Volume 7 & 8, 2013-14

Scrutiny

A Journal of International and Pakistan Studies

National Institute of Pakistan Studies
Quaid-i-Azam University
Islamabad / Pakistan

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Scrutiny
Volume 7&8, 2013-14
ISSN 0377-5143

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Emotions in Conflict – Multiple Entanglements in two (Failed) Love Stories from Gilgit-Baltistan

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Abstract

Based on current trends in the anthropology of the senses and two case studies of (un)successful love stories of young women in Gilgit-Baltistan, this paper suggests a mode of analysis "beyond crisis" (Khan 2010). Instead of reproducing the prevalent narrative of Pakistan's perpetual state of emergency, I aim to show how local conflicts can be reframed as moments that offer the opportunity to contest and renegotiate existing norms. Social life is constituted by entanglements with countless parallel, contesting and interdependent agents and it becomes continuously embodied and enacted by each person in a process of sensory experience of one's performances. In this way, social and cultural patterns constantly emerge through an inter play between mind and body, the individual and society. The first of the two stories is a detailed account of a young woman who struggles to get divorced after her *nikāh* (Islamic wedding), but before quotidian married life has been endorsed by *shādi* (social wedding). The ensuing conflict involves the groom's family following customary concepts of honour and a religious scholar subsequently defending the girl's position against attempted violence. In the second case, a girl falls in – and later out of – love with a young man from a different Islamic denomination. Although the two female protagonists of the cases presented here break established norms and expectations of modesty and family obedience, as well as of arranged marriage, they successfully manoeuvre their position between parallel sets of morality, such as customary codes of honour, varying interpretations of Islam and individual or community ideas about romantic love. Based on Sara Ahmed's conceptualisation of emotion as fundamental to sociality, the paper depicts emotions as motivational forces that imply directionality and possess the power to bring people together or tear them apart. In a world of multiple entanglements, I attempt to 'make sense' of Pakistan by finding stability in instability and suggest that we conceive conflict and crisis as creative potential for

negotiation instead of considering them to be supposed deviations from an ideal state.

Making Sense[1]

Farzana Shaikh's "*Making sense of Pakistan*" (2009) was one of the first books I read about Pakistan some years back. She, like many authors (cf. Mielke & Schetter 2013, Qadeer 2006, Talbot 2012), recounts Pakistan's recent history, tracing it back to the colonial period, providing a chronological overview with a focus on the increasing Islamization, stating the country's religious and ethnic diversity and pointing out how Pakistan is "at war with itself" (Constable 2011). History writing in and about Pakistan conjoins in the overarching theme of crisis. Crisis stands etymologically for an accumulation of difficulties that culminate in a turning point, either for better or worse (Oxford 2017). Pakistan's history, however, seems persistently trapped in the peak of emergency. Janet Roitman (2014) critically questions social sciences' inflationary appellation of crisis, thus, creating a self-referential system that associates deviation of a stable or more desirable 'normality'. It might be more constructive to change the perspective to understand conflicts on a regional or national level and look at examples from micro politics, which, in the case of my research in Gilgit- Baltistan,

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[1]The project "The appropriation of mobile telephony in Gilgit-Baltistan" was generously funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) between 2013 and 2016. I presented a preliminary version of this paper at Quaid-I-Azam University in 2016 and am very thankful for the ensuing discussions as well as constructive comments by Martin Sökefeld, Roger Norum, colleagues of the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology at the LMU Munich and the anonymous reviewers. The biggest gratitude I owe to my friends and 'families' in and around Gilgit, without whose warm reception and openness, experiences of local culture and analytical insights would have never been possible.

means to pay attention to negotiations of love concepts among young women and within their families.

Similar to Naveeda Khan's ethnography "*Muslim becoming*" (2012), I suggest seeing processes in Pakistan "*Beyond crisis*" (Khan 2010), thus, not as conditions of disaster with devastating outcomes, but as possibilities for "emergence" (Tsing 2005, 269), aspirations and new things to develop. By narrating a very detailed case of a divorce drama and a shorter story about a failed love relationship, I will show how waves of conflict mount in crisis, crisis that subsides – and protagonists' lives continue. Life can never be static, as human beings exist entangled in multiple environments and are shaped by the interaction of biological, social and cultural factors; we always need to deal with changes and confrontations from various directions. Anna Tsing provocatively summarises, "disturbance is always in the middle of things: the term does not refer us to a harmonious state before disturbance. Disturbances follow other disturbances. Thus, all landscapes are disturbed; disturbance is ordinary" (Tsing 2015, 160). Emotions play a crucial role in this continually ongoing process of emergence; they tie people together and are the force behind motivations. What feminist scholar Sara Ahmed describes as the "cultural politics of emotion" (2014 [2004]) for movements of sociality, is also found in everyday lives. Ahmed stresses the relational quality of emotions: They have the potential to bring people together or separate them. Paying attention to individuals' stories offers the chance to understand how the politics of affect[2] materialise, in practice as well as on a more normative level. Given such insights, macro processes also become more 'sensible'.

