to detach momentarily from the harsh realities and struggles of everyday life: civil war, drought, famine, natural disasters, unemployment, and isolation from the global community, in addition to a general sense of hopelessness about the future. This final dance did not indicate the end of the *mehmani* as the celebrations continued with solo and group singing of popular Afghan songs. Again, due to the curfew, everyone remained overnight in Sayyid Rahman's residence and the *mehmani* finally concluded with breakfast the following morning.

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on Anthony Shay's usage of the term (1999:35), I have found this expression useful in describing a dance that appears "outside of tradition" to create a new dance that is still based on an existing tradition.

<sup>56</sup> Many body parts were used in Sayyid Rahman's dance which enabled him frequently to change the shape of his torso. He favoured a spatial path which included many indirect and multi-focussed movements and incorporated combinations of arc-like and spoke-like directional actions. In some of his gestures, Sayyid Rahman skilfully elongated his body to the limit of his kinesphere.

### *Summation of Performance Events in Badakhshan*

From the analyses of cultural practices in Chapters Six and Seven, it has become clear that a diversity of personal to communal, local to regional, ethnic to trans-ethnic, sectarian to pan-Islamic, and political to socio-cultural themes and concerns, has been expressed in the range of religious and non-religious performances I observed in Badakhshan in 1998 and 1999. In particular, it seems that cultural performances manifested a multiplicity of cultural influences and social identities whilst remaining embedded in Afghanistan's central cultural influence of Islam.

In Afghanistan in the late 1990s, tensions arising from the escalating convergence of Islamic and Afghan identities were publicly contested in the political arena – for example the Taliban versus the United Front, extremist versus moderate Islamists, *ulema* versus Islamists – and in Badakhshan, were manifested in various interpretations and perceptions of what constitutes a 'good Muslim'. The majority of Badakhshis follow Hanafi Sunni Islam and as a consequence, strictly adhere to Islam's normative texts. From 1992, ultra-conservative Badakhshis who were influenced by Indian/Pakistani reformist movements (Deoband, Ahl-e Hadith) and/or Arabian Wahhabism, tended to be either strictly or loosely aligned with the more conservative or radical Islamist parties such as Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Islami, Sayyaf's Ittehad-e Islami or even the Jamiat-e Islami, and abided by extremist interpretations of cultural performances. Other Badakhshis who were more moderate and even relatively liberal Sunnis, while privately espousing a synthesis of normative Islam with more local practices such as visiting Sufi shrines, celebrating *nowruz*, participating in *buzkashi*, and dancing at weddings and *mehmanis*, publicly conformed to the prevailing standards of conservative Islamic behaviour. In contrast, the minority Ismailis in the province continued to practise a more syncretic form of Islam that incorporated elements of local traditions and Sufism. These varying interpretations and loyalties meant that there was always the potential for overt tensions both within and between sectarian and ethnic groups.

Frictions between Islamic and Afghan, especially regional and more local identities were clearly mirrored in the non-religious practices that were sanctioned by the religious and political authorities in Badakhshan. *Buzkashi*, for example, was perceived by the majority of Badakhshan's population to be a sport unique to northern Afghanistan. The fact that it is seen to be a marker of northern Afghan identity may have been one of the reasons why, in

contradistinction to the Pushtun Taliban's prohibition of this sport, it continued to be condoned throughout Badakhshan, even though it is not an Islamic practice. In this sense, the performance of *buzkashi* potentially strengthened the United Front alliance within the province and implicitly contributed to anti-Taliban sentiment. Perhaps for similar reasons, that is not only because of the evidence of its pre-Islamic origins, but its explicit connection with a northern non-Pushtun identity, the Taliban banned *buzkashi*. Clearly, this action was also a means of breaking down regional identities and uniting all Afghans under their notion of Islamic identity, which increasingly replicated the culture promoted by extremist Arabs who were linked to international terrorist organisations such as bin Laden's al Qaeda network.

Historically, the legitimacy of cultural practices in Afghanistan depended upon the interpretations propounded by the *ulema* or village mullah. Since the inauguration of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, political and military leaders have also espoused their own interpretations of Islamic morality which progressively became more conservative in response to the rise of the Taliban. Although Badakhshan's leadership had not declared any official edicts with respect to non-religious performances, I was told by a number of informants that such practices were denounced by some *ulema* through their weekly *joma* sermons. While religious practices are clearly defined by Islamic conventions, non-religious practices tend to be less rule-bound, their meanings frequently ambiguous and hence more open to interpretation. My analysis of liminal practices such as the *namaz-e id* demonstrated that they were marked by orthopraxy and a sense of restraint and gravity which noticeably contrasted with the more liminoid activities of sport, music and dance that were characterised by qualities of exuberance, amusement and even provocation, and tended to be more polysemous. Yet further examination of Badakhshan's cultural performances indicates that they are not readily demarcated into religious or non-religious, but instead exist on a continuum of degrees of 'being Islamic'. This hypothesis finds confirmation in the fact firstly that non-religious performances such as sport were condoned by both Sunni and Ismaili authorities. I suggest that sport was approved by Badakhshan's religio-political leadership since it satisfied the Hanafi Islamic criteria of public entertainment. Moreover, the sporting contests and also the prize-shooting and merry-go-rounds provided for the children's amusement at the *nowruz* fair in Faizabad, seemed to manifest aggressive and competitive characteristics that after decades of civil war, had become predominant features of public life. Further, both *buzkashi* and *kushti giri* were overtly linked with political allegiances and agendas and hence directly reflected the pervasive influence of military

commanders upon all aspects of public social life. The existence of the religious/non-religious continuum is also attested to by the inclusion of instrumental and vocal music in Ismaili religious praxis.<sup>57</sup> Significantly, the fluid positioning of this cultural practice on the continuum of public/private is evident in its traditionally public performance among Ismailis, its concealment from Sunnis who would not regard this practice as Islamic, and the semi-public performance that was organised during my visit to Chashma Bozurg. Hence, cultural practices are not always easily and readily categorised as religious or non-religious or relatedly, as *halal* or *haram*.

The positioning of cultural performances along the continuum of public to private was directly related to the specific religious and political contexts in which these events arose. In Badakhshan this was manifested by the fact that commanders of the United Front officially condoned the performance of both religious and sporting practices. Yet as a consequence of the recurrent debates about the legalities of aesthetic practices in Islamic societies and due to the general state of cultural confusion that had arisen subsequent to Afghanistan's ongoing political crisis and the rise of the Taliban, non-religious aesthetic practices remained the most controversial cultural performances in Badakhshan. With the exception of the few public and semi-public events, all aesthetic performances in 1998 and 1999 were contingent upon the patronage of more moderate or liberal political and military leaders and if this was not obtainable, they were conducted in a clandestine fashion to ensure they did not attract the attention of orthodox citizens or conservative Islamist authorities. Indeed, it was only within the private domain that Badakhshis could in any way allude to more moderate ideas of Islam. Even the relatively more public performances – that of Sharif in Buz Dara and those during the *mela* in Khushbad – reflected the organisers' intentions to construct their environments in such a way as to optimise privacy. Only under such circumstances could the traditional cultural practices of music and dance be safely performed. Significantly, private parties that were organised and attended by powerful and politically influential members of the community commonly involved the engagement of musicians who were typically drawn from artisan groups, but whose marginal positioning allowed them to express controversial political and social commentaries that in other contexts would be deemed inappropriate. In contrast, if a *mehmani* was an informal and less political gathering of friends and relatives, the emphasis of the music and dancing in which all participants

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<sup>57</sup> Sunni Islam explicitly prohibits the use of musical instruments in association with religious praxis.

engaged, was chiefly and simply to have fun. With the exception of religious festivals, therefore, *mehmanis* which were concealed, exclusive and restricted to invited guests only, must be understood as the most marked special events in Badakhshan. Each private aesthetic performance thus represented one of the most secretive and protected forms of Badakhshan's cultural heritage.

All of the religious and non-religious cultural performances that have been discussed in this and the preceding chapter may be understood as signs of local Badakhshi culture. Musical performances signalled a number of possible agendas: religious (Sufi, religious Ismaili), nationalist and entertainment. The latter genre, in particular, was distinguished by musical and lyrical signs that evinced a diversity of local, trans-regional, multi-sectarian, and multi-ethnic associations. This was best exemplified with some of the entertainment music in the Ismaili region of Buz Dara where references to Islam, Nasir Khusraw and locality were made and local instruments used such as the Pamiri *rubab*, an instrument only performed in Afghanistan by Badakhshi Ismailis. The performances in the Sunni regions of Dasht-e Islam and Bagh-e Zard also incorporated songs whose lyrics referred to Islam, locality and history. Likewise, the Kateghani solo dances that were performed in Dasht-e Islam, Buz Dara and Faizabad may also be linked as semiotic possibilities to Sufism and the wider Badakhshan region as they seemed to be reflective of a northern Afghan performance genre.

I suggest that this blending of qualities and origins contributed to the categorisation of non-religious aesthetic practices as 'un-Islamic'. Yet there is clear evidence that societal approval or prohibition of aesthetic performances was not uniform, but variable and contested. 'Simple' instrumental music such as a flute performance was generally regarded as an innocent leisure activity that would not lead to immoral activities, and hence it was seen to be acceptable. In contrast, ensemble music involving the use of lutes, a harmonium and percussion and typically characterised by more complex musical qualities (scales, timbre, rhythms, tempo) was often considered to be more questionable, especially if the lyrics were somewhat ambiguous or if the performance could in any way be linked to illicit or immoral activities.

In comparison with the tacit prohibition of aesthetic practices espoused by the majority of Badakhshan's ruling Sunni elite, the participation of Ismaili religious leaders as musicians in Chahar Deh and Chashma Bozurg evinced their regard for music as an important cultural medium. This was further confirmed when a public music and dance performance was organised by



Enayatullah Qurban, Chahar Deh's *khalifa* and village leader. The absence of Sunni Tajik commanders and their armed soldiers in the Ismaili villages of Chashma Bozurg and Chahar Deh, and the relative isolation of these villages from the district centre of Buz Dara, meant that aesthetic practices could potentially be performed in a less constrained fashion since they were less affected by Badakhshan's political situation. Furthermore, the tolerance of aesthetic entertainment evident in 1998 and 1999 in the wider and mostly Ismaili-inhabited Buz Dara region, stood in stark contrast to other, mostly Sunni settlements in Badakhshan where religio-political leaders had strictly prohibited any form of non-religious aesthetic expression and where music had not been publicly performed since the beginning of Islamic governance in 1992.

