OF MOTHS AND CANDLE FLAMES

The Aesthetics of Fertility and Childbearing

in the Northern Areas of Pakistan

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by

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Abstract

For over forty years, demographers have been deployed to address the ongoing 'problem' of population growth which, it is argued, threatens the very sustainability of our planet. This thesis is an attempt to explore how an anthropological approach can complement that of demography and, in keeping with the 'new paradigm' that emerged from the 1994 Cairo Conference on Population and Development, facilitate a more contextualized analysis of fertility that considers processes of historical change, relations of differential power, cultural meanings and practices, and the lived experience of social actors themselves.

Fieldwork was completed among the Wakhi of Gulmit village in northern Pakistan. This area has long been figurai in European constructions of the Orient, and this study includes critical examination of the continuities between such constructions and contemporary discourses of development and population control. Following a review of the history of population policy in Pakistan, the study systematically maps out the relationship between local meanings and values ascribed to reproduction, and an embodied, but mutable, aesthetics of daily life. Aesthetic values are also shown to be implicated in local narrative representations which themselves reveal much about the relationship between constructions of the embodied self and emotion, experiences of dynamic gender relations, and reproductive histories.

It is argued that, in Gulmit, reproduction does not lend itself to analysis as a discrete conceptual or experiential domain for its meanings and values are implicated in multiple, cross-cutting, historically-specific discourses. It is argued, too, that investigation of relevant processes of narrative synthesis can do much to complement existing, rather rationalistic, demographic models of fertility decision-making. Such an approach has implications for reproductive health policy, as well as, future research. In this respect, it is an approach which may help to transform population growth from a 'problem' into an opportunity.
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Note on Transcription

The language of the ethnic group the Wakhi is also known as 'Wakhi'. Wakhi is thought to be related to an Iranian dialect of ancient Persian, but it has not been written or read by traditional Wakhi speakers.

Until recent years, the only available English text on the Wakhi language was that produced by D.L.R. Lorimer in 1958. Lorimer produced a dictionary based on a sophisticated notation which attempted to capture the range of Wakhi sounds not found in English. Unfortunately, Lorimer's supplementary signs and symbols were beyond the range of my keyboard, and so have not been used in this text. In recent years, German linguists, such as Dr George Budguss of Mainz University, have taken an interest in Wakhi. These linguists have also produced a specialised notation, but sadly I am not confident in its usage. I have therefore tried to, as far as possible, capture Wakhi within a conventional Roman script. I would like to apologise to all Wakhi speakers for the limitations of this approach.

A glossary of selected terms is included towards the end of this thesis.
Figure 1: LOCATION OF RESEARCH AREA IN PAKISTAN
Figure 2: MAP OF GOJAL REGION
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Date: 22 May 1994

Shadia steps out of the low, stone-walled house carrying a large bundle of soiled clothes. Turning into the enclosed garden, she walks towards the wod (irrigation channel). The water-pressure in the standpipe is low today, so Shadia will have to wash the clothes using the icy melt-waters that tumble down the channel from Shtuber Glacier high above Gulmit.

Placing the clothes on the concrete slab, Shadia squats by the wod. Squatting is to become small and low to the ground, knees bent, thigh pressed to calf, feet flattened and spread. Shadia draws the front of her kamiz top between her legs to avoid indiscrete exposure of her shalwar trousers.

The waters of the wod are murky and cold. Shadia scoops a little of the water into a large flat aluminium tray, wets her son's new T-shirt and begins to rub thoroughly with the solid lump of orange laundry soap. Thus begins the rhythmic process of lathering: the long strokes of the soap, the rubbing, pressing and kneading, the replenishment of icy water from the wod. As she works, Shadia rocks and leans from the solid base of the squat.

Rinsing requires a larger quantity of water from the shallow channel. Taking some rocks from the side of the wod, Shadia turns each irregular mass in her wet hands and finds a finger-hold. She leans forward and sinks each rock, one by one, into the rushing stream, thereby creating a small dam and a pool from which to scoop water. Still

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1 This description is based on participant observation notes made during fieldwork in Gulmit village, November 1993-April 1995.
squatting, Shadia, turns from the waist, systematically filling the plastic bucket and large aluminium tub beside her.

Faisal, Shadia's four year old son appears from the back of the house. In his arms he carries the new-born lamb that is being reared in the house enclosure. The bundle with its dangling legs proves cumbersome, particularly as it begins to struggle. Faisal trips and, at his mother's curt reprimand, releases the lamb. Next, Faisal jumps up and runs over to the wod to observe his mother's activities. Finding a stick, he begins to poke around in the water, scooping out bits of leaves and grass as they collect behind the rocky dam. Faisal leans on his mother for support, his small hand sliding across her arched back.

Shadia continues her task. Each soapy garment is placed in the filled tub before she manoeuvres round to crouch in front of it. Lifting slightly onto her toes, Shadia leans forward and plunges the clothes in and out of the icy water. Soon her hands and forearms become purple with cold. Nevertheless, Shadia continues her task, thoroughly rinsing and wringing out each garment.

Beyond the garden wall, a loose stone tumbles down the scree slope. High above, the jagged Karakoram peaks pierce the sky-line. The plaintive bleat of distant sheep is carried on the wind. Young boys gather on a winnowing platform above the river; mocking and cheering, they compete to strike a stone cairn by throwing rocks. For the time being, Faisal is content to stay with his mother to whom he chatters constantly in the distinctive guttural tones of Wakhi.

At last, Shadia stands and straightens her back. She glances over the garden wall to see who might be passing. The wall is high so she does not have to wear a pitek (veil) to hide her from the gaze of strangers. Returning
to the wod, Shadia crouches down and dismantles the make-shift dam. Faisal delights in the sudden rush of water. Shadia lifts the metal tray bearing the wrung clothes. Stepping onto the rusty corrugated metal sheet that bridges the wod, she moves towards the grove of apricot trees. Her washing lines are lengths of cord and twine tied between the branches. Where possible, Shadia knots sleeves and shalwar legs to prevent loss in the gusts of wind that sweep intermittently along the river valley. On completing her task, she once again stretches her back and leans against a tree to rest briefly in the sun. Finally, Shadia calls her son to her and together they saunter towards the house to take salted tea and the coarse, dry bread known as pitock.

Shadia is a young woman carrying out her daily tasks in the village of Gulmit in the Northern Areas of Pakistan. For more than four decades, women such as Shadia have been the target of expertly planned population programmes. Yet, fertility rates in Pakistan remain among the highest in the world and women such as Shadia continue to be seen as both the cause of, and the potential solution to, the 'population problem'. This thesis examines how population policy touches the lives of the women of Gulmit, how it becomes interpreted within a prevailing but mutable schema of meanings and values, and how it becomes one element among many which shapes their lived experience of fertility and childbearing.

Recent United Nations statistics indicate that the current population of the world is around 6.1 billion and, from medium variant projections, could reach 10.0 billion by the year 2050 (McNicoll, 1992a). Since the early Sixties, it seems we have been living in the shadow of a "population bomb", a bomb whose silent explosion threatens a catastrophe of global proportions (Ehrlich 1968). Tapping into anxieties
surrounding an intensifying Cold War, Maury (1963:vii) was explicit in comparing the potential effects to a nuclear holocaust:

...we are all uneasily aware of the mushroom cloud that first sprouted over Hiroshima, we are astonishingly unaware of the mushrooming global population.

Today, the association between overpopulation, poverty and environmental degradation is almost axiomatic, even though the precise relationship between these phenomena is rarely deconstructed (Hartmann 1987). Of course, there have been detractors. Authors such as Esther Boserup (1965), and Ruttan and Hayami (1991) argue that, historically, population pressure has produced positive responses in human reorganisation and technological development, and may actually be a driving force behind human progress. Yet, as we approach the new millennium and satellite imagery repeatedly confronts us with the carnage of genocide and ethnic cleansing, Thomas Malthus' eighteenth century prediction that unlimited population growth may eventually produce its own homeostatic correction, seems to echo hauntingly.

Concerns about the effects of unchecked population growth date back to the Enlightenment. However, the prevailing moral climate meant that there was little support for artificial means of birth control until the early twentieth century. The first birth controllers were largely anarchists and social reformers, many of them male, who saw the ability to control fertility as a way to strengthen the power of the working classes (Fryer 1965). Women activists also campaigned for birth control as part of their struggle for emancipation. In 1920s Britain, Marie Stopes, persuaded by the rationale of eugenics, fought for the first birth control clinics and more open sex education. Meanwhile, in the United States, Margaret Sanger lobbied hard for the promotion of birth control, seeing it as a necessary step in human
progress (Gordon 1990).

