DEVOTIONAL MUSIC AND HEALING IN BADAKHSHAN, TAJIKISTAN:
PREVENTIVE AND CURATIVE PRACTICES

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

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ABSTRACT

The dissertation examines current practices of music and prayer in healing among the Pamiri people of Badakhshan, Tajikistan. Over the last decade, the field of ethnomusicology has become increasingly concerned with the role of music in healing. Simultaneously, clinical research into music and healing, as well as prayer and healing has dramatically increased. Yet, the link between music and prayer in healing has not been critically examined, either in ethnomusicology or health science.

To approach the topic holistically, an interdisciplinary team of researchers was assembled in Badakhshan. Through an integrated methodology of traditional ethnomusicological techniques and physiological experiments, the dissertation investigates the phenomenon of music and prayer in healing in Tajik Badakhshan. By working with master musicians, traditional healers, local religious leaders and physicians, ethnographic and physiological data were collected that form the basis of the dissertation.

In the Pamir Mountains of Tajikistan, the preeminent vocal and instrumental genre of devotional music is known as maddâh. It serves several cultural functions and provides an example of how music and prayer function as a unified whole in the
context of traditional healing. *Maddâh* has been little researched in ethnomusicology, and its role in healing has not been explored in the literature. My research shows that the ritual performance of *maddâh* is used as a preventive practice for health maintenance, as an adjunctive medical treatment, and as a curative ceremony.

The dissertation introduces *music-prayer dynamics* as a model to conceptualize the use of music and prayer to effect healing in special contexts and in daily human experience. Evidence from my research suggests that the integration of music and prayer is potentially the most efficacious parameter of the *music-prayer dynamics* model. The study also proposes *medical ethnomusicology* as a specialized area of inquiry, which emphasizes integrative research to explore holistically music and healing in any context. Musical and poetic analysis draws on local, power-laden cultural symbols and metaphors, as well as concepts of embodiment and emplacement to explore how bodily response, belief and cognitive flexibility work together for cure and prevention.
Dedicated to my beloved wife Sabá, who shared in these and so many other experiences of music, prayer, meditation, and healing.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To acknowledge befittingly all those who have contributed to this project, either directly or by supporting and encouraging its author would be impossible. I must however express my deep gratitude to the following people, each of whom has contributed in a special way to the completion of this work: all the musicians and newly found friends and associates in Tajikistan—particularly in Pamir; Samandar Pulodov for his brotherhood, mystical insight and communication, expertise and tireless assistance in the field; Davlatnazar for his fearless driving through treacherous mountain passes and over raging rivers, his sense of humor and positive nature; Rafique Keshavjee and all the friends at the Aga Khan Humanities Project for their hospitality and assistance in welcoming my wife and I to Tajikistan and facilitating our work; Margarita Mazo, my academic adviser, for her patience and encouragement, sincere questions and challenges, whole-hearted listening, and openness of mind and heart; Daniel Avorgbedor, for always freely sharing his experiences, wisdom and scholarly insight, continual encouragement, and creative mind; Ron Emoff, for his openness and perceptiveness, encouragement, and clarity of expression; Udo Will for his fresh approaches to cognitive ethnomusicology, all his assistance with various computer programs and data analysis, and heartfelt candor; Graeme Boone for his
many spontaneous conversations and philosophical insight; Lois Rosow for her encouragement and support; Don Gibson and Pat Flowers for their open doors, positive perspectives and support; Ted Levin, for the many precious opportunities he has given to me, for his frank and spirited consultation, and his ongoing, intrepid research along the Silk Road; Margaret Mills for helping to open the door to Tajikistan, her ever-present encouragement and candor; Dick Davis for his gentle guidance in the translation of Persian and Tajik texts, his scholarly integrity and encouragement; Parvaneh Pourshariati for her assistance in translation of Persian and Tajik texts; Mahin Vojdani for assistance in translation of Persian and Tajik texts and freely sharing her unique experience in and knowledge of Persian culture; William Malarkey for his consultation and giving permission to reproduce his PIERS and “GAP” figures; my brother, Joseph Koen, for his loving encouragement, advice and consultation regarding the medical and physiological aspects of my research; Shiling Ruan for assistance with the statistics; Joan Lincoln and Payman Mohajer for their loving consultation and encouragement; Javad Ashrafi for sharing his music and expertise; my parents Leon and Thelma Koen and the entire family for their unfailing love and encouragement; and my beloved wife and best friend, Saba Koen, for all that we have shared, and all the journeys yet to come.
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  Drums: West African palago and djembe; Central Asian doira, Persian daf, tombak, and various percussion instruments.
  Other: Australian Aboriginal didjeridu.
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INTRODUCTION
TOWARD A HOLISTIC APPROACH FOR MEDICAL ETHNOMUSICOLOGY

The dissertation approaches devotional music and healing from three perspectives: namely, that of cultural context, conceptualization of music-healing practices and performative events, and methodological issues. The introductory chapter consists of two broad sections. First, the three perspectives are explored briefly to provide a foreground for subsequent chapters where the issues are examined in depth. Second, six theoretical issues and concerns are considered as a preface to the literature review of chapter 1. Broadly, the dissertation concerns the subject of music and healing. Specifically the study explores devotional music and healing in Tajik Badakhshan, which is inextricably interwoven with local religious beliefs and practices. Soviet era ethnographers and ethnomusicologists, Karamatov and his pupils for example, collected a significant amount of data concerning the music of Tajikistan, as well as all of Central Asia. However, this scholarship does not consider the subject of the present study and focuses on the “collection, transcription and analysis of [the sound] of traditional music” (Levin 1993: 300), rather than on cultural meaning, symbol, metaphor, and musical affect. Russian language sources therefore are not included in this study.
Conceptual and Methodological Issues

The relationships between music, prayer and healing are vast subjects that have captured the attention of mystics and poets, scientists and physicians, the lay and the learned alike throughout the ages and across the world. Over the last decade, research in ethnomusicology, medical anthropology and biomedicine concerning music and healing, as well as prayer and healing has dramatically increased1. Yet the relationship between music and prayer in healing has not been critically examined in either ethnomusicology or health science. An interactive and affective relationship between music and prayer often exists in traditional healing ceremonies, as well as in clinical studies—requiring that both components be considered in research. Hence, the confluence of music and prayer in healing is the first issue that the dissertation explores. A second and equally important issue is that of methodology. By convention, ethnographic research concerning musical healing seeks to convey the cultural context and lived experience of individuals and their particular practices. Health science research on the other hand largely focuses on the decontextualized body and its physiological processes. The dissertation balances between these two conventions and proposes a new approach to the ethnomusicology of healing.

To approach the first problem, I propose music-prayer dynamics as a model to conceptualize and explore the use of music and prayer in healing, as a preventive or curative practice, and in daily human experience. The model comprises four parameters: music alone, prayer alone, music and prayer combined, and unified

1 See for example Gouk et. al 2000; Roseman 1991; Hinton 1999; Larson et. al 1998; Harris et. al 1999; Koen 2000)
The *music-prayer dynamics* model is designed to explore the question of efficacy, i.e. how and why are certain parameters efficacious in healing or not; and to investigate the extent to which the effect of the parameters is culture-dependent or culture-transcendent. My research suggests that the confluence of music and prayer in the context of healing is potentially the most efficacious.

To approach the second problem, the dissertation utilizes an integrated methodology of ethnomusicological field research and physiological experiments to examine current practices of music and prayer in healing among the Pamiri people of Badakhshan, Tajikistan. The dissertation views “ethnography” and “science” as different yet complementary approaches and areas of inquiry for understanding unique aspects of diverse phenomena. Throughout the study, I often refer to an integration of, or balance between “ethnography” and “health science.” Rather than employing these terms in opposition to each other, they are juxtaposed to convey a *complementary* approach—a way of bringing different perspectives and research methods together to gain a more holistic understanding of music and healing.

Field research was conducted in Badakhshan during the summer of 2001, at the 2002 Smithsonian Folklife Festival in Washington D.C., and during a brief follow-up trip to Tajikistan in September 2002. Research was also conducted through regular communication and interviews with friends and contacts in Tajikistan over a two-year period. The dissertation is built upon my master’s thesis “Efficacy of Music-Prayer Dynamics in Healing and Health Maintenance: A Literature Review and Pilot Study”.
In addition, the dissertation builds upon a subsequent pilot study, which introduces physiological experiments into the context of ethnomusicological field research; and upon field research and study with Iranian musicians trained in the classical tradition of the Persian radif.

Cultural Context

Badakhshan is a vast region that extends across the southeast province of Tajikistan and into Afghanistan. Tajikistan shares borders with Afghanistan on the west and south, China on the east, and Kyrgyzstan to the north. In the present study, Badakhshan and Pamir refer to the specific districts in Tajik Badakhshan where field research was conducted. These include Shugnon, Roshon, Ishkishim, and the capital city of Khorog. There is a broad range of musical genres and healing practices throughout Badakhshan. The dissertation focuses on Pamiri devotional music and practices that employ music and prayer in the context of healing.

In the Pamir Mountains, the preeminent devotional music known as maddâh, provides an example of how music and prayer can function as a unified whole in the context of traditional healing. The closely related genre of lament known as falak provides another example of the confluence of music and prayer in healing. In the ethnomusicological literature, there is only one published article that specifically concerns maddâh (Berg and Belle 1993-95), which primarily deals with the poetic and musical form of the genre. In addition, Levin (1996) describes the role of the maddâh performer in Bukhara as well as panegyrists throughout Central Asia. There are also
three sound recordings that document several genres of Pamiri music, including maddâh (Berg and Belle 1994; During 1993; Kasmai 1992). Recently, Jean During and Ted Levin (2002) have added to the discography with a Smithsonian Folkways recording documenting the diverse traditions of the Silk Road, which includes two tracks from Badakhshan—one dargilik, and one madh (or maddâh). Berg (1997), a scholar of Persian, in her comprehensive dissertation on Pamiri minstrel poetry, critically examines the poetic text and form of maddâh in detail. In her chapter on the poetry of maddâh, “the power of healing and giving life” (Berg 1997: 227-232) is mentioned as one of the topics in maddâh poetry. However, there is no research that explores the music of maddâh and its role in traditional Pamiri healing practices. The present study shows that maddâh, while serving several cultural functions in Badakhshan, is used as a curative ceremony and a preventive practice for health maintenance; and has also been used as an adjunctive medical treatment for certain illnesses that can have their origins in physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual causes.

The meaning ascribed to maddâh poetry and prayer is central to its efficacy in healing. The poetry used in maddâh is predominantly from the mid to late medieval or “classic” period of Persian Sufi poetry. Maddâh performance draws from the written works of poets from that era such as Rumi, Shams-e Tabrizi, Sanâi, Khosrow, Sa'di, Rudaki, Hâfez, Jâmi, Hilâli, and others. The vast majority however, is from Jalâl al-Din Rumi (1207-73). Poems from the oral tradition play a secondary, yet still

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2 This and other genres of Pamiri music are examined in chapter 3.
significant role in maddâh, as do spontaneous, individualized prayers and poems, verses from the Koran, and Hadith. In Badakhshan the musical performance of maddâh creates and is a result of an interactive, dynamic relationship between the written and oral poetic traditions. For example, maddâh poetry is learned through multiple sources: aurally during performance; from published texts; from handwritten compilations of poems—often copied from published texts or written from memory by the master performer of maddâh; and from folk traditions and poems that are passed down within a family or village community. To make the situation more complex, the Persian language in Badakhshan (and all of Tajikistan) is written primarily in Cyrillic, rather than Persian. This allows further interpolations of a text during transliteration, or when only a partial knowledge of Persian script limits comprehension of a text. One or multiple combinations of these elements make the learning of maddâh poetry a highly flexible and variable process. Therefore, a poem learned aurally in the context of maddâh ritual performance is likely to be a variation of the original written work. Analysis of field recordings shows musical and poetic improvisations as being important factors in understanding how poetic text and formal design can change while the essential meaning is preserved.

During the era of Soviet control that lasted until 1992, the traditional practice of maddâh was forbidden and forced underground. Since then, it has emerged as a symbol of cultural, ethnic, and religious identity, as well as a means of individual and community healing. The dissertation places maddâh within the present soundscape and healthcare landscape of Badakhshan, re-conceptualizes maddâh according to its
current purpose and function, and explores the music, prayer, and healing practices of Pamiri village life.

To approach holistically music-prayer dynamics in field research, I integrated diverse ethnographic and scientific approaches. I assembled an interdisciplinary team of researchers, including local specialists in music, culture, biomedicine, language, and education. Field research focused on working with master musicians, traditional healers, religious leaders, local physicians and patients. I collected musical and ethnographic data through traditional ethnomusicological field research techniques, including sound and video recording, interviewing, participation-observation method, cultural transcription and analysis, and the phenomenological approach to learning through experiencing or living the practices of music, prayer and healing. Multiple and diverse performances recorded in Badakhshan give breadth to understanding some of the ways in which music and prayer live in Pamiri culture.

The concepts of embodiment, emplacement, and bodily hexis help to convey the spiritual aesthetic of maddâh and show how its ceremonial performance is both a preventive and curative practice. For the master maddâh performer, embodiment is not limited to the body, nor does it accept a mind-body dichotomy. Rather, embodiment refers to a process of transformation through which a human being, comprising intellect, body, and soul, known as aql, tan, and ruh, internalizes and manifests virtues, positive ideas and energy. Emplacement refers to the role of place (including the physical and ritual space) in the process of embodiment. The natural

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3 See Hinton (1999) for a literature review concerning emplacement.
and built environment in Pamir *emplaces* and gives meaning to the ceremonial practice of *maddâh*. Bodily hexis refers to the relationship of bodies to each other, body to environment and place, and the sense of ease or unrest in one’s body (see Hinton 1999). The dissertation examines evidence from the field research that the musical and poetic structures of *maddâh* embody power-laden symbols of Pamiri culture that are viewed locally as being efficacious in healing.

Concurrently, physiological data were collected with a digital blood pressure/heart-rate monitor, and an electrocardiogram. These data aim to measure changes in stress levels and provide insight into the bodily experience that is not mediated by language, nor accessible through ethnographic research alone. It was hypothesized that *maddâh* in specific cultural contexts lowers stress through the downward modulation of blood pressure and heart rate. Since there are no published ethnomusicological studies that attempt physiological experiments in the field, I adapted an experimental designed previously tested in my master’s thesis and subsequent pilot studies. The experimental aspect of my research hopes to provide one approach toward bridging the gap between ethnographic and scientific methodologies that explore the roles of music and prayer in healing. Together, data from both the ethnographic research and physiological experimentation show how bodily response and cognitive flexibility work together for cure and prevention.
Devotional Music and Prayer

Both music and prayer have myriad meanings and forms of expression. In the context of devotional or religious experience, a basic premise is that music and prayer are practices, which facilitate heightened levels of spirituality and even ecstasy. In diverse cultures throughout the world music and prayer are means by which people can draw nearer to or communicate with God, a higher power, or a spiritual being or dimension. In the context of devotion and worship, music and prayer can function individually, in combination, or as a unified whole. That is to say, in certain contexts music and prayer are one and the same; music often functions as prayer; certain genres of music are prayer; and certain genres of prayer only exist in a musical, chanted or intoned form. In the case of Koranic recitation for example, while it is not viewed as “music”, it is chanted or intoned and even considered “musical” by some. Music can also be a means of meditation and prayer; and meditation can lead to, be the result of, or be intermingled with music and prayer. In the context of maddâh performance, meditation is always interwoven with prayer. In the dissertation, when referring to devotional music, the term “music” is used broadly to indicate special genres of music, or any sounded, intoned, or chanted expression that are considered music or musical by local or individual standards. Notably, for Pamiris, the majority of whom are Isma’ili Muslims, music is not forbidden. On the contrary, music is celebrated and exuberantly expressed.

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For Pamiris the term “music” or musiqi has a broad meaning. It is used alone and in combination with other words to refer to multiple types of music. For example: musiqiye rohâni (spiritual/devotional music); musiqiye tasavofi or efâni (mystical music); musiqiye dini (religious music); musiqiye khalqi (folk music/music of the people); musiqiye asil (classical music); musiqiye sunati (traditional music); musiqi ba âvâz (music with voice); musiqi bi âvâz (music without voice). Vocal music is also described without the word music, as in khavândan (to sing, recite, chant, or intone). The verb khavândan is used in conjunction with special terms to indicate certain genres of sung, chanted, recited, or intoned vocalizations. For example: ghazal khavândan—referring to the performance, singing, reciting, chanting, or intoning of ghazal poetry; sher khavândan (referring to the performance of poetry in general); monâjât or du’a khavândan (referring to prayer); namâz or salat khavândan (referring to a special category of daily prayers); âvâz or âhang khavândan (referring to the voice, a song, tune, or melody); and maddâh khavândan (referring to maddâh).

Moreover, context can determine the manner in which a term is used and its specific meaning. For example: one can use ghazal khavândan to refer to the performance of ghazal poetry with or without instrumental accompaniment; monâjat usually refers to the use of the voice alone, but in the context of maddâh performance refers vocal and instrumental performance. There is flexibility in the ways that terms are employed and considering the context of usage is necessary to derive meaning and understand local language practices.
Broadly, prayer can be viewed as “an expression of the prayer’s relationship to a Higher power” (Larson et al. 1998: 108) or a metaphysical dialogue. Common categories of prayer include spontaneous, free form or colloquial; formal, written or ritualistic; petitionary, which includes requests for healing, forgiveness, assistance, qualities, virtues and attributes; intercessory, prayer on behalf of another or praying for someone to intercede on your behalf; and praise and thanksgiving; (see Larson et. al 1998; Miller 1999; Schimmel 1975). Two other special categories include: active, which Dossey refers to as “being in a state of prayerfulness” or praying “continually” or “unceasingly” (Dossey 1993: 69-70); and potential, which can be both latent and active in the subconscious (ibid.). Prayer can also be practiced individually or with others, vocalized or unvocalized, with or without movement or dance, as a meditative practice, or as a silent cognitive practice or spiritual experience. The categories of prayer that are most often considered in the biomedical literature are petitionary and intercessory. Ethnomusicological literature most often discusses petitionary, intercessory and active categories (see chapter 1). In special contexts, prayer and poetry are often interchangeable or one and the same. For example, in Badakhshan mystical poetry in the context of maddâh performance is prayer.

Multiple and diverse practices of meditation exist. For clarity and to focus on the underlying practice of attention common to all schools of meditation, I summarize meditative practices into three broad categories. The three categories are determined by the object or focus of one’s attention. Attention can be focused toward the inner,
outer, or nothing. Inner means focusing on or conversing with one’s own mind, inner being or soul; outer means focusing on a higher power—a sacred text, the life or person of a saint, holy person, prophet, or God; nothing means the practice of mindfulness awareness (for example Varela 1991), or allowing one’s attention to be still and aware in a “natural” state. These three descriptions are not necessarily mutually exclusive and individual experiences of different approaches are often similar or the same. For example, Newberg and d’Aquili (2001) report that Buddhist monks practicing mindfulness awareness meditation and Franciscan nuns in meditative prayer, or the outer approach, had similar, unique brain activity. This brain activity was characterized by a decreased activity in the posterior superior parietal lobe, what they call the orientation association area. This area or neural network allows us to understand borders between ourselves and other physical objects in our immediate physical environment. Both the monks and nuns described a feeling of being part of something greater than themselves, albeit in culturally specific terms (Newberg et. al 2001: 7). The researchers suggest that meditation decreases the activity of the orientation association area thus facilitating a sense of oneness and wholeness that extended beyond the self.

Meditation can be a separate practice from prayer or a partner to it—an essential component of the process of prayer. In some cases, prayer and meditation are inseparable. For example, in the ritual performance of maddâh devotional music in Badakhshan, prayer and meditation are intimately interwoven and cannot be placed fully into distinct categories. As Aqaye Kholmuhammad, Sufi of Shirgin explained his
view to me, meditation is an essential part of the prayer process that takes the hopes of prayers into the realm of action. He then said in a matter of fact kind of way: *du’a bedune amal bifâidas*, “prayer without action is useless”. He was very happy to hear my response *dorost qabul dâram, javâbe du’a dar amal-ast*, “true, the answer to prayer lies in action”.

**Healing**

Healing can be viewed from multiple perspectives. What constitutes health, illness, and healing can differ between cultures and individuals. Broadly, healing is both a process and event. It is not however an isolated event. Sometimes healing seems to be isolated, as a surprise, or even miraculous as it can be marked by significant points of transition to health or complete cure. Yet these points of change or healing events exist within a broader context and process, which creates a healthy environment that gives rise to healing. Moreover, healing is culturally constructed and can relate to various domains of human life. The dissertation views the human being as dynamic and ever changing—in a constant process of “progression” toward health and “regression” away from health, never static. Progression is viewed as healing, and regression as disease. Moreover, the ebb and flow of progression and regression is non-linear and related to multiple domains of human life and individual make-up.

At any given moment, the body is purifying blood, removing toxins, fighting off germs, metabolizing necessary nutrients, and taking in oxygen not only as part of

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5 These events have been described as “quantum healing” (Chopra: 1990), “spontaneous healing” (Weil: 1996 and as “miracles” (Seigel: 1990).
maintaining life, but as a process of healing. When these and the billions of other biochemical and physiological processes are not functioning correctly, healing ceases and a process of disease begins (see for example Malarkey 1999 and Chopra 1990). A holistic perspective includes, along with the physical ebb and flow between health and illness, the mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of humans as following the same dynamic process of progression and regression (ibid). In this continuum of progression and regression, the onset of disease occurs before symptoms are manifest and a diagnosis can be made. William Malarkey has characterized the period between disease onset and diagnosis as “The GAP” (see figure 1) (Malarkey 1999: 16).

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![Figure 1: “The GAP”](image)

“The GAP” is a critical time period where an opportunity exists for curing or preventing the development of disease, which can make a profound difference in the continuity and quality of life (ibid). Any healing practice or intervention, including
those of music and prayer can be seen to operate within this continuum, effecting
change in one or more domains of a human being.

Field Research Methods, Transcription, Representation

The role of field research methods will be a recurrent theme throughout
chapter 1. In any ethnomusicological study, the kind of materials gathered in the field,
how they are collected, analyzed, and interpreted, are of central importance. After all,
field research methods are the primary way we approach a topic, learn, discover, and
gain knowledge as ethnomusicologists. The discussion of methods in chapter 1 will
largely depend on the goal of a particular research project and the era in which that
research was conducted. Methods essential for one study may not be for another.

A constant challenge for the ethnomusicologist is to use methods that best
engage their chosen topic and heighten or provide some insight beyond the aural
perception of sound—usually through adapting existing approaches to a particular
case, borrowing models from related disciplines, or at times, abandoning common
techniques and developing new approaches altogether. Today ethnomusicologists
often rely upon computer-based methods of sound and time analysis that are capable
of representing humanly imperceptible differences of frequency, amplitude, duration,
rhythmic organization, and the spectral components of sound. While new computer
methods open new vistas for research and enable the ethnomusicologist to go deeply
into the melodic, temporal, and timbral components of sound, it remains of central
importance to link the transcription not only to the music, but also to the local
meaning and cultural role that music plays. Approaching music and healing might require supplemental or altogether different methods of transcription and representation, which help us to visualize, compare, and discuss the various issues germane to specific practices, as well as build bridges of understanding between different cultural contexts and academic disciplines. For example, methods might involve correlating physiological, cognitive, or emotional states and processes with music’s sonic features, changes, and processes.

Over the last century the concerns of ethnomusicologists have broadened to include a great variety of disciplines. As music and healing comes further into the view and conceptual framework of ethnomusicologists, field research methods will also need to broaden to address the specific problems that this subject raises. In the course of the introduction and chapter 1, I shall attempt to raise some of these problems and issues to the surface and lay the foundation for a new model.

A Note of Caution

First, a note of caution regarding interactions in the field is needed. An ethnomusicological interest in music and healing can be concerned with various areas, each demanding a different base of knowledge. Some knowledge is culture specific, other knowledge can be more universal, in particular, areas of biology. When confronted with illness in the field, ethnomusicologists must be cautious not to act outside of their area of expertise.
A mistake that some researchers make is to dispense aspirin or other medications without understanding its multiple potential effects. For example, the mistake of giving aspirin to a child with a fever could be tragic. Unless a researcher is a physician and making a professional diagnosis and prescription of aspirin, the recipient could contract Reye’s syndrome from the combination of a fever and aspirin. Understanding the relationships and “modes of action” between components of any given health system is essential to avoid potential health risks.

The degree to which any system is efficacious depends greatly upon one’s understanding of the operating principles of that system. For example, it is known that aspirin reduces pain and inflammation, and lowers fever. However, if a doctor is unaware of one of the operating principles within the overall system, prescribing simple aspirin for flu symptoms or the chicken pox, especially in children, can result in Reye’s syndrome and even lead to death (PDR 1998: 2784). Death can also occur by prescribing certain aspirin compounds that react negatively with other drugs or by giving them to patients that are suicidal or addiction-prone (PDR 1998:1446) (Koen 2000:6).

Epidemiological research has shown an association between the development of Reye's Syndrome and the use of aspirin (a salicylate [anti-inflammatory chemical] compound) for treating the symptoms of influenza-like illnesses, chicken pox, colds, etc. The U.S. Surgeon General, the Food and Drug Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend that aspirin and combination products containing aspirin be not given to children under 19 years of age during episodes of fever-causing illnesses. It is possible to develop Reye's Syndrome without taking aspirin. However, the chances of developing Reye's Syndrome can be reduced by not giving aspirin to individuals for relief of discomfort or fever without first consulting a physician for each specific use. Anti-nausea medications may also contain salicylates, and may mask the symptoms of Reye's Syndrome. Teenagers and adults are especially at risk of developing Reye's Syndrome due to self-medication (see www.reyessyndrome.org/aspirin.htm).

To provide a background to the literature review of chapter 1, I shall consider six broad theoretical issues and concerns. A brief discussion of these points will
provide scope and pose questions concerning the many interrelated issues found in the literature.

Music Therapy, Medical Anthropology

In recent years, music therapy is increasingly concerned with the impact of culture on efficacy of treatment (Toppozada 1995). Simultaneously, medical anthropology and ethnomusicology have more deeply explored the phenomenon of music and healing. In addition, with the formal establishment of applied ethnomusicology as an area of focus within the Society for Ethnomusicology, these three disciplines are becoming closer\(^6\). Yet, the approaches and foci are quite different. Medical anthropology and ethnomusicology specifically consider a healing event within or inextricably woven into the cultural and social context—with ethnomusicology emphasizing the roles that music and musicians play. Traditionally however, physiological experimentation has not been part of ethnographic research. Music therapy includes clinical trials, but rather than approaching the subject from the perspective of healing, approaches music as a tool for therapy. Certainly, therapy and healing overlap, yet the goal of music therapy is not the same as that of most music-healing traditions, which aim to bring about a fundamental, holistic change in the condition of a person through a ritual or ceremonial event or process that intermingles and seeks to balance the physical and spiritual dimensions. Music therapy is concerned with the “use of organized sounds and music within an evolving

\(^6\) In addition, at the 2002 annual meeting of the American Music Therapy Association, several presentations were dedicated to issues related to the role of culture in treatment.
relationship between client and therapist to support and encourage physical, mental, social and emotional well-being” (Bunt 1994: 8). Clearly there are relationships between the two, yet the claims of music’s power to heal, as well as its therapeutic effects are unique.

**Music and Healing in Ethnomusicology**

In ethnomusicology, music and healing is usually discussed in terms of healing rituals and ceremonies that involve music. Janzen laments that “[a]n exhaustive new bibliography on African music has no entries under ‘music and healing’, ‘music and medicine’, or ‘music and therapy’ (Gray 1991; Janzen 2000: 47-8). While such headings do exist in other works, the Garland Encyclopedia of World Music for example, these and other articles almost exclusively deal with music and healing in the context of trance or so-called spirit possession. Janzen also finds this in works about music in Africa (ibid). Notable exceptions can be found in literature concerning the classical traditions of Iran and India, as well as related traditions in that region which seem to be closely related to ancient Greek notions of music’s potential curative powers. I will discuss the case of Iran in chapter 1, as well as review Patricia Cook’s article on North Indian “sacred music therapy”.

Healing rituals and ceremonies have been discussed throughout ethnomusicology’s history. Studies that include the topic of music and healing range from brief sketches to in-depth, “thick” ethnographies. In the early ethnomusicological writings, writers usually describe the context in general terms and
how they perceive music’s role in the ceremonial event and daily life. Some of music’s structural features, characteristics, and extra-musical associations are discussed and often analyzed by methods current in the discipline. In the later ethnomusicological works, writers further describe, analyze, and interpret data gathered in the field, as well as convey the views and beliefs of participants. Musical questions are considered in light of field research and extant ethnomusicological literature. Broader questions on the nature of human understanding, perception, cognition, belief, emotion, and behavior are further considered in an attempt to deepen our understanding of humans and the world(s) in which we live.

Two broad categories emerge of the literature that I have surveyed. One is primarily concerned with providing an ethnography and letting it stand alone without connecting it to other healing practices. The other is concerned with linking ethnography to the Western, medical-science paradigm of health and healing.

**The Problem of Healing Ceremonies: Scientific vs. Spiritual**

Ethnographic and scientific approaches are different ways of understanding the world. Methods for both ethnographic and scientific research are based upon and emerge from various theories and assumptions. Hence, the subject of research, will, to some degree, be compared to existing theories and assumptions. The central problem of researching music and healing is that within the cultural contexts where it is practiced it is often considered to be essentially spiritual and by definition beyond the
ken of science. In most research, there seems to be a gap or struggle between the measurable and immeasurable.

To explore music and healing in cultural contexts, ethnomusicology and health science have the challenge to understand health practices that are flexible, dynamic, and based on a unique set of cultural theories, views, beliefs and assumptions, often totally outside the Western scientific paradigm. While there is evidence from western science that spiritual practices are beneficial to health (Larson et al 1998; Harris et al 1999; Dossey 1994), a model has not yet been developed to test the components of the “systems” considered in chapter 1 (see Waldram 2000).

Before such a model can be developed, the question “what is a system?” raised by Last (1981) has to be addressed. He claims that most traditional healing systems are not “systems” at all. Last argues that there is a lack of unity between practitioners of traditional medicine/healing within cultures, that there are no consistent theories, and wide variations in the meaning of terms. Hence, a better way to describe such praxis is as a “non-system” (ibid: 387). Yet, he does not want to discount the social role of such non-systems and even admits that the non-system can be “to the insider an adequately homogeneous means of coping with illness in all its forms” (ibid: 391). Last is skeptical of the discourse proceeding without recognizing the social factors that contribute to insiders “not knowing” and “not wanting to know” the causes, cures, and concepts behind treatments (ibid: 387-392). He finds that this lack of knowledge and desire “not to know” is due to the “non-system” nature of the practices. This
encourages secrecy and further complicates a researcher’s ability to understand traditional practices.

The unresolved problem of what constitutes a system arises throughout the discourse in ethnomusicology and medical anthropology. One notion of a system implies a functional relationship between components that constitute a unified whole. Hence, to understand a health system, traditional or otherwise, we must understand its components and their relationships. According to Waldram (2000), this cannot be viewed as a universal notion of a system. Not only do concepts of what it means to be sick, healed, and what constitutes efficacy vary between systems, but also between participants within each system. In other words, the epistemologies and ontologies between health systems, as well as between participants within a system are not uniform. The discourse in ethnomusicology and medical anthropology are at points of transition and perhaps the only consensus is that we are in a growth cycle of action/research, reflection/assessment, consultation, modification, and continued action.

Connecting the Field to the World

In modern ethnomusicological works concerning music and healing, there is a kind of struggle between ethnography, analyzing and interpreting a ceremonial event, and linking that event or practice to the researcher and the surrounding world. In a matter of fact way, the act of doing ethnography itself links fieldwork to the surrounding world. Nevertheless, ethnographers are confronted with linking fieldwork
to their own health consciousness in a way that makes sense. Often, conducting field research on the subject of music and healing means that the researcher will be working in a context that is totally immersed in a spiritually rooted worldview, which might not include the Western scientific paradigm. It is a general practice, if not an accepted premise in fieldwork “that analysis must look for significant points of connection between the ceremonial and the everyday, and then inquire as to the character of those ties” (George 1993: 12). In the same way, ethnographers try to find ‘points of connection’ between the traditional music-healing praxes they study and the health system within which they are treated, or are most familiar—usually modern biomedicine. I believe there are many reasons for this struggle to connect. First, I suspect that musical affect is a phenomenon that most if not all people have experienced. Second, we humans get sick and need healing. Third, when music is used for healing it seems natural to researchers to want to scientifically understand why and how musical healing might potentially work. Fourth, both a literature review and direct field research are typical starting points for inquiry. Fifth, researchers want to discover the reasons and processes behind the claims in the literature and from the cultural practitioners in their initial field research. Sixth, even when researchers conclude that for participants, music’s healing power is an inextricable part of a religious or spiritual belief system, they want somehow to link their observation of a profound music-healing event to their own experience of musical affect that I first mentioned. This perspective is gleaned from the discourse in ethnomusicology, my own field research, and a body of literature that situates the current health
This body of literature deals with developments in the health sciences—primarily biomedicine, psychiatry, and psychology. Naturally, this consciousness influences how society, including ethnomusicologists, views health, illness, and healing. So, while we consider various cultures’ music-healing practices, we must also consider how ethnomusicologists conceive of health, illness, and healing. To better understand how “health consciousness” includes both physical and spiritual dimensions, and how this can shape the mind-set of the ethnomusicologist investigating music and healing, I find the developments of complementary, alternative, and integrative medicine informative:

Developments in complementary, alternative, and integrative medicine imply a fundamental change in the understanding of health and aim “to shift some of the basic orientations of medicine: toward healing rather than symptomatic treatment, toward a closer relationship with nature, toward a strengthened doctor-patient relationship and an emphasis on mind and spirit in addition to body” (Weil 2000: 442). There is a growing interest in integrative approaches among academic and popular segments of society, as well as an increased use of complementary and alternative treatments by the general public in places where Western medicine is the norm (Astin 1998; Levin, 1997). A corollary to this is the increase and development of course offerings on complementary methods in medical schools in the United States (Wetzel et al 1998). ...[Concurrently] there is an increased interest in spirituality and religion (Levin, 1997) that links directly with the public and academic interest of including aspects of spirituality and religiosity in medicine (Larson 1998, 1994; Koenig 1997). Dossey claims that this not only illustrates that patients feel that “technology is not enough...[our patients] want something more, something that goes beyond the proper functioning of the physical body” (Dossey 1999: 18). Indeed, a recurrent theme in biomedical literature addressing complementary and alternative approaches is that the proper functioning of the physical body does not, and cannot exist in a vacuum. As the placebo effect, mind-body connection, psychosomatic interventions, and psychoneuroimmunology have proven—there can be an efficacious relationship between the tangible and intangible. These developments have in part caused the formation of the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (part of the NIH) in 1998. This center funds research in various areas, including several mind-body interventions. These are
psychotherapy, support groups, meditation, imagery, hypnosis, biofeedback, yoga, dance therapy, music therapy, art therapy, and prayer and mental healing ("mental healing" is a term often used in medical research to catalogue and discuss spiritual/faith/ or prayer healing, see Larson et al 1998). Many of these categories can be seen to have parallels with diverse cultural contexts of music and healing (Koen 2000: 11-12).