In spite of the rarity of aesthetic practices in Badakhshan in 1998 and 1999, the music examples presented in this and the previous chapter highlight the thematic and stylistic diversity of extant performances: a religious *qasida* in Chashma Bozurg (**rawan.mov**), a nationalistic song in Baz Dura (**anthem.mov**), a *falak* in Faizabad (**localtune.mov**), *ghazals* with local lyrics in Buz Dara and Dasht-e Islam (for example, **advice.mov**, **badakhshan.mov**, **yaryaryar.mov**, and **homeland.mov**), songs with Sufi content in Buz Dara and Bagh-e Zard (for example, **shams.mov** and **bacha.mov**), songs such as "Shish Kebab" (**kateghaniBahrk.mov**) that evinced Arabic influences, and even songs based on Western music (**modernsolodance.mov**) were performed. The musical structure and lyrical content of the songs mostly pertained to Badakhshan, but occasionally also to the wider region of Kataghan. Two of the local songs from Buz Dara were characterised by their humour (see **donkey.mov**) and even some sexually provocative comments (see **husband&wife.mov**), and demonstrated similarities with the genres of storytelling.

While the dances I recorded were mostly improvised solo dances and thus were stylistically less diverse than the music, they ranged from traditional (for example, **localsolodance(od)Ikm.mov**), to regional (for example, **kateghaniBahrk.mov**), to national (**attan(od)Fzb.mov**), to modern (**modernsolodance.mov**), and socio-critical performances (**kateghani2Ikm.mov**). Comparison of the dances I witnessed in 1998 and 1999 with those evident in historical footage reveals a general deterioration in stylistic and expressive qualities. This change was less marked in the more remote areas of Badakhshan such as the Ismaili village of Chahar Deh where

less stringent restrictions by Sunni Islamists meant that aesthetic performances continued to closely resemble those recorded in the early 1960s.

The questionable origins, nature and meanings of dancing meant that it was always considered by conservative Sunni Badakhshi Islamist and Islamic commanders and generally orthodox community members to be an un-Islamic (*haram*) activity. However, secularly-educated as well as more traditionally inclined Badakhshis who were not associated with any of the Islamist parties would listen to music and if the opportunity arose, even dance. It would therefore seem likely that the classification of dance as *haram* is at least in part related to the use of the body as a medium for emotional and sensuous expression, as well as its inherent potential to indirectly reflect or comment upon a range of socio-cultural and political issues. In Badakhshan, the dance performances I observed were generally characterised by light, gentle and fluid effort qualities which notably contrasted the strong, direct and aggressive elements of sport. Dancing was frequently marked by playful, sensual, even erotic, and political themes. Further, the affective qualities of performances were commonly reflective of local cultural heritage and identity although the potential for change was demonstrated by the ready inclusion of modern instruments and improvised dancing styles in the performances at the *mehmani* in Faizabad.

In contrast to the expression of Badakhshi personhood during religious rituals and non-religious sport, the dancing body often revealed more intimate information about gender (both the feminine and the masculine) and sexuality, as well as Sufism, orthodox Islam, and politics – issues which were rarely publicly acknowledged in Badakhshan's highly conformist society. In fact, dance represented a means by which controversial socio-critical comments and risqué gestures could be expressed both seriously and playfully in an arena of secrecy. In turn, the dancer's "creative freedom", his performance style and the nature of the setting may have permitted the audience a degree of "interpretative licence" (Jackson 1983:336) and thus facilitated a polysemous effect.

While there may be an historical link between Sufism and the effeminate gestures evident in some of the improvised solo dances, the sensitivity of both Sufism and the *bache bazi* tradition rendered discussions with Badakhshi informants impossible. Since these movements were entirely extra-linguistic signs, they were clothed in ambiguity and their meanings thus remained indeterminate to both performer and audience. One may hypothesise that such

dances possibly conveyed the message of “what it is to be” a woman (Jackson 1983:338). Yet while performers appropriated female virtue and stereotypical qualities, they exaggerated them, thus making them humorous and somewhat ridiculous. Indeed, many possible interpretations exist for this playful inversion of the public demeanour characteristic of Afghan men. Certainly, a pragmatic understanding of these ambiguous performances is situational and in many respects, the meaning of a particular performance may be felt primarily through embodiment when it is “experienced bodily before it is apprehended in the mind” (Jackson 1983:338). From my observations at these performances, although the dancers’ mimetic movement qualities were at all times extremely ambiguous, they nonetheless evoked a highly emotive response in their respective audiences. The embodied articulation of these male dancers with their male audiences thus produced a shared mockery of what they imagined to be women’s everyday practices, despite the fact that this domain was usually inaccessible and concealed from them.

The extant performances discussed in this thesis confirm the desire and indeed the determination of many local communities to maintain and safeguard their local traditions, in spite of prevailing prohibitions on non-religious practices. I have found Victor Turner’s terms of liminal and liminoid to be particularly useful in explicating the differences between *haram* and *halal* performances in Badakhshan. Liminal performances whose clear symbols and ritual practices have been prescribed by Islam’s normative texts are obligatory to any society that is founded on Islam and are understood as contributing to effective social functioning. Consequently, these cultural performances continued without question in Badakhshan. In contrast, more liminoid performances tend to be more creative and as Turner (1974:86) suggests, they

are often parts of social critiques or even revolutionary manifestos—books, plays, paintings, films, etc., exposing the injustices, inefficiencies, and immoralities of the mainstream economic and political structures and organizations.

These practices, in particular dance, largely signified iconically (through resemblance) and indexically (through contiguity), but not through language and were thus more difficult to situate with respect to legality. Moreover, these polysemous embodied performances had the potential to be political, to express social critiques and to challenge the status quo. The performances of double-edged gestures such as the mimicking of women or soldiers were also indicative of the interrelationship of homo-social practices (the military, Sufism and *bache bazi* traditions) that were especially salient in Badakhshan. It was these liminoid practices in 1998 and 1999 which were mostly and somewhat arbitrarily classified as un-Islamic.



# 8

## Conclusion

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Without tradition we cannot live.

(Habib Shah, Ismaili community leader, Badakhshan, 1998).

As you see, this is a destroyed building...

And what these people wanted to show was that art, music and culture will not die in this country and nobody can kill them.

(Raheen Makhdoom, Afghanistan's Minister of Culture and Information, commenting after the opening of the first post-Taliban theatre play in Kabul in AP 2002).

With its focus on cultural performances in Badakhshan, this interdisciplinary investigation has provided unique insights into the province's social, cultural and political relationships during the Taliban era (1996-2001). Indeed, the central premise of this thesis is that Badakhshan's culture is inextricable from its political and religious contexts. Clearly, all cultural practices are deeply embedded in both local traditions and Islam, reflecting the influences of Hanafi Sunni Islam, Naqshbandi Sufism and Sevener Shiite Nizari Ismailism. While the more moderate and predominant Hanafi jurisprudence had fostered a general tolerance of non-religious practices during previous political regimes, with the establishment of the Islamic State of Afghanistan in 1992, a strict Islamic code of conduct was propounded by elements within the Islamist government as an important obligation for all Afghans. This conservatism was largely an outcome of the political alliance between Islamic and Islamist *mujahideen* groups who having successfully defeated the Soviet-backed

Communist regime, saw Islam as the source of their triumph over foreign invasion.

Nevertheless, conflicting religious and political ideologies were evident from the outset of Rabbani's Presidency, with varying interpretations of Sharia law and differing ideas of the structure of an Islamic state. While most political-military leaders, who were nominally loyal to the Rabbani government and later aligned with the United Front, espoused a relatively moderate form of Hanafi Islam, a number of allied commanders imposed their own strict interpretations of Sharia law in the territories under their control. The Wahhabi-influenced Sayyaf, for example, promoted a vision of an ultra-conservative Islamist state that was strongly anti-Shiite in sentiment. Similarly, the Rabbani government's brief rapprochement with Hekmatyar in 1996 indicates the degree to which the Islamic State of Afghanistan was forced to accommodate pivotal political figures, regardless of their radical tendencies, in order to ensure their continued support for the nascent Islamist administration. Significantly, during his short-lived Prime Ministership, Hekmatyar promulgated extremist Islamic doctrines that led to the prohibition of all aesthetic practices that were not clearly associated with Islam.

Moreover, the emergence of the Taliban and their espousal of allegedly 'puritan' Islam compelled the comparatively more moderate Rabbani government to incorporate similar stringent Islamic guidelines that would continue to legitimise its leadership of an Islamist Afghan state. Again, the Rabbani government in Badakhshan was heavily dependent upon the allegiances of often-conservative individual commanders to maintain an effective anti-Taliban resistance. Indeed, some of these allies were extremist Muslims who, like the Taliban, had been influenced by the radical reformist ideologies of Arabian Wahhabism and Indian Deobandism. In addition, although Hekmatyar's political influence at a national level had ceased with the Taliban's increasing domination from 1996, he continued to muster considerable support among local Badakhshi commanders from mostly Uzbek, Pushtun and Baluch communities. In this context of escalating orthodoxy and tenuous political alliances, any perceived challenge to the practice of conservative Islam represented a threat to the integrity and stability of the Islamic State of Afghanistan. As a consequence and in light of the historical debates concerning the legality of non-religious performances in Islamic societies, those cultural practices that were more ambiguous in meaning became particularly controversial and were therefore either explicitly banned or, at the very least, significantly subdued in the territories of ultra-

conservative commanders. In noticeable contrast to the Taliban, however, the ruling authorities of Badakhshan condoned non-religious commemorative events such as *nowruz* and *jeshen* as well as sports such as *buzkashi* which had traditionally served as a marker of Badakhshan's cultural heritage. Unlike the proscribed performances of music and dance, these activities were deemed to be appropriate cultural practices in the conservative Islamic society of Badakhshan in the late 1990s. In comparison, aesthetic practices were only performed publicly in some smaller, rural, isolated, and strategically less significant settlements in the province.

### *Contested Identities*

The nature and legality of cultural performances in Afghanistan have been subject to the marked shifts in political and religious ideologies of the last three decades. Foreign cultural intervention in Afghanistan during this time most clearly dates from the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan from 1978-1989. Under this regime, religious practices were not encouraged, but instead non-religious entertainment and aesthetic practices were fostered as a means of communicating Soviet ideals. Yet, reminiscent of Amanullah's modernisation ideals of the 1920s, the secularly educated Communist elite overlooked the significant interplay between religion and politics in Afghanistan. The involvement of extremist Wahhabi-influenced Arabs such as the Saudi bin Laden and his al Qaeda terrorist organisation in Afghanistan, while initially less overt, was underpinned by a missionary zeal which sought to promote and cement Arabian Wahhabi principles into Afghan culture and perhaps even to expand the Wahhabi colonies in non-Arab Asia. Not surprisingly, these Arab ideas of culture clashed with Afghan traditions, contributing to the state of cultural confusion in Afghanistan. Unlike the Soviets, the Taliban were aware of the complex nexus between Afghan culture, Sufism and local traditions and on this basis, attempted radically to eliminate cultural practices that did not conform to orthodox Islam. Similarly, in Badakhshan, non-Tajik Badakhshis in particular, such as extremist Uzbeks and Pushtuns who had been associated with ultra-conservative *madrassas* funded by Pakistan or Saudi Arabia, aligned themselves with Arabian and Indian forms of Islamism, which in turn led to the strict censorship of aesthetic practices in the territories held by these extremist commanders.