By the 1950s, birth control and birth spacing were beginning to be seen as components of responsible parenthood everywhere. In 1952, the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) was established, its very title reflecting a general post-war enthusiasm for social and economic planning (see Cream 1994). Sir Colville Deverell (Secretary-General of IPPF, 1964-69) summarised the founding principles of IPPF as follows:

The broad objectives of IPPF were made 'to convert people everywhere to adopt a mode of life consistent with a philosophy which includes family planning as an important element of responsible parenthood; to encourage the provision of indigenously controlled services and to assist in the creation of a public awareness of all demographic and other relevant aspects such as will eventually enable, or indeed impel governments to play a fully responsible role.' (IPPF, 1992)

So, around this time population issues were beginning to be seen as part of a global project, and the establishment of IPPF can be seen as a significant milestone in this historical process. A second significant milestone was the formation of the Population Council in the United States. Also established in 1952, the Population Council was instituted to foster the ongoing scientific study of population issues worldwide.

Towards the end of the 1950s, as colonialism declined and the post-war zeal for modernization was at its height, influential American demographers suggested that the economic growth of poorer nations could be seriously hampered by rapid population growth (McIntosh and Finkle 1995). Meanwhile,

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2 Margaret Sanger and Lady Ramu Rau of India became the first joint presidents of IPPF.
within the context of a deepening Cold War, US policy makers began to consider the promotion of economic growth to be a necessary strategy to prevent communist ideologies taking hold in the Third World. The promotion of birth control therefore became a matter of US security. Indeed, by the 1960s, support for population programmes absorbed a huge proportion of the US overseas aid budget (Kabeer 1994).

During this period, Ray Ravenholt, the director of USAID, vigorously promoted policies of "contraceptive inundation" to deal with the "people epidemic" and, notes Kabeer, women were effectively singled out as its biological "first cause" (p.194). In 1962, the United Nations General Assembly also affirmed the relationship between population and economic development.

In the meantime, the faith placed in technological fixes and scientific discoveries by postwar planners, agronomists and nutritionists, was beginning to falter as food production failed to keep pace with population growth, and conservationists predicted widespread famines. There appeared to be an "urgent need to keep the world population within the limits of the food supply" (Epstein and Kupperman 1962:216). The Freedom from Hunger Campaign was launched in 1961, and in 1963, the United Nations World Food Programme was established. It was apparent that birth control could no longer be an issue of private sex lives for, in a world of limited resources, birth control was now an issue of collective survival. Indeed, within the context of a post-war ethos of state planning, it seemed that populations too must be planned. However, the challenge was to persuade those of the 'Third World' that they too could benefit from planning families. In 1965, the World Health Organisation (WHO) launched a programme of research into all aspects of human reproduction and fertility control, while in the United States, the Population Crisis Committee was formed. The United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) was established in 1969, and in 1972, the World Fertility Survey was begun to collect comparative data that would inform
future demographic analysis and policy planning the world over.

1974 saw the first World Population Conference in Bucharest. During this conference the G77 countries (a loose alliance of developing countries united by their perceived post-colonial interests) criticised the US for its preoccupation with overpopulation. Collectively, the G77 countries argued that "development is the best contraceptive" and that the focus on overpopulation effectively diverts attention from the inequalities of prevailing international relations. These developing countries were therefore principally concerned, not with the 'palliative' of contraception, but with the complete redistribution of resources and the establishment of a New International Economic Order (NIEO).

And yet, by the second International Conference on Population held in Mexico in 1984, there had been a reversal in positions. Third World countries now generally acknowledged that their resources could not support unchecked population growth, while the US declared population to be a "neutral phenomenon" and limited access to funding to those organisations not involved in abortion activities (Finkle and Crane 1985). Under Ronald Reagan's (1981-88) Republican regime, poor economic performance in Third World countries was now being seen less in terms of demographic change, and more in terms of excessive state intervention.

By the beginning of the 1990s, the international political landscape had altered once again, this time more dramatically. The Cold War was over, and while the Soviet Union had collapsed, the US faced increasing economic rivalry from Japan, South East Asia, even China. Differential development had fragmented the unity of the Third World nations, and a decade of structural adjustment had heightened the role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) operating outside the constraints of state planning. The UN Decade for the Advancement of Women (1975-85), together with widespread
feminist activism, had placed gender relations high on development agendas. Meanwhile, the AIDS pandemic had caused worldwide alarm, and in a number of poor countries threatened social and economic devastation (Barnett & Blaikie 1992). All these social, political and economic changes combined to create the conditions for a major paradigm shift that was to dominate the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo (McIntosh and Finkle 1995).

The new paradigm that emerged from the ICPD gave greater precedence to the concepts of reproductive health and women's empowerment, and played down the demographic rationale for population policy. Indeed, this demographic rationale came to be openly criticised for the new model asserted that "programs that are demographically driven, and are intended to act directly on fertility, are inherently coercive and abusive of women's rights..." (ibid:227); demographically driven approaches, it was argued, target women as reproducers and, through a narrow focus on fertility, fail to acknowledge the multiplicity of roles, responsibilities and concerns that preoccupy women themselves. As a consequence, the new 'Program of Action' proposed that family planning be just one component of comprehensive reproductive health services and that these, in turn, be part of integrated programmes of sustainable development that accept women's empowerment as a principal objective (Kabeer 1994). Feminists advocating this agenda asserted that once women became empowered and development advanced, women would opt to have fewer children and population growth would slow down. However, for many in the women's movement, the effect on population trends would be incidental, for it was the effect on women's rights, status and empowerment that mattered most (McIntosh and Finkle 1995:227).

Given the 'new paradigm', it appears that there is a need for social science research that considers reproductive health issues within the broader context of women's lives, in other words, research that considers "the woman not [just] the
womb" (Balchin et al. 1994). Nevertheless, demographers such as John Cleland (1996:8) express concern about the way population 'problems' have become submerged by issues of women's empowerment: "The truth of the matter is that family planning is a step on the road to female empowerment but female empowerment is not a precondition." For Cleland, a tactical distinction must remain between population problems and issues of female empowerment; "both need to be addressed but in slightly different ways" (ibid). Thus, for Cleland, 'demographically driven' approaches continue to have a role. But what do such approaches entail?

1.2 The Demographic Study of Fertility

Demography is the study of human populations mainly in quantitative terms. Demographers are especially concerned with the size of populations and their breakdown by analytical categories such as sex, age and social category, as well as, by density and geographical distribution. Demographic studies can be synchronic, examining population structures or characteristics at a given moment of time, or diachronic, as when they study processes of change in population composition and distribution over time. For demographers, fertility is essentially a biological term referring to numbers of live births, with social and cultural factors becoming relevant only as they work through a small number of biological and behavioural "proximate determinants" (Bongaarts & Potter 1983).³

From the 1940s, understanding fertility change was a major disciplinary concern, being linked to wider theoretical

³In a controlled population, that is one where fertility control practices are widespread, biological proximate determinants of fertility are said to include, breastfeeding, primary and secondary sterility, miscarriage, induced abortion, contraceptive use, coital frequency and sexual abstinence, postpartum amenorrhoea, and intrauterine mortality. Behavioural determinants of fertility are said to include, age of marriage, marriage patterns, education, income, government policy, religious belief and tradition (Bongaarts & Potter 1983).
debates relating to state planning and the practical concerns of managing labour resources both domestically and in the colonies (Cream 1994, Balchin et al. 1994). Indeed, until the 1970s the concept of 'demographic transition' informed much theoretical work. In keeping with the modernization theories of the post-War years, demographic transition assumed a direct relationship between modernization, urbanization and industrialization (that is, socio-economic development) and transitions from high fertility to low fertility populations. By the late 1960s, however, empirical evidence was accumulating to suggest that there was no consistent relationship between the onset of fertility decline and measures of social and economic change (Knodel and van de Walle 1979). Classic transition theory thus began to fall into decline. Yet, the legacy of this theory continues to echo through much contemporary demographic analysis based on the assumption that 'low fertility' is the end point of history and the optimum outcome for all societies everywhere, no matter what their relative political, economic or geographic position. It appears, therefore, that there is still a need to investigate fertility within particular historical contexts, while attending to specific conditions of socio-economic change (Greenhalgh 1995:16-17).

Since the late Seventies, there has been a tendency for demographers to explain fertility decline less in terms of socio-economic development and more in terms of the "diffusion" of ideas and attitudes, particularly where they relate to the acceptability of birth control (Knodel and van de Walle 1979).