I suggest that in some ways, these developments frame or at least influence the perspectives of ethnomusicologists and medical anthropologists when confronted with a music-healing ceremony. Hence, in ethnography it might be essential to include the views of the researchers. After all, they are part of the context that is being researched—and in a postmodern world, the chasm between researcher and informant is becoming more transparent. The appropriateness of how much ethnographers should include of their own views I believe can be determined by two basic principles, or questions. First, what is the nature of the research, what are the questions, goals, and methods of research, analysis and interpretation of data? Second, what is the degree of reflexivity involved in dealing with the first question? The more reflexivity is involved, the more need there is to understand the views of the researcher. I see this as having two main benefits. First, it enables a reader to better understand an ethnography that is filtered through a researcher’s mind. Second, it is a way of protecting writers from creating a subtext that could potentially undermine the views of those about whom they write. From another perspective however, when a more positivistic approach is taken that seeks to scientifically isolate a variable and test it, perhaps little if any knowledge is needed about the researcher’s views.
Interwoven Contexts

In the cultures considered in chapter 1, musical healing is part of broader belief systems or religions, which function as holistic entities. Friedson observes that “in traditional African societies, religion and healing form an amalgam that is often functionally irreducible into constituent parts” (Friedson 1998: 274). Music is viewed as being essentially spiritual or “other worldly.” The etiological view of most traditional cultures mentioned in chapter 1 can be generally summarized as follows: “any illness is...ascribed to a disturbance of the balance between man and spiritual or mystical forces, and the aim of health seeking is to restore the equilibrium” (Oosthuizen 1989: 30). Music is often the bridge by which the physical and spiritual are connected and can be the most vital part of a healing ceremony or practice. Moreover, in many of the examples discussed in chapter 1, the “physical” and “spiritual” are not separate dimensions that can be connected. Rather, they are viewed as aspects of one reality, where music functions as a balancer of these aspects and contextualizes ritual performance.

The inclusion and utilization of both the physical and supernatural realms has been described as a “sacred clinical reality...a complex of interrelated features including the beliefs, expectations, norms, behavior, and communicative transactions associated with sickness, health care seeking, practitioner-patient relationships, therapeutic activities, and evaluation of outcomes” (Kleinman 1980: 38-42). Healing systems so oriented “emphasize sacred reality, illness orientation (meaning that they take into account the patient’s account of the problem as their central concern),
symbolic intervention, interrogative structure, family centered locus of control...and substantial expectation of change, even cure” (Kleinman 1988: 120). Moreover, healing ceremonies include a wide array of elements, participants, and variables that are part of a web of music, song, dance, vocalizations, actions, and behaviors.

To approach holistically a sacred clinical reality, which is at once performative, preventative, curative, and grounded in both science and religion, I suggest that a new method is needed—one that combines the rich experiential and cultural base of ethnographic research with the objective trials of scientific experimentation. Moreover, the dissertation views science and religion as complementary domains of understanding which, can work in harmony, rather than opposition. The dissertation aims to contribute, however minutely, to the development of an approach that accounts for, and indeed embraces the knowledge from both areas of human life.

In addition, building upon the work of many scholars concerned with music and healing, the dissertation encourages an approach that might be called medical ethnomusicology.7 Medical ethnomusicology can be viewed as an area of study that explores any context of music and healing from a holistic perspective—embracing and

7 A complete history of the roots of medical ethnomusicology is beyond the scope of this work. However, chapter 1 begins to trace a kind of lineage of medical ethnomusicology within ethnomusicology and related disciplines. My approach has been summarized in a presentation at the 47th Annual Meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology, titled “Devotional, Musical Healing in the Pamir Mountains: Toward a Holistic Approach for Medical Ethnomusicology.”

I have recently learned that Gregory Barz also views his research concerning AIDS education and musical performance in East Africa as falling within the scope of medical ethnomusicology. The latter is intimately linked for him to a kind of activism in addressing health issues and music’s role in healing (personal communication, April 22, 2003).
critically examining issues and phenomena that are culture-dependent, culture-transcendent, and which lie at the crossroads of multiple disciplines in the humanities and sciences.

*Medical ethnomusicology*, while closely related to medical anthropology, focuses specifically on *music* and *sound* phenomena and the roles they play in any context of healing. Such roles can be physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and social in nature. As a research track within ethnomusicology, *medical ethnomusicology* encourages integrative research, in which collaboration between experts from a broad diversity of fields, including music, medicine, health science, cultural and comparative studies is at times essential to explore holistically issues of music and healing.

All documentation of field research data, including audio and video recordings, photographs, recorded and written interviews were done with the full knowledge and permission of the subjects. In all cases, musicians were paid for their performances. For musicians in the bazaar, it was a straightforward process—money was simply placed in the collection area. For *maddâh* and *falak* performances, payment was always given upon departure of a gathering, usually only after several rounds of refusal to accept and insistence to give. This interaction is discussed in detail in chapter 3.

The dissertation consists of five chapters, an introduction, bibliography and appendices. Chapter 1 is a literature review covering representative studies from
ethnomusicology, medical anthropology, music therapy, and semiotics. Chapter 2 discusses the theory and methods of the dissertation, proposes the new model of *music-prayer dynamics*, as well as an ontological framework for field research that is based on a paradigm of oneness, rather that the insider-outsider dichotomy. Chapter 3 provides an in-depth ethnography of experiences in the field concerning Pamiri practices of music, prayer and healing. Chapter 4 examines the genres of *maddâh* and *falak* as recorded in the field; provides analysis showing how musical and poetic improvisation serves to perpetuate both written and oral traditions with variability of form but with continuity of meaning. Chapter 5 shows how the *music-prayer dynamics* model was applied in an experimental context in the field, provides a description of the experiment and a discussion of the findings, overall conclusions and recommendations for further research in the region and for conducting physiological experiments in field research.
Throughout the world, there is a multiplicity of healing systems, etiological frameworks, and beliefs about health and healing. There is also a multiplicity of approaches to examine different healing systems and praxes. This chapter explores the theme of music and healing in the ethnomusicological literature, considers various concepts and issues, approaches and trends, concerns and problems, as well as models and future directions in the field and in my research. This chapter also considers the contribution of related disciplines to the broad area of music and healing and what they offer ethnomusicology. Two important works on semiotics, Nattiez (1990, *Music and Discourse*), and Hinton (1999) inform the conceptual base of the dissertation. This chapter draws upon selected, representative examples from a range of studies in the literature that approach the subject of music and healing. These studies are generally presented in chronological order and lead up to the present day investigations, thus providing a historical overview of the discourse of music and healing in ethnomusicology.

The relationship between the visible and invisible is a recurrent theme in all the ethnomusicological literature concerning music and healing. Developing a methodology that can get at this relationship is one of the current challenges in
researching music and healing. It is also a basic principle that frames health science research aimed at understanding and utilizing mind-body interventions, including music, prayer, and mental healing.

The notion that music has a power to heal seems to be as ancient as music itself. Traces of music’s efficacy to heal can be found in diverse cultures and throughout history in written and oral sources, musical and medical treatises, diaries and travelers’ narratives, religious scriptures and philosophical works. These traces however may not lead us very far in understanding the beneficial role that music can potentially play in healing. Ancient accounts of music and healing are, for the most part, interesting or fantastic stories that perhaps tell us more about individual or cultural perceptions than about music’s role in healing.

Modern interests in music and healing can be found in various scholarly disciplines, pop psychology, new-age trends, and popular culture in general. In the last decade music and healing has become a bona fide area of research in ethnomusicology and studies have become numerous. As the body of modern research continues to grow, not only is the cross-cultural phenomenon of music and healing becoming more apparent, but also our understanding of music’s potential role in healing is becoming more acute.

In some instances in this chapter, relevant excerpts from the literature are quoted to better illustrate the changing status of the discourse. At other times, they are simply summarized. It will be shown that there is a gradual transition from a “thin” to “thick description” as the discipline grows. The early examples will provide important
information as to the mind set of the ethnomusicologist and help us to understand how we have grown and developed. The later examples will provide the most recent trends and approaches in the field, as well as point to new possibilities in the exploration of music and healing. In conclusion, I suggest that to approach musical healing anew, a more holistic methodology is required that combines ethnography with physiological experimentation. This leads to the final points of the chapter, that experimentation is one method that can lead to knowledge not mediated by language; and is a way to achieve a certain shared experience and new level of discourse between researchers.

There is a complexity to the issue of exploring music and healing in diverse cultural contexts that seems at times irresolvable. This is due to the multiplicity of ontologies and epistemologies that are simultaneously involved. A mental model of this complexity can be generated that helps one to approach the diversity of beliefs and practices that interrelate in the exploration of our subject. For example, from a postmodern pluralistic viewpoint, the phenomenological sense of a world that is “already given” might be better seen as dynamically interrelated worlds already given, constructed, and continually being reconstructed. Worlds that comprise the geographic, physical, spiritual and mental spaces in the field, the ceremonial world within the field, the worlds of the participants and the researchers, the worlds from which they come, and those of their minds—their present thoughts, memories and visions, and other worlds within worlds—all “already given” and dynamically interacting with each other. If each world is considered as a circle, how are they
related? Are the circles concentric, interwoven or separated? What could be at the center of each circle, or at the center of a concentric whole? What elements could be at the periphery and in-between? The research discussed in this chapter takes various stances and approaches to the topic depending on the particular worldviews of cultural practitioners and ethnographers. Some do consider the philosophical problems and issues of the research endeavor, while others do not. As already observed by Waldram (2000), there is presently no unity of methodology or common model by which to approach the study of music and healing in cultural contexts. A current challenge to researching musical healing then is to develop a common ground between the related fields concerned with this area of inquiry.

**Early to Modern Writings in Ethnomusicology**

The writings in the 1900’s that pre-date the formation of the Society for Ethnomusicology in America are few. Francis Densmore in the early 1900’s stands out for her work with Indian music of North America. Her work has special significance for several reasons. The number of songs that she recorded and transcribed is monumental, over 2000 melodies. She wrote over a dozen monographs on music of the Plains region. Her dedication as a fieldworker for over 50 years set a firm foundation for the future of ethnomusicology where field research is at the center of the discipline. Her fieldwork marked a new stage in research that moved from the armchair of comparative musicology to the field of engaging real people in the context of human life. However, like the European school, she was concerned with categories
of intervals, contour, scales, tempo, and meter. To this she added categories of melody, key, song, and genre, which began to emphasize the purpose and function of music in a culture. Moreover, being a woman in the early 1900’s who led her field in the midst of the tragic situation of North American Indians is significant. Notwithstanding her accomplishments, later scholars have offered criticism that Densmore biased her recorded material by coaching her informants. This mistake however, along with her brief discussions of the cultural context had positive repercussions by helping to develop more sound and comprehensive fieldwork methods. Approaches that emphasize the importance of framing one’s understanding in a broad ethnographic fabric and not to bias the material by coaching performers soon became the accepted norm.

In *Teton Sioux Music*, Densmore briefly mentions music and healing and helps to move the ethnocentric mind-set of ethnographers from the 19th century to a culture-centered approach that remains at the heart of the discipline. She briefly states that the Lakota/Dakota/Nakota8 use music in ceremonies which have healing as one of their many functions. Densmore is primarily concerned with basic categorization and transcription of melodies and text. For example, she makes some connections between which herbs or medicines are used for a particular ailment, and which songs

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8 This tri-partite term is used here instead of the more common yet derogatory term “Sioux.” The Chippewa and Ottawa tribes referred to the Iroquois as Nadowe (adder or serpent). The French-Canadian abbreviation of the diminutive form, Nadowessiwag, was adapted as “Sioux.” (Densmore, 1918: 1). “Lakota/Dakota/Nakota” is often used to make a self-reference in the native languages of the Plains Indians. Although the problematic term “Sioux” has a negative connotation, it is still often used by North American Indians when speaking English. The term Lakota/Dakota/Nakota (or one of the three component words depending on the context of the discussion) instead of “Sioux” is a convention that is becoming the preferred usage in academic and public discourse.
accompany their usage. The following basic categories can be drawn from her descriptions.

Ceremonial Songs: used in the Spirit-keeping, Hunka and Sun Dance ceremonies.

Personal Dream Songs: songs obtained in dreams that are of special significance and which oblige the recipient to announce the dream to the tribe and fulfill the requirements of the dream (these songs are believed to come from the supernatural world and be imbued with power and often provide healing).

Songs Concerning the Sacred Stones: dreams of sacred stones are also of great significance and bestow supernatural powers upon the recipient. The stones can help one cure sickness, predict the future, and locate objects beyond one's natural vision.

Healing Songs: special songs used for healing or to accompany the use of certain medicines (Densmore 1918: 205 ff.).

Densmore’s work stands out as perhaps the earliest ethnomusicological research where the subject of music and healing was considered to any significant degree. As later research is considered, a recurrent question is “How has our understanding of music and healing advanced since Densmore?”

In the early 1950’s, ethnomusicologists, under the continued influence of anthropology, began to move beyond describing strictly musical features and focus more on the cultural context. The text and meaning of songs become more important to researchers, as do the order of events and the associations between musical and visible events within the ceremonial framework. Descriptions are more detailed and substantive, yet still raise more questions than are answered. Trying to view the following excerpt through a 1950’s looking glass, one can see a movement toward culture-centered description as well as progress in addressing questions that would
become central to ethnomusicology. The following quotation about “guardian spirit dancing”, often used for healing in the Chinook speaking cultures (e.g. the Makah, Quinault, and Skokomish), is taken from the introduction to one of Willard Rhodes’ studies on Native Americans of the northwest. A lengthy quotation is included to provide a sense of the state of description in the field. We will return to this except later to compare elements with subsequent studies to see what has changed, developed, or stayed the same in the discourse:

Whether the spirit dancing lasted for several days for each participant as in former days, or is done in a single night, as at present, the procedure was the same. When a dancer felt his power coming to him he groaned with agony, a signal for the drummers to gather around him. As soon as he intoned his song, the leader picked it up and they drummed the rhythm. When the dancer was ready he jumped into the center of the floor with a great leap, and faced his drummers while he sang a verse of the song. Then he turned and danced counter-clockwise around the house, moving between the fires in the center and the people sitting on the platforms along the walls. Periodically he stopped, faced the drummers and sang another verse and then continued on his way, making a circuit of the house, never less than once, never more than four times. Formerly these possessions were preceded by days of listlessness during which the family prepared for the dancing to follow. It is interesting that now, when so much of this culture has disappeared, this feature still remains in a shortened and less spontaneous form, but in the last twenty years, gaining rather than losing importance.

The individual character of these songs has frequently been mentioned but it must be added that, in spite of this, everyone knew many songs. However a song could be used only if the owner started it or gave his permission for its use. A very old man, who could no longer sing would pay a younger man to sing his song for him at a gathering. If the people especially liked the song, many individuals would, in turn, give the owner a present for having made it possible for them to hear his song. Once a song was started, everyone would join in, and the degree of participation indicated the social esteem in which the owner was held. During a man’s spirit dance his wife often walked around in front of the audience and urged them to sing. Volume was generally regarded as more important than quality in this type of singing.

In the culture of former days, there were individuals who had even stronger relations with spirits and more powerful and dangerous ones. These people were shamans or medicine men, which used their spiritual power to
cure the sick, foretell the future, recover lost articles, and go to the land of the dead for departed souls. Their powers were specific according to their spirit helpers and they could work for harm as well as for good. They were generally people to be feared and children were warned not to linger near a shaman’s house. A medicine man usually worked alone and came to a patient’s house on call. He would sing quietly to attract his spirit and then, with the help of the onlookers’ singing, dance and cure by means of massage or sucking the afflicted part of the patient. Again, as soon as his song was intoned, everyone present joined in. Such a cure might last only a few hours, but if the patient did not respond, it might go on for several days. Shamanistic curings have been crowded out of the Indian life of today by knowledge of modern medical practices and by missionary preaching, but there are still many older people who are minor shamans or resort to a shaman for help (Erna Gunther qtd. in Rhodes, 1953: 8-9).

Descriptions of this period include music and healing in the context of a broader framework. Several points are important here. Like Densmore, researchers are the collectors of their material, which now includes gathering information that gives insight into the social relationships in the community and the role that music plays in daily life. Journalistic questions of who does what, how, when, where, and why, become basic concerns that are increasingly considered in general ethnographies of cultural areas and specific groups. Through methods of observation, recording, and interviewing, data are gathered that form the basis of the ethnography—this alone is a major development. The above excerpt is representative of ethnomusicology in that it shows that there is not yet decisive consideration of music and healing. This description does not provide any specific discussion of music, nor provide any accompanying text or musical transcription. Other studies during this period in ethnomusicology often include transcriptions in five-line notation. The typical
discussion centers on basic musical features described in terms of range, volume, pitch, contour, repetition, and tone quality.

For about a decade after Jaap Kunst’s famous introduction of the term “Ethno-musicology” in 1950 and the formation of the academic society in the U.S. in 1955, the area of music and healing as a specific area of inquiry was still practically off the ethnomusicological map. In the 1960’s, ethnographies were produced that gave more attention to music in ritual and ceremonial contexts of healing. One such work is Rose Brandel’s 1961 *The Music of Central Africa: An Ethnomusicological Study*. Her study is representative of the field in its consideration of music and healing. She provides general descriptions of the context and behavior of participants as well as which instruments are used and at what point in the ceremony. Outside of anthropology, this is one of the earliest works that considers *ngoma* healing ceremonies. Most importantly, Brandel considers broader issues of music and healing. She then links these issues to her research. For example, she mentions that while the both calming and excitatory styles of healing music is known to her, the excitatory style is the only one that she encountered in Central Africa. She states that the *ngoma* drum is used along with repetitive chants to achieve a hypnotic, trance-state as part of the healing ceremonies. Her sketch is brief but it marks an important point in the history of the discipline. It contributes not only to future studies in ethnomusicology, but to those in anthropology in general and medical anthropology specifically—for
example, John Janzen who has written extensively on *ngoma* healing in Central and South Africa (for example 2000, 1992, 1985).

Throughout the 1960’s and 70’s, emphasis in ethnomusicology’s methodology moves from the more or less passive observer posture of the researcher to the active engagement by the researcher as a participant in the musical context. The observation/participation approach, pioneered by Manlile Hood’s “bi-musicality” concept, called for ethnomusicologists to achieve an acceptable level of competence in performing the music they studied. This would pose unique difficulties for studies of music and healing in ceremonial contexts. Such ceremonies are not as easily accessible to even the most sincere and competent musician. Moreover, factors beyond the structural elements of the “music itself” become central to performance. Such factors include specialized knowledge, skills, or power often inherited from or bestowed by an elder kinsman or spiritual being, at times in a dream or ceremony.

The framework of ethnomusicological questions from the early 1960’s onward comprises four areas: cultural context, understanding the social and cultural framework; musical context, often called the “music itself”; conceptions and perceptions about music and the world; and musical function. This basic model, with various adaptations or specific emphases, becomes the basis of nearly all the future research in ethnomusicology. This framework was outlined by Alan Merriam (1962: 120-30; and 1964) but is due in large part to the work of many early scholars who
helped to form the modern discipline, including Merriam, Mantle Hood, Charles
Seeger, David McAllester, and Willard Rhodes.

Another significant development in this period was the focus on the “insider”
view and on the individual musician. In 1967, linguist Kenneth Pike first coined the
terms emic and etic (from phonemic/phonetic). This construct was adopted by
ethnomusicology to distinguish the emic view of the cultural “insiders,” from the etic
view of cultural “outsiders.” The terms emic/etic are out of use in the present day
discourse, yet the concept and recognition of the insider/outsider perspectives is very
present.

Initially this concept benefited research by acknowledging and respecting
different views. It reminded ethnomusicologists that their perception and
understanding, however much informed by ethnography, is one thread in a fabric of
constantly changing views for themselves and for each person with whom they work.
As scholars began to explore music from their own cultural backgrounds and as bi-
musicality and participant/observation increased as a method, the lines between insider
and outsider became more blurred and porous. Individuals began to flow between the
roles of outsider, insider, ethnographer, participant and performer. Ethnographies
began to tell this multi-vocal story, showing the many facets and meanings involved in
and out of the field. Friedson’s *Dancing Prophets* illustrates an important point in
that cultural insiders (the Tumbuka of Malawi in this case) can be outsiders if they do
not ascribe to the same set of beliefs as the specific subject group; (Friedson 1996:40
49). At the same time, a cultural outsider (Friedson in this case) can be considered an insider based on the closeness of relationships that develop and the perceptions, assessments, and acceptance of the insiders. Of course, the labels can be easily switched depending on who the ethnographer interviews. To move beyond the borders inherent in the insider/outsider dichotomy, in chapter 2 I propose an inclusive ontological frame based on the concepts of oneness and unity in diversity.

In *Navajo Blessingway Singer*, an autobiography by Frank Mitchell (edited by David McAllester and Charlotte Frisbie), a rare work in the field is produced where the healer tells his own story. The Blessingway ceremony of the Dine (Navajo) is well known for its healing properties, which are primarily preventive rather than curative. It is the foundation of the Dine religion and is a ceremony that blesses. In this sense it is opposite the exorcizing ceremonies of the Nightway and Enemyway, and forms a different category than most music-healing ceremonies discussed in the literature. The Blessingway is used for healing and various social events like weddings, before journeys, for girl's puberty, house blessing, harvest blessing, and childbirth (Mitchell 1978: 212-218). Mitchell describes the importance of maintaining the integrity of the songs and ceremonies:

“As we understand it, the songs were left here by different groups of holy beings. We are supposed to keep them intact and not mix them up. If we do start mixing them up, one with another, they know about it, and therefore that ceremony is not recognized, it is not honored. It has no effect on the person that you are treating with it. Those Holy People are displeased with you if you start acting like that, and they no longer are willing to accept your songs and prayers. Otherwise, if you are keeping it up, as it should be practiced, it is always accepted. It is understood that the different ceremonies...are distinctly
separate and were left here by Holy People for the People to use. So, if you are singing Shootingway, you cannot just take songs from the Mountaintopway and add them. That is forbidden” (Mitchell 1978: 212).

The Blessingway singer must have the ceremony renewed for himself after every four ceremonies. By having the ceremony performed over him by others he can continue to lead acceptable and potent ceremonies (ibid: 218). Mitchell recounts some of the healing components of Dine rituals that include non-musical elements like herbs and other medicinal preparations that are ingested or burnt as incense. These often have healing properties that are not linked directly to spiritual dimensions or beings. In the ceremonial context however, these elements are secondary to the songs that are charged with spiritual power to heal.

Utilizing a different approach, Moyle (1979) provides a kind of basic case study as he recounts some of the direct actions and song texts used in a Central Australian healing ceremony:

“The classification of song series called tuyutu encompasses a number of healing practices which relate to both external and internal maladies; these in turn may be considered the result of direct injury or the malevolent workings of a supernatural creature. In the former cases, the songs sung deal with particular episodes in myths in which the Dreamtime character is afflicted with the same ailment; this character cures himself/herself by singing certain charms, and because of the success of these, the Pintupi too believe they will effect a cure by performing the same songs. In each tuyutu of the latter nature, however, it is believed that a specified and named creature from the mythological past is inhabiting the patient’s body. Such an unfortunate situation has an exact precedent in a particular Dreamtime episode, in which a mythological character is able to remove, kill, or otherwise incapacitate the offending creature and thus effect a cure; in all such cures, singing accompanies whatever acts the character performs. The final act by the Doctorman is often to ‘remove’ from inside the patient’s body, using sleight of hand, a small stone, piece of wood or bone, and, displaying this object a s
symbol of the creature causing the sickness, to proclaim the treatment successful” (Moyle 1979: 29-30).

Moyle continues with the same kind of description along with song texts that speak of healing, mythical creatures and stories to illustrate the healing practices. In one instance, he describes the treatment of a young boy who injured his leg falling from a tree. Two men lie on their stomachs and sing a song series with their mouths close to the boy’s leg. Once the songs are finished, they spit on the leg then forcibly straighten it out. The boy could not walk for six days but the ceremony was considered successful and later the boy was fine. There is no discussion of the role of music beyond mentioning that specific vocal songs accompany specific illnesses and ceremonies. While no model is proposed to better understand music’s role in the ceremony, the centrality of song text is emphasized.

From this study, a process emerges showing relationships between tuyutu songs and techniques used in psychotherapy and imagery: within categories of illnesses and conditions, labels exist regarding the person or situation (e.g. sick, ill, injured, dis-eased, stressed, patient, tense, critical, terminal); through guided mental imagery that often uses a combination of words, stories, music, and sounds, old labels are transmuted and new labels reassigned (e.g. cured, healed, well, resolved, peaceful).

Gilbert Rouget’s *Music and Trance* (1985) is a benchmark in terms of critically questioning a large body of ethnographic data up to 1980. The data he works with concern the relationships between music, trance, possession, and healing. While he does not conduct fieldwork for this study, his work continues to contribute to and
even frame aspects of today’s discourse. He defines music as any sonic event (excluding language) linked with trance that displays some rhythmic or melodic organization (Rouget 1985: 63). Through his own questions and answers, he seeks to debunk the theory that music triggers trance. He clarifies terms that have been used in the trance discourse and offers various definitions and features of altered states such as ecstasy, trance, and possession. According to Rouget, the distinctive features of ecstasy and trance exist in opposition to one another. In the following list the first term of each pair Rouget assigns to ecstasy, and the second term to trance:

“immobility/movement, silence/noise, solitude/in company, no crisis/crisis, sensory deprivation/sensory overstimulation, recollection/amnesia, hallucinations/no hallucinations” (Rouget 1985: 11). Rouget then discusses recognizable traits of a person in a trance state, which can be summarized as follows:

1. not in a usual state
1. the relationship to the surrounding world is disturbed
1. can fall prey to neurophysiological disturbances
1. abilities are increased
1. these abilities are manifested in action that is observable by others (Rouget 1985: 14)

Another main point of clarification for Rouget is that trance in shamanism is a phenomenon distinct from possession (Rouget 1985: 17ff). His distinction between these can be summarized as follows:

1. Shamanism occurs when a person (Shaman) journeys to and/or is in charge of embodying a spirit.
1. Possession occurs when a spirit is responsible for embodying a person who is not initiating the event.
In struggling with issues of so-called possession, shamanism and trance, Rouget draws on Levi-Strauss to present the dilemma between varying views on the real state of an entranced person:

The contradiction that I have spelled out can be resolved in two ways. Either the forms of behavior described by the terms “trance” and “possession” have nothing to do with those that we, in our society, call psychopathological; or one may regard them as being of the same type, in which case it is the connection with pathological states that must be regarded as contingent, and as resulting from a condition particular to the society in which we live. In the latter case we would be faced by a further choice of alternatives: either so-called mental illnesses, in reality outside the realm of medicine, must be regarded as sociological events affecting the behavior of individuals who have been dissociated from the group in a particular way by their personal histories and constitutions, or we must recognize in these sick people the presence of a state that is truly pathological but of physiological origin, a state that tends to create a terrain favorable, or, if you wish, “sensitizing”, to certain symbolic forms of behavior that still fall solely within the realm of sociological interpretation. (Levi-Strauss qtd. in Rouget 1985: 16)

This dilemma (originally stated in 1960) is still at issue in today’s discourse—although it is conveyed by a multi-vocal dialectic that includes the views of local participants, non-participants and researchers. In the following statement, Rouget begins to frame the question in the context of music and culture. He further grapples with the difficulties of his subject and provides scope to the questions raised in the introduction regarding the mind-set of the researcher and linking experience to understanding:

There is something paradoxical in the relations between music and possession. Seen from afar, in their totality, they appear most of the time to be absolutely necessary. Yet when one looks closer, the nature of that necessity appears incoherent and escapes all attempts at formulating it. This is because possession cults, of which there are so many various types, must be regarded as so many discrete systems whose internal logic will govern the articulation of their elements differently in each case. Music occurs as one of the component parts of those systems, and the role it plays varies with the models upon which
those systems are structured. But, since music is itself a system, its relations with each model is equally determined by its own organization, thus accounting for their protean character. How can we try to grasp such a constantly shifting reality? (Rouget 1985: 31).

Rouget attempts to gain access to a subject and understand it through a reflective process of research and questioning. In contrast, later scholars (many of whom are discussed in the following section) utilize a phenomenological approach to research. Friedson for instance, in his study of the musical healing practices of the Tumbuka, tries to access a reality not by “grasping” it through the acquisition of knowledge and reflection, but by “experiencing” that reality through a reflexive process of “doing phenomenology”9 (Friedson 1996: xvi, 6). “Doing phenomenology” by being immersed in and experiencing a culture from the inside is one of the most recent trends in ethnomusicology. Friedson attempts “to be” beyond the “participant/observer” approach into the level of total “experience”. Although Rouget does not discuss phenomenological “experiencing” as a means to access his topic, the following can be seen as encouraging such an approach:

It is clear that possession cannot be understood unless it is set in the system of representations of the society concerned. These representations, in their turn, must then be brought into relation with the way in which they are experienced in daily life, outside any form of ceremony. The least one can say is that we are very ill informed about this last kind of experience. What we do know however is that in societies having preserved an archaic way of life, which are precisely those in which possession cults are frequently found, the individual lives in constant sensorial contact with nature. He lives in perpetual intimacy with the elements, plants and animals. For him, the frontier between the animate and inanimate worlds is extremely vague. Men, beasts, plants, and things all have souls or are receptacles of souls. Every phenomenon is interpreted as resulting from the action or presence of a soul. The visible is constantly animated by the invisible (Rouget 1985: 123).

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Rouget’s general conclusion is similar to a basic assumption in medical anthropology—that traditional healing systems and ceremonies do more than treat illness, they structure and frame the sociocultural context of individual and community life. Moreover, trance and possession are socialized forms of behavior that have specific roles and goals to achieve within and without of the ceremonial context. Situating music and its role in healing inside and outside of the ceremonial context has remained a central issue in ethnomusicological and anthropological studies. It is precisely at this juncture between the ceremonial context and daily life where the importance of preventive practice arises.

In a critical transition from the formulations of Rouget in the 1980’s to the 1990’s, John Blacking’s concept of “the biology of music making” served as a framework for researchers from various fields to collaborate—including musicology, psychology, anthropology, and neuroscience. While Blacking did not specifically explore music and healing, his interest in the body encouraged questions related to our subject, including music’s ability to communicate emotion and meaning, the biological relationships between music, meaning, and performance, and the role of biology in musical universals. Ethnomusicology offered perspectives from diverse cultures and helped to bridge cultural and scientific studies with musical understanding. During the same period, medical anthropology was coming into a new stage of development and recognition. Medical anthropology claims that illness, as well as beliefs about illness, and modalities of treatment are neither singular nor solely
based on biology. Arthur Kleinman’s suggests that an integrated perspective, which includes both the body and culture, can perhaps best approach concepts of illness, treatment, emotion, the self, and the body. He gives the term “culture-biology dialectic” to conceptualize and indicate this view (see Kleinman 1988: 48ff.). From this period onward, a growing dialectic emerges between ethnomusicology, medical anthropology, music therapy, and the health sciences.

From 1990 to the Present

Since 1990, several ethnomusicological articles concerning music and healing have appeared in the discipline’s scholarly journals, including a special issue of The World of Music, 1997 v. 39(1) titled “Music and Healing in Transcultural Perspectives.” A more recent issue of the same journal, 2000 v. 42(2), “Spirit Practices in a Global Ecumene” is a continuation of the discussion in ritual and ceremonial practices. Other publications include collections of articles in the books: The Performance of Healing (Laderman and Roseman 1995); Musical Healing in Cultural Contexts (Gouk 2000); and Indigenous Religious Musics (Ralls-MacLeod and Harvey 2000). A few articles also appear in Ethnomusicology, and Asian Music. Every article will not be discussed individually since there are repetitions among them. Therefore, I will attempt to choose those that are representative of different cultures, approaches, and models.

As mentioned earlier, much research during this period has, in varying degrees, become increasingly phenomenological in nature. Ethnomusicologists immerse
themselves in the field to experience (Friedson, 1996), apprentice (Desjarlais 2000), or learn practices with the intent to link the newly gained knowledge to the wider society, at times in an applied way (Cook 1997, Amir 1997, Roseman 1991). Janzen (2000) acknowledges the effort of ethnomusicologists to place music at the center of music and healing, especially in Africa. However he questions the placement of trance at the center of African healing praxis and raises the question of the tranceless use of music, as well as the importance, even primacy of words in healing (Janzen 2000: 62). Further in this line of thinking is Rousseau’s (2000) argument that the voice, or carrier of words, is able to effect healing. Rousseau traces the historical consideration of the effect of the voice and concludes that in today’s research vocal affect and healing is the richest, yet to be undertaken project.

As more studies are produced, several questions and themes recur: what is actually doing the healing? If music is part of a healing component or practice that is essentially spiritual, is there any healing property in music when separated from its culturally spiritualized and empowered context? If not, then must one accept the belief system in order to receive musical healing? If so, then perhaps the healing effects of music can be engaged cross culturally. For instance, did Friedson believe in the vimbuza spirits and vimbuza music empowered to heal? In his first chapter (1996) he wonders if his “cultural baggage” would allow him access to the Tumbuka’s world of vimbuza music and healing. He does gain some degree of access and conveys his detailed first-hand experience in Tumbuka music-healing ceremonies. Friedson work,
like Roseman’s ethnography of the Temiar of Malaysia (1991), and other ethnographies from 1990 onward, certainly provides a more in-depth understanding of music-healing in a specific context. Yet, are we any closer to understanding music and healing outside the realm of vimbuza or the Temiar and one person’s experience? For Friedson, it is not really important. He is not after “knowledge” achieved through “manipulation and control[s]” (Friedson 1996:xvi), but experience and the question: “how is this musical experience possible?” (ibid). However, Friedson’s work relies on understandings that include manipulation and control and his ethnography cannot avoid the quest for knowledge of how the system in which he was immersed systematically functions—if it in fact functions systematically. He offers two descriptive models to better understand aspects of the Tumbuka healing practices that will be considered later in an attempt to provide models of approaching music and healing so that experience might be linked to research aimed at understanding potentially cultural-transcendent properties of music in healing.

In Healing Sounds from the Malaysian Rainforest (1991), Marina Roseman is among the first to combine the conceptual framework of medical anthropology with ethnomusicology to specifically research music in the context of traditional healing. Roseman (1991: 13-14) discusses the sectors of the Temiar’s “health care system” in the fashion of Kleinman to explore traditional treatments and healing practices. She focuses primarily on ceremonial practices performed by medium healers and also explores the intersection between traditional healing and the broader health care
system. Since ceremonial contexts of music-healing are laden with symbols and sounds that communicate and manipulate meaning between participants in ritual events, Roseman also draws upon performance theory\(^{10}\) to situate ritual symbols and sounds in the context of healing (ibid: 15). “During ceremonial performances, sentiments are modulated by sounds that have been imbued with networks of association. Sounds meaningfully situated activate emotions of longing, prompting their focus and release in the context of ceremonial performance” (ibid: 168).

Building on ideas gleaned from Kleinman, Roseman states that “[s]ince illness concepts and categories are closely linked with therapeutic strategies and thus are systems of knowledge and action...it was vital to investigate how Temiars think about, talk about, act out, and act upon illness—and how they contrive to avoid meeting with illness in the first place” (Roseman 1991:14). Roseman’s ethnography places the body at the center of her conclusion. “The body as nexus” (ibid:179) is the place where all the aspects of the culture meet and are modulated in the Temiar worldview, including the self, the other, the social, the physical, and spiritual (ibid).

In his article “Healing Process as Musical Drama,” Pinto (1997) proposes two models based on his ethnography of the *ebo* ceremony of the African-Brazilian Candomble religion. In one model, he orders and compares the “three cornerstones of the religious action that are perceivable by the senses”—action, text, and *toque* or rhythm. Through this chart he tries to make visible “the central invisibility...of the candomble” (Pinto 1997:28). The other interaction model draws a relationship

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\(^{10}\) Originally introduced into ethnomusicology by McLeod and Herndon in 1980, performance theory has become a major platform for ethnographic disciplines, including anthropology and folklore.
between the same three components with the substantive “content” in the center (ibid: 31). Although each ceremony produces a new “sacred order” of events, the meaning expressed by the symbols, their associations, and the functional role they play are preserved for all the participants. Family members are present at the ceremony and partly responsible for the healing process. Pinto supports the view that candomble music, like ceremonial music from diverse cultures, structures the ceremonial event and facilitates associations between the seen and unseen. In his conclusion, Pinto emphasizes that describing and analyzing the material aspects (actions, music, and text) of the ceremony is not enough; the sacred or spiritual fundamentals of candomble must be the starting point if “one desires to become familiar with this system-complex” (ibid:31).