Drawing extensively on my fieldwork in Badakhshan in 1998 and 1999, I have argued in this thesis that cultural performances during the Taliban era remained

central to the expression of Badakhshi cultural identity and were anchored in both collective and individual experiences of the contemporaneous political and religious context. At that time, uncertainties about legitimate cultural heritage stemmed from a state of general uncertainty about the appropriateness of traditional Afghan practices in a conservative Islamic society. The fact that some non-Islamic practices were condoned while others were clearly prohibited brings to light the existence of tensions between Afghan and Islamic identities in Badakhshan as well as in the larger context of Afghanistan.

Yet Islamic and Afghan identities are intricately interwoven in Badakhshan's cultural heritage. Both the contexts and the content of performances testify to the diversity of social, religious and political identities in Badakhshan. In many cases, the performance events comprised members of a variety of ethnic, regional, sectarian, and political groups. This was particularly evident at the *buzkashi* tournament in Faizabad. Similarly, and in spite of the fact that Badakhshan has historically been an isolated and autonomous territory, the variety of songs performed at the outdoor festival exemplified and accentuated Afghanistan's multi-ethnic cultural heritage and identity. During the *jeshen* festival, sixty per cent of the songs were local and of the remaining songs, forty per cent were from other ethnic regions of Afghan provinces, mainly northern Afghanistan but also from Logar and Kabul. In addition, the performance of a Pushtun *atan* by predominantly non-Pushtun participants at a *mela*, signified their acknowledgment of this dance as a national symbol, and indicated their positioning of Badakhshan within the larger multi-ethnic society of Afghanistan. Moreover, there was a palpable trend among the younger, secularly-educated population to incorporate cultural practices that were perceived to be 'modern' and 'Western' into local performance traditions, as evinced by the use of the Casio keyboard and the dancing to the tune of 'Jingle Bells'. This inclination not only attested to the dynamism of Badakhshi culture, but perhaps also suggested that this social group looked beyond the constraints of its local and national contexts for inspiration and opportunities that were perceived to accompany modernisation.

### *The Politics of Performance*

While the homogeneous and obligatory religious practices such as the *id* prayers were purely sacred, formal and restrained in nature and style, popular Afghan cultural practices such as music and dance were an amalgam of Islamic and local cultural traditions and although often expressing an element of 'fun',



also commonly provided some form of socio-critical commentary. Traditionally, in formal settings, music and dance were provided by professional (*maslaki* and *kesbi*) performers with a generally low social status and who have therefore been relatively 'powerless' in the arena of politics. This social positioning, however, in many cases provided performers with some licence to portray a "critique of power spoken behind the back of the dominant" (Scott 1990:xii).

While the role of performers was largely reduced during the Rabbani Presidency, if they were hired to provide entertainment, then they were still at liberty to act in ways that would otherwise have been deemed improper or contentious. The polysemy of aesthetic performances and their frequent political, religious and social allusions, meant that there was always the possibility for them to be interpreted as politically or morally negative and for performers to be held accountable for 'subversive', 'immoral' or 'politically provocative' actions. If, for example, a musician decided to sing a song that was not politically 'correct' or which contained messages that may have been perceived as 'un-Islamic', or if the dancer's expression became 'too' provocative or sensual, such actions could easily have endangered their lives. In the political context of my research, it was thus no longer possible for musicians and dancers to make a living from performing. In fact, every performer I interviewed in Badakhshan was virtually completely occupied with work as a subsistence farmer on private or leased land.

Given the risks inherent in the performance of non-religious entertainment, why then did some men in positions of authority condone them? In the case of the music and dance performances that were organised by the Ismaili leader in Buz Dara, for example, the answer has possibly to do with the exercise of power by local leaders. Control of an aesthetic performance may have represented control of a social resource and another's physicality, and consequently signified a leader's authority. The Ismaili leader, for example, in standing beyond the official censorship imposed by Sunni commanders and governors, thereby asserted a measure of autonomy and possibly the licence to permit and/or engage in other practices that did not conform to religious ideologies propounded by authorities at that time. This clearly confirms the political potential of cultural performances and their strategic manipulation by influential, authoritative figures to various and individual ends.

In a society in which signs and symbols of conflict were very much in evidence in everyday life, performances that were embedded in entertainment and

leisure had particular significance, embodying vital forms of social knowledge that have been integral to the maintenance of local identity. In accordance with the demands of each situation, Badakhshis had learned to assume different identities. The conservatism demanded by many mullahs and conservative authorities was met mostly with public conformity. Yet, in the absence of direct surveillance, the local population then had some latitude to engage in cultural practices, although usually in a restricted, concealed and private domain. Significantly, in spite of the restrictive environment for aesthetic performances within the groundswell of ultra-conservative Islam, dance and music performances were performed by some traditional as well as more liberal Badakhshis, although mostly surreptitiously and not without individuals taking considerable risks. In the more secluded environments of semi-public and private arenas, Badakhshis were in a position occasionally to adopt a more moderate Islamic code that was more in line with traditional cultural expression that had been common during previous political regimes such as that of King Zahir Shah, President Mohammad Daoud and the Communist era. However, the persistence of these performance traditions under the oppressive conditions of Islamic orthodoxy, clearly demonstrates the value that individuals attributed to their cultural heritage.

### ***Contemporary Situation***

Since this study was first conceived, tremendous political changes have taken place in Afghanistan. In 1997, many Afghans were still coming to terms with the northern retreat of the Rabbani government from Kabul and the expanding rule of the extremist Taliban militia. In the period from 1998 to 1999, I personally observed how the political consolidation of the Taliban throughout Afghanistan led to an intensification of conservative Islamic expression among the general population of Badakhshan, which at that time served as the seat of the Islamic State of Afghanistan. The promulgation of conservative Sharia law by the Rabbani government and allied commanders meant that non-Islamic performances were restricted and all aesthetic practices were censored.

By November 2001, the United Front through the assistance of US-led forces had defeated the Taliban. Shortly after, following the UN-sanctioned 'Bonn Talks' which concluded on 5 December 2001, a broad-based, multi-ethnic and pro-Western Interim Administration was established on 22 December 2001. On 19 June 2002, the final day of an Emergency *Loya Jirga*, President Hamid Karzai was indirectly elected as Head of State of Afghanistan's Transitional

Authority. This officially signalled a new era of politics in Afghanistan and the commencement of the reconstruction of its civil society. With the fall of the Taliban and the relocation of the Rabbani government from Faizabad in Badakhshan to Kabul in November 2001, there has been a dramatic improvement in civil liberties for all Afghans, with the residents of major centres, particularly Kabul, immediately enjoying greater freedom in the expression of traditional cultural practices. Music programs once again fill the airwaves of Radio Afghanistan, theatre productions are staged and cinemas have re-opened. Sport tournaments have been conducted nationwide and public music and dances were performed during *nowruz* celebrations in 2002 (see Daniszewski and Gettleman 2002; Gardish 2002; King 2001), events that had been previously banned by the Taliban militia.

Nevertheless, the performance of non-religious aesthetic practices remains a contentious issue in this early period of Afghanistan's nascent democracy. Tensions as to what is and is not appropriate Islamic behaviour have again become evident with the bans in August 2002 of 'indecently attired' female vocalists and the prohibition of Indian films that depict women dancing. It seems that the issue of contention underpinning this censorship relates to notions of appropriate clothing and conduct for women in a conservative Islamic society. Only nine months after the Taliban were deposed, Radio-Television Afghanistan, backed by the Supreme Court of Afghanistan's Transitional Authority, found it necessary to impose similar, albeit less severe, prohibitions on the broadcasting of aesthetic practices which were deemed to be offensive to "religious and traditional values" (Salahuddin 2002). The free expression of cultural performances thus remains contingent upon prevailing political and religious ideologies.

### *Future Projections*

Undoubtedly, it is too early to predict how this new democratic period in Afghanistan will unfold. Indeed, in mid-2002, outside of Kabul, very little has changed. Virtually autonomous fiefdoms under the control of former *mujahideen* and military commanders, most of whom are only nominally supportive of the Karzai regime, have once again re-emerged. Many of these regional and local rulers continue to impose strict Islamic codes of conduct in the territories under their control. Nevertheless, these are early days. What remains clear is that until Afghanistan has consolidated its process of civil society construction with an emphasis on transforming the 'culture of the

Kalashnikov' into a democratic society in which the general population is disarmed, the infrastructure dramatically improved, landmines cleared, and the basic needs of food, security, housing, and health are met, it is unlikely that the safeguarding of cultural heritage will be a high priority for either the government or the populace. Certainly, as has become evident through the historical review presented in this thesis, rapid modernisation has always been met with resistance from conservative elements of Afghan society.

In the face of existential hardship and an uncertain future – civil war, drought, famine, natural disasters, unemployment, isolation from the global community, and so on – sport and aesthetic performances in particular, functioned in Badakhshan not only as powerful expressions of local culture but also as sources of empowerment, relief and fun. Moreover, given the factionalised nature of Afghanistan, non-religious practices may represent a positive means of nation-building by strengthening community relationships across sectarian, social and political divisions and rebuilding confidence in what constitutes Afghan cultural identity.

The destruction of the Buddha statues by the Taliban is a tragic and tangible manifestation of the impact of ultra-extremist Islam upon Afghanistan's cultural heritage (Manhart 2001; UNESCO 2001). I have argued, however, that it is important to recognise that a culture's heritage not only depends on the endurance of such tangible or material objects, but also on the continuation of 'living' cultural practices. In fact, as was demonstrated in this thesis, intangible aesthetic practices such as the performances of *ghazals* or improvised solo dances have paradoxically proved to be much more resilient than the tangible Buddha statues. The nature of embodiment implies that aesthetic practices will endure, at the very least in the hearts of the Afghan people.

## Appendix 1: Glossary of Foreign and Uncommon English Terms as well as Abbreviations

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Aga Khan	آقاخان	Spiritual leader of the Sevener Shiite Ismailis.
Ahl-e Hadith	اهل حدیث	Literally 'The people of the Hadith', an "offshoot of the Indian subcontinent reformist movement founded by Shah Waliullah in the 18th century" (Roy 1995:81). A religious school that advocates a return to the Quran and Sunna, refuses to acknowledge the four legal schools of Sunni Islam and strongly condemns Sufism and Shiism.
<i>ailaq</i>	بیلاق	A temporary camp on a high mountain pasture.
<i>alaqadar</i>	علاقه دار	A government-appointed administrator.
<i>alaqadari</i>	علاقه داری	Smallest administrative division, a subdistrict of a province.
<i>amir</i>	امیر	Literally, 'military commander', the title of the Afghan rulers from 1826 to 1926.