The following two stories are examples of emotion's role in conflict and crisis. In both cases, female protagonists break the established norms and expectations of arranged marriages; although they risk their social standing, skilfully manoeuvring

[2]Although a multitude of possible definitions exist to differentiate between emotions, feelings and affects, even sentiments (Abu-Lughod 1986, 34), I do not support clear-cut distinctions between these concepts, as I will further elucidate in this paper.

between parallel sets of morality[3] protects them from public isolation. The scene is set in the district of Gilgit, the urban centre of Gilgit-Baltistan, as well as its rural outskirts. Although Shina-speaking Shia populate the area predominately, Gilgit is the home of three sects of Islam: Shia, Sunni and Ismaili, as well as various ethnic and language groups of the larger region. The events and narratives described here were collected in fourteen months of participant observation in local households and the subject of an intensive hermeneutical analysis. I have anonymized the identity of the protagonists for ethical reasons by merging various people into one person, condensing their experiences, thoughts and acts, things that happened, supposedly happened or comments on these, so that stereotypes of protagonists *e*merge and the distinctive characters of my interlocutors become blurred. Additionally, I refer to the wide geographical field of Gilgit district instead of indicating certain neighbourhoods or villages. Women's practice of veiling and gender segregation, *parda*[4], itself is not an absolute phenomenon: Privacy is created by displaying an interchangeable façade, while female voices can be heard, either in the direct sense, from behind their scarfs, or through their

[3]Various customary, Islamic and imported Indian or Western sets of moralities intersect and contest each other in contemporary Gilgit-Baltistan. I prefer Zigon's use of morality in its plural or adjectival form to counter totalising tendencies and emphasise modality (Zigon 2008, 19, 161). The current debate on morality and ethics in anthropology has shifted focus from a more philosophical lens on dogmatic ideas and values unto a "practice level" (Lambek 2010, 2), where moralities are negotiated in interpersonal activities (Zigon 2008, 162-4). Morality cannot be isolated from other domains of society, but transcends all spheres of life (Csordas 2013, 535). While anthropology in a relativist manner generally strives not to qualify others' actions and thoughts, thus, struggles against the moralizing tendencies that the term morality implies (Fassin 2014), our interlocutors themselves judge their own and others' behaviour within the frameworks of various prevalent moral codes.

[4]پردہ is often transcribed as *purdah*, which does not comply with the ALA-LC standard of romanisation used in this paper.

influence on men who will (un)consciously advocate them in public. Actions, opinions and emotions in the following accounts contrast and amplify each other and will leave room for a politics of emergence to resonate.

Breaking Bonds

"*Qasm Allah ki*" ("I swear by God, it's true"), Sabā exclaimed and rushed into the dimly lit kitchen where I was sitting with the women of the household preparing dinner. Their older cousin had just arrived from another village bringing the latest news of a family scandal. I had already overheard some hushed words while having tea two days ago, but the gossiping girls did not translate much for me from their Shina conversation into Urdu and explained that they hardly knew anything themselves. I grasped something about a love affair and a broken marriage. What the girls were quite certain of was who the rumours were about, and that was why they were reluctant to share: it involved their own extended family. With Sabā's arrival, the topic was on the table; an older relative can dare to talk openly about delicate matters, especially since she found herself caught up in the middle of the troublesome events. Her voice was tense and she breathed heavily. Everyone stopped working and sat down on the floor around her.

A few nights ago, Sabā's whole village woke up to the sounds of warning shots being fired into the sky with Kalashnikovs! Sabā's heart almost lurched from the race it was beating in. Her husband, a well-respected *sheikh* (Shia religious scholar), had been called to the house of relatives for the night because they suspected trouble coming and asked for his support. And the worst nightmares came true: The house he was in was under attack. In the shadows of darkness and empty roads, fifteen to twenty men entered the village in their four-wheel-drive jeeps and demanded to take the rightful bride home with them. A man of their family had been married to her for some years, but their marriage had never been fully implemented and she still lived with her parental family. The Shia community of Gilgit-Baltistan usually practices the legal wedding ceremony, *nikāh*, separately from the social wedding, *shādi*, when the marriage is

socially implemented with a big celebration and the wife moves into the husband's family's house. Although *nikāh* is the official Islamic wedding, local customs demanded strict avoidance and distance between spouses until their *shādi*. Girls were traditionally so *shermāti* (modest, shy) that they hid from their husbands; *nikāh* served more as an irreversible engagement, a means to reserve good matches, while it gives the couple time to grow up until they exercise their relationship. Only during recent years has this become the focus of intense negotiations. Reformists argue that Islamic rules outlaw older, 'uninformed' practices and the younger generation happily embraces a relaxation of rules, start talking and dating. The problem in the case here was that the bride refused to go ahead with the second step of the wedding.

Back to the eventful night. Sadā Ali, Sabā's husband, as an influential Islamic scholar and senior of the family, gave the commands in the house under siege. The girl and her mother hid in the back rooms while he and the two sons of the family barricaded the entrance door, hiding crouched down behind it, warning that they would have to shoot anyone who came close to the door to hijack the bride. None of the attackers dared to take that risk; they had expected that their mere presence would cause the bride's family to surrender. Alarmed by the echo of firing from the surrounding mountains, more and more armed villagers arrived and the intruders made their escape. Although the girl's mother called the police, they did not arrive in time to do anything; mountain roads are often in a bad condition and distances as far. However, a case was filed the next day and six men from the groom's family – him among them – were arrested and taken to jail. Despite Sadā Ali's intervention which prevented bloodshed, he found himself under accusations of being a *bagh̲airat* (honourless) coward because he did not violently defend his family. The opponents openly ridiculed him while his relatives remained sceptically silent.