Ijzermans offers a unique approach to the subject of music and healing, again in the context of African possession groups. He attempts to construct “a theory about music...[i.e.] a set of related statements aimed at explaining or predicting certain musical phenomena” (Ijzermans 1995:245). He does this through a reflexive and interactive process of consultation with various traditional healers in Zambia. The approach to healing is very similar to other possession groups in Africa discussed by Friedson and Janzen. In particular, his theoretical ideas about the role of temperature in African healing ceremonies closely relate to Friedson’s. Ijzermans describes that the music and dance “makes hot”, “boils”, or “cooks” (ibid:264) the ritual to a point that brings together the “human” and “extrahuman” worlds (ibid:267). Through the mediation of this process, healing can occur. His theory is not fully constructed and
his chief informant unfortunately dies before the project could be fully completed. He describes his approach as an “intersubjective form of theory development, the prolonged and continuous discussion between researcher and exegetes aimed at the construction of a theory about their music” (ibid: 247). This approach could be adapted for general use in musical healing research to better understand the theory behind local practices.

Friedson also uses an interactive model of consultation with his informants; and, although traditionally the rhythmic patterns essential for Tumbuka healing are never formally taught from teacher to student, he is able to study with a local master drummer and then transcribe the vimbuza rhythms. With this method, he takes the construction of a theory of music a step further. He transcribes ngoma drum rhythms and represents them in a horizontal row of squares. He places “R’s” or “L’s” in the top or bottom areas of the squares with supplementary symbols to indicate the kind of stroke to be played. In this way, he indicates which rhythms are used for which spirits and diseases. In addition, the approach helps him to connect performance practice with similar conceptualizations of hot and cold as encountered by Ijzermans. The “heating up” and “cooling down” cycle of the chilopa Tumbuka ritual is shown to be mediated through specific drum rhythms in the context of ceremonial performance (Friedson 1996: 91-98).

Strathern takes another approach that is somewhat necessitated by the context he studies. Healing seems to be indirectly linked to the function of at least one of the
Melpa rituals of Papua New Guinea. Strathern’s approach utilizes interviews, observation, and transcribing song text to approach music’s role in the ritual context. His study focuses on “the power of sounds” and “the power of words associated with different contexts of sound” (1995:219). These are the most important elements in the Melpa ritual context. Words are the nexus, and sound is the context. The meaning and impact of words can depend on their own sound structure and on their ritual context (ibid). This premise is similar to studies in psycholinguistics that consider how intended and understood meaning, and emotional content is modulated via word intonation (for example Pierrehumbert and Hirshberg 1990, and Ladd 1980).

Strathern gains access to secret rituals by paying a fee or by developing kinship ties with members. He finds associations between words, sounds, and the cosmology of the Melpa in a way similar to Feld’s study of the Kaluli, which shows how local worldview links the worlds of sound, nature, belief and daily life. Perhaps the most striking aspect of this study is the use of words and sounds that are empowered yet are almost silent (Strathern 1995:220). This brief article can help us appreciate the role of words, their sounds, and sound contexts when approaching music and healing since words are almost always involved. This is closely related Cooks article on “sacred music therapy” among Hindu healers in North India (Cook 1997) and music and healing in Iran.

Cook describes a “sacred music therapy” based on the principle of spanda, that “all things in the universe are in vibration” (Cook 1997: 64). She uses a participant/observer approach, primarily utilizing video recording and interviewing as
her field methods. Traditional healers sing sacred verses and devotional songs to guide a patient into a spiritual state where their disease can be identified and cured. Cook describes four stages in the healing process: induction, diagnosis, treatment, and curation (ibid). In her field research, she observed healing sessions where patients suffered from jaundice, fever, cripplings, and possessions. A healer’s role is to progressively lead the patient into a spiritual condition where they begin to chant the song of healing that has been identified by the healer’s diagnosis. If the source of the illness is not spiritual, the patient will be sent to an allopathic doctor, or treated with herbs. The basic assumption as to the efficacy of treatment is that through listening to sacred Vedic chants, or actively chanting sacred words and verses, both the physical and metaphysical vibrations permeate the patient’s being and restore it to health.

Cook offers a cross-cultural comparison between the Hindustani sacred form of music therapy and the Western “music”-centered approach to therapy. She finds the sacred version instructive and suggests that links between the Indian and Western versions of music therapy/healing can provide areas of further research. She suggests that music “allows patients to step outside the normal time-space continuum...[and] music becomes a container, connector, carrier, catalyst, co-therapist, and medicine” (Cook 1997: 80).

These can be summarized as follows:

- **container:** music creates an auditory field or atmosphere that manipulates mood and creates both tension and relaxation.
- **connector:** music links to memories, emotions and perceptions that may otherwise be hidden.

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carrier: music carries archetypes and central themes in human experience such as death, birth and freedom.
catalyst: music is a catalyst for emotional expression and physical responses.
co-therapist: music affects and guides the patient.
medicine: the physical or metaphysical vibration can stimulate body chemistry and physiology.

Cook’s article provides a good example of the interface between the researcher and the informant. Often when there are differing views, ethnographers can easily set aside the informants views, which essentially are the local belief system, for their own belief or understanding. When this happens, it is often done as a subtext in the ethnography and borders on the ethnocentric. In contrast, Cook allows for an open dialogue between herself and her informants and she shares the differences with her readers in a spirit of consultation and mutual learning. Her methods and goals are clearly stated. Through her narrative, she shares her own views that provide a background for her reflections, question, and interests. In light of her experiences in the field, she suggests that Western music therapy should consider the above six categories and include the spiritual or sacred aspects of music in research and practice.

Langenberg (1997) reports a case study of the efficacious use of active improvisatory music therapy. A model of improvisation is presented where the patient and therapist interact musically, then verbally. The patient plays a chromatic xylophone, and the therapist plays the piano. Empathetic music making stimulates the senses and acts as a catalyst for varied ways of understanding and working through problems (Langenberg 1997: 101-2). Unfortunately, this article does not discuss the
music. Langenberg claims “in [Western] music therapy, sound is understood as an archaic element beyond culture” (ibid: 97); and concludes by stating that “[t]he archaic element of this encounter process [case study] between patient and therapist in terms of improvisation resulting from spontaneously structured impulses is a phenomenon beyond culture” (ibid: 106). These statements seem pregnant with meaning and support the notion of universals in music but remain unexplored in this article. This and many articles in music therapy, often without intending to, raise the central challenge to studies in music therapy—considering the importance of culture in music, and music in culture. For example, it seems that since the music is the vehicle of therapy, its form is important. Indeed, the patient’s clinical progress is described and measured in terms of gross musical features and form (ibid: 104-5). So, since musical features and forms are intimately linked to culture and can be indicative of specific meanings, culture must be considered in order to better understand the relationships in any given case study. Another article (Amir 1997) in the same journal and volume, takes a more culture-based approach by framing Israeli music therapy practice in the cultural context and utilizing that frame as a tool for treatment.

Levin (1996) provides a work that is a benchmark in Central Asian studies. While he frames the ethnography as a travelogue, it is nevertheless much more. The scope of the work in terms of geographic and cultural range, as well as its ethnographic depth and sensitivity lays an essential foundation for future ethnographers in the region. Of particular interest here is the healing practices of the
baxshi—performers of oral poetry who serve several social roles throughout Central Asia. They are part of the region’s ancient shamanic practices, and can be known by different names depending on the area. Baxshi performances are described as “the recitation of musically heightened poetry [that] was understood to have a magical and potentially therapeutic effect on listeners....[which] could be intensified through an individual séance ...that included special incantations to facilitate contact with the spirit world and exorcise evil spirits from the body of a sick person” (Levin 1996: 146). Levin also explores the healing practices of Nur Bâbâ, an old and “enlightened” mulla of the Yagnâb Valley region (ibid: 212-215). These practices are grounded in “knowledge of hot and cold natures, or temperaments (Arabic: mizaj) of people, animals, and foods” (ibid). Healing occurs by establishing a balance between the temperaments and is practiced by three different types of healers: “the baxshi healed with a drum, i.e., with sound, the mulla healed with books, and the tabib healed with herbs” (ibid). Music is also stated to have the capacity to effect change in temperaments.

In “Of Shamans and Healers” (2000), Boyce-Tillman draws upon the works of ethnomusicologists and anthropologists regarding shamanistic practices from African, Malaysian, Mongolian, and North American Indian traditions of healing and rites of passage. These contexts revolve around the common theme of music and altered states of consciousness. She emphasizes that these traditions can only be understood from within the framework of each cultural mindset, yet common themes emerge
between them. In an attempt to categorize common features, she offers the following points:

**Ceremonies are:**
- communal in nature
- aimed at healing through a transformation of the self
- curative or preventative
- structured and flexible
- involve trained specialists (shamans or healers) and community members
- private and public

**Music is:**
- central to the ritual or ceremony
- a means to enter an altered state of consciousness
- used by the shaman to journey to the spirit world
- a way to communicate with spiritual beings
- provides structure to the ceremony and organization to the community

Boyce-Tillman’s *Sounding the Sacred* (2000) is not directly concerned with music and healing. Nevertheless, in one sense, sacred or religious music can usually be viewed as connected to healing. She draws on many traditions and historical periods to derive and construct models that might provide the basis for a universal sacred music. The first model in *Sounding the Sacred*, is a graphic of five interactive domains of musical experience (137). Namely “Materials, Expressive Character, Formal Structures, Values, and Transcendence/Spirituality” (ibid). These categories have strong parallels to Malarkey’s health science PIERS Review (see appendix B) that models the five domains of life: Physical, Intellectual, Emotional, Relational, and Spiritual. According to Malarkey, the proper balance between these five aspects are central to wellness, healthy aging, and often make the difference between life and death (Malarkey, 1999). These models bear a striking relationship to each other.
Moreover, both models intend to be universal (see figure 2).

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<tr>
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<td>Spirituality</td>
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**Figure 2: Comparison of music and health domains**

Boyce-Tillman’s second model illustrates “the interface between religion, culture and spirituality” (ibid:151). This model of three interconnected circles representing religion, culture, and spirituality, shows a common area where all are present and interact (ibid: 151). Although adding the parameter of culture to the above five-part models might not be necessary, understanding these models in the context of culture is. Notice that each parameter can be highly variable depending on an individual’s cultural framework, yet there is also some common underpinning to each.

Understanding and navigating between the culture dependent and culture transcendent then is a constant challenge. This can also be viewed as balancing between or understanding the relationships, tension and harmony between spirit and form, form and meaning, the unchanging and changing, the dependent and independent, science and religion. For example, what constitutes good physical health can vary between cultures, both in terms of nutrition and chemical balances in the body. Also, while the domains in the PIERS take a progressive holistic approach to
health, it is not yet a standard in the culture from which it comes—American biomedicine. In the case of music for example, the “expressive character” of music is likewise highly dependent on culture as are the other parameters listed above. These models then can be used as general principles that can adapt to different cultures and individuals. Expertise in applying these models will require training in culturally appropriate and meaningful communication and understanding.

Central to the use of music and sound in healing is aesthetics, which is at once a vehicle of efficacy within a certain cultural context, and a framework by which we can understand the potential universal applications of music and sound. Avorgbedor’s examination of the acoustic traits of specialized musical and unique natural sounds of the Anlo-Ewe is grounded in local aesthetics. He shows how certain sounds and music are viewed locally as having the power or “supra-human properties...capable of engaging the ‘hidden’ forces in order to effect physical and spiritual well being in individuals and communities” (Avorgbedor 2000: 9). At the same time, certain sounds are seen to cause physical, spiritual, or psychological disease, which can result in the ostricization of individuals or families. Healing and exorcism practices like many practices across cultures aim “to restore balance or health in individual biophysiologies or in an entire village” (ibid) through the balancing or bringing back into harmony the physical and spiritual worlds.

The most recent contribution to the discourse on music and healing is Emoff’s *Recollecting From The Past* (2002), also rooted in aesthetics. His ethnography of the *tromba* possession and healing ceremony from the east coast region of Madagascar is
a sensitively written work that strives to “transfer a feel for...Malagasy aesthetics” and practices through the written word (Emoff 2002: 1). To convey a local aesthetic through ethnography, Emoff utilizes *maresaka*, a Malagasy concept and aesthetic, which “calls for the combination and integration of a density of varied sonorities, visual elements, and bodily movement” (Emoff 2002: 60). He calls this is a kind of “echoing” in ethnography of the ceremonial event and fieldwork experience. While the practices of the *tromba* ceremony bear strong resemblances to many other spirit possession practices already mentioned here, the historical framework takes on a special meaning. To the Malagasy who practice *tromba*, history is not simply situated in the past, but a lived, recollected experiential dynamic that can facilitate resolution to conflict and effect healing. Through *tromba*, the serial nature of time perception (past, present, future) is melded into a non-linear web of living interaction.

Music-prayer healing practices as discussed in the present dissertation rely upon similar concepts of remembering and recollecting found in Emoff’s ethnography. In particular preventive practice depends upon multiple modes of remembering and enactment, translating into present lived experience, the values, attitudes and behaviors that constitute health and wholeness.

**The Case of Iran**

In the Baluchistan region of Iran, trance rituals are used for curing a specific kind of illness known as *guat*. Healing is achieved through prayer chants accompanied by various instruments: the *ney* and *do-ney*, the *tanbur* (used as a drone), the bowed *ghizhak* and *sorud*, and various percussion instruments. These ceremonies
aim to cure various possession diseases through music (Miller 1999: 19-20). Jean
During (1997) discusses the ritual context in more detail as it occurs in the Baluchi
section of Karachi. He emphasizes the role of prayer throughout the ceremony,
describing the participants, environment, and their general interaction with the music
and the ceremony’s strong connection to African healing rituals.

While altered states can also be found in relation to the classical tradition of
Iran, these are categorically distinct from those discussed throughout this chapter,
perhaps with some exception to Cook (1997). To my knowledge, there are no modern
studies that have explored the classical Persian *radif* (repertory) and its healing
effects. Yet there are sufficient claims in the literature to warrant further investigation.

Throughout Persian history, the therapeutic power of Persian traditional music
has been often noted (Miller 1999: 19), and in old times, music was considered to be a
“spiritual art that could produce all sorts of changes in the soul” (Safvat 1985: 18).
Safvat claims that Abol-Hosein Shahnazi cured a young man of typhoid by playing
*setar* for a half hour, and he supports Avicena’s claim that the sound of the *ney* could
also cure typhoid (Safvat 1997: 209-10). Claims of the *ney* curing typhoid still
circulate within various circles. In interviews with Iranian scholars, a recent case was
reported to me where a *ney* master cured a young man of typhoid near Tehran. Safvat
also lists six modes, each with specific curative or therapeutic effects (ibid). There
seems to have been ancient system of medical healing, which is mostly forgotten, and
which included the use of music and prayer. That system of medical healing it seems
utilized the applications of specific modes and instruments to certain maladies in order
to effect healing. Also, it seems that physicians, rather than traditional healers or spiritual leaders practiced such a system of musical-medical treatment. These notions were confirmed by my interviews with Dr. Shirinbek in Badakhshan who stated that other healers could have also practiced such a system, but that only remnants of those practices remain. He was very interested in these notions and hoped that they could be rediscovered through modern research.

Famous Persian physicians/philosophers, including Abu Ali Ibn Sina (Avecina) and Zakaria Razi have acknowledged and utilized the power of music in their practices (During et al 1991: 40; Miller 1999: 31). Safvat also claims that there is a culture-transcendent effect in authentic Iranian music. This is primarily due to the music’s link with religion, the mystical, and the transcendent (Safvat 1985, 1991). He states that the effect of traditional Persian music is in part related to its “inherent emotional content, delicacy, and effective components”(1991: 231-250). The effective components are considered to be aspects of the radif, the way the radif is played, and the extra-musical associations of the dastgah-gushe system that comprises the radif. The notion of Persian classical music having the ability to heal is linked to ancient Greek notions of the same (see Miller 1999, and Gouk 2000: 85,87). Claims based on these notions are yet to be thoroughly examined and can be neither fully accepted nor denied and should be viewed critically.

**Semiotic Modeling of Musical Healing**

In some instances semiotics has been employed as an effective means to understand and convey various aspects of traditional musical healing practices (see for
example Briggs 1996 and Hinton 1999). To underscore aspects of the model presented in chapter 2, I shall summarize specific concepts as set forth by Jean-Jacques Nattiez in *Music and Discourse* then summarize aspects of Hinton’s ethnography in light of these concepts.

**Nattiez and Extrinsic Referral**

In *Music and Discourse*¹¹ (1990: 118-127), as well as the article “Can One Speak of Narrativity in Music” (1990: 243), Jean-Jacques Nattiez outlines three general types of “extrinsic referral” of which music is capable: “spatio-temporal, the kinetic, and the affective.” For Nattiez, these three types of symbolic referral, as well as his basic concepts of the *semiology of music* are grounded in Peirceian semiotics, i.e. relationships between the *sign* (or *representatamen*), the *object*, and the *interpretant*¹² (*Music and Discourse*: 6-7). Nattiez particularly refers to Peirce’s “notion of the infinite and dynamic interpretant” (ibid: 8).

In order to develop a case for musical semiology, Nattiez makes clarifications of and additions to extant models. The following is not a complete summary. Rather, it will specify certain concepts and definitions that I find useful for applying semiotics to the model and in the music and healing discourse. Moreover, if all the points discussed in *Music and Discourse* are considered, a model could easily become too broad, encompassing everything, thereby ceasing to be useful for describing

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¹¹ *Music and Discourse* is an English translation of *Musicologie generale et semiologie* (Paris, 1987). See pages 155-164 for the discussion in French regarding “extrinsic-referral”.

¹² While these three levels stand out, they are, admittedly, a reduction of Peirce’s concepts. This is necessary here since a full discussion is beyond the scope of this chapter.
something specific. To focus on applying the most relevant aspects of Peircien semiotics to music, Nattiez utilizes a concise summary of Peirce’s tripartite model. This summary is also applicable to the semiotic frame utilized in the present dissertation:

> a sign or ‘representamen’ is a thing which is connected in a certain way to a second sign, its ‘object,’ in such a way that it brings a third sign, its ‘interpretant,’ into relationship with the same ‘object,’ and this in such a way that it brings a fourth sign into a relationship with this same ‘object,’ and so on ad infinitum (Granger qtd. in *Music and Discourse*: 5-6).

In Peirce’s model, and semiology in general, meaning and mediation are central concerns. That is, all signs have meaning; and “mediation is the characteristic of the Sign” (Peirce qtd. in *Music and Discourse*: 6). Mediation is the process by which signs, or objects and interpretants, interact. Nattiez states that an object has meaning when it becomes part of an individual’s lived experience (ibid: 9). He further suggests that signs do not only function in a linear way as Peirce describes, but that they “appear to be caught in a web of multiple interactions” (ibid: 7). Moreover, the meanings ascribed to signs by individuals are polyvalent and dynamic. Thus, for Nattiez, “a sign, or collection of signs, to which an infinite complex of interpretants is linked, can be called A SYMBOLIC FORM” (ibid: 8).

As one point of departure, Nattiez draws upon Molino’s example of an “eighteenth century literary parlor game” (ibid: 11) of comparing arbitrary and “unrelated” words. The game is based on the formula *A is to B as X is to Y*. Nattiez builds a tripartite model for semiotic analysis that provides for comparison and ascribing of meaning between apparently unrelated symbols. That is, *A seems
unrelated to $B$, just as $X$ is to $Y$, yet there is a relationship, and, moreover, the pairs can serve as metaphors for each other. In describing the symbolic phenomenon, which, Nattiez would argue is always present, he describes three dimensions: poietic, ethesic, and trace (or neutral).

1. The poietic dimension is dynamic and generative; and is not dependent on intended meaning. Meaning can be created through the interaction of signs.
2. The ethesic dimension is that of “receivers” or signs that assign meaning(s) to other signs or “symbolic forms”.
3. The trace, or neutral level is the physical or material embodiment of the symbolic form where the “immanent and recurrent properties” are accessible to the senses and analyzable. (ibid: 11-12)

Lastly, for Nattiez, since music is polysemic, the symbolic form must be viewed “as designating music’s capacity (with all other symbolic forms) to give rise to a complex and infinite web of interpretants...[which] are divided into neutral, poietic, and esthesic [dimensions]” (ibid: 37).

Hinton (1999) makes a semiotic analysis of an Isan healing ceremony in Northeastern Thailand. Nattiez’s extrinsic referral is not discussed per se, however Hinton’s ethnography rests directly upon them, and on the assumption that persons “are both embodied and emplaced” (Hinton 1999: 50). Hinton suggests that issues of body, poetics, and praxis, emerge from and “resonate with a certain locality, [and that] interpersonal dynamics, bodily hexis, and psychology/physiology, derive from specific images of the lived environment” (Hinton 1999: 50). He also emphasizes that the “importance of local metaphorical and ethnophysiological models...emerge from
images of practical activity and the built and natural environment” (ibid). These themes underlie all of Hinton’s ethnography.

In Isan musical healing, the extrinsic affect is a result of metaphor and signs being both embodied by individuals and emplaced in the world. There are key metaphoric relationships between the landscape, natural and built objects, water, bodily hexis, contour or arch, poetics, music, dance, physiology, health, and illness. These form a symbolic web and operate between opposing dyads that can be described in terms of health and disease (see figure 3).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Health</strong></th>
<th><strong>Disease</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>water</td>
<td>drought</td>
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<td>moist</td>
<td>dry</td>
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<tr>
<td>flowing</td>
<td>unflowing/blocked</td>
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<td>flexible</td>
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<td>arched</td>
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<td>loose</td>
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<td>hollow</td>
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<tr>
<td>cool</td>
<td>hot</td>
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<tr>
<td>poetic/song language</td>
<td>regular language</td>
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**Figure 3: Comparison of health and disease by Devon Hinton**

The transition from disease to health is mediated by metaphor. For example, the primary signs that mediate a healing rite are the *kaen* flute music, the medium’s song
and poetics, and the dance. Each of these is actually a combination of signs, with its own set of objects and interpretants. For example, “kaen flute music” consists of the following: the OO plant, a result of interactions in nature; the instrument, which is a result of the interaction between a person, a tool, and the OO plant; and music, which, in part is the result of the interaction of a person and the flute. These are even incomplete—as it was mentioned, the interpretants are endless. Nevertheless, further comparisons with the kaen will provide scope to the meaning embodied in the metaphor, which enables it to mediate transformation of the person from illness to health.

For instance, in the ritual context, the patient, dance, and the dance technique necessary for the performance of healing rites can be considered the signs or the signified objects that mirror the OO plant. The OO is a bamboo-like plant, which is hollow between nodes and is used to make the kaen flute used in ritual healing music (ibid:6-8). In a more strict Peircian view, the OO is the sign (representamen), the person/patient is the object, and the subsequent signs or impressions are the interpretants. From Nattiez’s interactive symbolic web model (Music and Discourse: 102 ff.), the various elements are in a dynamic state of interaction and construction of new meanings and interpretants.

The OO has nodes, which, are likened to joints of the human body. The OO is more flexible than bamboo, “it bends but does not break; it arches beautifully under the various influences, bends at all its joints...so too a human should learn to bend supplely at all the joints, this bespeaking not only humbleness but also a mental
flexibility” (ibid). This aspect of space and place (the plant is part of nature and a certain locality) is expressed temporally, kinetically, and itself is affective, especially in the dance. During the dance, the healer/medium, referring to the various movements of bodily joints and the patterns created in the dance, verbally encourages the patient to “play all the patterns, until your heart is refreshed” (ibid: 6). This is also compared to the natural pattern between the *OO* plants as they exist in nature.

Hinton points out a basic relationship between language for the kaen and language for humans (ibid: 8). The hollow sections of the *OO* are called *pboong*, which is the same word for being smart. Being smart is the same as having a pure heart that is empty of self. The nodes have the same name as human joints, *kooh*. Aesthetically, the *OO* is considered beautiful for its bending quality and hollowness; a person is considered beautiful for the quality of flexibility and openness of heart. A healthy heart is a cool heart, and coolness is achieved by the cleansing of the heart with water (ibid).

Water symbolizes the source of life for humans and nature. The “water heart” of the healer enables her to give “water words” to “cool” the “dry hearts” of the patients (ibid: 4). Moreover, the water is found in natural and man-made ponds, in poetry and song, in nature, and in the human body—embodied literally and metaphorically. The ritual space is considered “a kind of deep water hole where the waters circle...a place of ritual dance and play, of embodying sung metaphor and enacting it” (ibid:9). The poetry gives rise to the concept of play in relation to freedom of heart and mind: “spin in the deep place in the river,” ”come down and play
in the waters,” “if you are tired come and clear your heart in the swirling waters,” and “I will scoop out my water heart to you” (ibid). Throughout the dance, the participants will live the metaphor by mimicking the action of the currents of water and the bending plants and flowers that interact with the water. Hinton describes Isan ritual as a kind of multi-modal, multi-sensing experience that conveys and imprints meaning through the “kinesthetics of dance, the singing of metaphors of the medium, watching others ‘play’ various ‘patterns’ while dancing and hearing of ‘multi-currented’ music (ibid: 10-11). Also, the kaen instrument and its music, serve as a flowing, entrancing energy where the dancers become like the OO plant, physically bending and becoming flexible which is a sign of healing—becoming unblocked, flowing, whole.

**Conclusion**

Do we understand music and healing more today than when Densmore described that sacred stones have healing properties? Or when Gunther described the “guardian spirit dancing” ceremony? I believe so. However, after almost a century of research since Densmore, and fifty years since Gunther, perhaps we should be further along than we are.

I have attempted to present a historical overview, which shows how various studies in different periods have viewed and approached musical healing. Within a research environment that covers a range of disciplines and concerns, recurrent themes emerge and new directions develop—necessarily, a diversity of approaches will be utilized. Yet, I suggest that points of unity need to be established regarding the culture
transcendent aspects of musical healing. Moreover, to better understand any healing practice, both the physiological and cultural elements must be considered. This can be viewed as a “culture-biology dialectic” (Kleinman 1988: 48ff.), which goes beyond ethnography about the body, which alone cannot speak to the physiological processes completely—some objective measures are needed. Hence, combining ethnography with physiological experimentation I suggest is one way to bridge the gap in musical healing research.

Experimentation adds a new aspect to the discourse between researchers by providing structured experimental designs and data. Experimental approaches can then be critically viewed and improved upon in other field or laboratory contexts, thus creating a type of *shared experience* between researchers and participants that is not bound by time or place. Moreover, experiments can offer valuable insight into musical healing that is neither mediated by language nor filtered through the mind of the researcher to the same degree as ethnography. Neither experimentation nor ethnography alone can hope to provide a comprehensive view of healing. Together however, I believe a more holistic, truer understanding can begin to emerge. Given the nature of ethnomusicology, its interests and ability to collaborate across academic disciplines, I believe that ethnomusicologists are in a unique position to offer new and meaningful approaches to the discourse. Balancing between ethnographic and scientific methods I suggest is the next step in carrying the discourse of musical healing forward.
As the myriad illnesses afflicting humanity increase daily, reaching unimaginable degrees—far too horrific and well known to recount here, music and healing takes on a deeper meaning for me. There is a need for individual and societal healing. I do not believe it is a coincidence that the consciousness of scholars from various disciplines is now embracing this area to a greater degree than ever before. For me, there is a practical, service-oriented impetus behind this interest. During what might well be considered the most dynamic, tragic, yet hopeful and promising epoch in human history, a deeper and more comprehensive knowledge of music and healing can contribute to our understanding of the world and our ability to shape it.

Music, prayer and healing deal with a universe of ideas, beliefs, and practices that can change the way we view the world and each other. “Healing” occurs both on the individual and societal level. There were numerous instances of such power exemplified at the “2002 Smithsonian Folklife Festival, The Silk Road: Connecting Cultures, Creating Trust”. For example, over one million people who visited the festival learned from and interacted with people and cultures, about which they often knew very little or were perhaps ill informed. Festival participants also learned from the public and each other and developed a unity that transcended borders of culture, religion, language, nationality and ethnicity. For instance, in rare performance-workshops on devotional music, music was a bridge between Asyrian Christians and Usbeki Jews; and between Indian Hindus and Pakistani Muslims. The groups performed together or shared the same stage to show the unity of spirit conveyed in different musical forms. However, it was surprising to the participants and audience
that the musical forms were also very similar. In the midst of the rich diversity of the
festival, which included groups spanning cultures from China to Italy, with a large
Central Asian representation, there was a palpable sense of unity that pervaded the
Mall and perhaps beyond. Themes of unity in diversity, the power of thought and
belief, performance and prayer, and more were shared throughout the festival and
emphasized in a final day’s morning ceremony. There at the site named the “Tree of
Life”, prayers that had been written during the festival by participants and public alike,
were placed together and burned. As the smoke rose to a cello performance by Yo-Yo
Ma, the festival’s director, Richard Kurin expressed the hope that the spirit of the
prayers and the festival, metaphorically ascending with the smoke, would be carried
across the world and create stronger ties of unity and peace—such as had been
experienced on this Silk Road journey.
He drew a circle that shut me out—
    Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
    But Love and I had the wit to win:
    We drew a circle that took him in!
    - Edwin Markham

Kuh be kuh nemiresad,
    Ådam be ådam miresad.

Mountains come not together,
    People always return to one another.
    -traditional

Proposing A New Model: Music-Prayer Dynamics

The new model presented below emphasizes those aspects that have not been considered in ethnographic or health science literature. Namely, the dynamic relationships between music and prayer in the context of healing, as well as their combined or unified expression as a unique phenomenon.

Chapter 1 has shown music at the center of diverse practices of healing where beliefs in the supernatural or spiritual domain have framed the contexts where music is performed. While prayer is often mentioned, its role and relationship to music is not critically examined. On the other hand, in biomedical research concerning
intercessory prayer and the mind-body problem, the converse is true. That research clinically grapples with the questions of “spirituality” and “religiosity” without trying to unpack the loaded meanings in cultural practices or belief systems and their roles in healing. The general approach taken in biomedical research is to implement a practice of prayer in a controlled, clinical setting and compare outcomes between test and control groups (see Byrd 1998, Harris et al 1999, and Dossey 1994). However, biomedical research has yet to include the important factors of music, sound, chanting, singing, intoning, and culture in their experimental designs and case studies. For clinical research that concerns prayer, spirituality or religiosity, it is critical to consider the role of music and culture.

For instance, in diverse religious contexts, music is almost always an essential part of worship, which is culturally determined and expressed. Music itself is often a form of prayer, or a prayer is often offered in a musical form. The role of music or sound can entirely change the experience and potential power of prayer. In some cases, the prayer and its sound or musical form is one. Hence, when studying the effects of music or prayer, both components must be considered to discover what makes a practice efficacious. Moreover, one component might make a music or prayer intervention efficacious or powerless, depending on the individual cultural associations and beliefs. For example, a healing prayer might be rendered powerless if the musical form is not suited to an individual’s cultural aesthetics; or music could be powerless if it is used in a context devoid of spiritual associations essential for an individual to be affected by music’s potential healing power. Figure 4 models how
ethnographic and scientific research has conceptually framed the components of music and prayer. Note that although meditation can stand alone as discussed earlier, the model views meditation as a practice linked to and interwoven with prayer.

**Figure 4: Research model with separate domains of music and prayer.** The figure shows research in which music and prayer are viewed as distinct, unrelated components in healing.

To approach this problem holistically, I propose *music-prayer dynamics* (see figure 5), as a model to conceptualize the practices of music and prayer in diverse contexts of healing, daily human experience, as well as ethnographic and experimental research. *Music-prayer dynamics* is designed in light of extant ethnographic and health science research, maintaining binary relationships between parameters and adding two new parameters that explore the confluence of music and prayer. Hence,
the model considers both the individual and integrated uses of music and prayer. The model comprises four parameters: music alone, prayer alone, music and prayer combined, and unified music-prayer. The model is versatile and can be applied in a strict or more open sense. Generally, experimental studies will utilize a strict application, and ethnographic studies a more open one. The *music-prayer dynamics* model is designed to explore the question of efficacy and to investigate the extent to which the effect of the four parameters is culture-dependent or culture-transcendent.
Figure 5: Music-Prayer Dynamics Model
This model represents the confluence of music and prayer in the context of healing, daily life experience, and ethnographic and experimental research. Each circle represents an individual parameter. Binary relationships can be seen at the intersection between each pairing of two parameters. The combination and unification of music and prayer seen in the center is potentially the most efficacious parameter to effect healing.13

13 See appendix C for a construction of the music-prayer dynamics model that includes meditation as a separate parameter.
In experimental research, the model can be used as a frame for testing the efficacy of the various parameters. For example, in two pilot studies\(^\text{14}\) conducted to test the model, the most basic formulations were used consisting of music alone, prayer alone, and music and prayer combined. The music alone parameter consisted of a solo instrumental excerpt; the prayer alone parameter consisted of recited prayers; and the combined music and prayer parameter consisted of a combination of the first two excerpts. Questionnaires were used to measure participants’ self reported levels of distress and general well being; and daily journals were written by participants to record other perceptions and experiences. In a subsequent pilot study, a different formulation of the model was tested: one stimulus consisted of an excerpt of devotional instrumental music—a recorded solo performance of the Persian *ney*; another stimulus consisted of a contrasting instrumental musical excerpt of the World Saxophone Quartet; and the third stimulus consisted of reading a “neutral text” from a graduate school student handbook. Participants consisted of three Iranian families—parents who were raised in Iran and spoke Persian as their first language; and teenage children who were raised in America who spoke English as their first language but who also spoke some Persian. A questionnaire was again used, and a physiological index of distress was added to the experimental design. This pilot study compared the three stimuli in a pre-test post-test design where heart-rate was measured two times before and two times after each stimulus. The questionnaire was again administered after each stimulus. While these pilot studies did not produce

\(^{14}\) See Koen, 2000: M.A. thesis for a detailed discussion.
statistically significant results due to small sample sizes, many insights were gained that were perhaps more important at that stage of experimentation. Notably, that music and prayer seem to influence each other in dynamic ways, effecting positive and negative changes in psychological and physiological distress; and that these effects are often linked to cultural associations and individual experience. Moreover, the combined or unified parameters are potentially the most efficacious for the downward modulation of stress. The model can also function as a frame for critically viewing experimental research that has not considered cultural factors or the relationships between music and prayer in their designs.

**Music-Prayer Dynamics in Field Research**

For ethnomusicological field research, the model can serve as a conceptual frame shedding light on the dynamic relationships between music and prayer in diverse cultural contexts of healing. This accommodates a more holistic view of any given healing context or “sacred clinical reality” where these components are present. The model also facilitates cross-cultural comparison by establishing common ground between research projects. As a flexible framework, the model allows for a diversity of cultural expressions, while conceptually approaching the problem with both culture specific and universal potentials in mind.

In my field research, the *music-prayer dynamics* model was utilized for both the ethnographic and experimental aspects of the project. Figure 6 below shows how broad and specific aspects of the cultural context can be modeled and categorized.
The categories below are not exhaustive and are meant to provide a broad range of conceptual possibilities for ethnographic research. Moreover, the understandings gained through ethnographic research can then inform or frame experimental research, which would focus on one or more variables in light of cultural context.
Figure 6: Expansion of Music-Prayer Dynamics Model

15 This is an adaptation of the PIERS Model (Malarkey 1999: 30) discussed in chapter 1 and shown in appendix B, figure 2. The holistic model shows five domains of human life essential for good health—Physical, Intellectual, Emotional, Relational, and Spiritual.
In the above graphic, each component of the *music-prayer dynamics* model is elaborated upon to broaden the range of ethnographic consideration. The model provides for interconnections between all subcategories. For ethnographic purposes much insight can be gained by posing questions based on the graphic. In addition, questions should be posed to a range of individuals who can inform the subject, thus providing a multi-vocal and richer representation of a practice, genre, cultural context, and performative event.