Amir al-Momineen	امير المؤمنين	Arabic, literally 'Commander of the Faithful'.
<i>amr bil marof wa nai an munkir</i>	امر بالمعروف ونهي عن المنكر	Office for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice.
Amu Darya	آمودريا	Northern Afghanistan's main river. In Badakhshan, the Amu Darya creates a natural border with Tajikistan.
aniconism		The use of symbols that are not shaped into an image of human form.
<i>aqsaqal</i>	آق سقال	Turkic, literally a 'white-beard' (Dari, <i>rish safid</i> ), a village elder. Usually elected by the local community (village, valley) and approved by the ruler.
<i>arbab</i>	ارباب	A mayor/leader/elder/chief of a village.
Argu	آرگو	Larger settlement in western Badakhshan.
<i>armonia</i>	آرمونيا	A harmonium, a free-reed aerophone with a bellows-operated keyboard.
Ashura	عاشورا	The tenth day of the lunar month of Moharram and a day of voluntary fast. For the Shiites, this day commemorates the martyrdom of Hussain at Karbala.
<i>atan</i>	آتن	A traditional Pushtun group dance, accompanied by the <i>atan</i> tune.
<i>atan-e meli</i>	آتن ملی	Afghanistan's national dance.
Atin Jelaw	آتن جلو	Village in western Badakhshan with an important and still operative caravanserai along the ancient trade route Wakhan-Baharak-Faizabad-Keshem-Taloqan.
Avesta	اوستا	The ancient Persian language spoken by the Zoroasterians.
<i>awqaf</i>	اوقاف	Religious endowments. Plural of <i>waqf</i> .
<i>azan</i>	اذان	The Muslim call to prayer.

<i>bache</i>	بچه	Boy, son, a boy who impersonates female dancers.
<i>bache baz</i>	بچه باز	A lover of boys, pederast.
<i>bache bazi</i>	بچه بازی	Child play, the performance of a dancing boy, pederasty.
Badakhshan	بدخشان	Afghanistan's most north-eastern province.
<i>bagh</i>	باغ	Garden, orchard.
<i>bagh-e ban</i>	باغبان	A gardener.
Baharak	بهارک	Largest settlement in the central basin of Badakhshan.
<i>bait</i>	بیت	A poetic line or verse.
<i>baradar</i>	برادر	Persian, denoting brother (singular), but also has a religious meaning referring to a Muslim.
<i>barakat</i>	برکت	A blessing. A quality possessed especially by holy men in Islam but extends also to places and objects.
<i>baya</i>	بایا	An oath of allegiance.
<i>bazi</i>	بازی	Persian, denoting play, but also refers to game and dance.
<i>bazigar</i>	بازیگر	Persian, denoting a dancing boy.
<i>bazi kardan</i>	بازی کردن	Persian, to play.
BBC		British Broadcasting Cooperation.
<i>bulbul</i>	بلبل	A nightingale.
<i>burqa</i>	برقع	A head-to-toe covering made mostly of nylon. At the level of the eyes, a small net is inserted so as to allow for some orientation whilst walking.
<i>buzkashi</i>	بزکشی	Persian, literally 'goat-snatching', a term for the northern Afghan equestrian tournament.
caliph	خليفة	Arabic, literally 'deputy of God', a head or ruler of the Muslim community, who as the successor of Mohammad, guided the Muslim community in civil and religious affairs.

<i>caravanserai</i>	کاروانسرای	Large rest house for traders and travellers who were travelling along Badakhshan's ancient trade routes, the Silk Road.
<i>chadri</i>	چادری	Persian, a woman's veil.
<i>chahar bait</i>	چهاربیتی	A quatrain.
<i>chahar shambe awal-e sal</i>	چهارشنبه اول سال	The first Wednesday in the Persian New Year (approximately 21 March).
<i>chaikhana</i>	چایخانه	A local teahouse.
<i>chaman</i>	چمن	Persian, literally a meadow, but in an Afghan context denotes a garden or lawn with flowers.
<i>chapan</i>	چین	A coat.
<i>chapandaz</i>	چپ انداز	A <i>buzkashi</i> rider or <i>buzkashi</i> champion. Plural <i>chapandazan</i> .
<i>charkhak</i>	چرخک	A local fair with amusement activities such as ferris wheels and merry-go-rounds.
<i>charkh-e falak</i>	چرخ فلک	Ferris wheels.
Chung	چنگ	People of Moghol ethnicity, presumed to be descendents of Ghengis Khan and living in isolated villages in Badakhshan.
CIA		The United States' Central Intelligence Agency.
CNN		Cable News Network.
<i>daf</i>	دف	The Arabic noun for a tambourine.
<i>dai</i>	دای	Literally, 'summoner', a term for a missionary in various Muslim groups. The term was especially used among the Ismailis before and during the Fatimid period as well as in the Alamut period of Ismaili history.
<i>dambura</i>	دمبوره	An Arabic term for a long-necked, plucked two-stringed lute.
<i>darya</i>	دریا	A Persian noun for sea and river.
<i>dastar khwan</i>	دستارخوان	The Dari word for a long dining cloth.



<i>dawa</i>	دعوت	An Arabic term, literally meaning 'summons' or invitation to Islam. In the context of the Ismailis, this term refers to the hierarchy of the Ismaili religious organisation in the pre-Fatimid, Fatimid and Alamut periods of Ismaili history.
<i>dervish</i>	درویش	A Persian word for a follower of a Sufi order.
<i>dewana</i>	دیوانه	A Sufi or dervish who may be seen to be mad, crazy, insane, and/or frenzied with love.
<i>dhikr</i>	ذکر	Arabic, a Sufi term for repetition of certain words or phrases in praise of God. Also spelled <i>zikr</i> .
<i>din</i>	دین	Religion.
<i>diwan</i>	دیوان	Persian, a collection of poems, usually by one author.
<i>dobaiti</i>	دوبیتی	Persian, a quatrain, two verses or lines.
<i>dohol</i>	دهل	A double-headed barrel-shaped frame drum.
<i>doira</i>	دایره	Persian, a type of tambourine. Also called <i>daf</i> .
<i>Dovazdah Imami Shiite</i>	شیعه دوازده امامی	Twelver Shiite Muslims.
<i>DRA</i>		Democratic Republic of Afghanistan.
<i>dutar</i>	دوتار	A two-stringed plucked lute, especially common in north-western Afghanistan and the trans-Oxus region.
<i>ebriq</i>	ابریق	A clay ewer, pitcher.
<i>emic/etic</i>		These distinctions were coined by the American linguist Kenneth Pike. 'Emic' denotes a native's point of view whereas a researcher's 'etic' approach is analytical and may utilise general classifications.
<i>emirate</i>	امارت	Arabic, an empire.
<i>esal</i>	عسل	Honey.
<i>eshaq</i>	عشق	Love, passion.

Faizabad	فیض آباد	The provincial capital of Badakhshan, located in the Kokcha river valley.
<i>falak</i>	فلک	Literally 'sky' and metaphorically translates as 'fortune' or 'destiny'. In Badakhshan, this term is also used in a general sense to refer to a 'verse'.
<i>fard</i>	فرد	A separate couplet from another poem and unrelated to the main poem that follows. It is often a couplet from a famous <i>ghazal</i> or <i>rubai</i> .
<i>farhang</i>	فرهنگ	Persian, denotes both culture and civilisation.
<i>farhang-e jang</i>	فرهنگ جنگ	Persian, 'Culture of War'.
Farhang-e Khalq	فرهنگ خلق	Persian, name of an Afghan cultural journal "Culture of the Masses".
Farhang-e Mardom	فرهنگ مردم	Persian, name of an Afghan cultural journal "People's Culture".
<i>farsiwan</i>	فارسی و ن	Persian-speakers.
Fatimids		A major Muslim dynasty of Ismaili caliphs in North Africa (from 909) and later in Egypt (973-1171), who claimed descent from the Prophet Mohammad through Ali and derived their name from the Prophet's daughter, Fatima.
<i>fatwa</i>	فتوا	Pronouncements, injunctions, and the rulings of the scholars of Islam.
<i>fiqh</i>	فقه	Jurisprudence. The discipline of elucidating Sharia law.
<i>futa</i>	فوتہ	A five metre long belt that is tied around a Badakhshi wrestler's waist and holds his shirt together.
GBAO		<i>Gorno-Badakhshanskaia Avtonomnaia Oblast</i> (Autonomous Region of Gorno-Badakhshan in Tajikistan).

ghalcha	غلیچہ	A construct that was applied by Western colonial writers to the Ismailis of the Pamir region.
ghamza	غمزہ	A Persianised Arabic word denoting a flirtatious gaze.
ghazal	غزل	An Arabic noun for a short poem, which has been influenced by Sufism and often contains a theme of love. The <i>ghazal</i> "consists of an indeterminate number of couplets...which are thematically independent and united only by the metre and rhyme-scheme...Both couplets of the first lines rhyme; in the succeeding couplets the original rhyme scheme is maintained in the second line. The rhyme scheme is thus <i>aa, ba, ca</i> etc." (Powers 2001a). As a musical form, this poetic style was possibly created in the Subcontinent, if not in Afghanistan by the thirteenth century Hazara poet Amir Khusrau (1253-1325) from Balkh (see Baily 1988:111).
ghichak	غچک	A northern Afghan spiked fiddle.
ghina	غناء	Arabic, refers to singing and song.
gholam bachagan	غلام بچگان	Page boys, slave boys.
ginan	غنان	An artistic genre (songs) which integrates poetry and music in the local vernaculars, especially among South Asian Ismailis.
gudi paran jangi	گدی پاران جنگلی	Kite-flying.
gul	گل	Persian, flower.
guldashte	گلداشته	Persian, bunch of flowers.
gulshan	گلشن	Persian, literally a place of flowers, but metaphorically also refers to the expression of love and the maintenance of friendships.
gulzar	گلزار	A flower bed, a flower garden.

<i>hadith</i>	حدیث	Literally 'report' or 'narrative', used for the Traditions of the Prophet Mohammad. In Shiite Islam, the <i>hadith</i> also includes the traditions of the Imams.
<i>hagh parast</i>	حق پرست	Arabic, followers of God.
Hajji	حاجی	Honorary title bestowed to those who have made the pilgrimage to Mecca.
<i>hakim</i>	کلیم	Governor, district officer.
<i>halal</i>	حلال	A permissible action according to Sharia law.
<i>halwa sabodi</i>	حلوائی صابودی	A dessert made with milk and pistachios.
<i>hamraz</i>	همراز	Confidant.
Hanafi	حنفی	One of the main Sunni schools of jurisprudence recognising four sources of law: Quran, the <i>sunna</i> , the <i>qiyas</i> and the <i>ijma</i> . The major form of Islamic law in Afghanistan.
Hanbali	حنبللی	One of the most conservative schools of Islamic jurisprudence and which is practised in Saudi Arabia.
<i>handasah al sawt</i>	هندسه الصوت	Arabic, literally the 'artistic engineering of sound'.
Harakat-e Inqilab-e Islami	حرکت انقلاب اسلامی	Islamic Revolutionary Movement led by Mawlawi Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi.
<i>haram</i>	حرام	Arabic, in a legal sense this term denotes actions forbidden according to Sharia law.
<i>hasan</i>	حسن	Arabic, denoting good, but not fully reliable.
Hazaragi	هزاره گی	The language spoken by the mostly Twelver Shiite Hazaras who mostly inhabit central Afghanistan.
<i>hezb</i>	حزب	Party.
Hezb-e Demokratik-e Khalq-e Afghanistan	حزب دموکراتیک خلق افغانستان	People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA).