4It is acknowledged that some demographers deny that demography has any 'theories' in the sense of coherent bodies of analysis "linking a characterisation of society and economy, aggregate or local, to individual fertility decisions and outcomes, able to withstand scrutiny against the empirical record" (McNicoll 1980:441). Nevertheless, like Greenhalgh (1995) I use the term 'theory' to refer to a recognisable schema of demographic ideas, associated with particular idiomatic language, which constantly informs demographic research and analysis, if only implicitly.
de Walle 1979:239, Cleland and Wilson 1987). At the heart of these analyses is the assumption that fertility is only significantly controlled through modern contraceptives and that in "natural fertility populations" (that is, populations where modern contraceptives are not used) biological or "supply" factors explain virtually all variation in the age pattern of fertility (Knodel 1983:69-70). There is therefore little acknowledgement of the 'cultural' means that may be used to regulate fertility pre and postnatally (see Devereux 1955, Scrimshaw 1983) or methods of socially managing family size through fosterage, adoption, even infanticide (Bledsoe 1990).^5

Principal sources of data for these demographic approaches have been Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) surveys. While allowing demographers to assess prevailing attitudes, these surveys also facilitate the assessment of "unmet need" and the "KAP-gap", that is, the additional contraceptive use that would be required to "achieve fertility levels consistent with women's stated reproductive intentions and to eliminate all mistimed and unwanted pregnancies" (Bongaarts cited in Dixon-Mueller and Germain 1992:331). As Dixon-Mueller and Germain point out, however, "need" is not defined by informants themselves, but by researchers who deduce it from apparent inconsistencies between behaviour and reproductive preferences stated at a particular moment in time. In other words, the "need" is ultimately emergent from researchers' own analytical constructions. It appears, then, that such analyses might be complemented by a more phenomenological approach which situates reproductive preferences and contraceptive use within the lived experience of informants themselves.

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^5 The assumption that fertility regulation = contraceptive use finds its way into most population policy. The Overseas Development Administration's (ODA) policy document "Children by Choice not Chance" (1994) implies, rather naively, that unless women have access to, and use, contraception, reproduction is entirely left to 'chance'.

21
Another strand of demographic analysis has emphasized micro-level changes in household organization and the status of women. In the late 1970s, John Caldwell (1976, 1982) developed a 'wealth-flows theory' which plotted fertility transition against gradual inversion of intergenerational flows of goods and services. In the 1980s, Karen Mason (1986, 1987) focused on women's status and fertility decline arguing that women's autonomy from male control, economic dependency and social status influences child supply, child demand and child costs. Although Mason's argument holds a certain hegemonic (in the Gramscian sense) appeal, like Caldwell's analysis, it seems to have yielded relatively little empirical demographic research or cumulative theorisation (Greenhalgh 1995:7).

An alternative approach has been advanced by Geoffrey McNicoll (1980, 1994) who considers the 'institutional determinants of fertility change'. McNicoll argues that patterns of fertility change are determined by configurations of inherited social and cultural institutions (such as community structures, kinship systems, sex roles). Although the approach allows consideration to be given to relations of differential power, it does tend towards structural determinism, despite McNicoll's attempts to incorporate elements of dynamism and change. Moreover, McNicoll's emphasis on institutions rather obliterates the individual, the self and subjective experience of social institutions.

Paralleling the more 'sociological' approaches to demographic analysis are the more microeconomic approaches. These tend to focus on fertility decision-making within households and, more particularly, among couples. Leibenstein (1975), and Easterlin and Crimmins (1985) have attempted to temper the extremes of utility maximisation approaches of authors such as Becker (1960) by acknowledging social and biological constraints that may influence decision-making. Nevertheless, there remains an emphasis on highly-rationalistic cost-benefit calculations and active decision-
making, and relatively little consideration is given to wider social, political and historical contexts and the structural relations that influence who can make decisions and the choices they perceive (Greenhalgh 1995).

There is no doubt that rigorous demographic analysis provides considerable insight into fertility as a 'social fact'. However, there is a tendency for the abstractions of demography to represent human reproduction as a discrete conceptual domain and, in so doing, to remove fertility and childbearing from the embodied experience of women and men themselves. Policies that are informed by such demographic approaches can therefore appear to be concerned with populations more than people, and with processes of objectification that effectively erase the subject. It is this tendency which underpins the criticism that emerged from Cairo. It therefore seems that the time may be ripe for a

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Hollerbach (1983) contrasts active decision-making (that is, highly-conscious decision-making) with passive decision-making which occurs when, "restricted perceptions and particular habits or customs, institutionalized within the culture, reinforce the childbearing behaviour and leave the individual with little perceived choice" (p.352). In the course of this thesis I hope to demonstrate that, in Gulmit, fertility outcomes may be shaped by elements of both.

Susan Greenhalgh (1990, 1995) is particularly critical of demography's apparent lack of reflexivity and its disciplinary tardiness in engaging with the critical perspectives of political economy, feminism and postmodernism. She is critical, too, of demography's recent tendency to borrow from the methodologies of anthropology without acknowledging its theoretical insights. For Greenhalgh the way forward lies in a new approach which "situates fertility" within its dynamic historical, political, economic and cultural context. While Greenhalgh's argument is well-made and timely, contributions to the volume fail to bring all the contextual components together in a unified analysis. For example, Kertzer tends to emphasize culture but prefers to think of it in terms of social organisation rather than cultural meaning systems since he finds the latter too abstract to be accessible. Here, I think, Kertzer fails to recognise the interrelatedness of the two. Carter, on the other hand, prefers to examine the relationship between human agency and fertility decision making but fails to move beyond a level of abstraction wherein actors are conceptualised in terms of their "reflexive monitoring and rationalization of a continuous flow of conduct" (see p.19) to consider how agency relates to a more
more constructive interdisciplinary dialogue between demography and anthropology, for the latter is a discipline that offers a possible analytical framework for investigating the meanings and values that social actors may bring to the experience of fertility and childbearing.

This thesis is therefore an attempt to explore how an anthropological analysis can effectively complement demographic analyses of the relationship between human reproduction and population growth. It is anticipated that such an approach may inform policies which, in keeping with the new paradigm, address the perceived concerns of women (and men) themselves. A review of the demographic literature suggests that an effective complementary analysis would situate fertility within its broadest context while considering historical change, relations of differential power, cultural meanings and practices, and the lived 'childbearing' experience of local social actors. Let us now consider what the existing anthropological literature reveals about constructing such an approach.

1.3 Constructing an Anthropological Approach

For its part, anthropology has, until recently, given only cursory attention to the relationship between human reproduction and demographic change. During the nineteenth century, social theorists such as Frazer, Morgan and McLennan did consider procreation beliefs together with kinship structures, but this was largely to locate societies within theoretical frameworks of social evolution. By the early part of this century, procreation had become almost completely subsumed within theories of marriage and kinship. Rarely was the relationship between sex and procreation ever questioned (see Ashley-Montagu 1937). Indeed, procreation was seen as essentially sex and biology, the facts of which became culturally elaborated or distorted to support various kinship systems (see for example, Malinowski 1927). The encompassing notion of the embodied and actively constructed self.
well-known 'Virgin Birth' debate of the 'Fifties—which drew upon Malinowski's study of the sexual lives of Trobriand Islanders—crystallised the emergent dilemmas by asking whether "certain primitive peoples...were or were not ignorant of the physiological facts of paternity" (Leach 1967:39). It is only relatively recently that the "physiological facts" themselves have been held up for scrutiny through the lens of cultural analysis (Delaney 1992:14-16, Broch-Due & Rudie 1993).

During the Sixties, studies of reproductive beliefs and practices tended to be integrated within extensive cross-cultural surveys (eg. Ford 1964, Mead and Newton 1967) that were rather inclined to essentialize and decontextualize these themes. Within Marxist analyses, biological reproduction became somewhat subsumed within the reproduction of structural relations of differential power. It was only with the rise of feminist anthropology in the Seventies that the social and cultural aspects of biological reproduction began to be investigated in depth, particularly as they related to issues of gender and power.