After a period of puzzled, unbelieving assessment, the girls in the kitchen became restless and resumed their work of cooking *salān*, various types of stew, as well as forming and baking *roti*, the thin bread that accompanies almost every meal. Being busy did not divert their attention from the divorce case and they actively contributed to the subsequent discussion. I could follow their Shina

gossip well enough to grasp the overall sentiments; even without any language skills, they were intensely present in the room: unbelieving enquiries, soothing compassion for Sabā and enraged exclamations of disgust! My best friends took the time to explain the whole scenario to me and patiently answered the many questions that arose for me to comprehend the full state of affairs. Mariyam's marriage was arranged by her father when she was only 14. Her father passed away before the *nikāh* took place, but she conceded to the wedding out of a sense of duty. Many older women commented that she was too young to comprehend the consequences of such a big decision, "*uskā zehen choṭā thā*" ("her mind was immature"). They credited her for complying with what was expected of an obedient and modest daughter. Continuous gossip added more drama and later narratives often included the version that Mariyam's family wanted to back out of the marriage negotiations after her father's death, but the groom's mother did not agree with such honourless behaviour: A word is a bond.

The couple got to know each other in the years following their *nikāh.* Then, about three years ago, Mariyam decided that she did not want to be fully married to her husband and asked him to set her free by a divorce. When her husband did not agree, Mariyam's family tried to convince and pressure her into *shādi* for a long time – without success. At the time of this crisis, she was about 22 years old and the conflict had escalated far enough that her family had no choice other than to protect her for her own good. Since her father was no longer alive, Mariyam's older brothers asked Sadā Ali, as a prestigious relative, to support them in this case. He is known to be loyal to his Islamic beliefs, which often stand in opposition to local customary codes of honour as he promotes non-violence, certain women's rights and conjugal sexual relationships after *nikāh* as the legitimate Islamic wedding. Although controversially debated, most schools of Islam, such as the Hanafi jurisprudence dominant in Pakistan, grant female initiated divorce (*khulā)* under grave circumstances, such as a man's impotence or his breach to provide sustenance if the wife returns her dower (Masud 2012, 48, 57). Ayatollah Sistani, the Iraqi Shiite spiritual leader widely followed in Gilgit district, demands that a husband pronounce divorce if a

woman hates him so much that she can no longer live with him (www.sistani.org). Moreover, the condition section in the Pakistani *nikāh nāma* (marriage contract), which is also used by the Shia population of Gilgit-Baltistan, offers the possibility of giving the bride the right of *ṭalāq*. Gilgiti customs, however, demand modesty and most women are not even aware of the existence of this clause, so it is left empty – such as in Mariyam's case, where it fell to the husband to grant divorce.

Gilgiti women hardly ever ask for a separation, even under unbearable circumstances; to return to one's brother's house and depend on his family and to give up one's older children to the ex-husband's family is not only a social disgrace, but also a sign of personal failure for most women. All cases of divorce initiated by women that I witnessed or heard of happened in the time between *nikāh* and *shādi*, thus, in the local system of the liminal phase between *nikāh* and *shādi*. Therefore, they were often perceived of as cases of *inkār*, defiance as a means of refusal, which actually applies to dismissal from an engagement. Nevertheless, a proper divorce is required after the legally binding *nikāh*, even if the marriage was never consummated. The Muslim Family Laws Ordinance of 1961 gave women the right to divorce and ordered a 90-day reconciliation period after a man's *ṭalāq* declaration[5]. After amendments to the Family Court Act in 2002, women do not even have to prove the impossibility of conjugal harmony. Many citizens and government officials tend to draw on Islamic interpretations and neglect the implementation of the legal framework because these legislations conflict with customary practices (Ahmed 2014, 72-3, 76, Patel 2003, Weiss 2014, 25). A judicial approach is often not regarded as a valid alternative in Gilgit-Baltistan and was never actively pursued by either of the two parties involved in the divorce drama. Based on colonial experiences, institutionalised law in Gilgit has been

[5]Verbal triple *ṭalāq*,while acceptable in most Sunni schools of thought, is not a valid means of divorce among Shias. They formulate a *ṭalāqnāma* to dissolve the written *nikāh* contract (Patel 2003, 86). Since most people in Gilgit-Baltistan register these with a government-authorised *sheikh*, they officially legalise a marriage or divorce.

appropriated as a suspicious system of control by external administrations, whose court proceedings take countless years, cost money and are manipulated by personal connections. Until now, most cases throughout Pakistan are either settled by a compromise or are transferred to a local *jirga*, an extra-legal form of restoring peace through consensus (cf. Biddulph 1977 [1880], 17-8, Chaudhary 1999; Lentz 1997, 2000, 442).