Hezb-e Islami	حزب اسلامی	Party of Islam, an extremist-radical Islamist party led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.
Hezb-e Islami (Khalis)	حزب اسلامی (خالص)	A breakaway faction of Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Islami under the leadership of Mawlawi Mohammad Younus Khalis.
Hezb-e Wahdat	حزب وحدت	Party of Unity, Shiite party of ethnic Hazaras, led by Abdul Karim Khalili.
Hezb-e Watan	حزب وطن	Fatherland Party.
<i>honar</i>	هنر	A Persian noun denoting art.
<i>honarmand</i>	هنرمند	Artist.
<i>honarmandana</i>	هنرمندانه	Artistic.
<i>hujja</i>	حجّت	A term from the Quran that means both 'proof' and 'presentation of proof'. In Shiism, Prophets and Imams are designated as "proofs" of God's presence on earth. In the Ismaili <i>dawa</i> of the pre-Fatimid and Fatimid periods, it was also applied to senior <i>dais</i> and in the Alamut period of Ismaili history it came to be applied to those representing the Imam" (IIS 2001).
<i>id</i>	عید	An Arabic noun denoting festival.
<i>id-e qurban</i>	عید قربان	The 'Feast of Sacrifice', commemorates Abraham's offer, upon the command of Allah, to sacrifice his son Isaac.
<i>id-e ramazan</i>	عید رمضان	Arabic, also known as Id-e Ramadan, the 'Feast of the End of Ramadan'. A three-day celebration marking the end of the fasting month which occurs during the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar. <i>Id fitr</i> and <i>id-e kalan</i> are other terms that are used to denote this feast.

<i>ijma</i>	اجماع	Consensus, a means of interpreting the law in those instances not dealt with by revelation or the <i>sunna</i> through the consensus of the <i>ulema</i> .
<i>ijtihad</i>	اجتهاد	Literally 'exertion'. Individual inquiry to establish the ruling of Islamic law in questions not expressly provided for in the Quran and the Traditions ( <i>sunna</i> ).
Imam	امام	In general usage, a leader of prayers or religious leader. In Shiism, the term refers to their spiritual leaders who descended from Ali and the Prophet's daughter Fatima.
imamate	امامت	The institution of hereditary spiritual leadership in Shiism.
Ishkashimi	اشکاشیمی	The language still spoken by some people who live in the Ishkashim region in the Pamir region.
ISI		Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate, Pakistan's intelligence organisation.
Ismaili	اسماعیلی	Sevener Shiite Muslim sectarian group.
Ithna Ashariyya	اثنی عشری	Literally 'Twelvers', the majority branch of the Shiites who acknowledge twelve Imams in lineal succession from Ali after the Prophet Mohammad.
Ittehad-e Islami	اتحاد اسلامی	Islamic Alliance, led by Abdul-Rab al-Rasul Sayyaf.
Ittehad-e Islami Mujahideen-e Afghanistan	اتحاد اسلامی مجاہدین افغانستان	Islamic Mujahideen Alliance of Afghanistan.
<i>jabha</i>	جبهه	Military structure created by commanders; organisation of local members of community into military units.
Jabha-e Muttahid-e Islami-e Melli baraye Nijat-e Afghanistan	جبهه متحد اسلامی ملی برای نجات افغانستان	United Islamic and National Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan.

Jabha-e Nejat-e Melli	جبهه نجات ملی	National Front Liberation, led by Sebghatullah Mojadiddi.
<i>jafa</i>	جفا	Unkindness, sternness.
<i>jamaat khana</i>	جماعت خانه	Assembly or religious congregation; also a term used by the Nizari Ismailis of Badakhshan, Gorno-Badakhshan and northern Pakistan for their individual communities.
<i>jamiat</i>	جماعت	Society.
Jamiat-e Islami	جماعت اسلامی	Islamic Society, an Islamist party in Afghanistan.
Jamiat-e Demokratiki-ye Navin-e Afghanistan		Persian, literally the 'Neo-Democratic Party of Afghanistan'.
<i>janda</i>	چنده	A standard, that is, pieces of textiles which are raised on a pole.
<i>jang</i>	جنگ	Persian, war.
<i>jauz</i>	جوز	Persian, nut.
<i>jeshen</i>	جشن	Literally means festival or celebration.
<i>jihad</i>	جهاد	Arabic, a religious struggle, Islamic resistance, an Islamic war for the cause of Islam.
<i>jihadi</i>	جهادی	Pertaining to the <i>jihad</i> , that is related to the resistance against the Soviet-backed government (1978-1992).
<i>joma</i> (also <i>juma</i> )	جمعه	The Arabic word for Friday during which the obligatory midday prayer is performed at a congregational mosque.
<i>junbesh</i>	جنبش	A movement or party. Commonly pronounced <i>jumbesh</i> in Afghanistan.
Junbesh-e Melli-ye Islami	جنبش ملی اسلامی	National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan, an Afghan political party led by the Uzbek Abdul Rashid Dostum.
Jurm	جرم	Settlement in the central basin of Badakhshan.
Kabah	کعبه	Arabic, the sacred enclosure at Mecca.
<i>kafir</i>	کافر	An unbeliever.

Kamaz		A brand-name for a four-wheel powered industrial/military truck which was manufactured in the former Soviet Union.
Kataghan	قطغن	The former name for the province in northern Afghanistan that included Kunduz, Baghlan and Takhar. Also known under the spelling of Qataghan.
Kataghani	قطغنی	Pertaining to the region of Kataghan. This term also refers to a genre of entertainment music that would often include dancing, especially improvised solo dances, and which was common in the former Province of Kataghan and Badakhshan.
<i>kesbi</i>	کسبی	An Arabic noun for a professional performer.
Keshem	کشم	Urban settlement in Badakhshan's western regions.
KhAD		Khadamat-e Atalaat-e Dawlati (State Information Service), Afghanistan's Intelligence Organisation.
<i>khahr</i>	خار	Thorn.
<i>khahr khas</i>	خار خس	Literally, thorn and straw.
<i>khalifa</i>	خليفة	A village representative appointed by an Ismaili shah or pir. May also denote a secular and/or religious head of state after Prophet Mohammad. In the context of Ismailism, however, <i>khalifa</i> refers to a religious leader and teacher.
Khalq	خلق	Persian, literally 'Masses', one of the Communist parties that emerged in Afghanistan in the 1960s.



khan	خان	A leader of a group who was originally of Mongol or Turkic origin. Often refers to a wealthy, influential landowner. In Afghanistan, this term is used as a title of respect, especially when addressing an influential person.
<i>khanaga</i>	خانقاه	A Sufi brotherhood.
khanate	خانی	An English construct denoting the state or district ruled by a khan.
<i>khanawada</i>	خانواده	Persian, denoting extended family formations.
<i>khane</i>	خانه	Persian, a household or house. Commonly pronounced <i>khana</i> in Badakhshan.
<i>khar</i>	خر	Donkey.
<i>kharabat</i>	خرابات	The section of Kabul's Shahr-e Kohne where professional musicians and dancers used to live. In poetry, this term refers to a tavern.
<i>khel</i>	خیل	The patrilineal group of relatives in Afghanistan.
<i>kheysh</i>	خویش	A relative, kin.
<i>kheysh wa qawm</i>	خویش و قوم	Kinship, a network of relations.
<i>khiaban</i>	خیابان	Persian, a main street.
<i>khirqa</i>	خرقه	An Arabic term for a cloak or robe.
Khurasan	خراسان	This historical region today spans the territories of Afghanistan, eastern Iran and neighbouring Central Asian regions.
<i>khushkhana</i>	خوشخانه	A Dari word denoting a guesthouse or guestroom.
<i>khusraw</i>	خسرو	Persian, a royal person.
<i>khwaja</i>	خواجه	A descendent of one of the first <i>caliphs</i> . Also an honorary title assumed by members of Central Asian religious orders.
Kirghizi	قرقیزی	The Turkic language spoken by the Kirghiz people in the Wakhan Corridor.
<i>kofta</i>	کوفته	A ground meat dish.

Kokcha River	کوکچه	Badakhshan's main river, which drains into the Amu Darya in Takhar province.
Koran-e Munjan	کران و منجان	Settlement in southern Badakhshan.
<i>kuchi</i>	کوچی	A pastoral nomad.
<i>kulcha</i>	کلچه	A hard, round cookie which is prepared by women two to three days before the <i>id</i> celebration.
<i>kushti giri</i>	کشتی گیری	A common Persian noun for wrestling.
<i>ladhdhat</i> , also <i>lazzat</i>	لذت	Arabic, denoting enjoyment, delight.
<i>lahw</i>	لهو	This Arabic term was used in early Islamic texts to describe performances that included a range of entertainment and amusement activities such as dance, music, play, gambling, sports.
<i>laib</i>	لعب	Arabic, referring to sport activities and play.
<i>lajvard</i>	لاجورد	Lapis lazuli, a blue-coloured semi-precious stone found predominantly in Badakhshan.
<i>lal</i>	لعل	The precious stone ruby.
<i>lala</i>	لاله	Persian noun for the tulip.
Lamar		Name of a cultural journal in Afghanistan.
LMA		Laban Movement Analysis.
<i>loya jirga</i>	لویه جرگه	A Pushto expression for a Grand National Assembly/Council of Elders in Afghanistan.
<i>ludic</i>		An adjective denoting undirected and spontaneously playful behaviour. This term was widely used by Victor Turner (1974; 1982), especially with respect to liminal engagements, such as rituals.
<i>madah</i>	مداح	Arabic, a panegyry that is usually performed at religious occasions.
<i>madrassa</i>	مدرسه	A higher religious school.