Early feminist studies were concerned to analyze reproduction in terms of the universal oppression of women (eg. Ortner 1974, Rosaldo and Lampere 1974) with particular attention being given to how reproduction becomes integral to gender identity and status (eg. Clarke 1975, Vielle 1978); in this context, childbirth was generally seen as a rite de passage (see Van Gennep 1960). Subsequent studies acknowledged that women are a differentiated group and explored how cultural beliefs relating to the ethnophysiology of reproduction effectively naturalize and perpetuate existing gender relations (eg. Ott 1979, Jorgenson 1982), and may have particular potency where there is continuity with an encompassing cosmology (Delaney 1991). Some slightly later studies recognised that women may be a differentiated group within a single society and investigated how women's reproductive experiences can be mediated by factors such as
caste, class and status (Kabeer 1986), and the role played by state institutions (including health and family planning services) in perpetuating relations of differential power (Jeffery, Jeffery and Lyon 1989). A number of studies have examined the relationship between biomedicine and women's reproductive experiences. For example, Jordan (1980) demonstrated that the biomedical management of childbirth is mediated by social and cultural context; Emily Martin (1987, 1990) showed how obstetrics and gynaecology are implicated in the alienation of women from their own bodies, while Treichler (1990) showed how childbirth may be surrounded by contested meanings.

These feminist studies have undoubtedly made an important contribution to the analysis of the relationship between reproduction and gender. Yet, Strathern (1988) suggests that although much feminist analysis appears 'etic' in nature, it actually involves the imposition of rather 'emic' epistemological constructions since, she argues, "Westerners find it almost impossible not to regard the sexes in a permanent relation of asymmetry" (p.330). This asymmetrical construction derives, it seems, from a deeply-rooted cultural metaphor of commodity exchange that invests individual persons with intrinsic qualities (such as sexuality) which confer value, and can be exchanged. In keeping with this construction, women become characterised (and valued) by their innate capacity to have children, while men become characterised by their assumed need to gain access to, or control of, this capacity. In short, it is assumed that men need to dominate women. Drawing upon comparative material from Melanesia, Strathern demonstrates that anthropological analyses of gender relations, marriage, childbearing and childrearing tend to become saturated with elaborations of the commodity exchange metaphor and can prevent anthropologists from fully hearing and comprehending the meanings, the 'emic' constructions, of other cultures.8

8Strathern (1988) suggests that Melanesians see gender relations less in terms of positions of differential power within a shared socio-
Strathern's point is well made: the challenge for anthropological analysis is to take seriously the cultural beliefs and practices of others in their own terms and, in so doing, to be actively, and iteratively, reflexive of its own.  

Within the broader discipline of anthropology there have been other theoretical developments which, in challenging earlier epistemological constructions, have implications for this study of fertility and childbearing. Anthropology's recent interest in 'the body' is perhaps of particular relevance.

The theoretical transition that revived anthropology's interest in the body emerged from (empirically-based) criticism of Levi-Strauss' structuralism and the interpretive approaches of authors such Geertz (1960, 1973). It became apparent that these approaches placed excessive emphasis on cognition and the intellect at the cost of giving due consideration to the embodied practices of daily life (see Bourdieu 1977). It therefore seemed there was a need to move beyond the analysis of enduring social and cognitive cultural system (our own view) and more in terms of the active evincing of gender from individuals who are themselves regarded as microcosms or manifestations of multiple, historical social relations.

Strathern's later (1992) work on the new reproductive technologies (NRTs) suggests that, in challenging our most fundamental notions of motherhood, paternity, personhood and the naturalness of birth, the NRTs blur the conceptual divide between nature and culture and create the possibility of thinking about reproduction in whole new ways (see also Shore 1992).

Historically, anthropological interest in the body has largely been confined to the fields of physical anthropology and sociobiology. During the first half of this century, social and cultural anthropology began to move away from the evolutionism and biological determinism that characterised these approaches, with the result that the body became rather neglected, other than to describe cultural rituals, adornments and markings associated with it. An exception was the work associated with Mary Douglas (1966, 1970) which explored the relationship between the body and systems of classification and symbolic representation.
structures to explore how the body becomes a vehicle through which human beings "have a world" (Merleau-Ponty 1962:276), and how discourses of the body become implicated in the production of subjectivity (Foucault 1984). It is notable, too, that this theoretical transition coincided with the emergence of postmodern critiques of the 'rational project of modernity', which drew upon Nietzschean philosophy to explore the relationship between desire and reason with the body representing "a source of opposition to instrumental reason" (Turner 1991:16).

Recent feminist literature has also picked up on these themes. In particular, several authors have begun to question the conventional 'constructionist' divide between sex (seen as bodily, biological) and gender (seen as a cultural or psychological elaboration)(see Broch-Due & Rudie 1993). There is increasing recognition that this distinction mirrors the Cartesian dualisms of post-Enlightenment thought and that the divide between sex and gender may not be clear-cut. Sex, it seems, is not simply a natural or pure biological category for, as Plumwood (1989) points out, the usual biological criteria of chromosomes, internal and external genitalia, hormonal states and secondary sex characteristics can show enormous variation, and there may be no inevitability about the way they are combined. Furthermore, as Laqueur (1990) has shown, biological 'readings' of bodily anatomy are themselves discursively constructed. Consequently, it now seems untenable to bracket off the body from gender, as if the former were something neutral and passive. Plumwood (1989) argues, however, that the answer is not to abandon the sex/gender divide completely but to actively investigate the culturally-mediated interface between the two. Similarly, Broch-Due & Rudie (1993:33) suggest that contemporary analysis must consider how "the shapes and surfaces of

\[\text{11Broch-Due & Rudie (1993) contrast the 'constructionist' view with that of 'essentialists' who regard the body as inherently naturally-sexed raw material that is universally the same and manifests itself in the social world as biologically-determined 'gender'.}\]
particular anatomical bodies are marked and mapped within a cultural system of meanings" and how local theories of biology "open some surfaces and orifices to signification and close down others".

From our review of earlier anthropological studies of reproduction, it appears there has been little systematic analysis of cultural constructions of the sexed body for there has been rather disproportionate emphasis on abstract theories of procreation, conceptual models, and epistemological and symbolic systems. It thus seems there is a need for contemporary anthropological analyses of reproduction to begin to attend to corporeality, as well as cognition.

It appears too that, while anthropologists have been very effective in analysing reproduction in terms of structural relations, they have been less effective in analysing the continuities (and discontinuities) between these and the dynamics of interpersonal relationships. Recent contributions to the anthropology of emotion have demonstrated, however, that the investigation of culturally constructed embodied emotions can provide an important "missing link" capable of "bridging mind, body, individual, society, and body politic" (Scheper-Hughes and Locke 1987:28-29). It seems, then, that a study of reproduction that attempts to draw together broader contextual themes and the lived experience of social actors themselves may also have to give due attention to the study of emotion.

Although a number of feminist studies have touched on the role of reproduction in constructing and naturalizing gender identity, such studies rarely extend to analysis of the relationship between biological reproduction and the reproduction of the embodied self. It is likely that such an analysis could also go some way towards bridging the enduring analytical divide between social relations and relationships, the individual and society, mind and body. The work of
medical anthropologists Robert Desjarlais (1992) and Byron Good (1994) has proved particularly significant in providing some theoretical tools to facilitate such analysis.

Robert Desjarlais (1992) emphasises the need to appreciate the sensate nature of human experience and the ways that kinaesthetic and sensory experience is actively embodied in "the aesthetics of the everyday". In using the term 'aesthetics', Desjarlais refers less to formal artistry, performative genres or dramaturgy (see Kapferer 1983), and more to the "tacit cultural forms, values, and sensibilities -local ways of being and doing- that lend specific styles, configurations, and felt qualities to local experiences" (p.59), all of which may be mediated, of course, by relative social position (see also Bourdieu 1984). Moreover, argues Desjarlais, through attending to the aesthetics of the everyday, it becomes possible to move debates about the construction of selfhood away from the usual fixations with body contours and boundaries, and more towards consideration of the ways social actors compose, manage and evaluate their actions, and those of others, within a realm of sensory experience which extends beyond the body into the realm of social relations.

Byron Good (1994) argues that interpretation of bodily experience emerges from processes of both aesthetic synthesis and narrativisation, either individually or collectively. Here, narratives are seen as a mode of making sense of reality by narrators who effectively create a plot -an apparently unified reality- from disordered experience. From Good's comparative work, it appears that narrativisation is fundamentally and universally human, and may be integral to the active construction and presentation of self (see also Mitchell 1981, Schafer 1981, Reissman 1993).