**Etiology and Belief: Applying The Model In Badakhshan**

In Badakhshan, there are special genres of music and prayer that exist within the broader complex of local beliefs and traditional healing practices. Certain beliefs and practices can be either curative or preventive in nature, or both. *Maddâh* devotional music is the most important music-prayer genre among these practices. I experienced and explored multiple approaches to music and prayer in Badakhshan, all of which corresponded to parameters of the model (see case below and chapter 3).

Local etiology and beliefs about healing often vary between community members, including patients and healers. In Badakhshan “healers” include: religious leaders, *mulla-s* and *khalifa-s*; mystical figures or people believed to have *baraka* (spiritual power that can bless and heal), including *pir-s*, *mir-s*, *dervish-s*, *maddâhkhan-s*, and local elders who practice folk remedies; herbalists and naturopathic doctors; and Russian trained biomedical physicians. Patients include anyone who becomes ill by physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual causes. Patients
often utilize a combination of treatments and approaches by seeking out different healers. This depends on the patient’s beliefs and resources, the nature of the illness, and which healers are available. Usually, physical disease is treated by herbal and/or biomedical approaches. An herbalist, physician, religious leader or mystical figure can treat psychological and emotional illness; and the religious leader or mystical figure treats spiritual illness. Illnesses of an emotional, psychological, or spiritual nature often have physical symptoms. Hence, diagnosing the cause is of central importance. Diagnosis can often be very similar between healers, relying on interviewing the patient and knowing the patient’s medical history. However, for the spiritual healers, spiritual insight and spiritual knowledge is key for a successful diagnosis. This insight and knowledge is an aspect of the same spiritual energy known as baraka. Through the healers’ spiritual state, they can diagnose the cause of the illness. For patients, often no specialized treatment of any kind is available. In such a case, people rely on prayer and their own knowledge of traditional or family remedies.

While there is a diversity of views about illness and healing in Badakhshan, in general, local etiology and beliefs consider the domains of PIERS as potential sources of illness, as well as healing. For instance, there are Physical/material, Intellectual/mental/psychological, Emotional, Relational/social, and Spiritual/metaphysical causes of and cures for illness. Moreover, each domain of PIERS can potentially be affected by music and prayer separately or in combination.
Case Study

The case below shows one way in which the *music-prayer dynamics* model can be utilized and how the parameters interact. In the specific practice described below, the parameter of prayer alone, i.e. without music or chanting, was the primary treatment, with the exception of Koranic cantillation, which was performed at times by the *khalifa*. This consisted of several practices of prayer alone:

1. The *khalifa* writing prayer amulets known as *tumâr* that the patient, Mr. Ma’ruf would read, place in his mouth, or wear around his neck. Examples of the *tumâr* are discussed in detail and shown in chapter 3.

2. Mr. Ma’ruf praying and reciting sacred verses individually, silently and aloud without chanting. These passages were specifically prescribed by the *khalifa*.

3. The *khalifa* praying and reciting sacred verses individually, silently and aloud without chanting. At times he would recite prayers in the style of the Koran.

4. The apprentice praying and reciting sacred verses individually in the same manner as the *kalifa*.

5. All three praying together. In this arrangement, one person would pray silently or aloud and the other two would focus their attention and join in the prayer silently.

Chanting or singing prayers aloud, with an individualized or prescribed form did have its place and specified function in the traditional practice of prayer-healing in Badakhshan, but was not being applied to this patient. An apprentice was studying the
practice of prayer healing with the *khalifa*. He often would treat the patient instead of the *khalifa*. In our interviews the apprentice served as an “interpreter” between our research team and the *khalifa*, not because of a language barrier, but out of respect. This formality was not common. In all other interviews with religious leaders, we spoke directly with them in a respectful and frank manner.

The apprentice explained that chanting *ba âvâze boland* “with loud singing” was only performed in special cases where the illness was of a spiritual or psychological origin. In the minds of the *khalifa* and his apprentice, as well as in the practice itself, a marked difference existed between prayers with chanting, “*du’a bâ âvâz khândan,*” and those without chanting, intoning, or musical gesture “*du’a bi âvâz khândan.*”

Although this patient was suffering from a condition of psychological/spiritual origin, the healer did not prescribe any chanting at the present stage of treatment, but focused on reciting and writing specified verses and prayers. The *khalifa* and apprentice explained that chanting and using music had a special power that could change the psychological and spiritual atmosphere of the patient and therefore must be used only at the appropriate time with certain patients. The power of *intoned sound* used in chanting was believed to “penetrate deeply” into the *being* of the patient and have more impact and affect in the body, mind, and soul. When to utilize such chanting could only be determined on a case-by-case basis and they were not certain that it would ever be performed for this patient.
Mr. Ma’ruf was suffering from a psychological/spiritual condition that was related to a kind of nervous breakdown that he had experienced several months prior to our interviews. The apprentice explained that Mr. Ma’ruf’s ability to communicate verbally was limited as was his general ability to interact with others and his immediate environment. Initially, he had lost his ability to read and write. Over the course of his treatment with the khalifa, he had made significant progress, though not yet to his previous capacity. He also had a chronic toothache with facial swelling, which they believed was somehow related but primarily of a physical origin. There were no other symptoms. He had sought biomedical remedies from physicians in Pakistan and Tajikistan to no avail, as well as herbalists in Badakhshan with limited, temporary relief for his tooth only. Mr. Ma’ruf was now seeking the help of the local khalifa who practiced one kind of spiritual healing that draws upon prayer and the recitation of sacred verses as described above.

In my interviews with the khalifa, his apprentice, and Mr. Ma’ruf, they attributed the cause of his condition to a kind of psychological injury related to the pursuit of a special knowledge that he had come too close to in his intellectual and spiritual quest for enlightenment. The apprentice explained that the knowledge itself was not the problem. Rather, Mr. Ma’ruf’s capacity had not grown to the point to handle the new knowledge when he tried to understand it, similar to athletes who attempt feats beyond their physical capacity and consequently injure themselves. The khalifa and apprentice did not know exactly what the specific knowledge was, nor could Mr. Ma’ruf disclose the circumstances or incidents that led to and caused his
injury. This did not seem to matter in terms of treatment, which consisted of a flexible, weekly schedule of reading and transcribing prayers, sacred verses, and other mystical passages from the Koran and special books that had been in the khalifa’s family for many generations.

During the period of Soviet control, most of these books were taken and burned, leaving only a few. Two such published books were briefly shown to me. The first was organized according to illness or injury to a specific part of the body. Under each illness, certain verses and prayers were written that could be given as a treatment for that specific condition. Sometimes the illness or body part was mentioned in the prayer, but not always. For example, the instructions for a prayer that was being used for Mr. Ma’ruf’s toothache directed the khalifa to write the specified prayer on a piece of paper and that it should be placed in the patient’s mouth next to the injured tooth. The prayer itself was of a general nature that focused on the power and mercy of God and the patient asking for assistance and healing. In addition, some sections of this book would indicate a specific herb or food that should be consumed. The apprentice expressed the desire to work more closely with herbalists but there were none that lived near their village.

The second book was “from an ancient time” az zamâne qadim, and was organized into two sections, khub va bad—“good and bad”. The first section was khub and used for healing, blessings and good fortune. The bad section was to curse or cause misfortune. Upon showing this book to me, the apprentice immediately
clarified that they only used the *good* section and that the other section had fallen out of use and that likely no other copies even existed.

In utilizing the prayers and verses from these and other sources, at times the *khalifa* and patient would pray together, at times alone. Certain passages were often selected by the *khalifa* and written in the form of a *tumâr*. The same and other passages would also be prescribed by the *khalifa* for Mr. Ma’ruf to read, recite and write. In answer to my questions regarding the use of the voice in the reading or recitation of the prayers and verses, the apprentice said that usually Mr. Ma’ruf would perform the prayers and verses silently. This kind of internal practice or *dialogue* between Mr. Ma’ruf’s mind, soul and God seemed to be gentler and more meditative in nature than if chanting or music were utilized. The apprentice and my local research associates described Mr. Ma’ruf as being in a fragile mental state that slowly needed to be strengthened. Hence, internal practices were emphasized at this stage of treatment. There was much unknown to the *khalifa* and apprentice regarding Mr. Ma’ruf’s case. In principle, they were certain that chanting and music could be effective agents of healing, but in conditions like Mr. Ma’ruf’s, they must be introduced and applied gradually.

The apprentice was very interested in collaborating with other specialists. He stated “at times we work and consult with herbalists and physicians from the hospital who sometimes send us their patients”. Sometimes the *khalifa* and apprentice serve as counselors to address the psychological conditions of patients. In such cases, *healing*
is viewed as a process of psychological transformation. At other times, the baraka inherent in the prayer, verse, or healer is viewed as the source of healing.

In explaining the way that prayer functions, the apprentice explained two concepts. The first he explained was a difficult system to understand totally because of its links to mathematics and mythology, and since most of the knowledge about the practice had been lost or destroyed. The second explanation was an overarching principle that was always involved for any particular treatment to be effective. The apprentice briefly explained the first approach as a “complex mathematical system” based on the Arabic abjad system where each letter of the alphabet has an assigned numeric value. In choosing the prayers, the names of the patient and the patient’s mother were calculated in terms of their numeric value. Each letter’s value as well as the cumulative value of each name has certain linguistic, cultural and astrological associations. Other associations relate to the time and place of birth. Based on these numbers and their relationships, certain prayers are chosen. “If the names of the patient, the mother, or the star, day, week, month, and year under which the patient was born, and the relationships between all these are not properly calculated, then it [the prayer] won’t work”. This is one of the practices that the apprentice was learning from the khalifa and he could not explain more, nor would the khalifa discuss the subject further.

In the second approach they emphasized that more important than the details of the numeric system or the use of music or chanting, or which prayers and verses were chosen, was the spiritual state and intention of the healer and patient. Specifically,
“if there is trust and belief in the person, the [prayer] that I transcribed becomes an instrument, a tool between God and us...and we are then influenced by that power.” He further explained that 

"everything is in God’s hands” and the instrument or treatment is secondary and dependent on purity of heart—“if you don’t have a pure heart, if a person himself is not pure, no prayer can have any effect, no prayer can have any effect, the difficulty in the knowledge (or science of prayer) is just that—you must have a pure heart, only with a pure heart should we pray, then it will be accepted. In other words, such prayer becomes a healing treatment for the sick one”. He continued to say that their practice has been very successful and even cured his wife’s bone disease, as well as many other patients with a spectrum of diseases.

Chapter 3 will explore other practices of music and prayer in Badakhshan in detail, as well as frame these practices in the broader soundscape of my field experience. Examples of music and prayer will show how various aspects of the model can help to frame ethnographic research.
Methods And The Ontology Of Oneness

Ontology and epistemology can be viewed as two aspects or frames that characterize and guide field research (Rice 1997: 106ff; Beaudry 1997: 63-83; Kisliuk 1997: 23-43). Ontologically, contrary to the dominant, binary and often divisive perspectives that frame the field in terms of “we – they”, “insider- outsider”, “researcher – informant”, “Western – Eastern”, and “native – foreigner”, I believe that the all-inclusive perspective of that there is only “we” is more productive. Of course, this “we” is neither singular, static, nor an expression of sameness. Rather, it is a kind of a mosaic, a fabric of infinite diversity whose threads are interwoven at multiple levels. It is a manifestation of the principle of unity in diversity that allows for and demands difference in the various parts of an entity for that entity to be healthy and whole. Surely, the current use of these opposing terms in ethnomusicology is at times due to the conventions of language, for the sake of convenience, the desire to express the views of people other than the researcher, or in an effort to be “objective”. However, there is often embedded in these terms meaning that not only shapes the ethnography, but the manner in which ethnographic methods are employed. Of course, any ontological view will shape how methods are used and data collected and shared. Nevertheless, views that do not allow for unity in diversity, and which perpetuate practices that prefer to neatly box up, categorize, and label groups of people are not only limiting to research, but potentially dangerous, especially in a field like ethnomusicology which is often responsible for educating people about cultures and people with which and about whom they are unfamiliar or perhaps misinformed.
Viewing the field as a physical and mental space that is inclusive rather than exclusive I believe is essential to advance ethnomusicological research. That is, the field need not be viewed as “out there”, some “other”, often “foreign” place where one goes to collect data. Rather, the field can also be viewed as “in here”, a boundless, inclusive circle, any and every place in the world, in and of the mind—beyond notions of in and out. Perhaps the field is neither here, nor there, but an “already given condition” into which we all are born. Perhaps the field simply is not.
Az to harakat,
Az khodā barakat.

From you action,
From God blessing.
-traditional

The Roof of the World

Badakhshan, poetically known as kuhestân—mountainland, and the roof of the world, is the ethnographic site of the present study. The province is home to most of the shi’eh Isma’ils that live in Tajikistan, who represent approximately 5% of the Tajik population, some 90% of which are sunni Muslims. Badakhshan is bordered by Afghanistan on the west and south, China on the east, and Kyrgyzstan on the north.

The province of Badakhshan is divided into several linguistic groups. A comprehensive linguistic study of the region has not been conducted. Berg (1997) states that there are a number of dialects current in the province with the main spoken languages being the Shughni-Roshoni group, and the Waxi (or Wakhi) group; and that “...each village of Shughnon and Rushon has its linguistic particularities” (Berg 1997: 22). Berg provides the following subdivisions of the languages and dialects spoken in Badakhshan. The Shughni-Roshoni group consists of Shughni, Roshoni, Bartangi,
Oroshori, and Sariquli (spoken only in Xinjian); Waxy is spoken in Waxon; Yazgulami is spoken along the Yazgulam river; Ishkashimi in Ishkashim, also known as Ryni from the name of the village Ryn (ibid). One of my informants added only one other language to the above list, Vrang from the village of Vrang located northeast of Ishkashim along the river Panj. Leila Dodykhudoeva classifies local languages in the following categories: Shughni, Rushani, Khufi, Bartangi, Roshorvi, Sariqoli, Yazgulami, Wakhi, Ishkashimi. Tajik-Persian is spoken as a common language throughout Tajikistan, including Badakhshan, where Shughni is also common among most Badakhshanis. Languages in Badakhshan, indeed in all of Central Asia have existed in a constant state of tension and transformation. The Soviet program, which began in the late 1920’s, aimed at replacing local scripts and languages with Cyrillic and Russian, which was firmly in place by 1940 (Allworth: 81). Such forced transformation struck at the heart of the Tajik aesthetic, which is intimately linked to classical Persian poetry and literature. Over some six decades of Russian language use, and utilizing only Cyrillic instead of Persian script to write and read Tajik-Persian, Tajiks have a complex and mixed relationship with both Russian and Persian. Each language has certain associations with powerful cultural forces in Tajik history; for example Russian is associated with communism and all things “Soviet” and Persian with Islam and all things “Persian”. In addition, both languages are spoken and live in Tajik culture—expressing all the emotions that are part of daily experience.

16 See also Allworth pp. 65-68 for a discussion of Persian and Pamiri languages in Central Asia.
Not surprisingly, in music and poetry, across genres, Tajik-Persian is overwhelmingly the dominant language.

As Berg (1997) observes, the future of the Russian language in the region is uncertain. Efforts are being by the government, educators, and religious groups to strengthen the learning of Tajik-Persian with Persian script in schools, but this is a long process with challenges that link to cultural identity and the socio-political structure of the country. Since the introduction of Isma’ilism to the region by the Persian poet and Isma’ili pir, Naser Khosrow, Persian has been at the center of religious practice and identity. The influence of Persian in Badakhshani culture and identity cannot be underestimated. In my fieldwork, a salient and recurrent feature of language usage was that the language of prayer, in any context or parameter of the music-prayer dynamics model, was overwhelmingly in Persian or Tajik-Persian; Arabic was second in usage, and Shughni third; Russian was never used. In speaking to this issue, three of my informants stated that the language did not matter and that indeed any language could be utilized, i.e. Persian, Arabic, Shughni, or Russian—the spirit of the prayer or music was central. This emphasizes the local Isma’ili and Sufi perspective that prefers the spirit to the form, or the bâtin over the zâher. Other local musicians and maddâhkhân-s however emphasized the primacy of Persian and Arabic in prayer, for example as in the performance of maddâh, salat, du’a, and monâjât.

Historically, the mountains have often provided refuge for victims of oppression, giving some degree of protection from warring factions on both sides of
the Tajik-Afghan border. Yet, the vast Pamiri mountain range, which, is a formidable obstacle between the province of Badakhshan and the outside world, including the rest of Tajikistan, could not provide an escape from the seventy year long Soviet control nor the subsequent Tajik civil war of 1992, both of which left the country in despair. Tajikistan is the poorest of the five former Soviet Republics of Central Asia and Badakhshan is the poorest region of Tajikistan.

Some of the basic necessities of life are often scarce in Badakhshan. Local agricultural developments as well as the availability of water, food and electricity are ongoing problems. Basic healthcare is also at a minimum and often unavailable. Hospitals lack necessary medical equipment, sterile patient facilities, and proper heaters to heat hospital facilities, especially during winter months when extreme temperatures can fall approximately 40 degrees Celsius below freezing. OCHA reported that the “under 5-year old child mortality rate is 75 per 1000 live births...and infant mortality is 57...[a]s comparison, in Switzerland 5 children out of 1,000 die as infants and 7 die before they are five years old” (OCHA 1998). Before making the journey to Badakhshan from Dushanbe, our contacts and friends repeatedly asked if we had evacuation insurance—since medical care might not be available or dangerous. Even proof of evacuation insurance was required to be granted a travel visa.

17 See Keshavjee, 1998 for a complete discussion.
Green Mountain in the Pamir Mountains

While living in the northeastern most province of China from 1996-1997, friends there gave me the Chinese name qing shan (green mountain) as a way to welcome me into their family. This was an honor and special gift for me, which gave a physical expression to our common ontological view that we were already family. This view imbued my experiences in Pamir as well with a sense of kinship—and I found that many of the musicians and healers with whom I worked also shared this view, which was expressed in various ways. For instance, older community members would at times refer to members of our team as their children; or people around the same age might call us their brothers or sisters; and we would respond in like manner. However, when addressing those older than us or when making a new acquaintance, appropriate titles or honorifics were always used. In addition, whenever we visited a local individual or family, we were welcomed with loving hospitality, as though we were family returning from a long journey.

Before arriving in Tajikistan, through life experience and study I had become very familiar with the universe of ideas related to mysticism and comparative religion, Persianate cultures, Islamic mysticism and Sufi poetry. This provided some common understanding of spiritually or religiously based worldviews and for shared experience between my informants and me in the field. For instance, walking through the Pamiri mountains and valleys on any given day could easily bring to mind poems and
metaphors that are rich with themes of love, nature, mystical sojourning, and spiritual ecstasy. Often times, while on a field excursion, a member of our group might point out a particular mountain peak, river, village, or tree—and without comment encourage reflection on what was pointed out; or recite a line of a poem or tell a personal, historical or legendary story, which related to the natural beauty around us; or share a perspective that related to individual beliefs or hopes. So, being conversant with this dynamic interaction between the natural environment, mystical themes, poetry, and modes of communicating emotion with sounds and silence, poems and songs, affirmed my sense of being at one with my informants and Pamir.

A mystical or spiritual worldview is not common to all Pamiris. However, my research focused on working with individuals who did have such a worldview, which they understood as being a positive force in life, and which they strived to translate into daily action. These individuals included the maddâhkhân (singer/recitor of maddâh), religious leaders, healers, mystics, musicians and community members who participated in maddâh ceremonies or other spiritual practices. The notion of having a positive, even idealistic vision and manifesting that energy throughout one’s daily life, to me was very normal and something which I practice in my life. Thus, another common ground was found in the field. In addition, shared aspects of our worldviews allowed for differences of religion, thought, age, culture, ethnicity, and nationality to create bridges, rather than cause division.

There were some connections that I experienced with certain individuals in the field were rare and precious. For instance, while in Dushanbe, a local friend
mentioned that there was someone named Samandar Pulodov who could perhaps
introduce me to some Pamiri musicians. When I first heard the name “Samandar,” I
immediately felt a sense of brotherhood with this unknown person. When I arrived in
Badakhshan and met Samandar, this feeling was confirmed. Shortly thereafter,
without me sharing my story, Samandar told my wife and I that some two weeks prior
to our arrival, he had a vision that we were coming. His vision did not clearly depict
our faces, but “a special energy” as he described it. He continued saying, “the first
day I came to your apartment and you opened the door, I knew.” Samandar is a young
ostad in his own right and is best known for his innovative approach in composition
and performance, dedicating all his efforts to—musiqiye erfâni or musiqiye rohâni
(mystical or spiritual/devotional music). He blends traditional instruments, including
the Pamiri and Afghan rubabs, tanbur, ghizhak, doira, chang, and ney, with acoustic,
electric and bass guitars, keyboards and synthesizers, and utilizes traditional dress and
dance. He focuses on new compositions and lyrics that can be viewed as both poems
and prayers. Samandar’s music is perhaps best viewed as part of a living tradition of
Pamiri devotional music that is mystical in nature and which seeks to reach people
beyond the range of the surrounding Pamir Mountains.

Maddâh Devotional Music

The primary genre of religious/devotional music in Badakhshan is maddâh. It
is both vocal and instrumental. The genre is also referred to as madh in some areas.
Among people throughout Central Asia and Iran, references to and knowledge of
maddâh exists. The genres that are referred to as maddâh in that vast region have similarities in poetic content and in the family of instruments used for performance. However, the music itself and vocal style are highly varied. Moreover, while there are strong relationships between the diverse cultural groups along the Silk Road, the Pamir Mountain range that largely isolates Badakhshan has forced Pamiri culture to develop with considerable independence, being less influenced by other cultures. In my field research, the term maddâh, the root of which means “praise”, was used to refer to several related phenomena: the genre—as I have already mentioned, where music and prayer form a unified whole; the text—the written and oral poems and prayers; the performance itself; and the music, either individually or in combination. Maddâkhân refers to the master musician and performer of maddâh—a panegyrist, literally the recitor or singer of maddâh; maddâkhânâne refers to the place where the devotional event occurs, typically the main room of the Pamiri home; and maddâkhânâni refers to the event or gathering of a maddâh performance, in the same manner of ghazalkânî.

Two other related terms should be noted: du’a (prayer), and maddi bulbul (song of a nightingale). The relationship of du’a, was shared by various maddâkhân and khalîfa (religious leaders) in the field, and was echoed by other informants throughout the fieldwork. Socially, the linguistic relationship between du’a and maddâh is in the function of the latter; i.e. maddâh functions as prayer. Maddi bulbul relates to a sung aspect of maddâh performance. Maddi bulbul is “the song of the nightingale (on account of its prolonged notes)” (Steingass 1996:1199). The
relationship to the song of a nightingale is full of mystical meaning and has a clear connection to devotional genres of music in the Middle East. Throughout the last section of maddâh performance, at certain points of heightened energy, and as the performance builds up to and reaches ecstatic states, an entire room of people (usually the men), wail out a “long note” that is laden with emotion and meaning, unique to each person, simultaneously weaving a connection between the participants and the objects of their prayer. Each person holds the wailing tone for different durations. It is usually steady until the end where individuals either stop the tone abruptly—often with a strong exhalation, or a fast decay and sweep upwards, or a kind a vocalized sigh that descends.

Maddâh in the Mind and Life

Maddâh is believed by many Pamiris, especially the Isma'īlis of Badakhshan who perform or interpret maddâh, to have the spiritual power or baraka to effect healing. If maddâh is performed with the intention of curing a patient, the healing effect is attributed in part to the God given baraka, which is inherent in the words (poems and prayers), in the person of the maddâhkhân, and in the ceremony as a whole. Ultimately, any positive effect is attributed to God, since maddâh is, at its heart, a prayer. As a regular, preventive practice, the healing effects of maddâh are attributed to the degree that a participant embodies the guidance, principles, and virtues conveyed in the genre. This is associated with a way of life that embodies holiness.
Performers insist on donning the traditional *toqi* (hat), worn out of respect for the genre and what it represents (see photograph 1). Before performance begins, the *maddâhkhân* might quietly utter a prayer while he gathers his thoughts and focuses his attention (also see Berg and Belle 1993-95: 59).

Photograph 1: Toqi
Photograph 1 shows two traditional *toqi* hats. They exist in various styles and are the essential article of clothing for the *maddâhkhân*. In Badakhshan, not once did I observe a performance of *maddâh* where the *maddâhkhân* did not wear a *toqi*. The *toqi* are also worn by local religious leaders, healers, elders and respected men in the community, and by other community members as a sign of religious or cultural association with Pamir.

*Maddâh* serves several cultural and social functions, being performed on special occasions or days of commemoration, holy days, funerals, rituals of mourning, and as a curative ceremony and a preventive practice for health maintenance.

Presently, *maddâh* is still traditionally performed in these contexts and as a regular
Thursday or Friday night prayer or devotional gathering, which constitutes a formal aspect of local worship. In maddâh ritual performance, community members who are present during performance also participate in varying degrees—by listening, praying, meditating, and vocalizing. Hence the occasional vocalizations—wails and cries of pain or praise, sighs and exhalations of relief and struggle, personal outbursts and individualized sounds (“vocables”), and the singing of words and phrases are also important aspects of the sound of maddâh. While the functions of this genre can vary in certain specialized contexts, it can be said that maddâh aims to make positive transformations in the spiritual emotional, mental, and physical states of the performers and listeners.18

Maddâh performance can last from approximately 20 minutes to several hours, at times from night till dawn. Style and intensity of performance can vary between regions and performers. On special occasions, in a traditional Pamiri funeral ceremony for instance, performances of maddâh and the related genre of falak (lament) are linked together and interwoven in a continuous musical expression for up to three days and nights—men performing maddâh, and both women and men performing falak. Multiple performers meet the varied requirements of each ceremony. The use of music, its duration and intensity is dependent upon the social status of the deceased. The more important the social position of the deceased, the more involved the ceremony, including longer performances, a greater diversity of musicians and singers participating, and a greater expression through the music of

18 See also Mazo (1994) and Meyer, Palmer and Mazo (1998) for a discussion of the affective responses of performers and listeners to Russian Laments, where cries, sighs, gasps and other voiced sounds emphasize the emotional content of performance, as well as participants’ transformational experiences.
baraka. If the deceased were a child for example, maddâh would usually not be performed. There would however, still be falak performance, as well as prayers of mourning and intercession offered on behalf of the child, for the family, and community.

Language

The language of maddâh is predominately in classical Persian, with an occasional sentence or phrase in Arabic. During ecstatic moments of performance, a specialized kind of language exists that is only mystically understood through the power of its sound. In one sense the language at such a point of performance can be viewed as stretching or melting into a non-lexical sound language, carrying with it a polyvalent aesthetic, which is directly linked to the notion of sacred text, language, sound, and samâ’—the practice of spiritual listening.

People

Musicians and Singers

The maddâkhân is the central figure of the maddâh ceremony. He is believed to have baraka that is affective, enabling healing to occur, and embodied in the performance itself. In all of my experiences, all the maddâkhânân were male. Two of my primary informants had however heard the maddâh of an elderly female performer, who they claimed was outstanding and the only female maddâkhân whom they knew. Accompanying musicians and community members also participate by singing in support of the main voice or through individual vocal expressions.
Khalifa and Mulla

These two positions are that of local religious leaders who have the role of interpreting, explaining and expounding on the meaning of the maddâh performance. On rare occasions, in the absence of a khalifa or mulla, the maddâhkhân might decide to elaborate or explain the performance. With one of them present however, the maddâhkhân and other performers would not interpret or even discuss the maddâh as this is the domain of the religious leaders.

Instruments and Accompanying Musicians

The primary instruments\(^{19}\) for maddâh performance are the long-necked lute known as the Pamiri rubab; and the doira (lit. circle) or daf\(^{20}\) frame drum. Another common long-necked lute used in maddâh is the tanbur. Berg states that the ghizhak spike fiddle “is never used to accompany madâh” (1997: 38). However, in my field research there were two such performances where the ghizhak was used (see photograph no. 2 and hear for example track 1).

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\(^{19}\) For brief organographic descriptions of the instruments used in maddâh and other genres of Pamiri music, see Berg and Belle (1994) and Berg (1997: 37-8).

\(^{20}\) While both doira and daf are used to refer to the Pamiri frame drum, the doira generally refers to a smaller drum of approximately 37cm, the inner metal loops of which do not touch the drum-head. The daf is usually larger and the metal loops do brush against the inside of the drum-head.
Photograph 2: maddâh performance with ghizhak
Photograph 2 shows the ghizhak being played by Miskinov Qorbornshah in the context of maddâh performance. In the center is Oganazar Mamadamonov (playing the rubab and singing the maddâh); on the left is Abdulnazar Alovatov (playing the doira); and behind is the falakhân (singer of falak) Shukrikhoda Sangmamadov.

In rare cases maddâh is performed by a solo maddâhkhân who would both sing and play the rubab. There can also be two maddâhkhânân who trade lines of a poem throughout a performance. This interchange can also occur between a maddâhkhân and another musician or apprentice. Usually the smallest group consists of the maddâhkhân and one doira musician. Often there is one other rubab or tanbur player, and at times one additional doira player. The largest group that I witnessed was a total of three lutes and two drums in one performance. In another unique grouping at Imam Dar Gah, there was a rubab, tanbur, doira, and a ghizhak.

Usually, before a ritual performance of maddâh begins, it is clear from among those present who will participate in the playing of the instruments to accompany the
maddâhkhan. Often, musicians are competent on two or three instruments; and there is an unspoken hierarchy among musicians that dictates who will play which instrument. This is based on three things: experience, performance skills, and the direction of the maddâhkhan. The khalifa and senior musicians can also direct other musicians which instruments they should play. The performing group can be viewed as a “core group” surrounded by community members who participate by listening, meditating, and praying. Some of the community members who join in to sing at certain places—usually during the extended “Ay” in between sections or at the end of verses; at times they sing the ending words or phrase of a familiar poem along with the maddâhkhan. They also call out individual invocations: “Yâ Ali” or simply “Yâ” are both common. While the social context of maddâkhani has formal aspects, for example the specialized and sacred performance space (maddâhkâne), the role of the maddâhkhan, the religious leaders, the accompanying musicians, and other participants, there is a flexibility as well regarding the other participants who sing occasionally. Berg and Belle refer to such participants as being part of the performing group constituting a “choir” (Berg and Belle 1993-95: 69) or “choir singers” (ibid: 59). However, in my field research, such an aspect was never mentioned, and other participants performed in a highly fluid capacity that could not constitute a formal aspect of the performing group. In the usual context of maddâh performance, the core group of musicians regularly sings the extended “Ay” and occasional lines of poetry, community members participate in a supportive fashion. The construction by Berg and Belle of a “choir” likely has more to do with the context under which recordings
were gathered, i.e. “under exceptional circumstances, for the sake of recording solely” (ibid: 49). While it is true that such recordings are often the only recourse since it might be inappropriate to record during a maddâhkhânî (ibid), and that the “willingness and dedication of the performers permit a true representation of the genre” (ibid: 59), the constructed context can also influence the perception of the researcher. Hence, community members that are a flexible and fluid component of the performance, flowing in and out of vocalization as they are spiritually and emotionally moved, might be viewed as a choir when gathered together to sing intermittently and recreate the musical texture. Such a constructed environment need not be problematic however, just viewed in the context under which it was created.

The Rubab

The pivotal instrument of maddâh is the Pamiri rubab. It embodies both a sound and cosmological meaning central to performance. One legend about the rubab says that the instrument, in a shape that reflects that of a person, descended from the heavens, itself sounding divine melodies on the gut strings from a sacrificial lamb. The maddâhkhân receives the rubab and mirrors this melodic action by vocalizing and wailing out mystical poems and prayers (see photographs 3 and 4).
Photograph 3: Ancient cave wall carvings
The top section of photograph 3 shows ancient cave wall carvings of cosmological symbols; and the bottom section shows ancient cave wall carvings of two rubab-s. Although these are two separate pictures, they are placed together in the Badakhshani Museum in Khorq, emphasizing the local associations between the rubab, spiritual dimensions and the cosmos. The manager of the museum explained this connection to me and affirmed the legend of the rubab’s descent from heaven, which I had heard from multiple musicians.
Photograph 4: *Rubab in human form*

Photograph 4 shows an elaboration on the theme of the *rubab* as a human form. To emphasize the human form, two necks are made to give the figure two legs. While this instrument can be played, it was created as a work of art and now resides in the Khorq Museum. Each neck has six strings, and one drone string is found in between, stretching from the figure’s nose to the jacket’s first button. The instrument usually has 5 strings and 1 drone string.

The *rubab* and *tanbur* often have prayers carved into their necks or written onto the skin that covers the body and resonance chamber as shown in photographs 5-7.
Photograph 5: Rubab with prayer no. 1
Photograph 5 shows a prayer for assistance carved out of the neck of a rubab. It is in the form of a brief invocation that is often recited by maddâh performers: “Yâ Ali madad!” “Oh Ali, divine helper!”

Photograph 6: Rubab with prayer, no. 2
Photograph 6 shows a similar prayer carved out of the neck of a tanbur: “Yâ Mohammad, Yâ Ali!”
Photograph 7: *Rubab with prayer*

Photograph 7 shows the skin of a *tanbur* where a longer prayer of praise and assistance can be faintly seen. It has been mostly worn away from years of playing.

**The Form of Maddâh**

Berg (1997) explores in depth diverse poetic forms utilized in *maddâh* performance, including *ghazal, rubaiyat, qasida, masnavi, mukhammas*, as well as the prayer forms of *munajat and du’ā*. In addition, spontaneous, free form expressions of prayer and poems are common, especially in the most spiritually and musically charged moments of performance. These forms are interwoven and linked together in flexible ways, allowing for the inspiration of the moment to guide the performance.

The subject matter of *maddâh* falls into two broad categories, prayer and counsel. The basic musical form of *maddâh* consists of three sections, the *munajat, haidari,* and *setāyesh*. 

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The three-part form outlined in the following description was conveyed to me by a khalifa after participating in a maddâkhâni together. The maddâkhân and several musicians and community members were present during our interview. While he places certain subject matter in specific sections, it is also true that all sections contain both aspects of prayer and counsel.

In addition, there is some regional variation that was noted between areas. The maddâh of Khorq, Roshtkala, and Rushon, seem to conform to the same musical features, while those of Ishkishim varied. Particularly, the recordings from Ishkishim show the munajat section to be in a regular rhythm and meter, while that of the former three areas were in free musical meter. The intensity or energy of performance also varied, with Ishkishim being more reserved, quieter, and consisting of fewer musicians, usually two, while the other areas had up to five musicians. The melodic content also varied which can be observed in the forthcoming examples.

The first section, or munajat (prayer) consists of prayers, often for forgiveness, and poems testifying to one’s lowliness and humility. Munajat is most strongly associated with petitionary and intercessory prayer, or intejâ’, where one seeks with the hope of gaining an answer or resolution. It is in a free musical meter where the maddâhkhân accompanies himself on the Pamiri rubab in a call and response format between the voice and instrument. This act alone is a metaphor for communication between the Divine and the world of creation. The munajat is the calmest and most reserved section in terms of musical energy and texture (hear for example track 2).
The second section is the *haidari* (of or about Ali), which consists of narrative, didactic poems that often recount the *Sunna*, and lives and actions of *pirs*, saints, or holy people, most often Ali. The *doira* frame drum enters in this section, providing a regular pulse usually in a strong duple meter (hear for example track 3). If present, other *rubab* or *tanbur* lutes enter here as well. In this section, the addition of more performers to the group, the increase in volume and tempo, the introduction of a regular beat and repetitive rhythm, cause the musical energy to be markedly higher. Moreover, the *haidari* often gradually and significantly increases in tempo.

The third section is the *setâyesh*, literally “to praise”. This is the most intense part of *maddâh* performance in terms of energy, musical content and interaction with the sung poetry. The *doira* and *rubab* rhythms change, as do the tempo and meter (hear for example track 4). These will be discussed in detail later in this chapter. In one sense, the *setâyesh* is the section that defines or makes *maddâh*. However, while a complete *maddâh* performance almost always has the three sections outlined above, each section can also stand alone, and might be referred to as *maddâh*, *madâ*, *maddâi*, or *madh* (see During and Levin 2002: 32; Kasmai 1992: 30; and Berg and Belle 1994: 14). The individual section names might also be used to refer to a performance of a section, i.e. *munajat*, *haidari*, or *setâyesh*. In this case, each section can be considered a genre unto itself. Finally, the first line or refrain of a poem might be used to refer to the individual or three-part form.