<i>mahali</i>	محلی	This Arabic word refers to locality. In the context of Badakhshan, this term implies a local genre.
Mahaz-e Melli Islami	صہاذ ملی اسلامی	Islamic National Front, a <i>mujahideen</i> party that was led by Sayyid Ahmad Gailani.
<i>mai</i>	می	Wine.
<i>maidan</i>	میدان	A ground.
<i>maidan-e askari</i>	میدان عسکری	A military ground.
<i>maidan-e id</i>	میدان عید	The grounds of the <i>id</i> celebration.
<i>maidan-e sang-e mahr</i>	میدان سنگ مہر	The local term for Faizabad's historical space in which the <i>nowruz</i> festivities take place annually.
<i>mai khana</i>	می خانہ	Tavern.
<i>makruh</i>	مکروہ	An action that according to Sharia law is regarded as reprehensible or unfavourable.
<i>maktab</i>	مکتب	Arabic, a primary religious school, usually in a village.
<i>maldar</i>	مال دار	Pastoral nomads.
<i>malik</i>	مالک	A village leader.
<i>maqam</i>	مقام	Arabic, denoting a musical mode, scale or melody.
<i>maqbul</i>	مقبول	Arabic, denoting acceptable.
<i>marg</i>	مرگ	Persian, death.
<i>marghad</i>	مرقد	Arabic, tomb.
<i>maslaki</i>	مسکلی	An Arabic noun for professional or vocational, often denoting hereditary performers.
<i>mastawa</i>	ماستاوہ	A Badakhshi term denoting a lentil stew.
<i>matla</i>	مطلع	An Arabic term for the opening distich of a poem, such as a <i>ghazal</i> or a <i>qasida</i> .
<i>mawlawi</i>	مولوی	A mullah, religious cleric.
<i>mazhab</i>	مذہب	Religion. An Arabic noun for a denomination, sect or religious creed.
<i>mehmani</i>	مہمانی	A Persian noun for a joyful gathering, a party by invitation that often includes a banquet.

<i>mela</i>	میله	This Dari word can be understood as a picnic, an outing in the countryside, but also a fair, fete or folk festival.
melismatic		An adjective that means ornate or florid in melody.
<i>mihan</i>	میهرین	Persian, homeland.
<i>milla</i>	ملت	<i>Persian, nation.</i>
<i>mir</i>	میر	A Tajik word, literally meaning 'local chief', a leader of local dynasty. A shorter version of <i>Amir</i> .
<i>mir-e shah</i>	میرشاه	A local aristocratic ruler of Badakhshan, at times also called <i>Amir</i> or <i>Mir</i> .
Moharram	محرم	The first month of the Islamic calendar.
<i>mubah</i>	مباح	An action that is permitted according to Sharia law.
<i>muhajerin</i>	مهاجرین	Someone who migrates because of Islam, a refugee.
<i>mujahideen</i>	مجاهدین	Islamic resistance fighters. Plural of <i>mujahid</i> .
<i>al-mukhannathun</i>	المختنون	Arabic, performers who use effeminate movements.
mullah	ملا	The title for a local religious leader.
<i>murid</i>	مرید	A disciple of a Sufi order.
<i>mursal</i>	مرسل	Arabic, denoting the lack of connected chains with respect to the reliability of a <i>hadith</i> .
Musahiban	مصاحبان	Musahiban is a lineage name in Afghanistan whose members were the descendants of Sultan Mohammad Khan, a brother of Dost Mohammad (1819-1839).
<i>musiqi</i>	موسیقی	Arabic/Persian, denoting secular music, professional or art music.
Mustalis		Adherents of a branch of the Ismailis who supported al-Mustali, the younger son of the Fatimid Imam-caliph al-Mustansir (died 1094) as his successor.

<i>mutawatir</i>	متواتر	An Arabic term meaning confirmed.
<i>muza</i>	موزه	Long boots worn in Badakhshan.
NAC		Norwegian Afghanistan Committee, an NGO.
<i>nakhud</i>	نخود	This Persian word translates as roasted chick peas.
<i>namaz</i>	نماز	A Persian noun for the obligatory Islamic prayer, one of the five pillars in Islam. A religious bodily and sonic practice which is conducted five times a day.
<i>namaz-e id</i>	نماز عید	Arabic, the public prayer during the <i>id</i> celebration.
<i>nan</i>	نان	A common type of leavened bread in South and Central Asia.
<i>nat</i>	نات	Arabic, a religious or mystical <i>ghazal</i> .
<i>nawaz</i>	نواز	This term refers to someone who performs, and often adjoins an instrument's name to indicate a performer's accomplishment and skill on that instrument.
<i>nawhe</i>	نوحه	Mourning chant, a type of Shiite religious song.
<i>nay</i>	نی	Persian, a type of flute.
<i>nazanin</i>	نازنین	Beloved, especially in a Sufi context.
<i>nazar</i>	نظر	An Arabic term, meaning gazing, especially in a Sufi context.
<i>nazar ila l-murd</i>	نظر الی المراد	Arabic, literally 'the contemplation at youth'.
NGO		Non-Governmental Organisation.
<i>noql</i>	نقل	A sugar-coated nut (almond, chick pea, apricot kernel) – a popular Afghan sweet.
<i>nowruz</i>	نوروز	A Persian term for the Persian New Year, celebrated annually around 21 March. Literally translates as 'new day' and refers to the New Year of many Persian-speaking communities.
NWFP		North West Frontier Province in northern Pakistan.

oblast		Russian, an administrative region or territory.
OED		Oxford English Dictionary.
ostinato		A musicological term, indicating a recurring or frequently repeated musical structure.
<i>pahlawan</i>	پهلوان	A Persian word for a champion wrestler, rider or hero.
<i>pakol</i>	پکول	A flat topped woollen cap with a folded/rolled lower end. The cap was possibly introduced to the North West Frontier Province and the Northern Areas region of Pakistan during the British colonial period.
<i>pa kufian</i>	پاکوفتن	Persian, dancing. Literally means 'tap dancing'.
Pamiri	پامیری	A Western construct to denote the east-Iranian languages that are spoken in the Pamir regions of Badakhshan and Gorno-Badakhshan in Tajikistan. Pertains to the Pamir region or an inhabitant of the Pamir region in north-eastern Badakhshan.
Pamiri <i>rubab</i>	پامیری رباب	A six-stringed unfretted plucked lute played in the Pamir regions of Badakhshan and Gorno-Badakhshan.
Panj-e Darya	پنجہ دریا	The upper part of the Amu Darya in north-eastern Badakhshan.
Parcham	پرچم	Persian, literally 'Banner', one of the Communist parties that emerged in Afghanistan in the late 1960s.
parlando		The direction that a musical passage is to be played or sung.
<i>parwana</i>	پروانه	Persian, butterfly.
Payam-e-Mujahid	پیام مجاہدین	Persian, 'Message of the Mujahid', newsletter of the Panjshiri-based Massoud faction of the Jamiat-e Islami Afghanistan.

PDPA		Hezb-e Demokratik-e Khalq-e Afghanistan (‘People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan’), the Communist Party of Afghanistan that was founded in the mid-1960s.
Phrygian scale		This type of scale “is frequently used with...diatonic non-Western melodies whose final or apparent tonic is related to the scale type...The most characteristic feature of such melodies is the presence of a scale degree a semitone above the final or apparent tonic” (Powers 2001b).
<i>pilaw</i>	پلو	A steamed rice dish.
<i>pir</i>	پیر	Persian, a religious dignitary of a Sufi sect. The Arabic equivalent is <i>shaikh</i> .
Pushto	پښتو	The language spoken by the Pushtuns in Afghanistan.
<i>pushtunwali</i>	پښتون ولى	A code of conduct that incorporates the totality of social norms and values of the Pushtuns.
PVC		Polyvinyl Chloride.
al Qaeda		Arabic, literally meaning ‘Military Base’, the terrorist organisation of Osama bin Laden.
<i>qala</i>	قلعه	A walled, enclosed settlement in Badakhshan, which protects a community or family.
<i>qamandan</i>	قماندان	A field commander, especially during the <i>mujahideen</i> period in Afghanistan.
<i>qanun-e jang</i>	قانون جنگ	Persian, literally the ‘Rule of War’.
<i>qanun-e Kalashnikov</i>	قانون کلاشینکوف	Literally, ‘Law of the Kalashnikov’, a local neologism reflecting the prevalence of Kalashnikov-carrying males in Afghanistan.

<i>qasida</i>	قصيده	An Arabic noun for the lyrical 'ode' that is commonly used in verse form in classical Arab and Persian music. A <i>qasida</i> may be used, for example, as a praise song (for a king), to promote virtue, or in a purely religious sense such as with Nasir Khusraw, but also in the context of mourning. According to Amnon Shiloah (2001), a <i>qasida</i> consists of "many lines, sometimes over 100. Each line is divided into two equal parts and subdivided into feet. Each <i>qasida</i> has a single rhyme and uniform metre...The basic compositional concept is that each line should be independent and contain a complete, self-sufficient idea".
<i>qawm</i>	قوم	Arabic and Persian, a common term for kinship affiliations in Afghanistan with many meanings (group clan/tribe/community).
<i>qazi</i>	قاضی	A Sharia-applying judge.
<i>qibla</i>	قبله	An Arabic noun, denoting the direction toward which Muslims turn in praying.
<i>qiraah</i>	قرائت	Quranic chant.
<i>qishlaq</i>	قشلاق	The living arrangement of a <i>khel</i> (village, settlement).
<i>qismat</i>	قسمت	Arabic, a common term in Afghanistan to denote fate or luck.
<i>qiyam</i>	قيام	An Arabic noun denoting standing.
<i>qiyas</i>	قياس	The method of reasoning in Islam by analogy with a known example.
<i>qowud</i>	قعود	A Persian noun denoting sitting.
Quran	قرآن	The unquestioned sacred text of Muslims.



<i>qurbani</i>	قربانی	The meat of the animal that has been sacrificed for the <i>id-e qurban</i> ritual.
<i>qustin</i>	قوستین	A Persian noun for a wrestling style used particularly in Badakhshan.
<i>rakat</i>	رکعت	The plural of the Arabic noun of bowing in Islamic prayer (singular, <i>raka</i> ).
<i>raqs</i>	رقص	Arabic, a common term for dance in Afghanistan.
<i>raqs al-sharqi</i>	رقص الشرقي	An Arabic term denoting belly dancing.
<i>rasgueado</i>		A strumming technique that is commonly used in Flamenco guitar playing.
<i>rawan</i>	روان	As a noun, this term may refer to a soul or spirit; as an adjective it may mean 'flowing'.
<i>rish safid</i>	ریش سفید	A Persian noun for village elder, literally a 'white-beard', an elder who is respected in the community for his knowledge and experience.
<i>rubab</i>	رباب	A Persianised term for the Arabic lute.
<i>rubai</i>	رباعی	An Arabic word for the Persian poetic style of a quatrain, consisting of four hemistichs or half lines. In Afghanistan, the quatrain is also commonly known as <i>chahar bait</i> and deals often with the theme of love.
<i>rubato</i>		A musicological term denoting the expressive alteration of rhythm or tempo.
<i>ruz-e id</i>	روز عید	The first day of <i>id</i> .
<i>sabzi</i>	سبزی	A spinach and yoghurt dish in Afghanistan.
<i>sahih</i>	صحيح	An Arabic term meaning 'correct'.
<i>sahw</i>	سحو	Arabic, meaning 'sober'.