"*Usko bardāsht karnā cāhiye thā*" ("She should have accepted and tolerated it"), my good friend Sarah murmured angrily, while forcefully bouncing a *roti* back and forth between her hands to form an even circle. She is about the same age as Mariyam and in the same stage of life, in between *nikāh* and *shādi*. Many of the younger women judged Mariyam quite harshly for creating this scandal. What they criticized most fervently was her *āna* and *ẕid*, her ego and stubbornness, that drew so many people into a spiral of hatred, violent threats and widespread gossip reflecting on their relatives' reputations: "*Āpne ghar ki izzat kā khayāl nahin rakhti hai*" ("She doesn't uphold her family's honour"). One could understand a refusal a few months after *nikāh*, but not after so many years of dating. In the end, their accusations paraphrased the bewilderment at how she could claim the right to selfishly put her own interests before those of her family. It was said that Mariyam herself had spread reports that she liked another man, who was married himself and did not seem to be interested in her. This statement did not find appreciation from her pals; if she was interested in someone else after *nikāh*, she should have kept silent about it, "*dil men chupānā cāhiye thā*" ("hide it in the heart"), while others believe that once feelings are directed onto a certain person, they are irrevocably fixed. I had witnessed this process of gradually establishing intimacy and falling in love after an arranged *nikāh* so many times and understand what Sarah means. To expose one's own feelings or exaggerate one's importance is the most shameless (*besharm*) thing for girls to do. Being socialised into Gilgiti ways of life, even I felt intimidated when I heard of Mariyam's alleged public declaration of love. It seemed so oddly out of place in an environment where women are proud to possess the agency to control their innermost feelings. Many women also blamed Bollywood movies and Indian soap

operas for infecting the younger generation's mind with unrealistic, romantic ideas. These are also the reasons why the groom's family had many sympathisers. They were the ones devoted to customary codes of value and honour, and they had behaved 'correctly' in the local framework. However, the men had crossed a red line; educated people could not approve of the violent escalation of the conflict and regarded the groom's family as *bewaqūf* (stupid) and *jāhil* (backward). The vocabulary invoked by public discourse resembles negotiations of 'modernity', of people's endeavour to redefine their place in a multiple and globalised world. A strong and powerful development discourse exists through out Gilgit-Baltistan. Given immense changes in infrastructure, education and interpretations of Islam over the last thirty years, the population is strongly influenced by a general development rhetoric of what is supposedly good and bad, modern and backward (Walter 2014). In this divorce drama, trajectories of reformed understandings of norms and values clashed with older expectations of morality.

While the women were still discussing and working in the kitchen, more visitors arrived in the house. Sadā Ali, together with his wife, came to our village and called for an intimate family gathering in another relative's house. The circle included Mariyam's brothers, respected elders of the family and some younger males, while only two mature women joined them with me. The men set out in a highly formalized and refined manner on a dignified journey to find a consensus. I will best do justice to this impressive experience by quoting an extract from my field diary:

> Each of the men presents his opinion slowly and with sincerity, vividly illustrates it with a story and gestures of his hands; he gets as much time as he needs to make his point without anyone interrupting or commenting in between. All the others listen and watch attentively, seem to be lost in thoughts and, after a small pause, another man chimes in to remark on the latest contributions. Every opinion is treated with respect; they all nod in agreement. The atmosphere is calm and composed; not even in their respective speeches do they get too agitated. I'm completely fascinated how they accept each other's standpoints, how they negotiate interests, benefits and obstacles of the current situation and struggle to find a unified way forward.

A frank debate is for the common good, since a single person's actions affect the whole extended family. Of course, some men's words weigh more than others, and Sadā Ali was very clear about his pious approach: Allah's wish for a righteous treatment of women should be more eagerly observed than social pressure or ridicule feared. One of the family's elders fervently defended female education, while an uncle pointed out that girls nowadays change their *z̲ehen* (mind) when they go for higher education to the bigger cities after their engagement or *nikāh*; they compare their lives with those of others and become aware of their qualities, either intellect, wealth or beauty. Another one called the group to consider that a precedent case might be exploited by other daughters, their attitude negatively affected, "*mahol k̲harāb ho gā*" ("spoils the environment"), and is enforced by a young man: "*harhāl men̲ ṭalāq*" ("they will want to get divorced over everything"). The women present did not interfere, nevertheless, their silent facial expressions of (dis)agreement did not pass unnoticed. After many hours of discussion, the family agreed to continue on the path taken and set their hopes on the *jirga*, an assembly of village dignitaries, which was to be installed during the next few days. A *jirga* usually consists of two to three impartial elders and *sayyids* (religious honoraria descending from the Prophet Mohammed) from either parties or villages. They first asked the contesting groups for their opinion (*rāi*) at the start of the intervention process (*bayān*), in which the *jirga* speaks with all persons involved to resolve the quarrel by a consensus; the peace compromise (*ẓulah*) must be accepted without objections by all involved. The social institution of the *jirga* offers a well-respected and established mechanism to solve problems in the Shina-speaking community and is accepted by the government authorities as a parallel means of jurisdiction; local courts consider cases resolved once a *jirga* has come to a conclusion. Surprisingly, the groom's family did not accept handing over the issue to a *jirga*, although they themselves had boasted about upholding the traditional code of conduct. They must have feared that even the *motebars'*, the elders and dignitaries', opinions might lean towards a differing interpretation of morals.