It is important to note that *maddâh* is a *mystical* genre, at the heart of which is a high degree of flexibility and allowance for innovation and improvisation. While the
musical and sonic features progress from munajat to haidari to setâyesh with great regularity and can be considered as creating a formal structure, the meaning in the poems and prayers cannot be as strictly categorized. That is to say, all sections might testify to one’s humility and God’s greatness; all sections can convey the Sunna and stories of didactic subject matter; and all sections can be about praise and love of God.

The three sections form a crescendo in both a musical and meditative sense. While the musical features increase and become more complex and active on all levels throughout the performance—including volume, timbre, tempo, pitch level, and rhythmic organization, the meditative focus of participants becomes deeper.

For listeners, a general state of bodily stillness accompanies the progressively deepened meditative state—there is no dancing or significant movement during maddâh. Performers usually sit cross-legged to play their instruments and sing. They can become slightly more physically animated as the performance builds and as the spiritually empowered atmosphere influences them. For all participants, as a genre of worship, prayer and devotion, the ideal state is outward stillness, which in turn encourages meditation on the meaning of the sung poems and prayers. Listeners usually sit around the perimeter of the room where the performance occurs, or in other open spaces that facilitate relaxation and the directing of ones spiritual capacities toward the Beloved.
Embodiment, Emplacement, and Bodily Hexis: Conceptualizing the Healing Effects of Maddâh

One way in which maddâh facilitates healing is through a dynamic process of embodiment, which links performance to daily life experience. This constitutes a preventive as opposed to curative healing effect. By building upon Devon Hinton’s use of emplacement and bodily hexis (see Hinton, 1999), in chapter 4 I examine power-laden symbols of Pamiri culture, which are found in the musical and poetic structures of maddâh, and which serve as catalysts for participants to embody the meaning inherent in such symbols. Emplacement refers to the role of place in the transformative process of embodiment; and bodily hexis refers to the relationships of bodies or beings to each other, to the natural and constructed environment and the state of ease or unrest in one’s body.

Including The Spiritual In Embodiment

The small number of maddâhkhânân, musicians, healers, and individual community members with whom I worked constitute a specialized group within Pamiri culture; namely, individuals who believe and practice various forms of music and/or prayer for preventive and curative healing. Through interviews and experiences of music and prayer with my informants, the role of embodiment in the practice of maddâh began to emerge for me. In a broad sense, the practice of maddâh is not restricted to the ritual performance space of the maddâhkhâne, since one of the purposes of this didactic genre is to imbue practitioners with an ethical code to be
applied throughout daily life. Moreover, the morals and beliefs conveyed through maddâh are viewed locally as being essential for total health—including the health of the mind, body, and spirit. Through the ritual performance of maddâh, participants attend to multiple layers of meaning found in the performance. Most informants described their attention as both pointedly-focused, for example on specific words or passages in the maddâh; and broadly-focused, allowing themselves to be immersed in the total sound of the ritual and influenced in a holistic way, being “carried by” or “immersed in” the sound. In both the pointedly-focused and broadly-focused attentions, there is a process of transformation that occurs. It is a process of focusing attention, allowing meaning to be internalized, and manifesting what has been internalized, or attending—internalizing—manifesting. Hence, the dissertation views embodiment as both a process and a goal. The process however, is non-linear, and the goal continually advancing, i.e. reachable, but once a goal is reached, another goal, or the same goal reinterpreted appears at another level. Maddâh is a kind atmosphere, a sacred space along the path of daily life—providing refreshment, hope, and communion for practitioners.

In the spiritually rooted worldview of my informants, what I have called embodiment is a process by which an idea, virtue, symbol or energy is absorbed and manifested in one’s being, not just one’s body; and it is the goal of mystic unity with the Beloved where the self or nafs, is burned away by the fire of love and only the Beloved remains. Both the process and goal represent healthy living and healing. The term “being” is used here to refer holistically to what my informants consider the
three-part human reality of the mind-body-spirit, or \textit{aql-tan-ruh}. This view moves beyond the materialistic definition of embodiment, which usually limits discussion to the physical body.

Rather than introducing new terms, such as “embeing or embeingment” to indicate the three-part human reality that includes the soul or spirit, I have chosen to re-interpret embodiment in a holistic sense, disencumbered from a Cartesian duality. Embodiment then, is a positive energy and disembodiment the absence of that energy—just as darkness is the absence of light. In the same way, if one is not in the process of embodiment or progression, one is in the process of disembodiment or retrogression. That is, moving further away from the virtues, thoughts and behaviors that comprise the ethical code of a culture. For the \textit{maddâhkhânân} and healers with whom I worked, embodiment is encouraged through the performance of \textit{maddâh}, which integrates music, poetry, prayer and meditation, in turn leading to the focusing of one’s attention toward the \textit{bâtin}, or mystical inner realities, throughout daily activities. \textit{Maddâh} is heavily didactic, dedicating much time to giving counsel, explicating the consequences of specific actions and behaviors by drawing on historical and legendary stories to illustrate the halāl and harām—that which is permitted and forbidden in the culture. At the same time, \textit{maddâh} is the central mystical genre of the Isma'ilis of Badakhshan—emphasizing the \textit{bâtin}, not at the expense of the \textit{zâher}, or outward form, but rather to see in that which is physically manifest, a spiritual reality or essence.
Emplacement and bodily hexis create context and frame sacred spaces for devotional practices and daily activities; give meaning to poetic metaphor; and encourage cognitive links and reminders between symbols in the natural and built environment and their direct or metaphoric meaning. Hence, the focusing of one’s attention, and the expanding of one’s awareness is encouraged by emplacement and bodily hexis. In Badakhshan for example, the most prominent and significant formations are the massive Pamir Mountains, deep valleys, powerful rivers, rock, dust, light, the Pamiri home and the maddâhkhânê—the transformative, sacred space where maddâh is performed. These symbols interact with each other in the process of embodiment, heightening awareness and encouraging reflection on multiple cognitive and spiritual levels. Maddâh serves as a powerful vehicle of continuity in this process. It is practiced regularly, musically and linguistically tying together beliefs, intentions, aspirations, expectations, history, and the environment.

A Khalifa’s Testimony

I was often fortunate to participate in a maddâhkhânî with a khalifa or mulla, whose role it was to explain the meaning of the genre, specifically its textual meaning. On one such occasion, a young khalifa conveyed his personal experience with the healing effects of maddâh and the wider context of prayer and healing (see photograph 8).
Photograph 8: Khalifa interview
Photograph 8 shows an interview with the khalifa after a performance of maddâh and falak. Both the khalifa and the maddâhkhân (seated against the back wall) are wearing the traditional toqi as shown in photograph 1.

Khalifa: There is something special I feel if there is any problem that I have, after hearing or listening [to maddâh], all the problems disappear. The particular problem that I felt, and every problem, they all disappear...this is what happens to me.

BK: All of the problems? For example spiritual...

Khalifa: Yes the spiritual, in all respects, the soul, mind, body—in whatever way I am ill, from that perspective, be it soul or mind, I get a kind of feeling, a special condition, and to the degree of illness, I listen to maddâh to that degree. The healing is different each time. Depending on the illness and my feeling, the illness feels like it just disappears, or I feel something else, it is not one way, the healing happens in multiple ways. Sometimes its stronger or weaker, the feeling or special atmosphere varies.

BK: Do people come to you for tumâr, or special prayers for healing?

Khalifa: Well, yes if they come for this, of course we write prayers for healing, there is absolutely no problem, we do this work.

BK: If you say a prayer for healing, do you chant it?
Khalifa: No, I say it in my heart, in the heart...then I write it. I don’t say it with the voice, it is all in the heart, yes.

BK: Then you write it?

Khalifa: Yes, then it is written. There are prayers that are written, prayers that are recited, and those that must be both written and read, that is both recited and written. They all can grant forgiveness and healing. In the heart you say it, then write it.

BK: When you say the prayer in your heart...is it like reading, say as you would a book, or is it like reciting the Koran?

Khalifa: No, its like reading. Not like reciting the Koran, but like reading a book— with special meaning. Of course, the prayers that are used are from the Koran, the ones that we say in the heart then write are from the Koran, and different verses from the Koran. Some are said in the heart, some written, some both.

BK: Is there a relationship between all these prayers that you mention and maddāh and falak...and are the effects similar?

Khalifa: I understand. Of course, in as much as maddāh is prayer, it is intimately linked to these and other prayer forms, including du’ā, munajat. Munajat is a special part of maddāh so it is specially related, and maddāh itself is like du’ā. There are also special kinds of praise in maddāh called setâyesh (praise)— praise of God, praise of the Prophet, and praise of the Imâms. Then there is the section of requesting or praying for hopes—this is a du’ā. Falak is different, it does not have the same relationship as do maddāh and du’ā which, are very close, intimately linked; however falak has a close relationship with maddāh because they are sung and use instruments, they share some meaning, but the musical connection is strong.

We paused for a moment, smiling, and it seemed that our interview had concluded for the time being. Then he turned to the maddâkhân, then the rest of those gathered and said with a smile and joyful tone: “Ah mitavânad munajat bekhânad!”

“O.K., now he can sing a munajat!” and he did.
Falak

*Falak* (lament) is a closely related genre that is often used in conjunction with maddâh, secondarily drawing on the tradition of medieval Persian Sufi poetry. *Falak* primarily utilizes poems and stories from the oral tradition. The structure of *falak* is most often in one section, as where the *maddâh* is typically in three sections. A complete *falak* is often used as an interlude in *maddâh* as where the opposite is never true. A *falak* is typically from about two minutes in duration to approximately 20 minutes. A *maddâh* performance can last from approximately 20 minutes, to several hours, or from night till dawn. *Falak* is considered to be khalqi genre (a folk genre, genre of the people) as where *maddâh* holds the status of being a religious/spiritual/mystical genre related to the written poetic tradition of Iran and the Isma'ili religious practice of Badakhshan. Both are performed at funerals, and can function as prayer.

*Falak*, when used with the word *dashti* or *biâbân* (desert), as in *falak-e dashti*, refers to a *falak* that is performed by the voice alone with no instrumental accompaniment. Instrumental *falak*, without voice, also exists. This is often performed on the Badakhshani ney, a six-holed, apricot wood, funnel shaped flute, 25-30 centimeters in length; or the ghizhak spike-fiddle. It can also be performed one of the lutes of the region—the *rubab*, *tanbur*, or *setâr*. *Falak* is most often performed in Tajik-Persian, or in combination with a local Badakhshani language. *Falak* can also be performed exclusively in a local language. Central themes of *falak*, and *falak-e dashti* can include those common to *maddâh*—mystical love, separation and reunion. However, *falak* themes most often relate specifically to human love, pain, suffering,
familial separation and hope of reunion—between a parent and child, or a lover and beloved. In the following example (track 5) ostad Abdu’l Sultan Mahmud performs a falak-e dashti and announces it as such. This example comes from a private performance in Khorooq. A summary of the text follows:

Bi parvâ falak miguyim Pamirba, hamin falak eh biparvâ falak...dar yak dashtmi, biábânmi, dar kojâhi bâshad falak miguid

‘Falak without instruments’ we call it in Pamir, the same falak ah just the voice...in the plaines, the desert, in whatever place, sing falak!

Mâ râ mâ râ kharâb kardi mâ râ
Dar âteshi tes kabâb kardi mâ râ
Dar âteshi tes kabâb hargez Ay napazad
Mâ sang o entekhâb kârdi
Âb kardi mâ râ
Ay...

Ah we, Ah we, you have destroyed us Ah we,
In the quick fire’s flame, you burned us, Ah we,
In the quick fire’s flame, flesh never Ah boils,
We were as stone, and you chose us,
And melted us
Ah...

Falak is sometimes used to refer to various folk genres that can broadly be named laments, and which in my experience, do not use Sufi poetry. These are dargilik, dodoik, bulbulik and lalaik, the last being a genre of lullabies. These are often performed by one solo voice, female or male. However there can be more than one voice and instrumental accompaniment by one or more of the above mentioned instruments. The melodic content and performance practice of dargilik, dodoik, and bulbulik are very similar; and the terms are often used interchangeably to refer to the
same piece. This is due to the common meaning found across pieces, as well as the performance practice of linking pieces in a row to create a larger performance, collection, or suite.

The same themes of human love, pain and suffering, and familial separation form the subject matter of dargilik, dodoik, bulbulik, and lalaik, with the latter specifically on themes of lullabies—love between parent and child, protection of the child, hope and prayer for the child’s well being, and humorous and fantastic stories. Theses genres also often function as prayer. For instance, in the following dargilik/lalaik example “Shirin dono” “Sweet little one”, a parent sings a love song to the child, tells what could happen in the child’s life, and prays for reunion with and protection of the child:

My sweet little one, sweet little one
When you go outside, and the rain falls
May you be safe and well
May we be together again soon.

In “Mâ dargilik donyâ qati” which literally means “We sing dargilik for the togetherness of the world”, the hope expands to embrace the world. In interviews with ostad Musavar Minakov, he explained that this is a very old folk song that is a kind of prayer for unity and peace in the world.

Not all dargilik, dodoik, bulbulik, and lalaik express hopes and prayers, nor are they all necessarily lamentful. For example “Ye gol tutor, ye gol maino” literally “One flower bird, one lovely flower”, tells a story of a bird that lands on a flower to be close to its exquisite beauty. The bird becomes the flower and becomes beautiful. The flower with its magical beauty is offered to a loved one, perhaps wife or husband, a
sweetheart, or a child. These songs can have multiple versions that are specific to different regions, families, or performers. For example, a variation of “Shirin dono” can be seen in Berg (1997: 382-5) where the theme is romantic love rather than the love between a parent and child.

Bulbulik literally means “nightingale song”, a symbol with a rich history in Persian literature. The thought of a nightingale and its song, immediately bring to the consciousness images and emotions of love and longing, purity, joy and sadness—forming a underlying aesthetic that relies on the art and literature of the region. Two broad categories of bulbulik exist: bulbulik barâye bakhshidan va gham; va barâye shâdi—bulbulik for forgiveness/relief of sadness; and for happiness.

Dodoik builds directly on the image of separation. As ostad Abdu’l Sultan Mahmoud explained to me the meaning of dodoik:

Dodoik...dodo manâi ‘dur, dur budan’...Yek rah bâlâ miravad, râhe digar tarafê pânê miravad...hardo râhe durand. Man delgir shodam barâye to. Dur hastid dur hastid dur hastid...In hamin tariqa manâi hast.

Dodoik...dodo means ‘far, to be far away’...[e.g.] One path goes upwards, another goes downward...they are far apart from each other. I have become grief stricken longing for you. You are far away, so far, so far away...This is exactly what it means.

In the following example (track 6) ostad Abdu’l Sultan Mahmud performs a suite of bulbulik, lalaik/bulbulik, dargilik/dodoik. The genre names can be heard in the respective sections.
Soundscape

The Dervish: Music-Prayer

My first experience of music and prayer in Tajikistan was an encounter with the Dervish in the Green Bazaar. The Green Bazaar is perhaps the largest bazaar of Dushanbe. The name “Green” comes from the fact that vegetables are sold there, among many other items, including clothes, foods, spices, household items, and audiocassettes of Tajik pop music. A few minutes after entering the bazaar, we passed by a table where a young man was playing dubbed cassettes at such a high volume level that the system’s speakers buzzed and the sound became very distorted. As we continued walking, a distant voice could be faintly heard. The voice was obviously live and approaching a closer proximity to our small group of three, which included a research assistant and guide. The timbre and melody of the voice were the first characteristics that I could perceive. The voice seemed to be that of an elderly male, with a somewhat worn and raw throat. He sang a melody consisting of two brief alternating phrases, which were repeated with variations. The two melodic phrases were repeated, making a tune four phrases. These four phrases comprised the wandering dervish’s tune (hear for example track 7).
Photograph 9: Dervish approaching

Photograph 9 shows the dervish walking through the bazaar, using his crutches as canes, with his eyes downcast, singing prayers. The woman on the right is beginning to turn toward the dervish as he approaches.

At the end of each phrase or half-phrase was an accented exhalation that at once emphasized a phrase ending, and was a sign of the dervish’s physical fatigue. This exhalation formed a central sound component of his chanting. The exhalation seemed to function in multiple ways: it gave a punctuation to each phrase, emphasizing the prayer’s meaning; drew attention to and magnified the dervish’s physical condition; gave a certain aesthetic quality to the performance—where the physical exertion
marked by the strong exhalation, made the prayer of the dervish seem more tangible, visceral, and sincere; and created a certain emotional connection between the bazaar goers and the dervish—where the patrons seemed to feel and lament the dervish’s struggles, while simultaneously admire and perhaps hope to achieve his mystical condition. In the mass of people at the bazaar, I could hear the voice before I could find its source. Some of the words became audible as the voice seemed to emphasize certain syllables and words...Khodâvande karim, Yâ nâmê kiyâ!.. “O God of bounty and grace, O name of God!...” was repeated and slowly became perceivable. Other people were looking around to find the dervish with whom they had become familiar, as he was known to visit the bazaar on rare occasions. The voice became louder, a movement in the crowd started to open a passageway for him as he approached. The dervish moved slowly, bent over, almost hobbling as he balanced his aged and worn body on two oversized crutches that functioned as canes. His possessions, which appeared to be no more than a bowl or kashkul, some food, perhaps a book and a few other items, were all wrapped up in a white cloth and tied around his waist.
Photograph 10: Dervish departing

Photograph 10 shows the dervish’s possessions, tied up in a white cloth around his waist.

He continued chanting: *Khodâvande karim, yâ nàme kiyâ, yek qabul yek bar, na dar jâye digar....Yâre tun hamin jâst, qabul karde*. “O God of bounty and grace, O name of God, just once accept me and leave me not disappointed in some other place your lover is right here and accepts”.

As he continued walking slowly, his head mostly looking down at the ground, I noticed his heavy, rhythmic breathing mixed in with his chanting—it was very
hot and he seemed to be tired. He suddenly stopped chanting and walking and leaned on his crutches—a woman was standing still, her hand holding out a 10 or 20 somoni note (Tajik dollar), her offering to the dervish, which he readily accepted. He then offered a prayer for her in Persian, recited in an energetic voice that at certain moments of emphasis seemed to be a kind of shout:

Khodâvand karim qabul konad Muhammad qabul konad
...parvardegâre karim har ruzi...
Khodâ khair ke dar khâne, dar taraf, dar jaz, dar nun o dar âb o dar khânetun nazar konad,
Paygambari khodâ dast mâl konid
Haq bache haqiq ke qabul konad
Dar dele giyâ por konid
Har ruz bovar kon ke shush va tanesh
Ke haq be dele digar dost dar kâr nist O!
Ba âbe ruhye har che Muhammad biâvarad rahmasta,
Yâ haiy! pedar o mâdar o ahebâ rahmat konad.

God the beneficent accepts you, Muhammad accepts you
...God the bounteous, at all times...
God, the ever-kind, at home, from the side, on the island, in bread and water, in your home, His glance is upon you,
O prophet of God, purify our hands,
Be true child, in truth he accepts,
Fill and refresh our dry hearts,
Every day believe in the bold one and his body
Busy not yourself with any other heart Oh!
With the water of the spirit, what Muhammad brings is bounty/mercy,
Oh! Grant mercy to her father and mother, and all the people.

She listened with her head slightly bowed and eyes closed. After the dervish finished, she seemed to express thanks by nodding her bowed head once or twice and whispering a few words inaudible to anyone—perhaps it was a personal prayer. He immediately continued walking at his slow pace, singing praises and blessings until
the next outstretched hand was seen holding some money. For each new person, he would generally repeat the same prayer with variations in word choice, order and emphasis. For example, when the prayer was said for a boy that was approximately 10 years old, the dervish emphasized the words for father and mother and the prayer was only few lines. In every instance, the prayers were of a greater duration for adults and more brief for children. There seemed to be no difference in the substance of the prayer or its delivery based on the gender of the recipient. The duration might have also been dependent on the amount of money given. For example, the adults always gave more than children in the exchanges that I witnessed.

There were multiple levels of exchange occurring simultaneously between the dervish and the people in the bazaar. In one sense, the exchange of money and prayers was not a business exchange, in as much as the dervish was already praying for everyone and no money was needed for him to pray, sing, and give blessings. People would give money to the dervish for him, not for prayers and blessings; the dervish then would not stop and pray only because he was given money, but because that was his social role. It is true that the prayers said after accepting money were physically directed toward the person that gave. However, they were not for that person alone, there was also a universal application of the prayers, making them both specific and collective. For example, in line 3 of the above prayer, the word khâne (home) is mentioned first in the universal sense, then in the specific. First referring to all homes, then to “your home”, khânetun. In another sense, the exchange could be considered a business transaction since this is one way in which the dervish makes money to live,
and one way that people can receive specialized prayers from one they consider a mystic, whose prayers embody a unique spiritual power (baraka). While it is perhaps misleading to consider such exchanges as the buying and selling of prayers, blessings or spiritual energy, it seems to be more than coincidence that these interactions occurred in a bazaar—the place to buy and sell.

Having been personally moved by his voice, I ventured to meet the dervish. He greeted me with a smile, a gentle laugh and sparkling eyes saying “Ay bacham, Ay Khoda”—“O my child, O God”. We shook hands and I greeted him saying “Dear Sir, may God’s blessings and mercy be with you always”. I offered some money to him as was customary and he offered his prayer, at the end of which he said “hezâr rahmat, hezâr rahmat!” In none of the other exchanges between the dervish and local Tajiks did anyone respond directly to the dervish. In the moment of my experience, I felt connected to him and immediately naturally responded to the prayer he offered for me by saying “beham chenin,” which is a way of saying “may the same blessing and prayer be for you too”. He smiled and continued on his way, chanting his prayer-tune and disappearing into the crowd. I went back to my group where the guide and research associate said in an excited and intensely interested voices “hezar rahmat! you got that? (i.e. did you understand?),” I responded “a thousand blessings”. And they both replied with big smiles and a kind of knowing glance and tone in their voices saying quietly, as if we shared some wonderful secret, “yes...yes”.

The importance in this exchange was not that the words were said, but that people believe that certain members of society embody a spiritual energy known as
baraka, or barakat. This energy or type of blessing is believed to be in a person, in and of their being, body, clothing, words, or anything associated with their person. For different people, different spiritual/religious leaders, mystics, legendary or historic figures might embody baraka to varying degrees. Nevertheless, more important in the cultural context is the source of baraka. As the opening couplet of this chapter implies, all barakat ultimately comes from God. On the bus ride home, our guide explained that for the dervish to say “hezâr rahmat...” was indeed a very special blessing, rarely said, and a blessing that she believed to be very real and effective. In our further discussion, I mentioned to our guide that I did not hear anyone talk to the dervish at any time, neither before nor after his prayer; and that in my brief meeting with him, without thinking it came naturally to me to greet him at the beginning, and at the end it simply came of my mouth to say “beham chenin” after he had offered his prayer. I asked her if this was inappropriate, in some way not showing him respect. Thankfully, she replied, “Oh no, I think its very good”, and this to me was confirmed by his own positive response and smile.
The dervish of the Green Bazaar in Dushanbe pauses for a photograph.

The Dombra: Music Alone

After the dervish disappeared into the crowd, the other sounds of the bazaar dominated: “Compote, compote!” announced from one side, then a young man yelled “Eh, aya!” (“hey look out!”)—trying not to hit anyone as he struggled to push a wheel-barrel full of bricks through a muddy pass in the bazaar’s dirt road. While we had to leave to check on the status of our visas and conduct other interviews, I was still hearing the melody of the dervish in my head. On the way out, along the perimeter of the bazaar, our group entered a new atmosphere that was framed and wrapped in a different music. We were gradually approaching a new sound, which, like the dervish was somewhere off in the distance and slowly became louder, clearer
and more meaningful. Only this time, we were approaching the sound. As we drew closer, our eyes were led toward the ground, in the direction of the sound. A musician was seated on a small stool; an old bag and scarf were laid out in front of him to collect money, his left leg twisted 90 degrees inward so it was pointing directly to his right, rather than straight ahead. His right leg seemed disproportionately short which seemed to indicate this was not from an accident, but from birth, perhaps polio. He played the *dombra*, (also *dotar*) the two-stringed, fretless, long necked, strummed lute (track 8). Versions of this lute, like many other instruments in Tajikistan, can be found throughout Central Asia along the many trade routes that form the legendary Silk Road. Although this *dotar* had just two strings as its name implies (*do*=two; *tar*=string), however the name often indicates a lute with many more strings.

*Photograph 12: Musician playing the dombra in the Dushanbe Green Bazaar*
The *dombra*\(^{21}\) traditionally has been associated with nomadic people and shaman of Central Asia, as well as the folk poets of Khorasan, Iran. As such, a large and diverse body of music exists, consisting of specialized ritual pieces, melodies and songs from various villages and regions that are often intertwined with music that originated from another, often distant, place along the Silk Road. The sharing, intermixing, and cultural exchange that has been an organic process of human experience all along the Silk Road defies strict borders of culture. This is perhaps especially true when considering music.\(^{22}\)

Upon hearing the music of the *dombra* player in the Green Bazaar, there was an immediate sense of familiarity and freshness to his sound that was combined with some intangible ancient quality. While he was not a shaman, which most all *dombra* players are not, there was a mystical quality to his playing that is not surprising given the instruments connection to the Central Asian shaman tradition. While this musician and I never had a verbal conversation, we did converse on another meta-communicative level. Before recording or taking a photograph, I silently asked his permission which he gave. In my mind I felt that I understood what he was saying with the music, and I answered him without words through a kind of projection of mental energy, which in my mind, was music. In other words, my response to hearing his music was *musical*—music automatically began to flow in my mind and I felt part of the performance and that he knew that I was a musician. This communicative experience without words is to me similar to an interchange between musicians

\(^{21}\) See also Levin 2002: 900-901; and Kunanbaeva 2002: 952-959 regarding the *dombra* and *dotar* in Central Asia.

\(^{22}\) See for example *The Silk Road: Connecting Cultures, Creating Trust*, 2002, Carla Borden, editor.
making music together. Since I also had significant experience of playing music on the street, perhaps this formed a common understanding between us. Perhaps there is a universal social dynamic between the musician and public that we both felt.

Immediately upon hearing and seeing him in the midst of his performance, I felt as though I was also playing, at once lifted up by the music, above the disinterested passersby, and feeling an emotional mix of longing, joy, and melancholy. These emotions seemed to be reflected in his glances at me, and the brief repetitive melody, which seemed to tell the moral of a story over and over again, each time with a deeper meaning. There was a certain quality of process or journey in this brief performance.

This experience is reflected in the following fieldnotes:

> Perhaps his playing was totally improvised, perhaps part of larger piece. What he played consisted of two alternating sections, a cycle that seemed to naturally turn in on itself in kind of perpetual motion. He played intently as though he were on such a journey, a cycle or spiral that went round and round in the two alternating sections—giving the illusion of repetition, all the while going higher, further along the path. It was as though you would say to yourself “this sounds familiar (since this was a repeated section)” but by the time such a thought occurred, you would realize that you were in a new space, another place and although it was familiar, it was indeed new. I immediately felt taken into a kind of vortex that was timeless, placeless—in the crowds and hustle of the bazaar the music seemed to create a center of balance...the dombra was soft, active, rhythmic, and with a floating melody that was almost hidden in the mix of the instrument’s own sound and rhythm.

Most people in the bazaar walked by without paying any special attention to the musician, although a young boy, selling plastic bags for the equivalent of a few pennies, was very interested in our research group and stopped to study us for a few minutes. The musician’s performance was uninterrupted for approximately 15 minutes. Then, a Tajik mother, probably in her mid twenties, pushing her child in a
stroller, the child’s head wrapped in an American flag, stopped in front of the musician, with money already in her hand, quickly went and gently tossed the money in front of him. He stopped playing for a few seconds to prevent the money from blowing away; he then picked up the tune where he had left off. When it came my turn, I made sure to tuck the money into one of the folds in the cloth bag where he collected the money—he smiled and kept playing without hesitation.

The Flight: Touching the Mountains

Getting to Badakhshan is not an easy trip, and to some, constitutes a rite of passage—since it can be a dangerous, potentially deadly journey, and many Tajiks have not been to the legendary, formerly secret region of “Gorno Badakhshan” (Mountain Badakhshan). Although the plane flight is only forty-five minutes or so, it is not simple. I was repeatedly warned before committing to the journey: “if one of the wings touches the mountain, you’re finished”! Of course, I wondered “why would the plane’s wing be that close to the mountain”? It was explained to me that the size of aircraft needed to land in Badakhshan could not climb higher, and so must navigate between the mountain peaks. After being told that planes have hit the mountains in the past, but not recently; and after consulting with my research associates and local friends, we decided to make the trip—and how fortunate that we did.

As my research associate and I waited to board the fifteen-seat propeller plane, she took out the camera to get a photograph of the aircraft. As she innocently took the photo, a man quickly approached and requested (demanded) the film. He announced
that he was a custom’s officer and inquired as to who we were, our intended purpose for traveling, and the reason she took the photograph of the plane, since such an action was forbidden. Once it became clear that we really were musicians and researchers who were studying Badakhshani music, we were welcomed with the loving hospitality and courtesy most characteristic of our personal interactions in Tajikistan.

Our 15 person capacity plane was overloaded with some 25 people, but the pilot was confident that we would make it. He walked over passengers’ legs, on top of suitcases and boxes and made his way to the cockpit. Once we were in the air, all seemed well and a few people carried on simple conversations. After some time, about twenty minutes into the flight, everyone became totally silent. The gentleman in front of me finally buckled his seatbelt and bowed his head to pray. He and everyone on the plane was very still and silent—even the young children and one infant. Several people were clearly praying; some with closed eyes; others with bowed heads; still others moving their lips in a silent recitation. These prayers did not necessarily fall into the prayer alone category simply because there was no audible music, vocalization, nor instruments being used. What is important here is to broadly consider how individuals might practice prayer in this or similar circumstances where there is outward silence. For instance, is there internal cognitive intonation, vocalization, chanting, or some other musical context that frames the experience of prayer in one’s mind?

The silence, concentrated focus, and prayers of some of the local residents heightened the already palpable feeling that was a mixture of the evanescence of life,
exhilaration from the excitement of the flight and beauty and majesty of the mountains, fear of crashing, and the joy of journeying to the legendary place known simply as *Pamir*.

**The Khorq Bazaar: Two Accordions and One Macaroni**

Khorq is the capital city of Badakhshan. Since Tajik independence in 1992, the Khorq bazaar, indeed all business and economic exchange has gone through stages of development. Initially, acting on the concept of buying and selling for monetary gain was extremely difficult and slow to progress. Simultaneously, previous reliance on Soviet support for much of life’s necessities, and a lack of training in the essential skills for economic, infrastructure and agricultural development, left a gap between the will of a people to provide for themselves and the reality of a war-torn, former-Soviet republic. Ten years later, there is still much that needs to be done to create a healthy economic exchange in the bazaar and beyond. In this difficult and complex milieu, street musicians play their music to survive financially, and to give voice to the stories and experiences of the past, the present, and convey a new vision for the future of Badakhshan. As one informant was fond of often saying, in a big bright voice “BADAKHSHAN KHUB MISHAVAD”! –“Badakhshan will become great”! i.e. all it’s problems will be resolved.

Some of the first performances that I heard in Badakhshan were in the Khorq bazaar. There I witnessed performances of two musicians who played for money, both accordion players, both blind. The first performer seemed to be part of the family
whose booth he sat beside while he performed. The other musician seemed to be very alone, sitting by himself, never interacting with anyone (see photographs nos. 13 and 14).

Photograph 13: Accordion player no. 1 in the Khorooq bazaar
The first performer (track 9) had a much better instrument and could play a range of pieces. The second musician (track 10) had to struggle with an instrument that was barely functional and perhaps irreparable. The quality of instrument clearly affected the quality of performance and attracted more attention to the first musician, yet both musicians were supported financially. The social role of these musicians in the bazaar seemed simply to be to make “music”, the kind and quality was secondary; the role of the patrons was to support them if they could. While the words of both
performers, sung in Tajik and Shugni, were practically impossible to understand, in working with informants who also listened to the recordings, we comprehended enough to see how these songs were similar in meaning to other folk genres that do not traditionally use the accordion, for example *falak*, *dargilik*, *dodoik*, and *lalaik*. In these genres, phrases of supplication to God are often interwoven with stories of familial separation and hopes of reunion, lamentation and lullabies. Although the accordion performances are of a very different musical style than the above mentioned folk genres of Badakhshan, they are similar in that they have what might be called “moments of prayer”, showing yet another formulation of the music-prayer dynamics model. That is to say, the accordion performances were some variation of an AABA song form, unlike the other genres, but contained phrases that clearly called on Divine assistance to bring about resolution to feelings of pain and suffering.

Nearby, a young boy, sitting at his parents’ booth under a large umbrella, was playing a piece of macaroni like a bottle or end blown flute (see photograph 14). He could get at least two, sometimes three distinct pitches from the two inch pasta. He also used his finger and hand to create a slide between the pitches for the full range of the macaroni—this seemed to be his favorite sound.
Photograph 15: Boy at the Khorozq bazaar playing a piece of macaroni

He gazed off into the distance, blowing the hollow tube, in his own sound world, paying no attention to his parents or anyone in the bazaar, and intently focused on the sound of his performance. This lasted for a few minutes until his mother called him over to her. After a few minutes, he returned and continued to play.

Healthcare Landscape

Before exploring the role of *maddâh* and *falak* in healing (chapter 4), the broader context of local beliefs about healing and healthcare must be considered. In Badakhshan, both traditional and biomedical practices operate side-by-side, often together to treat patients. Local etiology views disease as having its roots in the physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual dimensions of human life. Healing also
comes from these areas. While a remedy is matched to the diagnosed cause, e.g. a physical illness will be treated with a physical medicine—an herb, pharmaceutical or naturopathic material approach, all illnesses potentially can be treated through the power of prayer. Prayers that are utilized for healing fall into two broad categories—*preventive* and *curative*. For example, the daily Isma’ili, ritualized prayer, *du’a* or *salat*, forms a regular part of daily worship and constitutes a central aspect of healthy living. Hence, practicing this prayer is an important *preventive* practice. A specialized written prayer-amulet (*tumâr*) on the other hand is often used to treat a specific disease and therefore is more *curative* in nature.

The primary kinds of prayer used for healing include direct/petitionary, intercessory, individual, group, spontaneous, colloquial, vocalized, written, silent, meditative, ritualized, and ceremonial. It must be emphasized that these broad categories are flexible and often interwoven with each other. They can also be combined with other praxes or interventions—movement, dance or medications for example. Patients often rely on specialized intercessory prayer performed by local religious leaders or mystics—a *khalîfa* or *mulla*, *pir* or dervish respectively. These prayers can stand alone or within a ceremonial context; and can be vocalized or written.

**Material Approach In Auj:**
**Hot Springs, Herbs, and the Metaphoric Water of Life**

There is an ancient tradition of naturopathic medicine in Badakhshan. This *material* approach to maintaining health and treating disease primarily utilizes special
herbs, foods and water. Dr. Shirinbek, a naturopath and surgeon, has one such present day practice. While he believes in and personally engages the power of prayer as a preventive practice and curative agent, utilizing prayer in the treatment of patients falls into the domain of religious/spiritual leaders.

There are some seventy-two natural hot springs in Badakhshan. Historically, these springs have been literal wells of healing energy. The location of fifty-seven of these springs can be seen in the photograph below which was taken in Dr. Shirinbek’s office, the others are unknown or buried underground. Not all the springs are accessible and only three of them are currently functional, one of which is under the care and direction of Dr. Shirinbek. His spring and clinic/medical practice is located in the village of Auj, between Khorog and Ishkashim.
Photograph 16: Map
Photograph 16 shows Dr. Shirinbek’s map of the known hot springs in Badakhshan.