<i>sajda</i> (also known as <i>sujud</i> )	سجده (سجود)	An Arabic noun for the action of a Muslim touching the ground with his forehead during ritual prostration.
Salafi		A mid-nineteenth century Sunni Muslim reformist movement which has been inspired by early Muslims and advocates a return to the basics of Islam on the basis of the Quran.
Saljuqs	سلجوقیه	A major Muslim dynasty of Turkic origin that ruled vast regions such as Persia, Iraq, Syria and Palestine from approximately 1038 to 1194.
<i>salmani</i>	سلمانى	A barber who also engages in artistic employment as well as blood-letting and circumcisions.
<i>sama</i>	سماء	This term refers to the listening of music by Sufis but also includes the performance of bodily movements such as dancing.
samovar	سماور	Russian, used as a local term in northern Afghanistan for a temporary teahouse.
<i>sang</i>	سنگ	Persian, stone.
Sardar	سردار	A male member of one of the ruling Afghan clans in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
<i>sarghin</i>	سرغین	A reed instrument, similar to a <i>surnai</i> (see below).
<i>saur</i>	سور	The second month of the Afghan calendar <i>saur</i> corresponding with the Gregorian month of April.
Sayyid (also Sayed)	سید	Families that claim descendency from the Prophet Mohammad or his son-in-law Ali.
Sazman-e jawanan-e Musulman	سازمان جوانان مسلمان	The 'Organisation of Muslim Youth' in Afghanistan.
<i>serai</i>	سرای	Rest house.
Setam-e Melli		The 'National Suppression Party', led by Tahir Badakhshi from Badakhshan.

Shah	شاه	A religious dignitary of the Ismaili sect.
<i>shahid</i>	شاهد	Arabic/Persian, meaning 'witness'. May also refer to ear- or eyewitness, a beautiful woman, a handsome man, beloved.
<i>shahid khane</i>	شاهد خانه	Tavern, but also meeting place for Sufis.
Shahr-e Bozurg	شهر بزرگ	A settlement in Badakhshan.
Shahr-e-Kohne	شهر کهنه	Persian, literally 'Old City'.
Shahr-e-Naw	شهر نو	Persian, literally 'New City'.
<i>shaikh</i>	شیخ	A religious leader; a leader of a Sufi order.
<i>shalwar qamiz</i>	شلوار قمیز	The most common type of male clothing in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The suit consists of long, loose shirt that reaches to the level of the knee and baggy trousers that are fastened by a piece of string.
<i>sham</i>	شمع	Candle.
Sharia	شریعت	Literally, 'the path to be followed', thereby denoting Muslim law as well as the totality of the Islamic way of life.
<i>shauq</i>	شوق	Persian, a spectacle.
<i>shauqi</i>	شوقی	An Arabic derived Dari noun for an amateur performer with an intense passion for his art.
Sheghni	شغنی	The language spoken by the people of Sheghnan in Badakhshan and across the Amu Darya in Tajikistan's Gorno-Badakhshan.
<i>sher</i>	شعر	Arabic, meaning poetry or verse.

Shiite	شیعه	The general name for those Muslims who hold to the rights of Ali and his descendents to leadership in the community, whether recognised by the majority or not, or any particular sect holding this position. Shiite as an adjective refers to the doctrinal position; as a noun, to an adherent of Shiism.
<i>shir chai</i>	شیرچای	Black tea which has been boiled in salty milk.
<i>shish kebab</i>	شیش کباب	Literally, 'fried lung and liver pieces'.
Shomali	شتمالی	North, a plain north of Kabul.
Shula-ye Jawid	شعله جاوید	Dari, literally 'Eternal Flame', a Maoist political party that was founded in the 1960s in Afghanistan.
shura	شورا	A meeting, council.
<i>shura-e nazar-e shomali</i>	شورای نظر شمالی	Advisory council of the north, set up by Massoud, and included a military and civil administration.
<i>sirr</i>	سیر	Arabic, literally mystery, referring to the inner nature of the soul.
<i>sukhtan</i>	سوختن	Persian, to burn.
<i>sunna</i>	سنت	This term includes the practices, customs, deeds, and utterances of the Prophet Mohammad, and conforms to Islam's normative texts.
Sunni	سنی	Arabic, literally the 'people of the custom and the community', referring to the majority of Muslims who accept the authority of the whole first generation of Muslims and the validity of the historical community.
Sura	سوره	A 'chapter' of the Quran.
<i>surnai</i>	سرنای	A double-reed wind instrument.
synecdoche		A figure of speech in which a part is named but the whole is understood or the whole is named but a part is understood.

Tajiki	تاجیکی	The type of Persian that is spoken in some parts of northern Badakhshan.
<i>talib</i>	طالب	A religious student.
<i>tanbur</i>	طنبور	Persian, a type of lute.
<i>taqin</i>	طاقین	An Arabic noun for a skullcap. In Badakhshan, the <i>taqin</i> is usually embroidered and has a curved top and is worn under the turban.
<i>taqqiya</i>	تقیه	The precautionary dissimulation of one's religious beliefs, especially in time of persecution or danger. While practised by both Sunnis and Shiites, it has been especially adopted by Shiites.
<i>tarana</i>	ترانه	A song or melody. In Afghanistan, a <i>tarana</i> refers to a nationalistic, patriotic song.
<i>tariqa</i>	طریقت	Way or path, the path that is usually followed by Sufi orders.
<i>tasnif</i>	تصنیف	A type of epic song about freedom and nation, usually performed with instruments and music.
<i>tawhid</i>	توحید	This Islamic notion reflects the unity of God.
<i>taziyeh</i>	تعزیه	A Persian term, marking the martyrdom of Hussein during the tenth day of the lunar month of Moharram.
<i>telpak</i>	تلیک	A fur-trimmed hat worn by <i>buzkashi</i> riders in Afghanistan.
<i>teriak</i>	تریاک	Opium.
<i>tokhum bazi</i>	تخم بازی	A Persian term for a game called 'knocking eggs' or literally 'egg-fighting'. In this game, the two contestants are equipped with an egg each and in order to win, one has to break the other's egg.
<i>tomban wa pirahan</i>	نمبان و پیراهن	Trousers and shirt.

<i>tonban</i>	تنبان	This term, colloquially pronounced <i>tomban</i> , is the name for the baggy trousers worn by all Afghan men.
<i>tula</i>	توله	A Dari term for a flute-like wind instrument.
Turki	ترکی	The language spoken by the Moghols in Badakhshan.
Turkmeni	ترکمنی	The Turkic language spoken by the Turkmen people in north-western Afghanistan.
<i>ulema</i>	علماء	Senior religious scholars.
<i>umma</i>	امت	A religious community, often in the sense of the totality of Muslims in the world.
UN		United Nations.
UNICEF		UN International Children's Emergency Fund
United Front		The 'United Islamic and National Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan'.
UNOCHA		UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.
UNRCO		UN Regional Coordination Officer.
UN SMA		UN Special Mission to Afghanistan.
US		United States.
USSR		Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.
Uzbeki	ازبکی	The Turkic language spoken by the Uzbek people in northern Afghanistan.
vibrato		A musicological term that refers to vibration of a tone.
VIP		Very Important Person.
vizier	وزیر	Minister.
<i>wajd</i>	وجد	Arabic, denoting ecstasy.
Wakhi	واخی	The language of the people who live in the Wakhan Corridor.
<i>wali</i>	ولی	Arabic, in Afghanistan this term denotes the governor of a province.

<i>waqf</i> (singular), <i>awqaf</i> (plural)	وقف اوقاف	Pious endowment such as land that is given to the Islamic community.
<i>watan</i>	وطن	An Arabic noun for homeland.
<i>wazir</i>	وزیر	Minister. Also called vizier.
<i>welayat</i>	ولایت	Province.
WFP		World Food Programme.
WHO		World Health Organization.
<i>wolesi jirga</i>	ولسی جرگه	The fully elected Lower House of the bicameral Afghan Parliament.
<i>woluswali</i>	ولسوالی	A larger administrative area in Afghanistan.
<i>wujud</i>	وجود	Arabic, referring to 'being'.
<i>yar</i>	یار	A polysemous term that may be used in a lyrical, dramatical or epic sense. As a poetic term, it often refers to a beloved, whereas in an epic sense, the word denotes a helper.
<i>zakat</i>	زکات	Alms tax, one of the five pillars of Islam.
<i>zamindar</i>	زمیندار	Landlord.
<i>zamin-e sakari</i>	زمین	Land that belongs to the Aga Khan but which is usually administered by Ismaili Shahs in Badakhshan.
<i>zamin-e shahi</i>	زمین شاهي	Land that belongs to Ismaili Shahs in Badakhshan.
<i>zanaka bazi</i>	زنگ بازی	The act of engaging in an extramarital affair.
Zebak	زیباک	Settlement in eastern Badakhshan.
<i>zeraat-e abi</i>	زراعت آبی	Irrigated cultivation.
<i>zeraat-e lalmi</i>	زراعت لالمی	Dry farming, non-irrigated or rain-irrigated farming.
<i>ziarat</i>	زیارت	The tomb of a great Sufi ancestor.
<i>zikr</i>	ذکر	Arabic, the repetition of certain words or phrases in praise of God by Sufis. Also spelled <i>dhikr</i> .
<i>zirbaghali</i>	زیربغلی	A common percussion instrument with a single membrane in northern Afghanistan.

For this glossary, I have drawn primarily on the following sources: Adamec (2001), Baily (1988), al Faruqi, (1985), Institute of Ismaili Studies (2001), Macy (2001), Maley (1998), McChesney (1991), Metcalf (1982), Neghat and Burhan (1993), Netton (1992), Olesen (1995), Roychoudhury (1957), Sakata (1983), Shahrani (1984; 1998), Shalinsky (1994), Trimmingham (1998 (1971)), and Wieland-Karimi (1998).



## Appendix 2: Notes on Transliteration of Persian and Arabic Terms

Arabic and Persian consonants and vowels whose transliterations have been simplified for this thesis.	
‘	The diacritical sign <i>ain</i> as in, for example, Shi‘ite has been omitted. Instead this word is transliterated as Shiite.
ای and او	The diphthongs “ <i>ow</i> ” as in ‘how’ and “ <i>hay</i> ” as in ‘pay’ are mostly transliterated here as <i>aw</i> and <i>ai</i> respectively.
ع	The Arabic symbol <i>hamza</i> as in the word Qur‘an, for example, has been omitted and appears as Quran.
ه and ح	These letters ( <i>he</i> ) are both transliterated as <i>h</i> .
ق	The letter <i>qaf</i> is transliterated as <i>q</i> .
ص, س, and ث	The letters <i>se</i> , <i>sin</i> and <i>sad</i> are transliterated as <i>s</i> .
ط and ت	The letters <i>te</i> and <i>ta</i> are transliterated as <i>t</i> .
و	The letter <i>waw</i> is mostly transliterated as <i>w</i> or <i>u</i> .