Over the next few days, I visited various related families and absorbed new unfolding stories about the divided couple. Sitting around the fireplace in the cold winter afternoons, the younger generation speculated agitatedly about details and creatively weaved comprehensive accounts out of little information. Older women only reluctantly shared in, commenting rather on the gossip with snorts and rolling eyes to express their disapproval. Someone had heard that the groom blackmailed Mariyam to pay for her college fees if she slept with him. Others claimed to know that she simply realised that her husband was not a good match when she got to know him better, as he, for example, did not approve of her writing poetry. No one knows for sure what their relationship was like in the first four years of their marriage. One day, when I was working alongside my 'sisters' in the vegetable garden, a messenger came in holding an unsealed letter from prison in his hand. It contained a passionate declaration of the groom's love for Mariyam and an appeal to release their families from the obligation of blood revenge by giving in. Here are some selected lines:

> Look Mariyam, today I am in prison, but I don't regret anything. It is sad that all this has happened between us. … Why has our relationship changed into enmity? … This is all our fault. Thanks to Allah, no innocent life has been wasted so far, but what will be tomorrow, murder and destruction. There will remain hostility between both families, generation after generation. … [Once] your younger brothers' corpses will come in front of you, you will get to know what you kept on doing. … There is a fear in your mind and heart that I will divorce and torture you after the wedding. … I cannot divorce you because you have become my honour. To defend my honour, I can give my own life and also take others' lives. … [If you come to me] I will touch the feet of your whole family and go to all their houses to ask for forgiveness. … Well, maybe my sin is that I fully loved you. … I have never hated you. In my heart is always your love. … But even Allah sits as a spectator.

The public display of his efforts served to demonstrate his good intentions. However, his drastic words provoked ambivalent reactions: Romantic sighs from some girls, as well as expressions of

disgust from older women, who were afraid of actual bloodshed and revolted by the pressure he exercised. The groom's friend defended him as having been instigated by his family, especially his dominant mother. Serving the general stereotype of a lovesick devotee, the groom repeatedly used the same telling argument against Mariyam as others had in their minds about him: "*Āp paṛhi-likhi ho, āp jo faisla karo gi soch-samajh kar karo*" ("You're educated, please make a thoughtful decision"). Perceptions of 'modernity' are invoked by both conflicting sides and depict what the apparent threshold of correct behaviour is.

Then I finally met Mariyam. I was walking through her *mohalla* (neighbourhood) with the son of a friend of mine. Many younger women did not dare to come close to her in fear of being 'contaminated' by Mariyam's reputation. I could already hear her from far, her strident voice arguing with some other people. There had hardly been any electricity for three days in a row due to bad weather and frozen streams, and everyone's mobile phone battery was dead. One of the neighbours had just switched on a generator and the girls were fighting with some boys for their share of sockets. The fuss grew calmer when I approached them. Mariyam fell into a more contained attitude and was curious who this unknown woman was. We only exchanged a few sentences of small talk, because Sadā Ali had forbidden anyone to talk about the divorce matter with her; at least enough to get a general impression of this confident, energetic woman. I had heard praises of her fair looks: white skin, light hazel eyes, brownish hair and a round, soft face.

After a few weeks of 'tension', the initial discomposure was fading and Sabā's and Sadā Ali's nerves calmed down. Because no consensus could be reached, Mariyam's family approached an influential religious scholar in Karachi. He presented the case to an official Iranian *mujtahid* (religious jurist with the right to independent interpretation of Islamic law) who dissolved the marriage. Religious authorities from another country served practically as a parallel legal system that prevented bloodshed. Under social pressure, the husband's family could no longer persist in their demand for the bride. Everyone was released from jail since civil charges had been dropped. Although it consumed a lot of energy and

patience from both families, Sabā, in the end, wished Mariyam well and stated optimistically that her family would manage to find a proper husband for her because she was young and pretty.

Toxic Ideas

The story that I want to contrast this drama with is much shorter, but none the less full of conflicts. As a consequence of sectarian tensions in the area of Gilgit, intermarriages between the different sects of Islam, Sunni, Shia and Ismaili have declined drastically over the last thirty years and neighbourhoods have become segregated (Sökefeld 2015, 17). However, possibilities of encounter persist in schools, the local university, the *bazārs* and on main roads. It happened that a young, educated girl from an Ismaili family, with whom I was friends, and a Sunni boy fell in love. They saw each other from afar on the way to college every day and started to exchange flirting looks and managed to exchange mobile phone numbers through mutual friends. After many months of secret and intimate messages, they told their families that they wanted to get married. Their wish was met with outrage from all sides. The boy's family was reluctant to take on a girl of 'loose' character who had attached herself without her parent's consent, let alone who is from the allegedly morally lax Ismaili sect. Since a wife moves to her husband's house, the Ismaili family was especially worried about their daughter's fate, being alone in an unfamiliar environment. Many women blamed Bollywood and TV dramas for infecting the young generation's mind with unrealistic, romantic ideas. Ifra, the girl in question, took rat poison one day, to express the sincerity of her love and put pressure on her family. She almost died and had to be treated in hospital for nearly a week.