12Desjarlais' emphasis on the full range of sensory experience is also an attempt to move away from the excessive visualism that historically characterises Western analysis (see Clifford and Marcus 1986, Stoller 1989).
While it seems that analysis of local aesthetic values and individual and collective narratives must also be a component of an analysis of reproduction that takes into account the relationship between constructions of the self and social context, it appears, too, that narratives of personhood and self can yield considerable insight into processes of historical change. Although some authors (eg. Mitchell 1981) regard narrativity as an essentially conservative process that perpetuates dominant world views, others, such as Bruner (1986a), suggest that narratives always contain the possibility of re-telling, re-constructing and re-fashioning experience, thereby becoming integral to cultural transition. Rosaldo's account of Ilongot hunting stories provides a vivid example of the active reconstitution of stories from cultural repertoires (see also, Sahlins 1987). Such accounts compel a re-evaluation of the traditional/modern dichotomy that informs many accounts of social change: Rather than see history in terms of succession, in which old forms give way to new, it becomes necessary to consider that so-called traditional forms constantly engage innovative ones as they continue to elaborate elements already integral to them (Kapferer 1983:xv).13

Within the anthropological literature, there is increasing acknowledgment that modernity is an idealised concept rather than an actual state; in Broch-Due & Rudie's (1993:5) terms, it is "nowhere complete and hardly anywhere fully absent". Modernity is, however, characterised by processes of change associated with a particular kind of complexity, a cultural pluralism, a "fissuring of little worlds" (Berman 1983:51) and a tendency for the individual to be seen as the supreme value with inviolable human rights (Dumont 1986).

Although there is undoubtedly room for analytical revision of some anthropological studies of reproduction, nevertheless,  

13Of course, what may be as significant as that which is recalled and re-worked, is that which is individually and collectively forgotten or excluded (Connerton 1989, Reissman 1993:3).
it is clear that an anthropological approach does provide a potential theoretical framework for examining fertility within its broadest context, taking into account historical change, relations of differential power, cultural meanings and practices and the lived, embodied, experience of subjects themselves. The next section considers how an anthropological approach might complement a demographic approach methodologically as well as theoretically and, more specifically, how anthropological research methods were used to collect the data for this study.

1.4 Methodological Issues
As suggested earlier, demographers generally tend to undertake more macro-level investigations of populations within selected geographical areas and regions. These macro-level investigations are principally concerned with quantifying, measuring and identifying trends in phenomena such as fertility rates\(^{14}\) and the variables that effect them. Demography has tended to remain rooted in the positivist tradition and is, therefore, critically concerned with issues such as representativeness and validation (see Denzin & Lincoln 1994).

In contrast, contemporary anthropological research tends to move between the micro and macro levels of investigation and, especially in recent years, may be actively concerned with the interface between the two. Approaches to anthropological research have undergone a series of paradigm shifts since the beginning of the century (Kuper 1973, Ortner 1984, Denzin & Lincoln 1994)\(^{15}\) but contemporary anthropological research is

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\(^{14}\) In the course of this thesis reference will be made to total fertility rates (TFR). TFR is a summary measure that indicates the number of children a woman would bear during her reproductive years if she were to experience the age-specific fertility rates prevailing at the time of the survey. Mathematically, the TFR is five times the sum of the age-specific fertility rates for each five-year age group (PDHS, 1990-91:38).

\(^{15}\) Denzin & Lincoln (1994) describe these paradigm shifts in terms of "five historical moments": the traditional age (1900-1950) of the "man-
inclined to be particularistic, problem and process-oriented, and tends to be concerned with meanings actors themselves bring to an issue (Ortner 1984). As a consequence, anthropological investigation leans towards rich description and emic, case-based research with emphasis on attaining breadth and depth of analysis through the triangulation of research methods. To this end, the anthropologist may employ a range of investigative techniques that include both qualitative and quantitative methods. In this sense, the anthropologist might be described as a kind of *bricoleur* who draws upon whatever 'tools' are at hand to pursue the research project.

Despite the apparent incompatibility between demographic and anthropological research methods, extensive use of demographic data has been made in this study of fertility and childbearing in northern Pakistan. Of course, it is an explicit aim of this study to explore areas of complementarity between demographic and anthropological analysis. However, demographic data have proved of intrinsic value for the anthropologist as *bricoleur*, especially where they assisted her in situating micro-level data within the wider macro-level picture, and where it became associated with interpretations and meanings that were significant components of the research 'problem'.

In Pakistan, demographic data relating to fertility and population growth rates have been collected since the colonial

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scientist" is characterised by commitment to objectivism and complicity with imperialism; the modernist or golden age (1950-1970) and the era of "blurred genres" (1970-86) mark the appearance and integration of postpositivist arguments and more interpretive approaches that include ethnomethodology, phenomenology, critical theory and feminism; the era of blurred genres is considered to have produced "the crisis of representation" (1986-90) which following the "linguistic turn" led to perceived predicaments of representation and legitimation; this has been followed by the present or "postmodern" moment which is characterised by heightened sensibility, doubt that any representation has privileged place, that any method or theory has universal application or can access authoritative knowledge.
era, however, its collection has become more systematic since the inception of the population control programme in the early Sixties. Since the establishment of the programme, a series of national surveys has been undertaken by the Ministry of Population Welfare, the National Institute of Population Studies and the Population Council, largely with a view to assessing the programme's effectiveness. A recurring question arising from these surveys is why, relative to comparable countries such as India and Bangladesh, Pakistan's population programme appears to have had minimal, or at least delayed, impact. Within the ensuing debate, the reliability, as well as the interpretation, of the available demographic data has been thrown into question (eg. Retherford et al. 1987, Sathar 1993). It seems particular difficulties arise when reference is made to baseline census data as, for political reasons, there has not been a census in Pakistan since 1981 (Hassan 1995).

While recognising the limitations of the available data, this study will nonetheless make use of the comparative quantitative data published in the Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (PDHS) of 1990-91. Unfortunately, the Northern Areas of Pakistan has been excluded from this, and other national surveys, because it is officially a

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17 In the absence of a national Census since 1981, official data on population and demographic trends is frequently self-contradictory and increasingly outdated, while independent data is usually derived from very small scale studies (Sathar 1993). Moreover, Balchin et al. (1994:3) comment that in Pakistan, "data on demography is extremely vulnerable to manipulation since the topic is fraught with implications for domestic policies as well as for Pakistan's international relations."

18 It was beyond the resources and scope of this study to undertake large-scale independent surveys.
territorial area disputed by India (Chapter 2). In consequence, the national data are, where possible, supplemented with data collected more locally by the Aga Khan Health Service (AKHS), the Family Planning Association of Pakistan (FPAP) and the local Ismaili Council.

The fieldwork location of Gulmit village was chosen following a preliminary visit and a series of key informant interviews with government officials, FPAP officers and village elders. Gulmit village is of interest from a demographic/reproductive health point of view because it has had a fully functioning family planning clinic since 1992, yet estimates of contraceptive prevalence rates have remained persistently low. From an anthropological point of view, the village is of interest because of its location in an area where a number of ethnic and sectarian groups co-exist and because there is evidence of relatively rapid integration into the global economy. Moreover, although a number of colonial and travel texts describe the area, there appears to be a dearth of recent anthropological texts. Of course, some more practical considerations also determined selection of the fieldwork location. Not least was the fact that the inhabitants of the village are Ismaili Muslims who are generally known in the locality for their relative openness towards Europeans and 'outsiders'. Indeed, having had some exposure to tourists and travellers, villagers were comparatively tolerant of a single European woman who was not well-schooled in the codes and practices sharem (shame, humility) and parda (veiling, covering).

Upon my arrival in the village on a blustery November morning, I was fortunate in securing accommodation (a single room and bathroom attached to a family house) within a few hours. The initial weeks of my fieldwork were spent learning some of the routines and practices of family life, mapping

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19Prior to commencing fieldwork, I had been warned that some female development workers had encountered considerable hostility when working in neighbouring Shia communities.
the village and getting to know some of the local people, particularly those who had sufficient command of English to become potential language teachers and fieldwork assistants. Fortunately, there were a small number of villagers who were actively involved in tourism, trade and teaching, who had considerable fluency in English. Over a period of time, I identified a small group of individuals (including three women teachers) who were particularly competent at translating between both languages and cultures. These individuals, depending on their availability, worked with me for varying periods of time. Where possible, I preferred to formalise our relationship by paying a small wage.