People both immerse themselves in this water and drink it for healing. The healing properties of this spring are primarily physical. That is, people believe that the physical components of the water promote healing, and they come to the spring for this effect. The doctor utilizes the spring for its physical properties, prescribing varying durations for patients to be immersed in the water, as well as varying amounts for consumption.
Photograph 17: Hot spring water formula
Photograph 17 shows Dr. Shirinbek pointing to the mineral content of the water, which he analyzed and wrote on the outside of one of the bath houses.
Photograph 18: Inside the hot spring pool

Photograph 18 shows Dr. Shirinbek explaining to Davlatnazar how patients come to the spring and immerse themselves in this pool of water. Patients are prescribed a specific duration of time to remain in the water, how often to visit the spring, and how much if any of the water they should drink. A stone channel from which the fresh water flows can be seen in the back, right corner. People who are not ill also come for general relaxation and rejuvenation. The bathhouses are cleaned after each use.

In combination with the spring water prescriptions, he prescribes a wide array of herbal medicaments, most of which he cultivates on the land around the spring, and all of which he and his wife harvest and prepare by hand (see photograph 19).
Photograph 19: Medicinal herbs
Photograph 19 shows Dr. Shirinbek explaining to Davlatnazar (center) and Samandar (right) the properties and uses of various herbs and the process of making an herbal tincture.

Dr. Shirinbek regularly travels throughout the region to collect known herbs and flowers and discover new ones. These are then transplanted to his garden in Auj. Some plants and flowers however only grow in the high mountain ranges, which cannot be transplanted and therefore must be collected annually.

In addition to the material approach described above, there are also other physiological, psychological, emotional, and spiritual associations with and responses to contact with the spring. For example, there is a physiological, psychological and emotional relaxation response experienced by patients when they come into contact with the water. There is actually a process in motion from the time one enters the
grounds to the moment of contact with the water where one gradually relaxes more and more until bodily immersion. Before arriving at the hot spring/clinic, one is usually walking (rarely driving) for a considerable time on a long and hard, very dry and dusty dirt road. The clinic is like an oasis in the desert, separated from the road and outside world by two gates large enough for a car to pass through. When we passed through the gate, we seemed to enter another place, unlike the road that was now at our backs and no longer visible from behind the gate. There were apricot and toot fruit trees, other blossoming healthy trees, flowers, herbs, wheat, potatoes and other vegetables — in general, quite lush vegetation for the region.

At first, I noticed that my field of vision was limited by the trees overhead, whose branches were full of leaves and blossoms and which blocked the view of the vast mountain range all around. Pathways had been made through the tall grass by the footsteps of many people over the years. Following the different paths would lead us to the clinic, the hot springs, or simply through the garden area. Seeing and inhaling the fragrance of the herbs, flowers, trees and soil, and hearing the sounds of the breeze blowing through the tall grass and vegetation, as well as the flowing water from the nearby stream all progressively contributed to a more relaxed state—physically, emotionally and psychologically. By the time patients had reached the hot springs the doctor or his wife might have already given the patient an herbal remedy to treat a specific illness, or perhaps for further relaxation. They might have also eaten a fruit or had a cup of tea after entering the grounds. At times, the medicament would be given after a visit to the springs. While most patients would normally reach a somewhat, if
not very relaxed condition before reaching the springs, some would still be nervous or tense. The final stage before entering the healing water is to disrobe, symbolically leaving behind all physical attachments and veils to the true self—the self that never dies; the self that cannot become ill. Then, women in their designated bathhouse, and men in a separate one, immerse themselves in the water, relaxing more and more, entering a specialized state of consciousness that assists in or brings about healing.

While the experience is admittedly different for everyone, Dr. Shirinbek believed that while the physical components of the water provide scientifically verifiable benefits, the transformation of a patients’ energy through the process of treatment is often where the curative powers of the hot springs exist. The patients’ energy can be understood as that which promotes healing and sustains life; and exists along a continuum of energy states from the quantum to the gross level, including infinite degrees or levels in between. As well as patients’ history, their current energy states are formed by, affected by and part of the their physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual condition. These conditions (and energy states) are in turn affected by some variation of the experience described above. The herbal medicaments intend to effect change in the same manner, through affecting the energy states via the physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual conditions/aspects. The overarching principle or goal is to restore balance to the patient. Imbalance equals disease and balance health. A disease that is manifest in the body can be due to an imbalance in the psychological, emotional, or spiritual aspect of the person. Likewise, a disease that
manifests itself as an emotional problem might have its roots in the physical, psychological, or spiritual dimension.

Beyond the physical properties of the Auj hot spring, some patients believe that its water is endowed with spiritual energy or baraka that cleanses, purifies, and heals. There are smaller springs, both hot and cold, throughout Badakhshan that the majority of people believe have such a power. The healing energy associated with those springs is attributed to a holy person having visited them, perhaps drinking from them, or performing their ablutions with the spring’s water. People often visit those springs for healing, to honor the pir, to drink, perform ablutions and offer special prayers, or to meditate and reflect. While there are no specific personages associated with the Auj hot spring, legends often exist in a way that can link a holy figure to almost any place that one desires. Hence, some patients might believe in such an association without it being historically true.

There is however an important cultural association that is not dependent on the association with a holy person, which applies to Auj and indeed all uses of water for healing; namely, the metaphor of water and healing as a potent and affective agent. Water as/is healing is not unique to Badakhshani healing practices or religious belief; neither is the metaphor of water and life. Water is perhaps the most important natural resource and sustaining element on the earth and is held by many cultures to be sacred. Moreover, water is often a metaphor for the word of God, the flowing of which is a divine action that cleanses, purifies, gives life and heals. In Pamir, a region where
water is not always available, where it must be collected daily and carried by buckets
from community fountains while they operate for a couple of hours a day, or from
springs if they are nearby, water is precious and always on the mind of people. Water
is also mentioned symbolically throughout the prayer and poetry of the region,
providing a constant reminder and metaphor of water’s healing effects and spiritual
associations. Consider for example an excerpt from the dervish’s prayer at the
beginning of the chapter:

God, the ever-kind, at home, from the side, on the island, in bread and water,
in your home...

With the water of the spirit, what Muhammad brings is bounty/mercy...

Here, water is directly associated with God, Muhammad, and with the means of
providing bounty and mercy. When one physically immerses in or drinks water in the
context of a healing practice, these symbols are present in the consciousness and part
of the healing process. Moreover, while the first reference is to physical water—one
of the infinite places where God dwells, and the second reference to a symbolic water,
physical water need not be present in either case for the metaphor to be effective. In
“water of the spirit”, physical water is not the bringer of bounty and mercy; rather,
spiritual water is the vehicle. Specifically, this is mainly a reference to the Koran and
Hadith, prayers and recitations of sacred writings. By reading, reciting, mentioning
and remembering—dhikr, praying—du’a khândan, and listening to the holy
word—samâ’; one is spiritually drinking and immersing in the water of the spirit. The
relationship between the inner and outer meaning and manifestation of any
phenomenon is central to the mystical tendencies in local religious belief and practice.
The inner is known as the bâtin, the outer as the zâher. These frames are explored further in chapter 4 and represent one of the strongest commonalities between Isma’ili and Sufi belief and religious practice.

**Saying Prayers; Wearing Prayers**

As already mentioned, healing prayers come in sounded and silent forms—vocalized, musical, mental, and written; each form having unique characteristics. Vocalized or musical prayer seems to have a particular evanescence and intangible quality that can fade away after the physical sound has decayed. This is of course a matter of attention—one can mentally attend to the same prayer after its sound has completely dispersed and thereby keep it alive so to speak. However, since not all people can mentally attend to a prayer with ease, and no one can always be attending to a mental prayer, written prayer amulets known as tumâr are utilized. Written prayers in contrast to sounded prayers perhaps have a more sustained or eternal quality, especially if they are worn on the body, as are the tumâr. *Tumâr* function in two ways: as an attention focuser, and as a prayer that has an autonomous power separate from the attention of the patient who wears it. The tumâr is an individualized amulet made of paper upon which a religious leader or spiritual figure has written a prayer or sacred verse particular to the patient and illness. The tumâr hangs on a string and is often worn around the part of body that is diseased or injured. It can also be worn around the neck, close to the heart for treating any specific body part; for illnesses of unknown origin; or for preservation of health and protection against disease. Hence, the tumâr is both curative and preventive in nature. The
prayers written in this form usually come from the Koran, Hadith, or other spiritual verses collected in special books, which also contain directions regarding specific illnesses (see photograph 20).

**Photograph 20: Prayers for healing**
Photograph 20 shows the khalifa (left), Mr. Ma’ruf (center), and the apprentice (right). On the table are the various texts utilized for prayer treatment.

There does not seem to be any overarching principle involved to determine if a patient will know the contents of the tumâr prayer or not. Each practitioner is unique and each patient is treated individually. In the case of Mr. Ma’ruf he was at times part of the diagnostic process. For example, in the course of reading different prayers chosen by the practitioner, one would stand out as particularly meaningful or effective. The same prayer would then be copied onto a piece of paper by the practitioner, folded into the form of a tumâr, and then worn around Mr. Ma’ruf’s neck, head, or placed inside his mouth. At other times, the practitioner might choose the prayer and make
the tumâr without the participation of the patient who might or might not read the prayer before wearing it.

In the case of Ms. T., she did not read or know the specific content of the tumâr. For her, knowing the specific content was unimportant. The patient believed in the power of the prayer to heal. Ms. T had a gastrointestinal problem for several years, and she was also developing ulcers. She had been to various doctors, but none could cure her. She had recently begun to wear a tumâr around her neck in hopes that it would effect a change in her condition. The tumâr was used in conjunction with naturopathic and homeopathic treatments. After a period of several months, all her symptoms disappeared.

In a severe case of an unknown degenerative disease, Mr. J. had progressively lost most of his motor control and ability to communicate over the past year. He had visited different allopathic and naturopathic doctors who could make no clear diagnosis or treatment. His family had a special tumâr made for him, which was placed on his head (see photograph 21). In such cases, and for psychological illnesses, the amulet is usually tied around the head where the source of the problem is believed to be. I met Mr. J. by chance, while on a field expedition to record maddâh.
As I was setting up microphones to record a maddâh performance, I was talking with the maddâhkhân about my research interests. Once he knew that my interests concerned music, prayer, and healing, he requested that I visit Mr. J. and pray for him. I explained “man pezeshk ya mulla nistam” “I am neither a medical doctor nor a clergyman.” He replied “hich gap nist, hich gap nist biârid, mailash?” “It doesn’t matter, never mind, let’s go, alright.” I responded affirmatively saying “dar khedmatetoam—beseyar khub bud ke âshnâ beshim; enshahallah khoda qabul mikonad du’aye bande” “I am at your service—it would be wonderful to meet him; God willing, the prayers will be accepted”. The maddâhkhân was happy and told Samandar that he would take me to Mr. J’s home nearby and would return after we had prayed. Samandar agreed and we were off.
We began to walk to his house, which was on the lower slope of a foothill. The landscape was beautiful; green meadows of tall wheat leaning gently to one side as the breeze would blow; tall trees along the edge of the meadows, and occasional small streams underfoot stretching across the grassy terrain. The maddâhkhân, another musician, and the patient’s father explained his current condition and asked a few questions of me—where I was from, had I visited Badakhahan previously, and how did I learn Persian. I asked a few question about their daily lives, water and agriculture, music, prayer, and maddâh. Then we all became silent as we finished the brief journey. We entered the home, went through a dark corridor and then into the main room where natural light was again visible. The room functioned as the main living room and maddâhkhâne (maddâh-house, or prayer-house); its size was approximately 800 square feet. Mr. J. was lying in bed against the north wall. He was in a restful state but not fully asleep. He was wearing his clothes and covered with one blanket tucked all the way around his neck so just his head was exposed, showing the tumâr tied around his head.

The maddâhkhân woke him and introduced us to each other. Mr. J. was unable to verbally communicate. He made some sounds in an effort to speak but it seemed to make him tired and frustrated. We shook hands and then sat together for several minutes. We looked at each other eye to eye and had a meta-communicative interchange. In such instances, it is perhaps impossible to know and understand what another person was “saying” in any given meta-communication. Yet, I have experienced this dynamic interchange in various aspects of life to such a degree, that I
believe it to be a certain human capacity. It is similar to the communication I have experienced with fellow musicians while performing, especially improvised music. During performance there is a level of communication between musicians that transcends the grammar of a musical language. It is an intuitive communication that would only be encumbered by the use of words. It is neither better nor worse; neither necessarily more nor less complete; it is simply another mode of communication that has its special time and place, while simultaneously giving an aesthetic quality of *timelessness* and *placelessness* to the experience.

Our hands did not release from one another for some time while this wordless communication occurred. The other people in the room were silent during this time. Since a few other people had come into the room, I explained again to everyone that I was not a physician or clergyman, but a brother who had traveled a long distance to learn from the Pamiri people about their music, culture, and healing practices, particularly those that involve music and prayer. I spoke in general about the potential power of prayer and that I hoped our prayers together would be acceptable and provide healing. After a moment of silence I chanted and recited a few brief prayers for healing in Arabic and Persian that I had learned by heart. Afterwards, briefly we sat in silent meditation and then said our farewells. The *maddâhkhân* and father expressed their satisfaction and said that the experience during the prayer was very good, that they felt the power of the prayers and that the “*du’a besyar khub bud, besyar khub bud*” “the prayers were very good, very good”.

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Praying with and for Mr. Ma’ruf

From the moment that I met Mr. Ma’ruf, as a kind of natural response for me, I said an internal prayer for his healing. We met in the main room of his home, which also served as a prayer room where he was treated by the khalifa. After several hours of interviews and being permitted to share in what is both a sacred and intimate practice of prayer healing, I requested permission to pray for Mr. Ma’ruf together with all those present—Samandar, Davlatnazar, the khalifa and his apprentice, and Mr. Ma’ruf. Everyone agreed and felt like it was a very good idea. Samandar and Davlatnazar said they had felt the same inclination to pray together and were very happy that it was mentioned. People moved around a bit to get into a comfortable and reverent position—cross-legged or kneeling is the usual position. On this occasion, everyone was seated cross-legged. The upper arms naturally hung at the sides; the forearms extending outward; the elbows pushed forward and upward slightly; the palms facing upward; the hands angled toward each other, perhaps touching at the small and ring fingers, forming a triangle between the forearms and body; or the hands might be apart with the palms still turned upward in a position ready to receive. The position of the hands is like that of performing ablutions or wuzu. In the same way as ablutions, after the final prayer is said, the worshipers raise their hands and pass them over their face as though they were washing or performing ablutions for the face. On many occasions it was explained to me that the hands are turned upward to receive God’s blessings, the water of life, and the energy from the metaphoric sun of bounty. This position is found throughout Central Asia. Eyes were closed and all was silent. I
again chanted and recited the few brief prayers for healing in Arabic that I had memorized. For Samandar and Davlatnazar, the meaning of the prayer could be easily understood since many of the words were common to both Persian and Arabic. The mulla, apprentice, and the patient knew Arabic well. The prayers lasted approximately five minutes and then we all sat in silence for what seemed like several minutes, but was likely only one or two minutes.

It seemed that on one level we were praying together. There was certain condition, a kind of ineffable atmosphere that I experienced during those brief minutes. What I can describe however is a sense of oneness with those present; and which extended beyond our immediate surroundings. This feeling of oneness was also aligned toward a common goal that was both specific and universal. We were at once praying for Mr. Ma’ruf and for all people. The most intense moments for me came after the chanted prayer had ended and we all sat in silent meditation. After some time, I opened my eyes to discover the eyes of everyone else still closed, their faces showing a focused attention and calm engagement with what Samandar often called a special condition, or yek mohite erfâni, rohâni—a mystical, spiritual atmosphere. Once everyone opened their eyes, we remained in silence for several moments. The apprentice talked briefly and we drank tea together before concluding our meeting.

Music-Prayer Dynamics in the Hospital

Music and prayer have recently been used in the Khorq hospital for pain management and as a supplement to anesthesia. A local physician who learned a simple, effective music-therapy intervention while visiting Norway introduced the
practice. For the application, patients listened to self-selected music during surgery.

In interviews with Dr. Faiz, the head anesthesiologist, he stated that with the music intervention, he was able to decrease doses of anesthetic by up to 20%. The music intervention was most often used in spinal surgery cases, since these surgeries required the most anesthetic. Before the music intervention was introduced, anesthesia alone sometimes was not sufficient and any higher levels would be dangerous. The music intervention provided an effective adjunctive treatment in such cases. Dr. Faiz also indicated that patients most often chose music of a devotional nature, maddâh and falak, being the most prominent local genres. Other genres of music that patients utilized included classical music from India and Western Europe, Indian and Pakistani qawwali music, and classical and devotional music from Afghanistan and Iran.

Since Dr. Faiz had positive outcomes with the music intervention, which often combined music with some form of personalized prayer, the hospital had a direct interest in the applied aspect of my research. Specifically, applying the music-prayer dynamics model in a hospital context. I was invited, along with research assistant, Saba, to perform music and prayer during surgery. Although we made several attempts, the opportunity never arose. In lieu of this project, we were able to meet with three patients and two visitors (see photograph 22) and perform an arrangement of music and prayers within the context of the model. The following parameters were used:

Music Alone—consisting of solo xiao (Chinese bamboo flute)
Prayer Alone—consisting of healing prayers recited in Persian and Arabic
Music and Prayer Combined—consisting of the above two parameters
Unified Music-Prayer—consisting of the same prayers from the Prayer Alone parameter, but in a Persian style of chanting.

Photograph 22: Hospital music-prayer dynamics
Photograph 22 was taken in the Khoroq Hospital after we performed a sequence of music-prayer dynamics parameters. On the far right a patient is in the bed in traction; two patients with arm injuries are also pictured with one visitor. Saba and I are standing on the left.

We were all gathered into one of the hospital’s recovery rooms. There were three patients and two visitors. Saba and I directed our attention toward the patient in the most severe condition, a gentleman who had been in an automobile accident. The other two patients had minor arm and shoulder, injuries and were mobile. One was only in the hospital for the day, and the other for a few days. The first patient however was lying on his back in bed, his neck put into traction by a piece of torn cloth that was wrapped around his head and chin, then tied to a metal bar in the bed’s headboard. He was practically immobile as both arms and legs were injured. Insects were constantly flying around and landing on his face and body, coupled with the noise
from workers outside the hospital, allowed him little rest and no comfort. Samandar and Davlatnazar kept the flies away and further comforted the patient through conversation.

In this setting, we performed music and prayer consisting of the above parameters. After the performance, we interviewed all the patients and visitors to understand how they experienced the parameters. While it was not appropriate to utilize questionnaires in a strict manner here (see appendix E), the content of the questionnaires was a framework for the interviews. At times even specific questions from the questionnaires were asked of the patients and visitors. While all the participants indicated that they preferred the combined music and prayer parameter, it seems that individuals had different reasons for the same response, which had to do with individual aesthetics. For example, the patient in traction said “when I heard the music, I immediately felt a sense of calm and attention went to the sound and away from the noise outside...all my pain went away while you were playing...I wish you could stay and perform for everyone at the hospital, and for me as well.” He continued to indicate that he liked each section of the performance, but that the music and prayer together was simply stronger, “more powerful”. For this patient, there was a masking effect and a change of attentive focus that was positive for him. That is, the sound of the flute and voice masked other sounds of the hospital and outside workers and helped the patient relax in a way that he had not experienced throughout many long days on his back in traction. The masking related to two features of the sound, the volume and the timbre. The combined parameter is by nature louder than the
individual parameters. Also the waveform of the sound is more complex, making it broader in masking other sounds. In addition, the patient experienced a shift in mental focus. He described images of nature and a sense of a non-specific focus that went into the sound. “When I focused on the sound, I had no pain” he stated.

**Maddâh Performance and Money**

Finding an appropriate and respectful way to pay musicians and hosts was always eventful. The challenge I faced was to somehow financially support the musicians who, would never think of being paid for a performance of maddâh, yet who could definitely use the money, if not for themselves, then for others in the community. In consultation with Samandar, and through initial experiences in the field, a few guiding principles emerged. First, leave any discussion of money until after performances, and just prior to leaving. Second, at the time of payment, it might be more appropriate and easier to give money to the hostess who was usually the wife of the maddâhkhân. Giving money to the wife or another person without the knowledge of the maddâhkhân was considered on a case by case basis—all parties eventually knew about the money, but not necessarily at the same time. Third, framing money in a spiritual light is important. Fourth, combining payment with the signing of release forms might encourage acceptance of the money since it can be seen how the recordings and experience will benefit the researcher. At times it was better to sign forms separately so it might not seem like a formal exchange of money for
maddâh, which is opposite the very spirit of the practice. The main principle here is open, honest, and frank consultation.

As an example of these principles, one occasion is particularly instructive. We arrived at a village between Khorog and Roshon, prepared to record a maddâh performance. After the performance and recording, and being shown typically warm Pamiri hospitality, I was asked to visit and pray for a young woman who was having severe migraines with vomiting, loss of appetite, stress and nervousness. I responded in a fashion similar to that described above and agreed to go.

In my meeting and interviews with Ms. K, I learned that she had much psychological stress in her life stemming from lack of healthy communication with her family regarding her personal hopes and dreams, especially those concerning her fiancé—she was being pressured somewhat to marry and it was not yet time in her mind. It seemed to me quite unique that we were able to communicate so freely and easily from the beginning. I attribute it to me being a foreigner and thus perhaps less threatening (not being part of her particular village); and to the questions I asked, and silence I gave in listening to her responses, and follow up questions based upon her responses, and then further listening to her.

After the prayers, she claimed that she no longer had a headache and described being more relaxed and peaceful. I then asked her about her heart (emotional heart), and she said that it was better too, which, from her tone and eyes I understood as being only a little better. It seemed to me that the heart improvement was due to the physical changes—loss of headache and relaxation response, as well as general feeling
of peacefulness. I also gathered that it was only a “little better” because the resolution to the emotional issues related above involved other family and community members (a good example of the relational aspect of Malarkey’s PIERS model). In conclusion, we discussed how she might approach her circumstances to resolve the relational issues, while maintaining peace of mind through prayer, meditation, and exercise. I also recommended visiting Dr. Shirinbek to explore her diet and perhaps adopt an herbal treatment.

After this very positive experience, it was time to part ways. The maddâkhân was very happy and sent a young boy off to bring me a gift—a traditional gift of beautiful, hand woven, warm, woolen socks. The maddâkhân expressed his gratitude for my coming and praying for Ms. K. I placed my hand over my heart as is common in Pamir and thanked him, saying that they had all given me so much already, and I could not possibly accept anything for having prayed for Ms. K. He and the other musicians and community members smiled and forced me to accept them after a few rounds of my refusals and their insistence. There was an aspect of ritual behavior involved in this interchange known in Persian as t’ârof, where in this instance, a certain amount of refusals are required before (if at all) one can accept a gift or token of gratitude for example. After having accepted the gift, suddenly another little boy appeared with another pair of socks with a different, beautiful design, then another child—a little girl with another pair! Since I had already accepted the first pair I had by default accepted these as well, even without knowing that they would appear as they did.
In our dialogue, the maddâhkhân, like informants in other similar contexts, used a kind of logical approach and Tajik sayings to build his argument so I would accept his gift: “Shomâ az dur âmadid va miguyand ke ‘qarib tabibast’” “You have come from so far away and they say that ‘a foreigner (stranger) is a healer’”—emphasizing that with such a long journey and the fact that your arrival is a kind of healing or good sign, you must accept this gift. Often, reference was made to each other as being brothers or me being the son of an older community member, and that we have a familial connection. A very common saying was “kuh be kuh nemiresad, âdam be âdam miresad” “mountains come not together, people always return to one another”—after saying this phrase, which has such emotional content, especially since everywhere you look, your eyes fall upon mountains and the faces of your hospitable hosts, it strengthens this feeling of familial connection and any refusal is practically impossible.

We talked for several minutes letting the feelings we had just experienced relax somewhat. It was almost time for our research team to move on when I began to thank the maddâhkhân, musicians and host for the hospitality, gifts, and for sharing the maddâh and falak with me. As I started to take money from out of my pocket and offer it to the maddâhkhân, he immediately said “No!” in a way that seemed to erase any possibility of him ever accepting it. In our ensuing discussion about my offering something to him he said that they could “not possibly accept money for the prayers and poems performed in maddâh.” I smiled and said “a little while ago I said the same thing about praying for the young woman at your request”. A big smile
appeared on his face, but he still did not fully accept until I put the giving of money in a spiritual or mystical context by saying that “this money is not really mine, but that everything comes from God...it comes from Him and has now come to you, it will eventually go to someone else. In the sight of God, it is no more than dust, like the mountains and the world, but it is also a gift He has given.” He smiled again as he agreed and accepted it.

Symbol, Metaphor and Meaning in Kuhestân

The virtues of nobility, humility and service stood out as ideals in the ethical framework of Pamiri culture. Certainly, in any group, individuals embody ethical standards in varying degrees; and some are in the process of disembodiment—moving away from the value system in a culture, thereby inflicting pain on others. In the following section, I do not propose that all Pamiris embody the virtues as I describe, nor is it my purpose to generalize the Pamiri people, or essentialize certain personal characteristics—whether or not the person, people, or characteristics are Isma‘ili or not. Nor shall I examine the negative aspects of human behavior and society that, as in all cultures also exist in Badakhshan. Rather, I shall examine the relationships between certain local beliefs and the environment, which are poetic by nature.

I was fortunate in my field research that the Pamiri people whom I had the honor to know and to work with overwhelmingly exemplified and embodied nobility, humility and service. The qualities of and relationships between the mountains,
valleys and water serve as a metaphor for these human virtues and can be found in the poetics and stories of the region.

Mountains and Water: Virtues Embodied and Emplaced
Poetic Notes from the Field

The ponderous snow-capped mountains of Badakhshan continuously draw one’s vision upward—physically toward the sky, and spiritually, metaphorically to the heavens. Today I realized that every time I looked up to the mountains, I would spontaneously, deeply inhale and experience a feeling that was both reflective and forward reaching, introspective and outwardly embracing. I soon noticed others would often deeply inhale as a regular response to lifting their gaze upward to the mountain peaks. The deep breaths that I experienced were not normal breaths. They were imbued with the grandeur and majesty of the mountains. It was as though I was inhaling the energy of the mountains, becoming one with the qualities that they possessed—stillness, patience, steadfastness, peacefulness, certitude and quiet strength.

Snow and ice cover the highest peaks. Small pools of fresh, ice-cold water from which one can drink rest on the mountainsides. Streams trickle down, finding their way across the rocky terrain, slowly growing in size and speed, cascading further into larger streams and small waterfalls, eventually finding one of the main channels of the river panj—the ancient Oxus. The river flows gently at times, and at others, it roars through the valley’s riverbeds with ultimate abandon and fervor, crashing against the colossal mountainsides and carrying away anything that enters
upon it. “Be still as a mountain, move like a great river” was my feeling as I walked through the mystic valleys of Badakhshan. Mountains and streams, dust and water perform a yin-yang, bâtin-zâher dance from the mountaintops to the deep valleys and riverbeds. The flowing water cleansing what lies in its path, clearing away debris, and nourishing the land and people. I recall the ancient Persian story of the drop of rain and the water of life...the conversation with Samandar about the seven valleys and the mystic path to the Beloved...the metaphor and meaning in the land of mountains—kuhestân, where earth, water, music, poetry and prayer come together to form the mystic concert and devotional gathering of the maddâhkhâne.

These field notes arose from a reflexive process where, through shared experience with my informants, the connections between embodiment, emplacement, local beliefs, music, poetry, prayer, meditation and healing began to emerge. For example, the awesome size, solidity, height and beauty of the mountains gives them an air of majesty. As the mountains are the highest formation in the natural environment, they are the first to receive the rain from the sky—the metaphoric water of life from the heavens. Yet, the rain does not stay on the mountain. The mountain only serves as a path to the valleys, which lie at the foot of the mountains, low and humble—the valleys’ natural state. Yet, because the valleys are low, they receive and collect the nourishing rain. The parts of the valleys that are even lower become riverbeds. The valleys guide the water to the river and it flows to lower points, eventually making it to the ocean. Metaphorically, the water of life longs for reunion with the ocean—a

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23 Wu Yu-hsiang qtd. in Lo et al. *The Essence of T'ai Chi Ch'uan: The Literary Tradition*, p. 54

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symbol of the vastness of God’s grace, power, bounty and mercy. The mountains become majestic over the passage of time, thus patience is requisite of majesty/nobility. Water collects at the lowest point. So, the lower or more humble one becomes, the more one embodies the qualities of the ocean. The majesty of the mountains is embodied as human nobility, the lowness of the valleys is embodied as humility, and the action of the water becomes the virtue of service. Carrying the metaphor further, it becomes clear that the virtues are interdependent, form a greater whole, and cannot exist without the other. Similarly, the words “mountain” and “valley” represent two poles of the same portion of earth, which itself is part of a greater whole. Moreover, without valleys, there are no mountains; without mountains, there is no gathering and direction of water into the rivers, and eventually the ocean. The natural environment of the mountains, valleys and flowing water encourages a constant awareness (both consciously and subconsciously) of the above virtues since these natural formations are practically always in the field of vision or hearing—even at night when the river can be heard through the window, or the moonlight reveals the a portion of the mountains and valleys.
CHAPTER 4
PART 1: MEDIEVAL PERSIAN SUFI POETRY AND ITS CONTEMPORARY PERFORMANCE IN BADAKHSHAN

My son, by prayers shall your incomplete soul become whole,
by carrying them out wholly.  
-Naser Khosrow (1003-1088)

Prayer without action is useless.
-Kholmuhammad, Sufi of Shirgin (July, 2001)

“Few places on earth have given literature the importance it has attained in Central Asia, where mighty and meek have for centuries composed, recited, listened to or read, and lived with the poetry which remained their constant companion. Placed at the center rather than the fringes of life by both intellectuals and others, literature [especially poetry] entered into every ceremony, it came out of the facets of daily existence and constituted the prime esthetic pleasure of man” (Allworth 1994: 397).

In Badakhshan, the healing effects of maddâh are in large part ascribed to the meaning and baraka (spiritual power) believed to reside in the words of the genre’s poetry and prayer. This chapter will then explore aspects of maddâh performance that relate to the transmission of its meaning and form. To unpack the loaded meanings and multi-leveled structure of mystical meaning that is part and parcel of maddâh

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\(^{24}\) Translation by Hunsberger (2000).
poetry, the broader context of Sufism and Sufi poetry must be considered. While the ancient roots of maddâh are somewhere off in the ancient past of the Persian Empire, it is a living tradition, growing and changing to adapt to the needs of the current atmosphere.

In Badakhshan, Persian Sufi poetry holds a unique place in the religious life of the Pamiri people. This poetry, usually referred to as “mystical” or “religious” (rather than “Sufi”) by Pamiris, forms the primary textual base of maddâh. The poetry used in maddâh is predominantly from the mid to late medieval or “classic” period of Persian Sufi poetry (roughly from the tenth to the late fifteenth centuries)25. Maddâh performance draws from the written works of such poets as Rumi, Sanâ’i, Khosrow, Sa’di, Rudaki, Hâfez, Jâmi, Hilâli, and others. The vast majority however, is from Rumi. Poems from the oral tradition play a secondary, yet still significant role in maddâh, as do verses of the Koran and Hadith, and spontaneous individual prayers, poems, and vocal expressions.

Within the context of maddâh performance, there is an interactive, dynamic relationship between the written and oral traditions. I suggest that this relationship derives, in part, from improvisation, and from interpolations similar to those proposed by Davis (2001) in his discussion of interpolations in the Shâhnâmeh. In addition, during the seventy years of Soviet oppression, aspects of poetry underwent a forced transmutation. Most importantly, religious or ceremonial performances of poetry were stifled or forbidden; and the Russian language was forced upon the masses in a

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25 This period is usually dated from after the seventh century Arab-Islamic conquest of Persia and the subsequent “two centuries of silence”, until the death of poet Adb ar-Rahman Jami in 1492.
campaign to wipe out traditional culture to be replaced by official Soviet constructed cultural facades (see Levin 2002; and Allworth 1994). Nevertheless, the meaning at the heart of the Persian mystical poetry in Badakhshan has remained in tact.

Through musical and poetic analysis, this chapter will emphasize that while meaning is often more important than and transcendent to form, subtle and profound meaning can exist within the formal structures of the poem and music. Part 1 provides a background to medieval Persian Sufi poetry and explores the poetic aspect of a contemporary performance. This exemplifies the unique process and resulting poetic work that are distinctly “Badakhshani”. Through musical analysis, Part 2 expands this notion of form embodying meaning to include the metric and rhythmic structures of the sound itself. This builds upon the concluding remarks of chapter 3 and further supports the concept of the process of embodiment previously discussed. Musical improvisation will be seen to be an avenue for poetic interpolations, and a means for maintaining the performance atmosphere.

**Isma’ilism in Badakhshan**

Isma’ilis form a community within Shi’eh Islam that developed from one line of descendants of the sixth imam Ja’far al-Sadiq. The name “Isma’ili” comes from one of the sons of Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq named Isma’il. In the mid-eleventh century, after his conversion to Isma’ilism, Naser Khosrow embarked on a personal spiritual journey (recounted in his *Safarnâmeh*). Khosrow is considered a pir (saint, spiritual guide) to the Isma’ilis of Badakhshan. He brought the Isma’ili teachings to the Pamiri

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26 In this instance, “embodying” refers to the poetic and musical structure, rather than a human being.
region and he lived in the mountain area during the major period of his writing. Both
Sufism and Isma’ilism developed around the same historical period and share various
mystical tendencies.

Perhaps the strongest comparison between Isma’ilism and Sufism is the focus
on the mystical or esoteric (bâtin), as opposed to the orthodox, and exoteric (zâher).
Zâher can be understood as the outward form of religion and its practices; bâtin refers
to the inner meaning that is beyond the physical senses. The chart below (figure 7)
indicates the mystical emphasis, or preference in Sufism and Isma’ilism for the bâtin
over the zâher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bâtin</th>
<th>Zâher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>inner</td>
<td>outer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meaning</td>
<td>form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spirit</td>
<td>body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>embodied</td>
<td>disembodied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>action/deed</td>
<td>word/rhetoric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pure motive</td>
<td>ulterior motive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7: Comparison of bâtin and zâher

So, for example, the practice of the five pillars of Islam takes on a similar meaning for
the Isma’ilis and Sufis, which, focuses on the inner meaning rather than the outward
form, and which, stands in contrast to orthodox Muslim practice. While the Isma’ilis
are not associated with the ecstatic Sufi practice, they are often compared to a sober
mysticism. Moreover, in Badakhshan Isma’ili belief and practice developed
independently from the rest of the Isma’ili community in other countries. This
encouraged certain rituals and praxes like maddâh to become part of Pamiri Isma’ili practice, which are not found in Isma’ili communities outside of Badakhshan.

**Concepts and Practices in Islamic Mysticism**

Broadly speaking, the term Sufi is often used to imply a universal quest, a mystical approach or tendency that can be associated with religious practice in general. Specifically, “Sufism” is Islamic mysticism; it is the quest for union with and annihilation in God, the search for authentic religious experience based in passionate love for God, and the pursuit of spiritual transcendence that springs from the Koran and the life of Muhammad. Like medieval Sufi poetry, Islamic mysticism began in Khorasân, in the northeast of Iran.