Although her father almost broke with Ifra over the public scandal she had created, her older sisters used the opportunity of nursing her during her recovery time to persuade her that elopement was not a promising alternative. Their main argument was that Ifra, even after having a son, would never have a secure standing in the new family. Common means of social control could not protect her as she would lack any

backing from her brothers or uncles. Even if her husband or in-laws treated her comparatively well, they would always suspect such a *beshārm* (shameless) woman of committing an emotionally driven, careless crime again. Ifra's beloved, however, fought for her. His messages contained desperate lines, such as, "I would have happily taken poison from your hands and drunk it." His friends reported how he turned *pāgal* (insane) over his loss, was absent-minded and did not eat enough. Instead of following through with the *Heer Ranjha* (Romeo and Juliet) plot or cutting her family ties irreversibly, Ifra decided to let the situation cool down; or maybe she was just too weak and tired physically. Many months later, she explained to me that she had secretly always been afraid of the stricter *parda* rules for veiling and gender segregation in Sunni families. She recognised that her parents' concerns might be for the betterment of their children, because the one who falls in love forgets everything around herself and does not consider whether she could actually live with the partner or his family for the rest of her life; it might work out for some time, but problems are inevitable: "In the beginning there is a lot of love between both; after a few years only fight."

Entanglements and Ruptures

Women struggle for self-determination and whole families undergo emotionally intensive moments of conflict and crisis in both case studies. What might seem to be the termination of 'traditional' values is, in fact, the resurgence or emergence of the very same norms in a slightly altered form. Customary values, such as shame and honour, interpretations of Islam, Bollywood and countless other factors are embodied by the protagonists in multiple ways. Embodiment, in the way I define the term, is not a singular act of incorporating pre-established cultural structures, but is an ongoing process of (un)consciously enacting one's multiple habitūs, thus, 'sensing' one's own acts and movements, and penetrating the norms that one just expressed. Humans are constituted by an inseparable body and

mind: Our performances and sensory experiences affect our thoughts and become an active part of societal discourses. As the feminist philosopher Judith Butler argues, "[t]he task is to think of being acted on and acting as simultaneous, and not only as a sequence" (Butler 2015, 6). Our mind shapes the way we act as well as the way we depend on, or perhaps better put are *entangled with*, endless factors. Gilgiti women enact modest behaviour in public by, for example, downcast posture. The constant repetition of reserve leaves a mark on them: They do not simply stage *sharm* for others, but express what they actually feel, namely shyness and reluctance. However, the latest fashion of black gowns (*abāya*), conventionally associated with Islamic fundamentalism, allows them to wear tight cloths with smaller headscarves that display their silhouette and gain confidence, while demonstrating exemplary modesty. In this way, the model of modal embodiment leaves room for creative variation, or rather for a constant modulation[6] of who one has been minutes earlier (Laplantine 2015). Just as our environment – not strictly the material, but also the social and immaterial, the imaginary and cultural – has a great influence on our perceptions (Ingold 2006), our experiences contribute to changes in practices and values, penetrating established structures.

The aim of this paper is to draw attention to webs of epistemological entanglements and interdependencies in which embodiment is enmeshed. Sociality comes into being through human relationships and actions of bodies, thoughts and emotions. Contemporary anthropologists point to the world's state of being in the becoming, its constantly emerging character (cf. Latour 2005, 2013; Tsing 2005, 2015; Ingold 2011). People in Gilgit avail themselves of a diversity of moral ideologies;

[6]"What I propose to call *modal anthropology*, radically different from structural anthropology, is an approach that allows for apprehending *modes* of life, action and knowledge, *manners* of being, and more precisely still, *modulations* of behaviours, including the seemingly most trifling, not only in their relationship to space, but in the dimension of time, or, rather, of duration" (Laplantine 2015, 105).

normative behaviour depends on the framework one embeds it with. While the disdained groom's family based their rights to the bride on customary codes of conduct and notions of honour, their opponents referred to fundamental principles of Islam which underlie varying schools of interpretation that cannot be uncoupled from general global discourses of (post)colonialism. At the same time, Mariyam's husband invoked trajectories of education and 'modernity' to convince her of his duty to avenge her shameful conduct; the escalation with firearms and jeeps to violently snatch the bride, however, was widely regarded as 'backward' and put the groom's sympathisers in a difficult opposition to judicial and Islamic law. No person can elude the confrontation with the multiplicity of possible discourses. The physicist and feminist philosopher, Karen Barad, introduces the neologism intra-action to indicate what she calls "the mutual constitution of entangled agencies. That is, in contrast to usual 'interaction,' which assumes that there are separate individual agencies that precede their interactions, the notion of intra-action recognizes that distinct agencies do not precede, but rather emerge through, their intra-action" (Barad 2007, 33).