Prior to commencing fieldwork, I had taken an introductory course in Urdu, the official language and lingua franca of Pakistan. Although most Gulmiti men are fairly fluent in Urdu, only younger village women, who have received some education, have any knowledge of the language. Within the village, Gulmiti men and women tend to speak their mother tongue Wakhi (in Wakhi, this is more literally referred to as the 'father' tongue (tat zik)), and village men and women frequently have a working knowledge of other local ethnic languages such as Burushaski and Shina. In order to communicate with village women on the more intimate aspects of reproductive health, it soon became apparent that it would be beneficial for me to learn at least some Wakhi. Unfortunately, Wakhi is not a written language and I had to work intensively with my local language teachers to establish basic grammar and vocabulary. To my shame, it took me about nine months to gain a reasonable command of the language. However, even when I was beginning to gain a degree of fluency, I depended a great deal on my fieldwork assistants when conducting formal interviews. Indeed, much of my energy went into establishing good working relationships with female and male fieldwork assistants in order that we might work together effectively, efficiently, and sometimes creatively. Many of the questions we needed to ask were of a rather delicate and sensitive nature and I believe it would have
taken me many years to gain sufficient command of the subtlety and idiomatic use of language to be able to ask questions appropriately and to pick up all the nuances of answers. Some of my most fruitful interviews were taped, and I often spent long hours with my assistants picking out metaphors and images from recorded conversations in order to deconstruct and explore their implications and resonances. This method was also particularly useful in working with the local songwriter Bul-Bul Nazir who is a local headmaster with a good command of English. Bul-Bul Nazir worked with me closely in translating his own songs both in terms of language and metaphorical content (Chapter 8).20

Shortly after arriving in the village, I took a (voluntary) job teaching English in the local girl's school to foster a network of relationships and facilitate my integration and participation in village life. Frequently, my status as a "teacher" displaced my less socially-recognisable status of "researcher". However, in general, I perceived that my identity among local people was shaped by four principal categories namely, 'British', 'educated', 'mature (Western) woman' and 'guest'. Indeed, these categories appeared to mediate my interviews and interactions with local people throughout the fieldwork period. Elderly people who remembered British colonial rule often treated me with great deference, but younger people were generally much more relaxed with me, often teasing me quite openly. My educated status tended to earn me more widespread respect, but I soon learned that this came with responsibilities: As an educated individual who visited the cities from time to time, I was expected to constantly look "smart"; indeed, my educated friends regularly reprimanded me when my shoes and clothes looked as dusty as those of village women. Although as a mature Western woman I was given something of the status of

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20 In nearly all cases, the names of local people have been changed to preserve confidentiality. In three cases (including that of Bul-Bul Nazir), local people particularly asked me to use their real names in order that songs and ideas would be accredited to them.
an honorary man (cf. Nader 1963), I was ultimately regarded as a woman, and was always aware of having to manage my relationships with men very carefully. Locally, female Western tourists had a reputation for being relatively promiscuous but I felt it necessary to avoid this characterisation in order to earn the respect and trust of local women in particular. This said, it quickly became very clear to me that I was not expected to behave like a local woman, indeed, villagers were usually particularly interested in finding out about my customs and ways as a foreigner. Even as I became well-known and well-established in the village, I was almost always treated with the hospitality reserved for a guest. However, when I had been in Gulmit for almost a year, my host family did begin to refer to me as a daughter or sister of the household, and when guests arrived I was increasingly directed to sit with the other household women to the left of the communal room in order to listen in silence.

My initial research interviews formed part of a general survey of households based on a judgemental sample from each village mahalla (neighbourhood). This survey not only helped me to establish a working rapport with my fieldwork assistants, it also allowed me to introduce myself throughout the village. The survey provided a preliminary overview of household composition, genealogical relationships, and the distribution of wealth. During each interview, initial structured questioning was followed by less structured, open-ended questions that probed themes such as the individual's happiest and saddest memories, events of which individual were most proud, and so on. From these discussions (in which I also exchanged comparative information and stories about myself), I began to gradually attune myself to local discourses of emotion, modes of storytelling, as well as the practical skills of listening, probing and prompting within a new cultural context.

And so the reflexive process of bricolage began. As I
pursued the research problem, attempting to unravel the context and embodied meanings, values and practices of local people relating to fertility and childbearing, new questions and themes constantly emerged that required exploration through a variety of research techniques. These techniques included key informant interviews, library and archive searches, structured and unstructured interviews (with local informant stratified by sex, age wealth, status, education and aspects of fertility history), the collection of case studies, life histories, stories and songs, focus group discussions (with participants identified by the above criteria of stratification). Particularly in the early stages of research, use was also made of the techniques that have come to be associated with participatory rural appraisal (PRA) (see Chambers et al. 1989). Some of the diagrammatic outputs from these techniques are contained in the appendices to this thesis. These techniques were extremely helpful in eliciting certain contextual information, however, they did tend to require a degree of visual literacy on the part of informants, and considerable facilitation skills on the part of both researcher and fieldwork assistants. Furthermore, issues selected for investigation by these techniques must ultimately be filtered through the researcher's own conceptual categories, and if used in isolation from other techniques, can mean it is difficult to discern the relative significance of the issues for social actors themselves. Finally, the information gathered by these techniques tends to remain at the level of abstract ideas and representations, rather than at the level of practice.

As explained above, what is significant about this research

21These techniques are also known as Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) and, more recently, as People Oriented Planning (POP).

22PRA methods used included body mapping, ranking exercises, modified wealth ranking exercises, the construction of time lines, seasonal calendars, daily routine diagrams, mobility charts, transect diagrams, matrices and venn diagrams. Details of these methods can be found in International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) publication by Theis and Grady (1991).
is that it rests upon a recognition that a more sensate account of fertility and childbearing, one that understands "the body as an experiencing, soulful being" (Desjarlais 1992:29) is required. Thus, central to this research has been the classic Malinowskian technique of participant observation. In this case, however, participant observation means more than simply watching and moving alongside informants, as implied by Pelto and Pelto (1978). Rather, it is about using one's own body as an instrument of research, about allowing oneself to consciously and unconsciously attune oneself to the sensory and kinaesthetic experiences that may constitute another's world.

Of course, it is not possible to simply discard one's own cultural habitus and exchange it for another. The process of acquiring patterns of behaviour unfamiliar to one's own body, and of attuning oneself to a new cultural environment in order to understand something of the world of the "experiencing subject", is generally slow and gradual. Indeed, it is recognition of this fact that provides the principal rationale for long-term fieldwork, and tends to distinguish anthropology from other related disciplines such as sociology and history (Bruner 1986b:8), as well as demography.

For me, participant observation was about feeling clumsy, inept, often child-like. It was frequently about resisting the desire to run away to something more familiar, more comfortable. It was something that filled my days, something in-between, around, and running into, my more formalised tasks of interviewing and teaching at the local girl's school. Slowly, imperceptibly, my experience of communication underwent a transformation. I would like to think that I began to intuit and appreciate more, both verbally and non-verbally. Gradually, I found myself asking different kinds of questions, wanting to understand different kinds of things. I wanted to know about mountain spirits, about why my neighbour wept when she listened to certain songs. The
landscape is big in Gulmit. Being in the village is not the same as being in the city; it produces different rhythms, patterns, sensations. After a time, I began to have a different sense of the order of things, a different sense of how one uses one's body and, therefore, what it might be to be strong, tired, or sick. I missed my home, but I also felt involved, preoccupied by different things, different stories in the making.

For me, participant observation involved walking rocky mountain paths, scrambling over boulders, chasing goats. It involved early mornings in the dark, shadowy dankness of the cow shed, inhaling the animal aromas of urine and dung as I learned to milk the cow —resting my cheek on its warm flank, feeling for the coarse teats, developing the rhythms, the pressures of milking until the rush of squirting milk hit the metal pail. Participant observation meant learning to knead soft dough and rhythmically rolling and folding it into thin nīgan (chapattis). It meant learning to squat, abandoning the right-angled postures of chairs, feeling the difference of how it is to crouch close to the earth, knees spread wide, buttocks touching heels. Participant observation meant gratefully hugging the fire (despite the acrid smell of smouldering dung) in winter temperatures that hovered between -5 and -15°C. It meant venturing outside to feel the icy wind sting my face, hunching and lowering my head to avoid the clouds of dry dust that invariably got into my eyes and filled the folds and seams of my clothes. Participant observation meant experiencing the relief of Spring as the long, slow winter finally ebbed away. It meant hearing the rush of glacial waters filling the irrigation channels, and the delight of being outside again for long hours —even when those hours were filled with the back-breaking work of planting potatoes. Participant observation meant the fun of climbing apricot trees heavy with fruit; it was shaking mulberry trees to be showered with berries; it was wincing at the tartness of the early fruit, then week by week tasting the growing sweetness of the maturing fruit. Participant
observation was the heat of summer and gathering with women in the cool ghranz (store-room) to squeeze sticky juice from the mulberries to make khunda syrup, later to be eaten with thick, doughy pancakes (gral). It was long hours in the fields, harvesting the fodder-grass and wheat, the gathering of potatoes into big, rough sacks. Participant observation was seeing the dark colours of summer transform into the tarnished shades of autumn; it was scooping up the fallen leaves to store them for winter fodder, sensing the inevitability of long, cold winter months creeping towards us once again.