ی	The letter <i>ya</i> is transliterated as <i>y</i> or <i>i</i> .
ظ and ض, ز, ذ	The letters <i>zal</i> , <i>ze</i> , <i>zad</i> and <i>za</i> may be transliterated as <i>z</i> .
	The three short vowels which are not expressed in writing are transcribed as: <i>a</i> , <i>e</i> , <i>i</i> , <i>u</i> and <i>o</i> .

## Appendix 3: Glossary of Peircean Terms

<i>Term</i>	<i>Sub-category</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Semiosis		A semiotic process that consists of three basic elements: 1. sign 2. object 3. interpretant
Sign (or Representamen)		A sign is the medium of communication; it is something that stands for something else to someone in some way. A sign is not a self-evident idea or entity but is the catalyst for an effect.
Object		The 'something else,' or entity stood for by the sign, be it in an abstract concept or a concrete object. Peirce suggests two types of objects. One is the existential object he called the <i>dynamical object</i> (an actual tree stands for the word <i>tree</i> ). The second type is the <i>immediate object</i> , the object as the sign represents it and as contained within the mind. Thus, the general mental concept 'tree' is the immediate object for the word <i>tree</i> .

Interpretant		The effect created by bringing the sign and object together in the mind of the perceiver. An interpretant may include feeling and sensation, physical reaction, as well as ideas circulated and processed in language.
	sign-interpretant	A linguistic-based concept.
	emotional interpretant	A direct, unreflected-upon feeling caused by a sign (sense, feeling, or sentiment).
	energetic interpretant	A physical reaction caused by a sign, be it the inconspicuous foot tapping to music, an accelerated heart beat from a police siren, or the withdrawal of a finger from a hot stove.
Habit		A sign is "related to its object only in consequence of a mental association, [which] depends upon habit...habits are general rules to which the organism has become subjected. They are for the most part conventional or arbitrary. They include all general words, the main body of speech, and any mode of conveying a judgement" (Peirce 1931-1958:3.360).
Meaning		The actual effect of a sign, that is, the direct feeling, physical reaction or language.
Mediation		A semiotic mediation may be understood "as any process in which two elements are brought into articulation by means of or through the intervention of some third element that serves as the vehicle or medium of communication" (Parmentier 1994:24).

Pragmatic maxim		The meaning of signs may be understood to consist of “all of the effects they have on participants: which includes everything from body movements, through feelings and emotions, to cognitive and linguistic understandings and expressions” (Lewis and Dowsey-Magog 1993:208).
Trichotomy		Peirce developed three trichotomies of concepts for analyzing different aspects of a sign and proposed distinct types of relationships between the three basic components of semiosis: sign-object-interpretant.
Trichotomy I		Refers to the nature of the sign. Every chain of semiosis begins with a qualisign followed by sinsign and legisign.
	qualisign	Tone. A pure quality embedded in a sign such as redness, or the quality of a particular musical sound, or of a harmonic or melodic relation. This aspect helps to determine the identity and semiotic potential of the sign.
	sinsign	Token. The actual specific instance of a sign, for example each individual appearance of the word ‘the’ on this page or the redness of a particular rose.
	legisign	Type. The sign as a general type, for example, the word ‘the’ apart from any instance of it, or the concept of ‘the colour red’.
Trichotomy II		Peirce’s second trichotomy specifies three ways that the sign and object are related in a perceiver. It involves the relationship of sign to object through icons, indices and symbols.

	icon	Refers to a sign that is related to its object through some type of resemblance between them. The degree, basis, and even accuracy of resemblance is not so much at issue as the fact that resemblance calls forth the object when perceiving the sign. Thus, if a literal musical quotation or even the vaguest trace of another piece brings that piece to mind, iconicity is involved. According to Peirce, only an icon "is inherently oriented toward the past" (Parmentier 1987:107).
	index	Refers to a sign, or representation, that is related to its object through co-occurrence in actual experience and not so much through similarity or analogy. Smoke can serve as an index for fire, a TV show's theme song can come to serve as an index for a program. The power of indices derives from the fact that the sign-object relations are grounded within one's own life experiences, and thus become intimately bound as experience.
	symbol	A sign that is related to its object through the use of language rather than being fully dependent on iconicity or indexicality.
Trichotomy III		Involves the way a given sign is interpreted as representing its object and includes the signs of rheme, dicent and argument.
	rheme	A sign that is interpreted as representing its object as a qualitative possibility. A rheme is a sign that is not judged as true or false but as something that is simply possible. Any single word, for example common nouns like 'cat,' 'god,' 'unicorn,' or 'nation,' are rhemes because they suggest the possibility of these entities without in themselves asserting the truth or falsity of that possibility.

	dicent	A sign which is understood to represent its object with respect to actual existence. The most important feature is that a dicent is interpreted as really being affected by its object. For example, a weather-vane is a dicent-index for 'wind direction' (object) because the wind direction actually affects the position of the weathervane.
Firstness		One of Peirce's three basic categories of phenomena, denoting something in and of itself without relation to any second entity. Firstness is "the initial term in each of Peirce's three trichotomies (qualisign, icon, rheme) and Trichotomy I (of the sign itself)" (Turino 1999:231).
Secondness		This phenomenological category denotes the relations between two entities without the mediation of a third. The second terms in the trichotomies (sinsign, index, dicent) and Trichotomy II (relations between sign and object) pertain to Secondness.
Thirdness		The third terms in the trichotomies (legisign, symbol, argument) and Trichotomy III (how the sign is interpreted) are in the realm of Thirdness and are the most highly mediated, general signs appropriate for abstraction.

Primary sources for this brief glossary of Peircean terms are Turino (1999), Parmentier (1987; 1994), Lewis (1993), Mertz (1985), and Peirce (in Buchler 1955; 1931-1958).





## **Appendix 4: Glossary of Laban Movement Analysis Terms**

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<i>LMA Term</i>	<i>Sub-category</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Effort qualities		These qualities may be understood as the visible presentation of Flow, Weight, Time, and Space “that comprise all movement events, but only become apparent as qualities when a movement process engages in modification of one or more of them” (Ness 1996:150n36). Within each effort element, a “qualitative change...occurs in a range between two opposite extremes;...these extremes have been called qualities” (Dell 1977:11).
	Flow	This effort quality consists of changes “in the <u>flow of tension</u> [that] can be either <u>free</u> or <u>bound</u> ” (Dell 1977:12).

	Weight	This effort quality consists of changes in “the quality of the <u>weight</u> [which] can become either <u>light</u> or <u>strong</u> ” (Dell 1977:12).
	Time	This effort quality consists of changes in “the quality of <u>time</u> [which] can become either <u>sustained</u> or <u>quick</u> (Dell 1977:12).
	Space	This effort quality consists of changes in “the quality of the <u>spatial</u> focus or attention, [which can be] either <u>indirect</u> or <u>direct</u> (Dell 1977:12).
Shape		“How the body forms itself in space”, consisting of shape flow, directional movements and shaping movements (Dell 1977:43).
Shape flow		“[T]he form results only from changes within the body parts” (Dell 1977:44).
Directional movements		These movements lead to a location in space and can occur in three main patterns (see Cohen 1978:55).
	Arc-like movements	These movements seem to define a curve, such as waving to someone.
	Spoke-like movements	Linear movements, such as those of a boxer’s direct punch.
Shaping		Describes growing and shrinking changes in body parts and as demonstrated by an expanding chest with inhalation and the subsequent shrinking of the chest during the exhalation phase of breathing.

Spatial orientation		The human body is able to utilise a three-dimensional orientation to space, and is thus able to access height, width and depth. The spatial distinctions of dimensions, planes and kinesphere assist in the description of space.
Dimension		A dimension travels along a linear direction from one point to another.
	Horizontal dimension	Has a left-right orientation.
	Sagittal dimension	Has a forward-backward orientation.
	Vertical dimension	Has an up-down orientation.
Plane		Laban developed a model of a three-dimensional cross of axes, whereby directions may be differentiated as planes, that is, as extensions of this cross (Dell 1977:69).
	Horizontal plane	Contains movements along a right-to-left, or left-to-right, and forward-backward, or backward-forward, axis.
	Sagittal plane	Incorporates movements of both forward-backward orientation and up-down axes.
	Vertical plane	Includes movements of up-down, down-up and side-to-side orientation.
Kinesphere		The limit of a performer's capacity to reach into space without having to leave his or her position.
Body part involvement in movement		How much the body is involved in movement.
	Gestural	Those movements in which only a part of the performer's body predominates.
	Postural	Movements employing the whole body.

Base of support		A category which provides information on the general use of the body and thereby on postural characteristics and types of weight transference.
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## **Appendix 5: Titles of Movie Tracks and Instructions on How to Use QuickTime**

<i><b>CD ROM 1</b></i>	<i><b>CD ROM 2</b></i>	<i><b>CD ROM 3</b></i>
advice.mov	attan(od)Fzb.mov	anthem.mov
batche.mov	badakhshan.mov	historicalatan.mov
buzkashi.mov	kateghaniBahark.mov	historicalboys'dance.mov
donkey.mov	kateghaniFzb.mov	historicalduet.mov
eidprayer.mov	localduet(od)Ikm.mov	historicalsolodance.mov
homeland.mov	localsolodance(od)Fzb.mov	kateghani1Ikm.mov
husband&wife.mov	localsolodance(od)Ikm.mov	kateghani2Ikm.mov
localtune.mov	modernsolodance.mov	
nowruzfair.mov	rawan.mov	
wrestling.mov	shams.mov	
	yaryaryar.mov	

### ***Using QuickTime on PC/Mac***

If not already on your hard drive, the QuickTime program can be downloaded for free from <<http://www.apple.com/quicktime/>>.

- Insert the required CD into the CD drive and click on the movie track that you wish to play.
- Use spacebar to start/stop the movie track. Alternatively, you can use the mouse and click on start or pause.
- To go to another track: go to Menu bar and 'Open Movie'.

### **To Increase the Size of the QuickTime Movie Screen on Your Desktop**

Go to 'Movie' on the Menu bar and then click on 'doublesize'. Please note that if the screen is enlarged, the quality of the picture is immediately reduced (compared to the quality of the smallest screen size available).

### **To Reduce the Humming Noise of the CD ROM Drive and to Increase Picture and Sound quality**

- Close other programs that are currently open on your computer. Copy the track(s) from the CD ROMs onto your hard drive (create a folder on your hard drive).
- To view a movie track from your hard drive, open the QuickTime program first and then go to the 'Open Movie' box on the File Menu.
- Select the movie track from the folder on your hard drive.

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