Two main religious experiences are generally considered in Sufism, the “sober” and the “ecstatic”. To these, Lapidus (1992) lists a third, the “gnostic” approach. All three have at their center a quest for spiritual transcendence and oneness with God—the approach or lifestyle varies however. For example, the “sober” approach, sometimes called the “Baghdad School”, is characterized by striving to balance the inner and outer aspects of religious life. The “sober” Sufi practices inner detachment and moral rectitude while observing the explicit laws of Islam—being *in* the world, but not *of* the world. Al-Ghazzali (1058-1111) is considered among the highest exponents of the sober approach, which is explicated in his treatise *The Revivification of the Science of Religion*. This work discusses how the inner and outer life can be unified. First, through the devotion and steadfastness in Muslim rituals and daily obligations; second, through the submission of the qualities
of the lower nature \textit{(nafs)} to that of the higher nature \textit{ruh, aql, qalb}—spirit, intellect, and heart; third, through the acquisition of knowledge through study of the Koran and through daily pious actions and behaviors which, leave impressions on the heart and thereby transform one’s life (see Lapidus 1992).

The gnostic approach focuses on metaphysical understanding through contemplation and ecstatic vision rather than worldly activity and piety. Ibn al-Arabi (1165-1240) from Murcia, Spain, is viewed as one of the great gnostic Sufis. His central teaching was \textit{wahdat al-wujud}, (unity of being)—that God is manifest everywhere and in everything, yet all things are veils to God. The acquisition of knowledge through contemplation is at the heart of gnostic Sufism. This approach also emphasizes individual contemplative ecstasy as opposed to experiences mediated by \textit{shari’a} (religious law).

The ecstatic Sufism is characterized by a search for miraculous experiences of ecstasy that draw one closer to God. The image of the wandering dervish, lost in the love of God falls into this category. In my field research, I encountered all three of these approaches to religious experience. It is important to note each of the three categories is highly varied from within and overlaps with the others. In the strict sense, Lapidus refers to the three kinds of Sufis as “worldly but pious gentlemen, aloof ascetic contemplatives, and ragged wandering holy men”\textit{(ibid)}. These three streams developed various institutions: religious schools, convents, orders, and brotherhoods that were based on the various approaches of specific \textit{sheiks} (spiritual leaders), saints, or holy men. Veneration of such saints and holy men was a central feature of Sufi
fraternities. Actions were often carried out with the expectation that the disciple would receive a special blessing, energy, or baraka from the leader that would aid the adept in his quest. Varying degrees of allegiance and service to a sheik existed, as did the strictness or flexibility of the order’s rules and practices. The sheik was the object of great adoration and, to varying degrees, viewed as a reflection of God. Hence, the master-disciple relationship became a significant difference between Sufism and orthodox practices.

The mystical path consists of shari’a (religious law), tariqa (path, acts, and behaviors), and haqiqa (Truth, God’s will). The relationship between the elements of this tripartite way to God that can be understood through a tradition attributed to Muhammad: “The sharia are my words, the tariqa are my actions, and the haqiqa is my interior states” (Schimmel 1975: 99). In the path toward oneness, there are multiple stations, or maqams that characterize the wayfarer’s journey to the Beloved. There is no canon that applies here. Indeed each Sufi might have their own variation on the overarching theme of separation and reunion. The following stages are common in the literature and practice. They are often described as seven or twelve cities or valleys (see figure 8).
Figure 8: Mystical stages in Sufism

These stations are neither necessarily linear, nor finite. They can be compared to a caravansari where the traveler temporarily stops along a journey. The traveler might never return to that resting place and even forget about it, or the traveler might return once or more times to the same station. The path might also be compared to an upward spiral where all the stages form one unbroken chain. At times, stages are repeated in different forms, at times they are left behind.

Samâ’ and Dhikr:

Two important practices that bear a strong relationship to the maddâh are the dhikr and samâ. The dhikr (lit. remembrance, repetition, mantra) is a group practice where the sheik of a Sufi order gives a mantra to the adepts for their repetition. In
concert, often with rhythmic, accented breathing, the group repeats the phrase, which, often consists of a special metric structure. The mantra would constitute the orientation of the particular Sufi order and function as a kind of motto. At times, in addition to the group’s dhikr, different phrases or formula will be given to individuals depending on their personal level of spiritual development (Lewis 2000: 28). The samâ’ ceremony is often described as a kind of “spiritual concert”. Like dhikr, it was a congregational activity that usually took place in the Sufi lodge. Samâ’ consisted of listening to music, and dancing as vehicles for drawing closer to God. Thus, music for Sufis was considered to be food for the soul. The samâ’ stood in stark contrast to the orthodox laws against music. Since music was often associated with other harâm (forbidden) practices like drinking alcohol and debauchery, orthodox clergy interpreted versus that denounced such practices to include music and dancing. As previously mentioned, for Isma’ili, and Sunni Pamiris, like Sufis, music and dance are regularly practiced and form central aspects of daily life and social structures. However, there is no dancing in maddâh.

**Medieval Persian Sufi Poetry**

Sufi poetry from this period developed after the seventh century Arab-Islamic conquest of Iran, and the subsequent “two centuries of silence”. The efflorescence of Sufi poetry can be considered to revolve around Jalâl al-Din Rumi (1207-1273), the mystic poet and founder of the Sufi order known as the “Whirling Dervishes”. The period is generally considered to have ended with the death of poet Adb ar-Rahman
Jâmi in 1492. Jâmi is perhaps the first to call Rumi’s Masnavi “The Persian Koran”.

Sufi poetry has roots in secular panegyrics (praise-poetry) of the Persian courts of Khorasân. In that secular milieu, poets would elaborately praise the local leader, dramatically raise the station of the leader and make their own level very low. This style of poetic composition can be viewed as having parallels with the Sufi orders, where the mystical poetry developed. Roughly, the courts consisted of a leader, lesser ranking deputies, and subjects; the Sufi orders also had a spiritual leader or sheik, adepts who were spiritually advanced and close to the sheik, and the rest of the adepts. In both cases, the leader (secular or spiritual) was the subject of praise, adoration, and love. Davis (1997: 15-6) also makes this comparison and ads that the differences between the secular and mystical panegyrics “were often indistinguishable” (Davis 1997: 15-6). The outstanding reason that this transfer from the secular to the mystical was so easily made is that the poems’ subject is intentionally ambiguous. For example, when “beloved” is used in such poetry, it can easily refer to God, a king, leader, or human subject (ibid). Moreover, in light of the Sufi principle wahdat al-wujud or tawhid (unity of being and oneness), the ambiguity dissolves since the mystic will see the face of the Beloved in all things.

The major forms of Sufi poetry can be categorized as the ruba’i (pl. rubaiyat), qasida, masnavi, and ghazal. Traditionally, the forms are considered to be different in length, rhyme scheme, meter, and content. The ruba’i is a quatrain (do-bayti) with a particular meter often of a serious nature and sometimes rendered as an epigram; the masnavi, a poem of rhyming couplets of varied length, used for epic, narrative, and
didactic expression; the ghazal, a lyric poem from four to sixteen couplets which has its roots in love poetry—later transformed into mystic odes of love; and the qasida, a long poem in mono-rhyme of didactic or panegyric content. The ghazal often presents the takhallus (pen name) in the last couplet. This can be seen in sections section “I” line 5 of the transcribed poem. A poet’s collected works are often gathered in a book called a *divan*.

**Themes of Love in Sufi Poetry**

Love can be viewed as the central theme of Sufi poetry. Other typical themes, for example, transcendence, ecstasy, detachment, passionate union, and annihilation, can be understood as aspects of or dependent upon love. A brief overview of the story of Jalâl al-Din Rumi and Shams-e Tabrizi is relevant here and provide an initial background to the poem examined below.

Rumi came from a tradition of Islamic theologians and was himself renown for his vast knowledge of orthodox Islam. When Rumi was in his twenties, his father, a prominent mujtahid (learned theologian), died, leaving Rumi at the head of his theological school. When Rumi reached his forties, Shams, a wandering dervish from Tabriz appeared, preaching a mystic love of God as the true religion of Islam. One legend mentions that when Shams first whispered a mystic word into Rumi’s ear, it changed his life and he became entranced. Referring to his own account recorded in his *Maqlamat* (see Lewis 2000: 155), Shams indicates that in their first meeting, he posed a question that “made him [Rumi] inebriated on account of his purity of spirit...”
Shams’ message enraptured Rumi and he abandoned the letter (form) of religion for the spirit.

For Rumi, the reality of Shams grew to become a direct vehicle for God’s message. Rumi then so embodied the spirit of Shams that he claimed that his poetry was not his own, but Shams’—Rumi achieved a kind of mystical unity with Shams where his voice would speak through Rumi. Just as he considered Shams a vessel of God, Rumi considered himself a vessel of Shams. At the same time, after Shams’ mysterious departure from Konya, Rumi’s grief and yearning for reunion knew no bounds. This shows the central theme of the love of God and longing for spiritual reunion embodied in the human condition of mystic wayfaring.

The poetry from the *Divan* repeats this theme throughout. A *divan* (collection of poems by one author) normally bears the name of the poet, e.g. “the divan of Hâfez” is a collection of Hâfez’s poetry. However, in the case of Rumi’s *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi*, Rumi felt that the poems, which he outwardly penned, were in actuality the poems of Shams. The central or second section of the poem examined below is from the *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi*.

Shams taught that passionate love for God was the only way to have an authentic religious experience. Shams claimed that the union with God was to be found in actions of life, not in writings and knowledge of books: “that which will free you is the servant of God, not abstract writings. He who follows words on a page is lost”; ...and “the meaning of the Book of God is not the text, it is the man who guides.
He is the Book of God, he is its verses, he is scripture” (qtd. in Lewis 2000: 136).

This sentiment together with the chapter’s opening quotes from Naser Khosrow and the Sufi of Ishkashim, reflect a kind of “sober” mystic approach to Islam practiced by the Isma’ilis of Badakhshan. In this way, the religious/spiritual life is directly tied to action. In principle, spiritual life is an embodiment of virtues expressed through the actions of daily life—spiritual life is life; not a separate area of one’s life that is compartmentalized to a specific day of the week, or to ritual practices. While the mystic tendency in Isma’ili belief is clear, Isma’ilis do not consider themselves to be “Sufis”.

**Performance and Transmission**

In many respects the example below is representative of the process of poetic change driven by human interpolations and improvisation; in other respects it is unique. In particular, the third section is unique in its transformation from the poetic form of a *ghazal* to a *mukhammas*, as well as in the unique construction of this *mukhammas*, which is explored below.

The performance analyzed below consists of three separate poems linked together to form a greater whole: the folk poem “*Ah Majnun!*”—“Oh Majnun!” author unknown; a *ghazal* attributed to Rumi, “*Ay shode ghurra dar jahân...*”—“O bright new moon now in the world...” and a *ghazal* of Hâfez, “*Chandân ke goftam*”—“How much I have cried”. The poem “*Ay shode ghurra dar jahân...*” seems to be the work of Jalâl al-Din Rumi. While it certainly bears the style of Rumi, there
is the possibility that it is actually the work of another poet. I say this for three reasons. First, misattribution is a common problem when dealing with literature from the medieval Middle East. Second, the published version is from a popular publication that pre-dates Furuzânfar’s critical edition, where I did not locate this poem. While Furuzânfar’s edition has removed many spurious poems attributed to Rumi, which might account for this poem’s absence, this cannot serve as the only criterion to be certain—there still might spurious poems in critical editions for example. Thirdly, although the performer believes the poem to be Rumi’s, he learned this poem aurally from his father’s performance, not from a text; sometimes, performers have handwritten copies of poems that they have collected in personal notebooks (tumâr or daftar), which are also usually from oral sources. In addition, the takhallus in the last bayt is often the criterion for performers, which cannot be sole criterion of research.

Misattribution is usually due to the way poems were collected and transmitted in the medieval Middle East. If someone wanted a certain manuscript, it had to be hand copied and edited which could take several months as manuscripts were often immense. This work often was given to professional scribes and there was no guarantee concerning a copyist’s fidelity to the text. Moreover, the delayed introduction of the printing press to the Muslim world (two hundred years ago), and subsequent delayed usage (it was not commonplace until the late 1800’s) compounded the problem (ibid). Although Lewis and Davis (2001) are dealing with different

27 See also Berg 1997: 105-112 for a discussion of misattribution.
subject matter, they both agree that as time went on, interpolations became more numerous. Davis introduces a typology concerning the interpolations of Ferdowsi’s epic *Shâhnâmeh* that I believe directly applies to interpolations in Sufi poetry and provides scope for considering the role of improvisation as an additional way that interpolations have occurred. Davis’ typology is based on “the apparent reasons for the interpolations” (Davis 2001: 1) and can be summarized as follows:

1. Interpolations based on the ignorance of the copyist, or the copyist’s assumption of ignorance on the part of his audience.
2. Interpolations based on a desire to include material not present in a given manuscript.
3. Interpolations made on moral or ideological grounds, including religious affiliation.
4. Interpolations made on structural and aesthetic grounds.
5. Interpolations made on aesthetic grounds that are concerned not so much with structure as with the production of immediately arresting of spectacular rhetorical effects (ibid:1-2).

I view these as probable reasons for interpolation and misattribution in the Badakhshani context. When the elements of oral transmission of a written text in a musical form include improvisation, the problem obviously becomes compounded.

*Improvisation, Mysticism, and Maintenance*

Improvisation can be viewed as functioning in ways that can add to the spiritual experience, maintain or preserve a performance, and contribute to interpolation and misattribution. Inspired or mystical improvisation works in tandem with the structure of *maddâh* performance and the intensity of the poem to create a state of ecstasy in the performers and listeners.
Improvisation inspired by the performance atmosphere usually occurs in sections two and three. As improvisation increases, the words of the maddâkhân become less clear; at the same time the listener can be experiencing various levels of attention to the lexical meaning of the words and be engulfed by the sound and progressively altered state of consciousness. In this atmosphere, the maddâhkhân, perhaps more than others, is being swept up in a mystical state where he might emphasize certain poetic passages through repetition, use of vocables, taking liberties or altering the existing passage, or abandoning the poem altogether and inspiring a new poem. Improvisation here facilitates the function of maddâh (prayer, meditation, worship, praise) and is a tool to maintain or preserve a given state of consciousness or mood. Consider if one is learning this tradition aurally, and through experience, as is typical, any given poem will practically never be the same twice. So, while one is learning the authentic maddâh genre, the classic poetry is not being learned in its complete or original form. The poems are being learned in a highly variable, religious, musical, poetic, spiritually and emotionally charged context where participants experience altered states of consciousness, from the calm and reflective to the energetic and ecstatic.

Another kind of maintenance improvisation also occurs. This arises from a slip in memory of the performer. In this situation, improvisation can be used to maintain the flow and structure of the performance and protect the performance from falling apart. This kind of improvisation usually occurs in the munajat section or perhaps in the beginning of the haidari section. If a performer forgets a line, he might
utter the invocation “Yâ Ali” and continue playing in such a way that it continues to be part of the flexible structure. Meanwhile, he tries to remember the poem and then continues. If he cannot remember, he will stop and returns to the beginning of the poem, or the last section. If a lapse in memory occurs in the haidari or setâyesh section when a high level of energy has already been attained, musical improvisation carries the group for a moment or two (5-10 seconds). If the maddâhkhân still is unable to recall the forgotten line, he might wail out “Ay.......” until the line appears in his mind (usually within a few seconds); or completely improvise new phrases and sounds until the inspiration creates a new musical path.

Analysis

In this performance (track 11), although it is not a “maddâh”, a similar process is involved, that is, moving from stage one to three with an increase in intensity. One will immediately notice the raw power of the ostad’s voice. Sultan Mahmoud has been known for his strength of voice since his days as a young man before he began a life as a professional musician in the theater. Now in his early seventies, his voice is still remarkable; he however claimed that it was a weak in his age. He said many times “its not like when I was a young man”.

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The *ostad* stated that his performance (below) was a *falak*, not a *maddâh*. He did agree however that it shared many aspects with *maddâh*, more than is typical of a *falak*. Other local expert musicians viewed this performance as perhaps being a “type of *maddâh*” that begins with a *falak*, but preferred to think of it as a *falak* that borrows characteristics typical of *maddâh*; namely the mystical poetic text found in sections 2 and 3; the three-part structure; and the typical rhythm and meter found in almost all *setâyesh* sections of *maddâh*. However, the meter that is typical of the *haidari* is not found in section 2 i.e. where the poem *Ay shode ghurra dar jahân* begins. Rather, the typical rhythm and meter of the *setâyesh* is performed. It is a good example of how the *falak* can imitate, reflect, and in some sense be considered a type of *maddâh*. The transcription, transliteration, and translation of the poem are in appendix D. Notes on transliteration are in appendix A.
This performance consists of three distinct sections. The first section is marked Section A; the second section is marked Section B – Section H; and the third section is Section I. The second and third sections have published counterparts in the Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi, and the Divan-e Hâfez respectively. Overall, the performance can be considered a maddâh poetic form, or perhaps a qaside.

Section A comprises 4 sections and each line is arranged in the way it is sung in performance. Other sections are also arranged as they are performed. The opening statement immediately references the suffering of the intoxicated lover who is lost in a desert, searching for his beloved. Majnun, whose name in Persian literally means insane, is searching for his beloved of the world, Layli, who also is a metaphor for the divine Beloved. One story of Majnun recalls that after asking for Layli’s hand from her father and being refused, Majnun took to the desert and began his association with the lowest of creatures, a dog. Many stories simply say that Majnun is lost in a desert (often a metaphor for the world or universe) and in search of Layli. He seeks her everywhere, even in the sand. He is alone and has no one to associate with—only a dog. He, like a intoxicated mystic, places his fellowmen before his own needs, but also places animals above himself giving the dog his bread rather than keeping it for himself. This also signifies detachment from the physical and fasting from the world.

The narrator is both a third person, and Majnun. Section A verse 1 emphasizes both perspectives: he is insane; I have seen; I have seen; he gave his bread; and he wandered. This multi-vocal aspect can be seen as emphasizing the idea of unity or oneness—that the narrator, thereby everyone, is the self (I) and the other (he). Section
A2 continues with he then switches to you in line 2. Here the narrator addresses Majnun in an incredulous manner “You long for the tree of paradise (Beloved), then why are you in the lowest of places, next to a dog? In A3, Majnun is now speaking, lamenting his condition from seeing his beloved but being unable to reach her.

The mention of the rubab is significant for the Pamiris, especially for maddâh and falak performers whose main instrument is the rubab. As mentioned previously, the rubab often serves as a canvas for Persian and Arabic calligraphy; prayers and invocations are written on the neck and body of the instrument. A typical supplication is “Yâ Muhammad, Yâ Ali madad” (O Muhammad, O Ali, divine helper). Hence, the line in A4 can be viewed as Majnun wailed by using his instrument; or that he wailed and the rubab wailed via its sound, its written prayers, and in separation from its place of origin—heaven.

Sections B – H consists of the performed version of the ghazal of Rumi. The published version consists of 7 (or 14) sections, each line usually consisting of 7 (or 14) syllables. The number 7 is a significant number in Islam and is a metaphor for Muhammad’s journey to the seventh heaven, the seven cities or valleys that also represent the mystic path to God, and Islam being the 7th world religion in recorded history. In Pamiri homes, there are 7 ceiling beams on either side of the main gathering room where maddâh is performed. This construction is one of the main structural features that enable the Pamiri home to function as a mosque. The basic meter is rajaz, with variations :

- - v - - / - v - / - v - / - v - /

Ay shode ghurra dar jahân dur masho dur masho
In the translation, I have tried to maintain a similar metric and syllabic structure so that some of the internal rhythm can be carried into the English. I do not intend to suggest this as the best approach for translation; it is simply one approach employed here. The decision in the approach to translation is both one of meaning and musical aesthetics. Since rhythm and meter, both poetic and musical, is of central importance in these genres, embodying symbolic meaning, especially in the case of maddâh, I chose this approach as a working method. For example, the first line Ay shode ghurra dar jahân consists of 8 syllables, followed by dur masho dur masho, 6 more syllables, making a total of 14. This same pattern is followed in English O bright new moon now in the world, be not far, be not far. When this is done, the English is often easily accented to mirror the Persian. I have also attempted, when possible, to match the syllabic and rhythmic structure word for word.

For example, section B line 2: Yâr o negâr dar bar-at has a syllable structure of 1, 1, 2, 1, 1, 1 (or bar-at could be considered 2); and the translation, Love and beauty in your arms is similar.

The basic form of each section is: A - B - A - B with an internal pattern of \/
\ /
\ /
\ /

hemistichs as follows: a a a b a a a b

Sections B and C are identical between the published and performed versions. The first difference is in section D line 2. In this case the performer simply substitutes anduhi (grief) for zende o (alive and). In this instance the rhythmic structure and meter is preserved by the choice of another three syllable word to replace zen-de-o. “Grief” can be considered as different from and the same as “alive”. Either way,
within the context of this poem, the overall meaning is preserved. The opposite meaning between grief and alive is obvious. On the other hand, being “alive” is a kind of grief for the mystic who hopes and strives for inner death and annihilation in God thereby achieving a closer union. This line of translation was easier to match with the published version. For example, compare zen-de-o (3 syllables) with “alive and” (also 3), as opposed to anduhi (3 syllables) and “greif” (1 syllable). The first line “O bright new moon now in the world”, in one sense, is Rumi calling to Shams, in another it is the lover calling the beloved/Beloved.

The “embrace” in B line 2 can be both spiritual and physical and relates to line 3. A lover is safe and protected when in the embrace of the Beloved, just as man is safe and protected in his dwelling. Another interpretation of “khalq/khana” could be “man/woman” which could refer to a mystical station beyond distinctions of gender. “Learned/mad of mind” can be a reference to Rumi himself and to the place of knowledge in the mystic path. Knowledge is not necessarily to be thrown to the side, it is considered good to advance in knowledge, as long as that knowledge is a vehicle toward the Beloved or goal and not a veil to it. “Divune” (3 syllables) was translated as “mad of mind” rather that “insane” in order to maintain the rhythm.

Section C has strong metaphors for orthodox Islam and Sufism together. The narrator claims to be the object of pilgrimage (Kaaba), which is an outward, physical place; and he claims to be the inner reality (asrâr), mysteries, or secrets of that place. He is also the garment of the pilgrim that is removed once the object of the quest is reached. The “monk and his religious belt” refer to orthodox practices, as where
“death and guide” are vehicles for the true practice of religion for the mystic. Through death, the lover becomes “chained” to the Beloved, and that enslavement is freedom.

In section E, the performed version uses lines 3 and 4 from the published poem as his first two lines and provides two new lines for his 3rd and 4th lines. So when we compare the content of the new lines:

\[
\text{Ab manam shâb manam...and Abri manam nâb manam,}
\]

\[
| water | young | cloudy | clear/pure |
\]

the comparisons seem to work, and although, they provide different metaphor, the overall meaning seems intact.

In section E, “heaven” is a metaphor for the paradise of nearness to the beloved/Beloved, or heaven; and “fire” indicates separation from the same, or the fire of hell. Also in section E, “friend/cave” and “water/jug” are typical themes. In one sense the cave holds the friend; the jug holds water. The friend can be divine and earthly just as the water can be the “water of life” meaning the spiritual sustenance coming from God, heaven or the “complete/seven heavens” (janat –e mamur in the following line); and can mean the physical water needed for all physical life. The cave also represents a place where Muhammad took refuge, and can refer to early Christian martyrs. “Rose bud/thorn” and “beloved/lover” are typical opposites. The image of the rose and thorn can also be viewed as a metaphor for the union of the lover and beloved, and the eternal struggle between the beloved/goal/rose and the lover/path/stem/thorn that itself is the cause of pain/suffering and inseparable from the
beloved. If there were not stem/path there would be no thorn/pain; yet there would also be no rose/beloved.

Sections F and G are the most different in word choice, yet the basic form and meaning are one. There is a continuation of the kind of opposites presented in the poem: day/night, old/young, unaware/aware, slave/free, rose bud/thorn, treasure/toil; as well as like terms sun/king, grace/one, soul/five. “Five” is full of local meaning and is explored in Part 2 of this chapter.

Section H is found only in the published poem and contains the takhallus as does the previous section for the performed version. Although the performed version is 23 bayts as opposed to the published 26 bayts, the overall framework and approach is the same. The point of significant change between the two versions begins in section E and is mediated by improvisation. The musical structure up to this point has remained constant. Between each section and each half section (i.e. after every 4 and 2 bayts) the pauses are consistent. The ostad begins section E in the same manner with the same pause preceding a new section. Yet it seems that since he displaced the last two bayts for the first two, by the time he arrives to what would be the last two bayts, he has already sung them. Here he makes the only extra pause and continues the musical “riff” as it were for another round while he comes up with new material. From this point on, the performed version is different from the published poem. Had the ostad not paused, it might seem that this is the way he initially learned this ghazal. Yet with only one such pause in the entire performance, it seems likely that the former explanation is true.
Section I is the closing section, which is unique in its musical performance. This is a ghazal of Háfez where the performer has changed a few words and phrases. The metaphors continue in the same fashion as discussed above. The most important metaphor however, is not in the words, but in the form; namely, the number 5, which is very apparent here. The poem is performed in such a way, which emphasizes five—5 sections, each section comprise 5 lines, and each line is made of 5 syllables. The meter continues to be a 5-syllabled rajaz: /- - v - -/, as in chand-ân-ke-gof-tam.

The example provided here shows that in this case, the contemporary performance of medieval Persian Sufi poetry in Badakhshan can vary in form and content while the essential meaning of the poem is preserved. Here, the theme was love, and was conveyed through typical and innovative metaphors of the lover and Beloved. Improvisation functions to maintain inner meaning, while allowing and even encouraging flexibility in the outward form. In this way improvisation plays an important role in the construction of varied and new versions of Sufi poetry. This flexible approach to performance is reflective of the mystic concepts and approach to life and religion. The mystic path, like improvisation, encourages creativity, detachment, and journeying to unknown areas, while preserving essential beliefs and meanings.
Part 2: Musical Meter and the Symbol of “Five”

In the context of performance, multiple levels of meaning exist. A subtle yet profound level of meaning is found within the musical and poetic structures, which embody the local symbol and metaphor of five. While the five-centered poetic structure found above in the ghazal of Hâfez is rare, the setâyesh section of maddâh in my experience always is organized in a musical meter of five. This also holds true for other recorded performances of maddâh.28 The same meter was also found in live performances at the 2002 Smithsonian Folklife Festival, “The Silk Road, Connecting Cultures; Creating Trust.”

The source of metaphor is found in the natural and built environment, as well as the local religious belief and practice. For example, the symbol “five” is found in the ancient Oxus River known as the river “Panj” or five, and in the “five rivers” that flow into the Panj; namely, the Vanch, Yazgulâm, Bartang, Ghond, and the Shakhdariâ. Five is also manifest in architecture of the main room of the Pamiri home, which also serves as a formal place of worship—a family or local mosque. This room is built around five structural pillars, which represent the five members of the holy family of Islam, Muhammad, Ali, Fatimeh, Hasan, and Hosayn. The structural pillars also symbolize the “five pillars” or central practices of Islam.

28 See for example The Silk Road, a Musical Caravan. no. 40438 CD/2: track 18, Smithsonian Folkways; or Pamir: Chants Et Musiques Du Toit Du Monde. no. 92744-2, track 4).
Photograph 24: Pamiri girls pose with one of the five maddâhkhave pillars

Photograph 25: Differently designed maddâhkhave pillar
Photography 25 shows a different style pillar with a very artistic design painted on the pillar itself, as well as the wall. Both paintings on the wall depict
typical nature scenes in Pamiri art—a river or stream flowing from a vast mountain range off in the distance.

This room has five walls, two of which are co-joined to the two pillars that symbolize Hasan and Hosayn. These two pillars, linked by a horizontal beam, form the physical entrance and metaphoric passageway to mystical experience beyond the liminal.

Photograph 26: Threshold pillars no. 1
Photograph 26 shows the two pillars that symbolize Hasan and Hosayn and which form the threshold to the maddâkhâne.
Photograph 27: Threshold pillars, no. 2
Photograph 27 is from a different home also of the pillars of that symbolize Hasan and Hosayn. On the left, a painting of a saint or pir hangs and a written prayer request is placed behind the picture; on the right is a decorative clock; and on the crossbeam is a box of tea. Paper decorations can be seen on the face of the crossbeam.

During maddâh, the room is transformed into the sacred, performative space of the maddâkhâne. The pillars and their metaphoric meaning are directly related to the Badakhshani Isma’ili view that the individual and community of believers are the panjtan or followers of the “five bodies” (five central figures) of Islam. Five also refers to the human being with five limbs and senses that is nourished by the pillars (practices) and central figures of Islam. Five can also be found in the poetic meter of rajaz, which is used alone as in the example above, and in combination with other meters. Finally, five can be found in the final, most intense and important section of maddâh performance—the setâyesh. The music can be analyzed and understood as being in a musical meter of five. This is true of all the performances of maddâh that I have heard.
To be sure, the performers do not conceive or perceive the setâyesh in a “5/4 musical meter”. Any notion of metric organization in maddâh, be it “5” or some other meter, is by definition a perception and cannot be claimed to be caused by the cultural factors already discussed. Nevertheless, when I proposed my 5-based analysis to maddâh performers, responses ranged from a kind of curious interest and delight to one musician that said “yes, there are always relationships, sometimes we discover them.” To explore these ideas in a practical way, I first return to the poem discussed in part 1. The 5/4-meter begins in the second section: “Ay shode ghurra dar jahân...” (“O bright new moon now in the world...”), and continues through “Chandân ke goftam” (“How much I cried”) until the end. As already mentioned, this is not a “maddâh” performance. Rather, it is a falak that shares many structural aspects with maddâh. In addition, since this is a solo performance, it is perhaps the best place to initially describe the rhythm and musical meter.

Eight strums on the rubab, along with eight drum strokes, form the basic rhythmic structure. These eight strokes are sounded in a regular, recurring pattern over 5 evenly spaced pulses, or beats. Furthermore, these 5 pulses can be organized into 20 subdivisions. The subdivisions of the musical meter can be organized as follows:

123 123 12 123 123 12 12 12, which contains three broad groupings (see figure 9).
Figure 9: Underlying rhythmic grouping of the setâyesh

In figure 10, the 5 evenly spaced pulses or beats are indicated by the numbers 1-5 in the first row; row 2 indicates the 20 subdivisions; and in row 3 the 8 accents (made by the drum strokes or strums on the rubab) are indicated by an “*” symbol under the beat and subdivision number where they occur.

Figure 10: Three levels of rhythmic grouping in the setâyesh

The metric organization is complex. There is an inherent metric ambiguity, which allows for different interpretations. For example, perhaps a logical interpretation of the rhythmic structure would align every “1” of the subdivisions with the beats and/or accent levels (see figure 11).
I have preferred the organization of figure 10 for aesthetic musical reasons; namely, the second and third accents to me feel syncopated, as do the fifth and sixth accents. Figure 10 shows this by placing respectively these accents on “1” and “3” of the subdivision, as where figure 11 places all accents on a “1” subdivision. In addition, figure 10 creates another pattern by emphasizing the last two subdivisions of each group, which indicates a rhythmic push or leading into the following beat or measure. This is indicated by underlines in figures 10 and 11, where all underlines are identical. In figure 11 however, the first two underlines are subdivisions 2 and 3 in groups 1 and 2, and the last underline falls on subdivisions 1 and 2 or group 3. While figure 10 makes more musical sense to me, it is still an interpretation, in the same way that a five lined staff notation transcription is an interpretation. To visually show aspects of the rhythmic structure in the sound itself, I have included waveforms below.

Beyond the cultural meanings and relationships between “five” and maddāh, there are four musical reasons that lead me to conceptualize the setâyesh section of maddāh in a meter of 5. First, the 8 accents shown by the bursts of energy in the waveforms below form a regular, repetitive, rhythmic pattern. Second, this rhythmic pattern is introduced by the maddākhân on the rubab as a transition from the haidari section to the setâyesh section. It is usually played 1-3 times before the ostad begins
singing the *setâyesh* and other instruments join in the rhythm. Third, the duration of the repetitive, rhythmic pattern forms an equidistant structure and can be evenly divided as shown above in figures 10 and 11. This metric division of the pattern is first based upon the accent level which is *in the sound* (see the bursts of energy in figures 12-16); then on the beat level, of which beats 1, 3 and 5 fall on accents (bursts of energy) in the waveform and are indicated by purple\(^{29}\) markers in the figures below. Lastly, the lines of poetry in *maddâh* also are structured by this repetitive cycle.

The first audio example is of *ostad* Abdu’l Sultan Mahmoud and comes from the performance discussed above. Only the *rubab* is used here. The excerpt begins on beat 1. The waveform of the above graphic is shown in figure 12 to see the manifestation of a 5/4 meter in the sound itself.

\(^{29}\) For the forthcoming discussion, if viewing this study in black and white print, the following can be substituted for the colors purple, green and orange: purple = round headed marker; green = square headed marker; and orange = triangular headed marker.
Figure 12: Waveform from a performance by Sultan Mahmoud (track 12)

Figure 12 is a waveform graphic with markers that show a 5/4 meter. This is a picture of the measure before the text “Ay shode ghurra dar jahân” in the performance by ostad Sultan Mahmoud. The two levels of subdivisions shown in figures 5 and 6 are marked underneath the waveform, as are the 8 accents that coincide with the bursts of energy. Beats 1-5 are also indicated underneath the waveform. Each purple marker within the waveform marks a beat that coincides with an accent; namely beats 1, 3 and 5. The green markers indicate accents that do not fall on beats. Hence the three purple markers and 5 green markers together indicate the 8 accents that form the pattern shown by the bursts of energy in the waveform. The orange markers indicate beats 2
and 4, which fall in between accents. These were derived by dividing the duration of
the pattern in equidistant intervals, taking into account the personal aesthetics of where
I felt the pulse and flow of the music. The 3 purple markers and two orange markers
then, indicate 5 beats. The last marker (red with an “S” above it) indicates beat 1 of
the following measure. The flexible nature of the rhythmic structure is immediately
apparent in the waveform and in the audio sample. Beats 1 and 3 are accented in this
performance and can be seen in the burst of energy on those beats. This continues
throughout the 5/4 sections of the performance, as does the slightly delayed
articulation of beat 5. The metric flexibility of the 5/4 musical meter is seen with
beats 1, 3, and 5 being slightly longer than beats 2 and 4.

The next four examples (figures 13-16) are from the setāyesh sections of
maddâh performances by four different maddâhkhanân. They follow the same
rhythmic organization between 5 beats and 8 accents. However, these examples
include the drum, at times more than one rubab or tanbur. The purpose of the
following graphics is to provide visual examples of the manifestation of a 5/4-meter in
the sound itself.
Figure 13: Waveform from a performance by Sohibnazar Tourov (track 13)

Figure 13 shows the 5/4 grouping that comprises the meter of the setâyesh of a performance by ostad Sohibnazar Tourov. The markers follow the same description as above. This group consists of two lutes and a drum. The second green marker has significant peak as it does in the previous figure 3. This is due to the drumming style where this drummer rolls through what is often an accent. This tends to be a typical approach when the tempo is maintained at a fast pace as it is in this example, approximately 140 beats per minute. In addition, the use of a drum creates a rhythmic drive that relieves the rubab players from tendency to accent each of the aforementioned 8 strums as would be more common in a solo or slower performance.
Beats 1, 3, and 5 also fall on drum/rubab accents, which are indicated by the burst of energy on those beats; the orange markers indicate beats 2 and 4. This arrangement of beats and accents forms a consistent rhythmic and metric pattern throughout the setâyesh section and shows the embodiment of *five* in the sound and musical rhythmic structure.

This performance seems to have less of a delay before beat 5. However, this is likely to be a perception that is created by the faster tempo. While detailed measurements of each beat and measure would indicate whether this perception is truly in the sound structure, or in the perceptive mind, the point here is not in investigating such details. Rather, the definition of 5/4 meter here allows for an ebb and flow of time that is flexible and stretchable between and within measures. Moreover, it is the inherent structure and its manifestation in the sound that can be understood in “5” that is important, not its explicit composition based on a conscious decision.