And now, of course, comes the task of communicating what was understood of this experience, of translating the felt, the immediate, into words. But, before proceeding further, it is necessary to be clear about the usage and implications of a number of terms that recur and become critical to the argument of this thesis.

1.5 A Clarification of Terms
In section 1.3 of this introduction, an account was given of how terms such as discourse, narrative, scenarios, self, embodiment, emotion and aesthetics have begun to gain currency within contemporary anthropological analysis. These terms can sometimes be used rather loosely within anthropological texts and, without careful clarification, risk losing analytical potency. In this section, the precise application of these concepts is explained, but what is important too is the degree of interrelatedness and interdependency of these key concepts within the analysis of this thesis.

Discourse
The term discourse has come to have wide and varying use within the social sciences. Among sociolinguists and literary analysts, discourse tends to refer to the socially mediated use of linguistic exchanges within particular contexts and texts (see Sherzer 1987). In this study, the
use of the term discourse is more directly informed by the critique of social theory associated with French poststructuralists such as Michel Foucault. Here, then, the term discourse still refers broadly to communicative exchanges but its usage implies a refiguring of two terms it complements or replaces, namely culture and ideology (Abu-Lughod and Lutz 1990).

The poststructuralist use of the term discourse stands in contradistinction to the notion of culture as a cognitive abstraction (the structural approach); however, it goes further by providing a contrast to functionalist representations of culture as a coherent, uniform and timeless system. Foucault (1984) uses the term discourse to forge a link between ideas and material realities and social practices in order to explore the observed reality of contested meaning, contradiction, shifting power relations and change.

Discourse is also used in contradistinction to the term ideology. Historically associated with Marxist analysis, the term ideology has the virtue of being potentially pluralized within one culture and linked to historically situated groups. However, the concept of ideology proves analytically problematic because, through its association with the conceptual distinction between base and superstructure, it sets up a rather over-determined contrast between the realm of ideas and that of material or social reality. Even more problematically, ideology tends to be theoretically constructed as the possession, or tool, of one dominating group relative to another oppressed or exploited group; here it is presumed that an unmotivated and objective truth is available to a privileged class, or more commonly to the critical social scientist, while others remain in a state of 'false consciousness'. The use of the term discourse is thus an attempt to move away from the limitations of structural dualisms to facilitate investigation of the dynamic negotiation of power and the contestation of meaning within
situated social practices.

For Foucault, power is not locked within social structures but flows out through diffuse, all-pervasive networks—which include systems of surveillance, discipline and punishment that are supported by particular discursive formations—and come to penetrate the very embodied subjectivity of the individual (see especially, Foucault 1980). Although Foucault's work is based on post-Enlightenment European society, the principles of his analysis have been extended to this study particularly where consideration is given to discursive formations, local contested meanings, the active negotiation of power relations, and the local discursive construction of self and subjectivity.

Narrative
In this study, the use of the term narrative is largely informed by the work of Edward Bruner (1986a, 1986b). Bruner (1986a:18) suggests that narratives may be seen as "meaning-generating interpretive devices which frame the present within a hypothetical past and an anticipated future". He also suggests that narrative structures organize and give meaning to experience, and that narrative "expressions", or modes, provide a means of accessing the experience of others. This study actively draws upon these interpretations of narrative and narrative modes to further the analysis of 'cultural meanings' relating to fertility and childbearing, and 'the lived embodied experience of subjects themselves'.

Narrative modes or expressions may include stories, songs, poetry, rituals, dramas and all manner of aesthetic presentations and performances (Bruner 1986a). Each mode has its own structural properties, and one is not reducible to the other, nor does one mode replicate any other; nevertheless, there may be "a dynamic interplay between modes—each objectifies experience in its own way, each has different reflexive properties" (p.21). In this study, different narrative modes are investigated in order to access
different dimensions of gendered experience that relate directly and indirectly to reproduction. In particular, the stories, songs and ritual performances of men and women are compared and analysed.

The construction and expression of narrative modes involves the manipulation of culturally appropriate metaphors, leitmotifs and scenarios (for an explanation of the latter, see below). Like Fernandez (1986), I subscribe to the view that narrative construction involves the dynamic interplay of tropes. Moreover, in keeping with the ethnographic analysis of Fernandez (1986) —and in contradistinction to the analysis of Delaney (1991)— this study does not focus on a single underlying cultural metaphor, for in Gulmit it appeared that social actors drew upon a rich repertoire of significant metaphors and tropes in the construction and representation of narrative modes. It also seemed that, while these tropes were constantly refashioned and recombined in the interpretation of experience, the narrative construction generally involved the impression of coherence. Indeed, the use of metaphor was rarely arbitrary for it tended to create "more-inclusive classifications" that yielded "a sense of the integrity of things" (Bruner 1986a:20-21).

Each presentation of a narrative mode depends upon the context, the audience, and the conventions of the medium, however, while each retelling involves the transmission of shared cultural meanings, it is rarely an exact duplicate of the already told story; the story therefore becomes transformed and transformative (Bruner 1986a). In this study, then, narrativity is used to provide a window into processes of cultural continuity and change. In particular, it will be used to explore local responses to the recent provision of a family planning service and the technological innovation of modern contraception.

In this study, two principal levels of narrative construction
will be considered. The first level is referred to as meta, or dominant narrative, and the second level is referred to as micro narrative, and includes personal narratives and narratives of the self.

Meta (dominant) narratives are described by Bruner (1986a:18-19) as "guiding paradigms" and as "major interpretive devices to organize and communicate experience" which remain largely unexamined until a new phase of history calls them into question. Bruner's reference to dominance makes the point that such narratives are emergent from, and implicated in, relations of differential power. In Foucaultian terms, meta narratives may also be seen as 'discursive formations' that inform the formation of social institutions while being implicated in the embodied subjectivity of social actors themselves. This study will give particular consideration to the colonial meta narrative of Orientalism, and trace continuities between this and contemporary discourses of development and population control. Within the context of Gulmit, the meta narrative of Islam will also be shown to be implicated in the interpretation and experience of reproduction.

Central to this study is the premise that cultures are always in production and that people are active agents in this historical process. Indeed, it has been suggested that cultural transmission, change and continuity all occur simultaneously in the experiences and representations of social life. Micro narratives engage with this theme and refer, most fundamentally, to the story of self told to the self in order to make sense of, and actively produce, a meaningful social world. In practice however, the story of self may be difficult to access, even for the subject themselves (Phillips 1994). Consequently, in this study the term micro narrative is extended to include personal narratives, that is, versions of the story of self expressed through a variety of narrative modes (which are themselves mediated by context, audience and the medium itself). There
is acknowledgement, then, that personal narratives may only yield a version of the story of self, however, as Goffman (1959) has demonstrated, sustained social interaction often depends on a degree of coherence and consistency between such versions.

As suggested above, micro narratives are considered to be constantly shaped by experience. Indeed, experience and narrative expression may be regarded as dialectically related within what Dilthey (1976) describes as a 'hermeneutic circle': "Our knowledge of what is given in experience is extended through the interpretations of the objectifications of life and their interpretation, in turn, is only made possible by plumbing the depths of subjective experience" (1976:195). However, the interpretation of experience is also dialectically and dialogically related to discourse, for as Bruner (1986b:146) suggests "we abstract the story from discourse, but once abstracted the model serves as a model for future discourse" (p.146). Once again then, the link is made, through discourse, with contested meaning and power relations, and Chapters 8 and 9 of this study give particular attention to how micro narratives of lived experience are situated within, and emergent from, dynamic relations of differential power.

It is necessary to emphasise that, in this study, narratives of the self are not regarded as simply conceptual constructions, rather they are seen as being actively experienced and embodied. Several studies in a variety of cultural settings (eg. Kapferer 1983, Good 1994, Phillips 1994) provide support for this position by demonstrating that a dysfunctional or incoherent narrative of the self can lead to physical symptoms that range from anxiety to profoundly debilitating illness. This theme will be developed in Chapter 9 of this thesis where the relationship between micro narratives and the experienced physical side-effects of contraception and contraceptive surgery will be explored.