Deviations from daily life and conflict often serve as dense tools to read and understand people's social organisation and fragmentation, their backgrounds and different motifs. This emphasis on crisis, however, might offer more conclusions about the author's romantic expectation of stability and normativity, her moral agenda, than the respective societies' alleged state of demolition that these works promote. Established dichotomies are penetrated rather than overcome (Roitman 2014, 3-10). The lives of our protagonists go on and their routines still function, albeit with a little variation. By calling conflicts or ruptures "frictions", Tsing (2005) elegantly draws our attention to negotiations that are involved in changing scenarios. Although ethical objections may arise against the cultural relativist negligence of underlying power structures, these models of thinking lend themselves to mental exercises aimed at overcoming conventional modes of interpretation and judgment.

There are clearly many conflicts involved in the case of

the divorce drama described, but the disruptions observed can also be depicted as a continuum: Our everyday lives are full of bigger and smaller problems that demand our and other people's (re)assessment and (re)enactment, while each of them offers opportunities for (re)formulation based on knowledge already incorporated. They are forms of continuous modal embodiment of the diverse factors in our lives that we tend to – or that tend to us. Many of us are familiar with this phenomenon: Once someone points something out to us that we had never thought about before, we start noticing it everywhere and our opinion gradually adapts. The two ethnographic case studies show similar patterns. Throughout the events, Sadā Ali stood for principles based on his Islamic studies. Their variation from local codes of conflict resolution and honour became obvious through his opponents' violence. Due to family loyalty, other men of the extended family were trapped with Sadā Ali's standpoint as an influential leader in the village and his place as a key figure in the divorce drama. The more they engaged in discussions with him, the more they learned to appreciate the reformer's arguments. Some relatives were quite reluctant and saw the case more controversially due to their embodied codes of morality, but gradually altered their stance and derived pride from protecting the girl against supposedly backward customs. Each word, each act, each feeling and string of thoughts affected their perception and, over the course of time, exponentially changed the overall scenario, much like the turns in a helix. Because perception and thought build on already established epistemologies, new stimuli do not overthrow cultural concepts, but become embodied within negotiated frameworks, or along their fuzzy edges; we make 'sense' based on what we already know.

Something similar happened with Ifra in the second story. She grew up learning to control her feelings, but gradually, and influenced by many other discourses prevalent in her society, such as concepts of romantic love, TV dramas and growing individualism, decided to throw this self-discipline overboard when she fell in love. Ifra went so far as to blackmail her family with an attempted suicide. Her poor physical

constitution afterwards and her sisters' loving care must have had a long-lasting effect on her. At the beginning of her recovery phase, she did not talk to anyone; she felt stubborn. She was angry with her family, while she also felt sorry for her father, who evidently suffered from the loss of reputation and was worried about Ifra. Little by little, she reconciled with her sisters; they talked for hours, but did not mention Ifra's boyfriend once or scold her. By omitting his role in her life, his influence was fading. When Ifra was at the hospital, her parents also confiscated her mobile phone and returned it only after weeks and after the pleading words of Ifra's sisters; but even then, she mostly left it switched off. Of course, her seclusion and the many conversations with loving, close relatives left a lasting mark, and Ifra collected herself and her composure. She now perceives herself to be stronger and found an excuse to escape her own rebelling scene.

Conflicts do not only serve as condensed access points to observe matters of entangled agents, but also offer room for creative adaption. While we are always an integral part of the connections around us, a crisis offers a chance for conscious (re)configuration. Naturally, no one exists in a vacuum, so the productivity of uncountable possible social and (im)material relations is constrained by their intra-play with shared environments and a person's apparently innate habitūs. Embodying similar experiences and backgrounds affords us – individually and collectively – emotional intimacy and empathic adaptations. Although conflict and crisis are associated with ruptures and although many locals perceive the events narrated as heavy disruptions, there seems to be stability in instability. Each discontinuity binds all affected agents together and emerges as a slightly modulated new fold.The emphasis, so far, has been on practice, but the reference to modulation now draws our attention to the quality of these connections, towards a "question of tonality and intensity" (Laplantine 2015, 105) – or, in another word, to intimacy.

Politics of the 'Sensible'

Intimate connections depend on indicators of quality. I identify emotions as the binding material that ties entangled links close together or evokes the reaction to drive them apart. They are the motivational forces, the transmitters of interaction among agents. Current debates in the social sciences strive to circumvent affects, emotions or feelings analytically. Affects are generally depicted as preconscious bodily sensations of unqualified intensity, while emotions involve a cognitive process of recognition and assessment of feelings, feelings which connote physiological and psychological conditions resulting from a certain stimulus (Feldmann Barrett 2005, 263; Gregg & Seigworth 2010, 1; Massumi 2002, 27-29; Terada 2001, 4). Affects, feelings and emotions are all shaped by cultural models of interpretation and expression (Röttger-Rössler & Stodulka 2014, 20). However, strict lines between these terms and concepts serve to obscure anthropological insight more than they clarify. Since the ontological dissolution of the Cartesian nature-culture or body-mind dichotomy, one must realise that emotions and feelings always conflate (Ahmed 2014 [2004], 5-6) and co-construct each other in the intra-active (Barad 2007) process of embodiment, as outlined earlier. Bruno Latour identifies thoughts, beliefs and emotions appropriately as the "invisible beings of the moderns" (2013): They are observable only through the actions of feeling persons, hard to ascertain in a scientific set-up based on reason and are often banned from a supposedly rational world, as we can also see in Gilgitis condemning reaction to violence as irrational in Islamic logics or to romantic love perceived as taking agency over a young person.