The *maddâh* aesthetic is intimately linked to 5, which has already been shown as a symbol of central importance. One symbol can be both explicit and implied, as in “panj tan”—the ‘five bodies’ of religion, i.e. modeling one’s life after the example of the five central figures of Islam so that through this process of embodiment, one exchanges the body of self for the body of selflessness, the body of dust for that of light, the body of worldly qualities, for that of heavenly virtues. The opening section of a performance by *ostad* Akbarshâh is relevant here and shows what is a common theme in the *maddâh* aesthetic (track 14).
Maddākhân is a title, which beyond identifying one as an ostad, or master of
the tradition, at times identifies one with a right literally to call others to attention, to
admonish, and guide. In the above verse, the first statement made by the maddākhân
links the act of spiritual listening to the symbol of the “panj tan”, which facilitates a
process of embodiment. This is a mystical verse with multiple meanings. One role of
religious leaders is to explain the mystical and multi-layered meaning(s) of maddāh.
One meaning of the above verse is that the maddākhân is calling out: “Oh heart and
law, a true tongue speaks with might, always say with these five pure
ones/aspects/speech, the inner self praises the five who are embracing. With spiritual
ears (hearing) listen to each name that I say, Muhammad, Ali, Fatimeh, Hasan,
Hosayn.” In addition, the above verse is the beginning of a poem in the form of a
mukhammas, or five line verses. The setāyesh section of this performance is also in
5/4:
This group consists of one *rubab*, one *tanbur*, and one *doira*. The tempo is approximately 122 beats per minute; the third of the 8 accents can again be seen under the second green marker. Beats 1 and 3 are also accented as in previous examples.

The next example (figure 9) comes from a performance by *ostad* Shanbe in which the duration of beats 1 and 3 are more balanced with the rest of the beats and strokes/strums. This is again a three-member group consisting of *rubab*, *tanbur*, and *doira*.
Figure 15: Waveform from a performance by Shanbe (track 16)
The final example is from a performance by ostad Sultan Nazar.

Figure 16: Waveform from a performance by Sultan Nazar (track 17)

This example is from later in the performance and the increase in energy can be seen in the amplitude peaks. Also, the bursts of energy are wider as the voice and instruments overlap more. Unless there is a falak interlude before the setâyesh, the music gradually intensifies. Notwithstanding, there can be sudden increases as a singer is inspired and wails out a phrase or two before settling back into the previous level of energy.
Revisiting Embodiment

*Five* is at the center of *maddâh* performance, in the textual meaning and in the music, at times even in the poetic structure. As the central theme of Sufi poetry is described as *love*, the central Isma’ili theme in *maddâh* might be viewed as *five*. Moreover, the sacred aesthetic of the mountainous landscape—with seemingly endless peaks and valleys, forms a path for the mystic wayfarer, who is guided and nourished by symbols of five—the river *Panj* (five) and the five main rivers that feed into the *Panj*; and rivers of metaphorically spiritual water of the *panjtan* (five bodies/central figures) that nourishes the mind, body, and soul (*agl, tan, ruh*). *Five* embodies and frames central aspects of Pamiri religious life, including individual and group identity, religious belief and practice, and the place of worship.
CHAPTER 5

EXPERIMENTATION IN FIELD RESEARCH

While ethnography is the best way to convey how music and prayer live in the context of Pamiri healing practices and daily experience, physiological measures can go hand in hand with ethnography to broaden our scope of understanding. Building on what Arthur Kleinman calls a “culture-biology dialectic” (Kleinman 1988: 48ff.), I suggest that clinical studies concerned with music or prayer healing, not only account for the relationships shown by the music-prayer dynamics model, but also consider culture in their designs and interpretation of data; and that ethnographic studies, while considering music-prayer dynamics, also consider experimentation as a partner to ethnography.

Experimentation adds a new aspect and level to the discourse between researchers by providing a new kind of data. Approaches can then be critically viewed replicated and/or improved upon in other field or laboratory contexts. Field experiments can bridge an ethnographer’s personal experience and description of a musical event to colleagues in a way that is not bound by ethnography, nor solely dependent on being there—creating a kind of shared experience between researchers.
and participants that is not bound by time or place. Moreover, experiments can offer valuable insight into musical healing that is not mediated by language nor filtered through the mind of the researcher in the same way as ethnography.

**Experiments in the Field**

Endeavoring to conduct physiological experiments in the field is fraught with complexity, challenges, and potential problems. This is perhaps why there are no physiological field experiments published in the ethnomusicological literature. It is not for lack of interest among ethnomusicologists however—many have shared with me there past hopes, interests, and attempts in pursuing such research. Most notable is Margarita Mazo’s electrocardiograph experiment with Russian lament in 1975.

Mazo explained:

“The experiment was carried out in a remote village of the Vologda province in North-European Russia. The experiment was set to examine possible physiological effects of listening to music. For that purpose, the electrocardiograms were recorded while the subjects were listening to a tape-recorded lament. There were eighteen subjects, all female, who represented three groups: 1) local women who were either the lament performers themselves or had a life-long experience in hearing local laments; 2) students of Leningrad Conservatory who took part in fieldwork in the local area three or more times and who had observed lament performances; and 3) students of Leningrad Conservatory who were doing fieldwork for the first time in their life and were not exposed to lament performances before. The cardiograms were taken for two minutes before the stimulus was played to get the base heart beat, followed by another two minutes while the stimulus (a previously recorded local lament) was played. The verbal observations on the subjects, behaviors during the experiment were recorded. The lament was then encoded directly on cardiographic tapes to synchronize them with the sound. The preliminary results showed a significant match between the subject’s enculturation and the effect of affective response to lament. There was also a noticeable correspondence between heartbeat changes recorded by the cardiograms and the instability in the sound characteristics. This instability was elevating as the lamenting unfolded; the instability manifested through the
disturbances in pitch, temporal, and timbral characteristics. The experiment was carried out in cooperation with Dr. Vladimir Markhasin, a physiologist of the Sverdlovsk Academy of Sciences, and Dr. Vladimir Tsekhansky, a music perception specialist from the Sverdlovsk Conservatory.30

Unfortunately, government authorities confiscated her research when she left the Soviet Union in 1979. In addition, Ted Levin, Marina Roseman, and Dale Olsen, in varying degrees have been interested in measuring bodily response to music in the field; and there are certainly other ethnomusicologists who have had similar notions.31

I conducted two physiological experiments in the field of Badakhshan: a blood pressure/heart rate experiment, and an electrocardiogram (ECG) experiment. My use of the ECG in Badakhshan during maddâh ritual performance was unfortunately inconclusive due to lack of data. However, a methodology was developed utilizing video recording equipment that can be employed in future research.32 The blood pressure/heart rate experiment was carried out successfully in the field (see following discussion).

The exploratory nature of the present field experiment should be emphasized. While it builds upon previous pilot studies summarized in chapter 2, and carries the exploration one step further, the present experiment is also best viewed as a pilot study. In our case presented below, challenges included achieving a sufficient sample

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30 Personal communication in April, 2003.
31 For example, when I presented a summary of my dissertation research in the paper “Devotional, Musical Healing in the Pamir Mountains: Toward a Holistic Approach for Medical Ethnomusicology” at the 47th Annual Meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology, there was enthusiastic support from our panel, chair, and other ethnomusicologists at the session. Many stated that they had inklings or hopes about someone conducting physiological experiments in the field.
32 See Appendix F for a brief discussion of the experiment and the ECGs.
size and evenly balanced stimulus/control groups, controlling for variables of age, gender, health status and medication, and the physical challenge of navigating our way through the Pamir Mountains and valleys. While the challenges were met to the degree that the experiment was conducted successfully, there can always be improvements. Ideally, in the design presented below, perhaps all subjects would experience all stimuli while controlling for any potential ordering effect, thus providing more comprehensive data.

**Team-Building in Badakhshan**

To apply the above-mentioned ideas in field research, and to approach the potential healing effects of maddâh from a health science perspective to work in tandem with ethnographic research, I assembled an interdisciplinary team of researchers and conducted a physiological experiment to explore one level of how maddâh might effect healing. The research team consisted of several individuals with expertise in unique areas, which gave breadth to our scope of understanding both the ethnographic and physiological aspects of the project. The core group of our team consisted of Samandar Pulodov, Davlatnazar, Nurse Lailo, Saba Koen, and the author. In addition, significant collaborators of our team included Drs. Shirinbek (see chapter 3), Faiz (head anesthesiologist at the Khoroq hospital), as well as the chief of surgery at the Khoroq hospital. Dr. Shirinbek accompanied our team on several field excursions, invited us to his naturopathic clinic and hot springs, and consulted at length with us regarding his philosophy of healing and the roles that music and/or prayer can play in healing. Dr. Faiz and the head of surgery at the Khoroq hospital
consulted with me regarding the project and subsequently invited us to perform a series of music and prayers at the hospital (see chapter 3).

As young Pamiri ostadân (master musicians) in their own rights, Samandar and Davlatnazar brought unique perspectives to our daily dialogue about the local music-culture and healing practices. While I was always able to communicate in Persian with Tajiks (and Pamiris), Samandar and Davlatnazar’s knowledge of Pamiri oral languages, as well as their personal or familial connections brought another level of familiarity and acceptance to some of our experiences. Samandar is a musician/composer, teacher of folk music and culture at the Khorooq University, and worker at the Aga Khan Humanities Project. As a guide, he was extremely well organized, patient, an excellent communicator, and knowledgeable about local geography and customs. He was also a superior research assistant. Davlatnazar, a local musician and frequent collaborator with Samandar, was our fearless driver. His charm and informal association with officials and armed soldiers at various checkpoints along the barren, rocky roads always made for a smooth passage between villages.

Nurse Lailo is distant cousin of Samandar. Both of them were instrumental in negotiating with medical clinic officials to acquire a mobile electrocardiograph (ECG), and in obtaining permission for Lailo to join our research team. She was primarily responsible for administering the ECG experiment (see appendix F), which was her primary job at the clinic. In addition, she assisted in administering the blood pressure /
heart rate experiment, as well as consulted with our team regarding the physiological data and its interpretation.

Saba Koen, my wife, is from Iran. This not only added another native Persian speaker to our team, but also deepened the cultural connection to the Pamiris and Tajiks with whom we worked. Persian culture and “Iran” forms an important image in the mind of most Tajiks and Pamiris, who look at being Iranian as a noble reality, which is intimately linked to their own being Tajiki or Pamiri. Indeed, local people, whether in Dushanbe or a Pamiri village, often thought that Saba was Tajiki or Pamiri. Seeing the two of us walking together in the street often drew many eyes our way in more than a casual glance. The looks were curious in nature, often with smiles, or a bit of surprise. I was often mistaken for being Russian, German, English, or French on one occasion—until I would begin speaking Persian with a Tehrāni accent. Then I would be asked with a smile and somewhat doubtful tone Irâni hastid? “Are you Iranian?” When I responded “no,” at times people would not believe me initially until I would tell them ham dars-e Fârsi mikhunam, ham as khānumam—ke Irâni hastand, yâd migiram—“that in addition to studying Persian, I learn from my wife who is Iranian.” Once I stated that my wife and her family are from Iran, a big smile and statements of respect would follow—often saying that Mâ ham mesle Irâni hastim, mesleham—yekim “We are like Iranians, we are the same—we are one!”

Often, if Saba and I were talking with local people in the bazaar, or in friend’s home and a new person would enter the conversation, someone would invariable announce on our behalf that Ishân Irâni hastand!—“she is Iranian!” This
announcement never failed to bring a positive response and welcome. More importantly, Saba’s bright and joyful nature, innocent sense of humor, and her gentle and respectful approach to meeting new people always helped to create an atmosphere of fellowship, which sustained and nurtured the initial positive feelings that we usually experienced when meeting new people. As an educator, working as a teacher of English as a Second Language with diverse groups of international students from elementary to junior high school age, Saba’s experience in connecting with children and youth was another asset in the field. This helped us to link with the children and female members of a household in ways that were not possible for me to do alone. In addition, Saba is an excellent research assistant and conscientious translator.

Participants

Participants consisted of 32 men and 8 women; 31 participants were between the ages 25-50; 6 between the ages 19-25; and 3 over 50 (see figures 18 and 19).

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</table>

F=Female; M=Male

**Figure 17:** Frequency distribution of male and female participants
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<td>63</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 18: Frequency distribution for age of participants**

In figure 18, the ages of participants are listed in the first column. The second column indicates the number of participants at each age level.
All participants, with the exception of two (one of whom was Saba, the other was from Dushanbe) were Pamiri, Isma’ili and had grown up with and participated in maddâhkhâni on a regular basis. Before individuals could participate, they were questioned as to their current health status and background. Any illness, heart condition, smoking, the consumption of alcohol or any medication would disqualify a person from participating.

**Description of the Experiment**

For the field experiment, healing is viewed as a downward modulation of distress (stress) by measuring changes in the stress indices of systolic and diastolic blood pressure and heart rate (hereafter SBP, DBP, and HR). A digital blood pressure/heart rate monitor was utilized for measurement. In addition, in four cases electrocardiographs were recorded to compare the physiological process in tandem with the musical process.

The hypothesis was that maddâh could reduce stress. The experimental group consisted of listeners, performers, patients, and healers: 40 participants, divided into 4 test groups, each receiving a different stimulus. Stimuli consisted of maddâh devotional music (group 1), no music (group 2), a contrasting local pop music (group 3), and an unfamiliar devotional music (group 4). All musical stimuli were performed live. Excerpts of the stimuli can be heard on the following audio tracks:

- **Group 1**: Maddâh devotional music (refer to tracks 1-4 and 13-17)
- **Group 2**: No music
- **Group 3**: Badakhshani pop music (track 18)
- **Group 4**: Unfamiliar devotional music (not available)
The Badakhshani pop/dance music consisted of electric guitar and bass, synthesizer/keyboard with a drum machine, and vocals—all amplified through a sound system. The unfamiliar devotional music consisted of the author performing a series of instrumental and vocal devotional pieces performed on the Persian ney, Lakota cedar wood flute, soprano saxophone, and poems and prayers chanted in Persian and English. Group 1 consisted of 18 participants who listened to and performed maddâh devotional music; group 2 consisted of 12 participants who had no music or other stimulus; group 3 had 4 participants who listened to and performed local pop music for dancing; and group 4 had 6 participants who listened to the unfamiliar devotional music. A between groups,\textsuperscript{33} pre-test/post-test design was utilized. Two measures of each variable were taken before the stimuli and two measures after the stimuli. In addition the factors of age, gender, and function (listener or performer) of the participants were also recorded. Prior to field research in Badakhshan, questionnaires based on the music-prayer dynamics model and the five parameters of the PIERS review were developed and utilized in three pilot studies (see appendix G). While formal questionnaires were deemed inappropriate for this field research, the subject matter was covered through interviews with patients, healers, musicians, and non-performing participants. These helped to provide an ethnographic frame for understanding local aesthetics of music-prayer performance and their roles in healing.

\textsuperscript{33} A between groups design compares effects between different test groups, as opposed to a within group design where all participants experience all stimuli.
Data analysis at a 1% error rate showed that *maddāh* had a significant effect in lowering SBP. Other physiological responses were not statistically significant. In conclusion, the null hypothesis for SBP was rejected thereby confirming that in this experiment, *maddāh* significantly lowered stress. For DBP and HR the null hypothesis could not be rejected.

**Statistical Results**

Explanatory data analysis was performed to identify which stimulus and factor had a significant effect on physiological responses. Two measures of each variable (SBP, DBP, and HR) were taken pre-test and post-test. Each set was averaged and the difference of averages was labeled SBPdiff, DBPdiff, and HRdiff. ANOVA (analysis of variance) and ANCOVA (analysis of covariance) analyses were used interleaved. The systolic blood pressure data suggests that positive effects are present and are aligned with a genre’s purpose and function, as well as a subject’s expectations and cultural associations. In the case of the *maddāh* stimulus with a 1% error rate, results show a significant effect on SBP between pre and post-test measures with a P-value of 0.000. This gives a 99% confidence rate that the effects are due to the stimulus. In some individual cases there were decreases in DBP and HR but not to a significant degree; none of the factors (stimulus, age, gender, listener, or performer) had a significant effect for the changes in DBP with 5% error rate. Heart rate modulation was effected the least. However, there were indications that gender seems to account
for a significant effect in the changes of heart rate with 5% error rate. This must be explored further, with a sample group controlling for gender.

Individual confidence intervals, Tukey/Kramer, Scheffe, and Bonferroni/Dunn multiple comparisons were used to determine where the significant effect occurs (see tables 5-7 below). With 1% error rate, the SBP of Group 1 (maddâh) was significantly reduced compared to both group 2 (no-stimulus) and group 3 (Badakhshani pop music), while the SBP changes are not significantly different between group 1 and group 4 (unfamiliar devotional music). There was no significant difference between any combination of groups 2, 3 and 4.

Figures 20-22 show the box plots of SBPdiff, DBPdiff, and HRdiff. The numerical values are summarized in Table 1 below. In the box plots the variables (SBPdiff, DBPdiff, or HRdiff) are indicated on the y-axis; and stimuli numbers 1-4 along the x-axis indicate the following:

1  maddâh devotional music
2  no music or other stimuli
3  Badakhshani pop, dance music
4  unfamiliar devotional music
Figure 19: Box Plot of SBPdiff

In the above SBPdiff box plot, stimulus no. 1 (*maddâh*) is shown to be the most effective in lowering SBP, followed by 4 (unfamiliar devotional music). It seems that the two devotional musics form a separate category. Stimulus 3 (local pop music) shows an increase in SBF, while stimulus 2 (no music) shows no effect.

Figure 20: Box Plot of DBPdiff
In the above DBPdiff box plot, there is now an overlap between all stimuli, with groups 1 and 4 no longer forming a separate category. Also, there is less variability overall, with the pop music not being as elevated as in the SBPdiff box plot.

Figure 21: Box Plot of HRdiff

In the above HRdiff box plot, there is the least amount of variability with each group maintaining a moderate stance, with the exception of a few outliers. Also, the mean (marked by a solid black line within each blue box) of group 4 is now the lowest as shown in figure 21.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Stim.no</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>StDev</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Q1</th>
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Table 1: Tabular Summary
Changes in SBPdiff, DBPdiff, and HRdiff Between Pre and Post Measures

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<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F-Value</th>
<th>P-Value</th>
<th>Lambda</th>
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Table 2: ANOVA Table for SBPdiff

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<th>F-Value</th>
<th>P-Value</th>
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<td>31.676</td>
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Table 3: ANOVA Table for DBPdiff
Table 4: ANOVA Table for HRdiff

In the above three ANOVA tables (2-4), the P-values are calculated at a 1% error rate, which indicates that the first table for SBPdiff is significant with P=.0003. The other two tables do not indicate a statistical significance.

The following three multiple comparison tests (tables 5-7) for SBPdiff use “S” to indicate statistical significance calculated and a 1% error rate. What is most important is that in all three cases the SBPdiff of the maddâh group (1) is significantly reduced in comparison to groups 2 and 3. Also, there is no significance between groups 1 and 4, the two devotional music stimuli; and no significant effect between groups 2, 3, and 4.

Table 5: Scheffe for SBP

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<tbody>
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<td>Significance Level: 1%</td>
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</table>
Table 6: Bonferroni/Dunn for SBPdiff
Effect: Stim.no
Significance Level: 1%
Comparisons in this table are not significant unless the corresponding p-value is less than .0017.

Table 7: Tukey/Kramer for SBPdiff
Effect: Stim.no
Significance Level: 1%

Although the data presented here are admittedly rough, they offer insight into the links between local beliefs and bodily response; namely, those who participate in maddâh believe it to possess baraka (spiritual power) capable of healing the physical body of any illness. In addition, the ritual performance of maddâh creates a process of purging the heart of sadness and pain. Informants often commented, “maddâh relieves my heart of sadness”... “it brings the sadness and pain out of my heart”.... “if my heart is burning or broken, it feels better after maddâh”.
During Dr. Shirinbek, the surgeon and naturopath from the village of Auj, was convinced of maddâh’s ability to lower blood pressure for Pamiris. This he stated before any knowledge of my experiment; and he thought that it might be one reason that the use of maddâh in the hospital (discussed in chapter 3) was effective. He also viewed the efficacy of music and prayer as functioning at two levels—the physiological and quantum levels—the bodily response being more related to prevention; and the quantum response being more related to belief and curative potential. While physiological measures can be strong indicators of stress modulation and immune response (see for example Kiecolt-Glaser and Glaser), they must be viewed in the context of local belief and aesthetics, which not only have an impact on bodily functions, but also can inform our understanding of curative experiences associated with musical, devotional practices.

Separately, ethnography and experimentation provide unique data and views of healing. Together, a more holistic, perhaps truer understanding can begin to emerge. Given the nature of ethnomusicology, its interests and ability to collaborate across academic disciplines, ethnomusicologists can offer new and meaningful approaches to the discourse of musical healing.
Conclusions
Sound, Symbol, and Embodiment

“How do sounds actively communicate and embody deeply felt sentiments? This question should be at the core of any ethnographic, humanistic, or social scientific concern with music, yet ethnomusicology is just beginning to untangle issues of the musical sign, the relations between symbolic form and social meaning, and the performance of sounds as communicative action (Feld 1991:79).

Ethnomusicology in Transition

In the past decade several ethnomusicologists have made significant progress by addressing Feld’s concern and suggestion (see for example the works since 1990 discussed in chapter 1). Building upon Feld’s statement, this study suggests that not only ‘ethnographic, humanistic, or social science’ be concerned with ‘how sounds actively communicate and embody deeply felt sentiments’ but physical and clinical science as well. In addition, the present study suggests that ethnographic research embraces experimentation; and clinical research embraces ethnography as a means to approach a more holistic understanding of music and healing.

To encourage a holistic methodology and ontology, this study proposes a flexible model, shown in chapter 2, which can frame both ethnographic and health science research where music and prayer are involved. For ethnographic or clinical research, the model emphasizes the need to consider multiple perspectives to understand and/or effectively employ music and prayer in the context of healing.
To apply these concepts, the dissertation utilizes the *music-prayer dynamics* model for the ethnographic and experimental components of the study. Chapter 3 frames *maddâh* within the current soundscape and healthcare landscape of the region, and provides context for understanding the relationships between local aesthetics and music, prayer, poetry, and musical instruments. In addition, chapter 3 shows the links between local practices of prayer healing and *maddâh* ritual performance. Chapter 4 explicates *maddâh*’s relationship to Sufi practices and poetry; further explores the signs, symbols, and metaphors, which connect the musical and poetic rhythmic structures of *maddâh* to local belief and practices, as well as the natural and built environment. Through an ethnographic exploration of traditional Pamiri healing practices, as well as through physiological field experiments shown in chapter 5, the dissertation attempts to approach the vast subject of music and healing anew. Building upon research from several fields, it suggests an integrative methodology is necessary to carry the discourse in music and healing forward.

Field research was carried out within a specific religious community and cultural context, which includes traditional practices that utilize music and prayer. Through the study’s combined methodology, by considering the cultural meaning and local beliefs concerning music and prayer, health, healing, and disease, as well as views of local physicians and healers, the dissertation hopes to encourage a dialogue between the areas of science and religion, viewing them as complementary rather than opposing ways of understanding the world.
Maddâh performance serves several cultural and social functions in Pamiri life. The dissertation dwells upon its role in healing. As shown in chapters 3 and 4, maddâh is a vehicle for participants to embody the meaning associated with the genre. This process of embodiment functions as a preventive practice for health maintenance. Also, as the outstanding devotional genre of music that is itself a form of prayer, its potential as a curative practice is emphasized. Physiological experiments presented in chapter 5 show that maddâh had a significant effect on lowering systolic blood pressure (P=.000).

In the maddâhkhâni, medieval Persian Sufi poetry forms the textual centerpiece of performance. In chapter 4, the primacy of textual meaning and baraka in the context of performance is shown to be maintained through innovative musical and poetic improvisation. Baraka is also viewed as the efficacious, spiritual energy that is intimately linked to and embodied in maddâh. Moreover, the belief in baraka extends to other healing practices of music and prayer, and to practices that utilize natural substances, especially water.

Future ethnomusicological research in the region might focus on documenting the lives of a limited number of elderly master musicians who safeguarded Pamiri music traditions during the era of Soviet oppression, through the turbulent Tajik civil war, to the present day—an area of focus not covered in Soviet scholarship. In addition, a few performers among a younger generation of musicians are performing new music in the tradition of Pamiri devotional music and should also be the focus of future research. Furthermore, groundwork is laid for the continuation of field
research concerning devotional, musical affect and physiological response. When such research is grounded in a rich ethnographic fabric, it promises to provide new insights into the elusive and potent subject of music and healing.
For the purpose of clarity, the dissertation employs the basic transliteration system found in Lewis (2000: xvii).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vowel</th>
<th>Sound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>lab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>â</td>
<td>law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>u</td>
<td>tutu</td>
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<tr>
<td>o</td>
<td>go</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Consonant** | **Sound**
--- | ---
kh | Bach (German)
zh | vision

ʻgh’ and ‘q’ represent sounds not found in English, a hard velarized “g” pronounced higher up in the mouth” (ibid). Shiva (1995: xxv), as well as others, often use the French “r” as a reference, which serves as a good starting point. To pronounce the Tajik-Persian (or Persian) “gh” or “q”, a helpful comparison can be made with the pronunciation of the English “t”. To pronounce “t”, one makes contact with the tip of the tongue to the point where the palette meets the front teeth; the rest of the tongue disallows airflow until the tip is released, thus producing the sound “t”. With the same process in mind, and building from the area that produces the French “r”, the back of
the middle velar region must make contact with the palette so that there is no possible airflow. When the velar region is released the proper sound is produced. One must have the “gh” or “q” sound in mind rather than the “k”, or a hard “k” sound might be produced. Other consonants are basically consistent with their English equivalents. The apostrophe (‘) indicates a brief pause.
APPENDIX B
PIERS MODEL BY WILLIAM MALARKEY

P=Physical
I=Intellectual
E=Emotional
R=Relational
S=Spiritual

The above figure represents an individual where all five domains are evenly balanced.
The above figure represents the addition of meditation as a separate component. The model constructed in this formation comprises eight parameters: music, prayer or meditation alone, the combinations of music and prayer, music and meditation, prayer and meditation, the combination of all three and unified music-prayer-meditation. This formation provides a parameter where meditation can function as a practice separate from prayer. While the dissertation does not consider meditation in this way, it is proposed here to aid in research that concerns the efficacy of different types of meditation.
**Section A:**

1. etherlands. He is insane!
   — I have seen a dog
   — Ah I have seen it — ah in the desert
   — Ah! His bread, he gave the dog his bread, ah
   — He wandered around that dog, ah

2. He said, he is intoxicated!
   You long for the tree of paradise
   Ah, then why are you with this dog?

3. Ah! One day of days I had seen, ah
   — From one mountain
   — Ah! Layli, Layli passed by, so it was
4a. Ah! I cried and wailed with my rubab
    I am burning like fired flesh

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

Section B:
Ay shode ghurra dar jahân
       Dur masho, dur masho
Yâr o negâr dar bar-at
       Dur masho, dur masho
Khalq manam khâna manam
       Dâm manam dâne manam
Âqel o divune manam
       Dur masho, dur masho

Section C:
Ka’be-ye asrâr manam
       Jabe o dastâr manam
Râheb o zonâr manam
       Dur masho dur masho
Mir manam, pir manam
       Baste be-zanjir manam
Sâheb-e tadbir manam
       Dur masho, dur masho

Section D:
Shâd manam dâd manam
       Bande o âzâd manam
Anduhi del shâd manam
       Dur masho dur masho
Shâm manam, ruz manam
       Eshq-e jegar-suz manam
Sham’e del afruz manam
       Dur masho dur masho

Section E:
Yâr manam qâr manam
       Delbar o deldâr manam
Gonche manam khâr manam
       Dur masho dur masho
Âb manam shâb manam
       Kuze manam âb manam
Abri manam, nâb manam  
   Dur masho dur masho

**Section F:**  
Ganj manam ranj manam  
   Jân manam panj manam  
Ruz o shab âhang manam  
   Dur masho dur masho  
Shaykh manam shâb manam  
   Kuze manam âb manam  
Bikhâr o bikhâb manam  
   Dur masho dur masho

**Section G:**  
Shams-e shajar(a) riz manam  
   Mahfel-e Tabriz manam  
Khanjar-e khun riz manam  
   Dur masho dur masho  
Khanjar-e khun riz manam  
   Dur masho dur masho

**Section H:** (omitted in performance)

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

**Section B:**  
O bright new moon now in the world  
   Be not far, be not far  
Love and beauty in your arms  
   Be not far, be not far  
Man am I, dwelling am I  
   Trap am I, the bait am I  
Learned and mad of mind am I  
   Be not far, be not far

**Section C:**  
Kaaba of mysteries am I  
   The cloak and turban am I  
A monk and his belt am I  
   Be not far be not far  
Death am I, guide am I  
   Bound up by a chain am I
The one who makes free am I
    Be not far, be not far

Section D:
Glad am I, sad am I
    Both a slave and free am I
Grieved and happy am I
    Be not far be not far
Night am I, day am I
    Love that burns within am I
Radiant heart’s candle am I
    Be not far, be not far

Section E:
Friend am I, cave am I
    Beloved and lover am I
Rose bud am I, thorn am I
    Be not far, be not far
Water am I, youth am I
    Vessel am I, water am I
Cloudy am I, pure am I
    Be not far, be not far

Section F:
Rich am I, sour am I
    Soul am I, five am I
The tune of day and night am I
    Be not far, be not far
Sheik am I, young am I
    Jug am I water am I
Foodless and sleepless am I
    Be not far, be not far

Section G:
The sun of heaven’s tree am I
    Assembly of Tabriz am I
Dagger that pours blood am I
    Be not far, be not far
Dagger that pours blood am I
    Be not far, be not far

Section H: (omitted in performance)
Section I:
Chandân ke goftam
Qam bá tabibân
Darmân nakhârdand
Meskin gharibân
Â mulki hardam

Dar daste khâr-ast
Gu sharm o bâdat
Az andalibân
Dorj-e mohabbât
Dar mohre khod nist

Yârab mabâd o
Kâm-e raqibân
Yârab amân deh
Tâ bâz o binam
Chashm-e muhebân

Ruye adibân
Ay mon'am âkher
Bar khân o aslah
Tâ chand o bâsham
Az binasibân

Hâfez naghâshti
Shaydâ o giti
Gar mishenidi
Pandi habibân
Gar mishenidi

Pandi adibân, dâde

Section I:
How much I have cried
Alas, the doctors
Don’t cure my sadness
A poor foreigner
Always in the world
In my hands are thorns
Say be ye shamefaced
From the nightingales
The treasure of love
It is not in them

O Lord! God forbid!
To grant rival’s wish
O Lord! Grant mercy
Until I can see
The eyes of my friends

In the face of my love
Oh eternal Lord
At the table of peace
How long will I be
Among the deprived

Hâfez, you won’t be
Enraptured by the world
If you listen
To the advice of the friends
If you heed

To the counsel of the wise ones
APPENDIX E
MUSIC-PRAYER DYNAMICS (MPD)
QUESTIONNAIRES MPD 1, AND MPD 2

QUESTIONNAIRE MPD 1

Instructions:
- Please answer the questions below AFTER listening to the cassette for TWO DAYS.
- Put a check mark in the box that best describes your feelings after listening to the tape.
- Please answer all the questions.

1. I felt less stress after listening to the tape.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Somewhat Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree
   - None of the above

2. I felt very sad after listening to the tape.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Somewhat Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree
   - None of the above
3. I felt healthier after listening to the tape.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Somewhat Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree
   - None of the above

4. I felt that my life had no meaning after listening to the tape.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Somewhat Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree
   - None of the above

5. I felt better about my life after listening to the tape.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Somewhat Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree
   - None of the above

6. I felt more relaxed after listening to the tape.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Somewhat Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree
   - None of the above

7. I felt less at peace with myself after listening to the tape.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Somewhat Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree
   - None of the above
8. I felt more satisfied with my living environment after listening to the tape.

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- None of the above

9. I felt closer to my community after listening to the tape.

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- None of the above

10. I felt better able to serve others after listening to the tape.

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- None of the above

11. I felt less loved by others after listening to the tape.

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- None of the above

12. Listening to the tape made me feel mentally tired.

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- None of the above
13. Listening to the tape made me feel physically refreshed.

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- None of the above

14. Listening to the tape made me feel emotionally drained.

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- None of the above

15. Listening to the tape made me feel spiritually uplifted.

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- None of the above

16. I felt closer to God after listening to the tape.

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- None of the above

17. The tape that made me feel the best was the tape with:

- music only
- prayers only
- both music and prayers
QUESTIONNAIRE  MPD 2

Please answer the following questions by placing a mark in the box that best describes your feelings.

1. I feel more relaxed.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Somewhat Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree
   - None of the above

2. I feel more confused.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Somewhat Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree
   - None of the above

3. I feel more refreshed.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Somewhat Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree
   - None of the above

4. I feel more stress.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Somewhat Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree
   - None of the above

5. I feel closer to my friends and family.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Somewhat Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree
   - None of the above
6. I feel more depressed.
   - [ ] Strongly Agree
   - [ ] Somewhat Agree
   - [ ] Somewhat Disagree
   - [ ] Strongly Disagree
   - [ ] None of the above

7. I feel more clear-headed.
   - [ ] Strongly Agree
   - [ ] Somewhat Agree
   - [ ] Somewhat Disagree
   - [ ] Strongly Disagree
   - [ ] None of the above

8. I feel more fatigued.
   - [ ] Strongly Agree
   - [ ] Somewhat Agree
   - [ ] Somewhat Disagree
   - [ ] Strongly Disagree
   - [ ] None of the above

9. I feel more spiritual.
   - [ ] Strongly Agree
   - [ ] Somewhat Agree
   - [ ] Somewhat Disagree
   - [ ] Strongly Disagree
   - [ ] None of the above

10. I feel better about myself.
    - [ ] Strongly Agree
     - [ ] Somewhat Agree
     - [ ] Somewhat Disagree
     - [ ] Strongly Disagree
     - [ ] None of the above

Please write any comments that you would like to share. Use the back of this paper if necessary.
APPENDIX F
ELECTROCARDIOGRAMS

The following ECGs were recorded from three different individuals (male) during maddâh ritual performance. Since each section of a maddâh performance is musically distinct (see pp. 115-117), it was hypothesized that the electrocardiograph would detect a physiological distinction between the sections. The ECGs for subject 1 are numbered 1.1-1.16 and are divided into four groups of four. Group 1 (1.1-1.4) is a pre-stimulus measurement to establish the basic pattern of the heartbeat. Group 2 (1.5-1.8) represents the heart activity during the first section of the maddâh, namely the munajat. Group 3 (1.9-1.12) shows the heart activity during the second section of maddâh, namely the haidari. Group 4 (1.13-1.16) shows the heart activity during the third and final section of maddâh performance, namely the setoyesh. ECGs 2.1-2.12 are for the same individual during a falak portion of maddâh performance. These are divided into three groups of four and show the subject’s heart response to the beginning (2.1-2.4), middle (2.5-2.8), and ending (2.9-2.12) sections of the falak. ECG’s 3.1-3.20 and 4.1-4.20 are for subjects 2 and 3 respectively; and follow the same organization as groups 1-4 mentioned above, with the addition of a post stimulus measure indicated by ECGs 3.17-3.20 and 4.17-4.20 respectively.
Nurse Lailo recorded the subjects’ ECGs while I videotaped the ECG printout in an attempt to coordinate the musical process with the physiological process. This approach could prove promising with a large enough sample size and sufficient ECG data. Since this portion of the field experiment did not provide sufficient data for analysis, no further discussion is provided. Nevertheless, the ECGs are included below for reference.
ECG 1.1-1.4
ECG 1.5-1.8
ECG 2.1-2.4
ECG 2.5-2.8
ECG 2.9-2.12
ECG 3.1-3.4
ECG 3.5-3.8
ECG 3.9-3.12
ECG 3.13-3.16
ECG 3.17-3.20
ECG 4.5-4.8
ECG 4.13-4.16
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