Nevertheless, both case studies bristle with emotions, and what links actions together are emotional decisions closely related to notions of morality: ethnic and sectarian identities, patriarchal egos, love and familial bonds, fear of change, jealousy and many more. In the stories presented, men especially prove to be passionate, hand over their agency to

conceptualisations of love or honour and let themselves be guided by instant emotional eruptions, while women seem more disciplined and calmly resolve conflicts. Mariyam has demonstrated that consistently arguing for her rights gave her an advantage over her feverishly fighting husband. Concomitantly, Mariyam was most often criticised for her refusal to adjust to the given circumstances.

Sensations are often identified as irrational, impulsive and inferior to intelligence: "I let myself get carried away", "I'm sorry, I spoke without thinking" (Laplatine 2015, 1) or in Urdu: "*Merā ye maṭlab nahin̲ thā*" ("I did not mean this"). These exemplary phrases of everyday language "... construct[s] emotions as not only irrelevant to judgment and justice, but also as unreasonable, and as an obstacle to good judgment" (Ahmed 2014 [2004], 195). Ifra's beloved cultivated his sorrow in accordance with the stereotypical South Asian hero, who longs for and is overpowered by his love. She, on the other hand, changed her mind due to her sisters' earnest concerns for her wellbeing and future happiness, although she had earlier been motivated by disseminating ideas of self-determination. Ahmed, who is famous for her political works on emotions, argues that everyone not in line with established expectations of normativity is regarded as "'sense'-less" (ibid, 195). Such attitudes lay open how the 'modern' human's mind is structured in dichotomies: "intelligible/sensible, reason/emotion, active/passive, and sometimes even nature/culture" (Laplantine 2015, 1). This black and white perception hides all the colours of the spectrum in-between and finds itself under sharp criticism today.

Feelings, emotions and sensations are part of this holistic approach, are products of entangled and intra-active processes,as I have attempted to show with the model of modal embodiment as an expression as well as a (re)configuration of individuals' characteristics and social categories through countless factors of entanglement. When Ifra felt her body's weakness, the implication of her suicide attempt became tangible. The sensual perception of her sisters' care and affection affected her, so did the constant repetition of Mariyam's male family members, who

had to defend her and themselves against the groom's family's attacks; even if they were sceptic in the beginning, the performative invocation of divergent concepts gradually affected their own opinions.

Ahmed points towards the very sociality of emotions: They possess the quality of bringing people together or driving them apart. Derived from the Latin word *emovere*, to move or to move out, the word already implies mobility (Ahmed 2014 [2004], 11f, 201) and direction. Emotions are the fuel for the intra-play between the individual and society, creating one's self-perception as well as collective bodies (ibid, 9f): "Emotions are relational: they involve (re)actions or relations of 'towardness' or 'awayness' in relation to such objects" (ibid: 8). Collective experiences, which Ahmed (2014 [2004]) calls the "cultural politics of emotion" of higher levels of organisation, undergo an intensification in Laplantine's attention to even more tangible aspects of "experiencing together" (Laplantine 2015, 82). We literally make sense together in daily activities of eating, suffering or chatting. Although Laplantine does not argue that every experience is political, but stresses the historical and political construction of sensual perception, I extend his phrase to the 'politics of the sensible' as a continuation of Ahmed's politics of emotion. Politics of the sensible, however, invoke a stimulating association of sensual components in meaning-making: The ambiguity embraces perception, being sensitive to something, as well as prudence, making sense of something. The men of Mariyam's family *jirga* personify these sensible politics: While they feel the compelling force of family cohesion, which might be supportive for some and obliging for others, they debate and make family politics. Common worries and shared experiences bind them together; embodied emotions function asan adhesive between family members. On the other hand, we can also grasp a growing distance through emotions. After agreeing to her wedding as a teenager, Mariyam changed her mind over time once she was exposed to other epistemologies apart from familial duty, but, most importantly, when she grew to dislike her husband – or favoured someone else. It is difficult to discern these invisible

ghosts, as we are often not even sure about our own feelings. Nevertheless, Gilgiti women gossiped extensively about Mariyam and exchanged their opinions fervently about 'correct' behaviour, passing moral judgments; having embodied normative expectations, they literally feel her transgression and are repulsed. Emotions serve as forces that transfer different motivations between people and they, therefore, reflect underlying moral and epistemological trajectories.

Societies are never in an equilibrium that could be shaken by a crisis. It is more valuable to grasp conflicts as knots bound by continuous negotiations, where entangled networks of agents, things, the environment, norms and values become obvious, a place of emergence and potential ground for change and creativity. Looking at conflicts and ruptures through a new prism and considering emotions as a long-neglected analytical category can enrich our understanding of societal processes – perhaps even offer tools for improvement. What emerges from these countless entanglements is not something utterly new, but a modulation of existing norms and ideas. Depending on the unique mix of intra-active factors, such as modesty, family obligation, religious views and Bollywood romance in a certain situation, the cultural kaleidoscope offers ever new variations comprised of familiar perspectives.

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