In presenting this study, it is of course acknowledged that
the ethnographic text is itself a narrative construction that depends on the establishment of authority and authenticity (Atkinson 1990, Rosaldo 1986) and is frequently shaped by prevailing cultural allegories (Clifford 1986b) and dominant narratives of the 'West' (Bruner 1986b).23 Like other forms of narrative construction, the ethnographic text is dialogically related to discourse although, like other academic texts, it is perhaps more formally involved in its production. Similarly, the construction of the ethnographic narrative is implicated in the enactment, as well as, the challenging of prevailing power relations (Clifford 1986a). But, of course, the entire process of producing the ethnographic text is also filtered through (historically-specific) narratives of the self. Not only does the author's narrative of self shape the text but, as Bruner (1986:151) observes, "we choose those informants whose narratives are most compatible with our own - just as, I am sure, informants select their favourite anthropologists based on the same criterion of compatibility." In this regard, the ethnographic text can ultimately be said to be co-authored by anthropologist and (selected) informants alike.

The production of this study, rests on a reflexive awareness of at least some of these processes at work.24 An attempt

23With the emergence of 'indigenous scholars', the authority and epistemological basis of Western anthropology is increasingly challenged. What has long been considered as "etic", non culture-bound and objective has now been demonstrated to be "emic", essentialist, even Orientalist (see Said 1978, Turner 1981).

24I am very clear that anthropologists choose their fieldwork sites and subjects of study for a reason, and I have no doubt that issues and themes that concern me personally surreptitiously find their way into my analysis. Although this thesis attempts to give expression to the voices of others, it remains my position that the voice of the principal narrator is itself neither solitary nor unitary, for it is already filled with the voices of others. And, in the end, it is surely a mistake to become so self-conscious that one becomes incapable of telling the story, of participating in the conversation. In the end, ethnography requires a leap of faith for, as Robert Desjarlais (1992:253) suggests, ethnography's understanding is born of an uncertain dialogue between both individuals and cultural traditions,
has therefore been made to situate the author as researcher and to critically examine some of the dominant narratives that, historically, have informed occidental representations of the research region, and may continue to shape analysis (Chapter 2).

Scenarios
Sherry Ortner (1989:60) helpfully defines (cultural) scenarios as, "preorganized schemes of action, symbolic programs for the staging and playing out of standard social interactions in a particular culture." The concept of the cultural scenario has also appeared in a number of earlier anthropological texts, although terminology sometimes varies. Victor Turner (1974) suggested that "root metaphors" inform recurring dramas (such as martyrdom in Christianity) in various religious traditions. Edward Shieffelin (1976) demonstrated how cultural scenarios of reciprocity and opposition among the Kaluli of New Guinea orders a range of social and ritual interactions. Meanwhile, Geertz (1980) and Sahlins (1981) have shown how cultural patterns of action, or what Sahlins calls "historical metaphors", can shape social action over long historical time frames and influence responses to historically novel social events.

Sherry Ortner's (1989) recent application of the concept is, then, a revival of an older analytical theme. In her study of the meaning of the founding of celibate Buddhist monasteries by the Sherpas of Nepal, Ortner demonstrates how key cultural scenarios or "schemas" inform the practice of monastery building. However, Ortner's analysis is ultimately contained within an opposition between structure and agency and, although she makes reference to embodied practices, she never really extends this concept to explain the corporeal phenomenon of celibacy.

and it is through such uncertainties that we may begin to know each other most.
In contrast, this analysis of fertility and childbearing places particular emphasis on the active 'incorporation' of cultural scenarios that may inform embodied personal narratives. Unlike Ortner's analysis, no single dominant or key scenario is identified, rather it is suggested that enduring cultural myths, stories, songs, -in short narrative modes- encode a repertoire of scenarios that may inform the interpretation of contemporary experience. Examples of Gulmiti cultural scenarios are found in Chapters 7 and 8 of this thesis.

Self

The study of personhood and self has long been of interest to anthropologists. Marcel Mauss (1924) was among the first theorists to analyze how notions of the self can vary cross-culturally. Later, Hallowell (1955:355) argued that social existence is a basic condition for the development of the sense of self, that is, the development of the self is "fundamentally dependent upon socially mediated experience in interaction with other persons".

Historically, anthropological analysis of the self has tended to be dominated by dualistic constructions. From Mauss to Marx, a distinction has tended to be drawn between the 'self' as self-aware ego, and the 'person' as a social category, or what Marx calls the "species-being". In recent years, this analytical distinction has proved increasingly problematic as empirical data suggests that the socially and culturally produced sense of self is generally mediated by notions of the social category of the person (Harre 1983).

A second dualism that pervades analysis of the self is the distinction between the egocentric and the sociocentric self. This particular opposition takes many forms: Louis Dumont (1970) sets up the distinction in terms of an opposition between the highly individuated subjects of modern capitalist societies who operate around shared values of equality and liberty, and those of precapitalist societies, such as India,
where the person is set within a "collective idea of man" (p.9) and is situated within a hierarchical universal order. Suk Choo Chang (1988:169) is more explicit in locating the "self as individual" in the Occident and the self as "integral with the whole" in the Orient. Other authors are less bound by geographical location but retain the essential dichotomy and the premise of cultural homogeny. Thus, Heelas (1981) refer to cultures where the locus of control or agency is situated within the self and those where the locus of control is outside or external to the self. Similarly, Schweder and Bourne's (1984) cross-cultural analysis ultimately yields two principal modes of looking at the relationship between the individual and society, namely, the "egocentric-contractual" mode and the "sociocentric-organic" mode. Again these dualisms prove analytically problematic for they cannot account for the multiple ethnographic examples (see Morris 1994) of autonomous individuality found in so-called non-Western societies. Furthermore, they cannot account for empirical observations that, within a single culture, essentialized notions of self may be modified by social categories such as class (Bernstein 1964) and gender (Howell & Melhuus 1993). Finally, to use a different critical language, these analytical constructions cannot contain observations that within a single culture notions of the self may be surrounded by contested meanings and counter discourses (in our own society, for example, 'individualistic' constructions of the self have historically been contested by the discourses of nineteenth century romanticism, Marxist socialism, and more recently, by discourses of environmentalism).

In the course of this thesis the term self embraces the possibility that different aspects or versions of the self may operate and be represented within one culture, or indeed one individual, and that these constructions may undergo transformations over time. For the purposes of this study, the self will be seen as "the center of narrative gravity" (Dennet 1991:49), and investigations of personal narratives
will facilitate examination of how different constructions and representations of social selves become emergent in different contexts.

Another point of departure for this thesis is the attempt to move beyond representations of the self as an abstraction or psychological category. In keeping with Merleau-Ponty it is acknowledged that the "transcendental immanence" of the ego is necessarily incarnate or embodied, and the body is the vehicle through which human beings "have a world" and "sustain communications with it" (see Schmidt 1985:42-43). In other words, this thesis attempts to move beyond Giddens' concept of agency, which tends to portray the self in terms of abstract, strategic thinking, and attempts instead to (quite literally) incorporate this within the notion of the embodied self.

Emotion
In recent years there has been increasing anthropological interest in emotions as constitutive of the self (Foucault 1980) while mediating social relations and relationships in diverse cultural settings (see Lynch 1990). The anthropological analysis of emotion tends to configure towards essentialism, which emphasises the psychobiological and universal aspects of human emotion (eg. Schachter & Singer 1962, Konner 1982), or constructionism, which emphasizes the relativistic and historically and culturally specific nature of emotions (eg. Myers 1986, Radden 1987). While essentialism addresses issues relating to the physicality of emotion, it tends to necessitate more introspective accounts that preclude the analysis of emotional exchanges and their role in interactions of social life. Conversely, the emphasis on constructionism can leave emotions seeming rather abstract and disembodied. Drawing upon the theoretical insights of Abu-Lughod and Lutz (1990), this thesis strives for a more integrated analysis which simultaneously draws out both the physically-grounded and socially-constructed aspects of emotional experience by
emphasising both "discourse of emotion" and "emotional discourse".

The thesis gives particular attention to the emotions of shame, honour, love and sorrow since these are distinctively elaborated within the cultural context of Gulmit. Consideration is given to how these emotions are interpreted and presented through management of the culturally-read sexed body, and how they become implicated in experiences of well-being, illness and reproductive health. Consideration is also given to how these emotions are implicated in the mediation and negotiation of historically-specific relations of differential power (for example, gender relations, interethnic and sectarian relations). In short, this thesis regards emotions as simultaneously embodied and socially-produced while being constitutive of the self in interaction with others.

**Embodiment**

Central to this thesis is the recognition that fertility and childbearing are likely to be as much about lived experiences of the body as they are about abstract theories of procreation, concepts, or symbolic representations; in short, they are likely to be as much about corporeality as they are about cognition (see Johnson 1987). By attending to processes of embodiment, as well as abstracted accounts and representations of informants, this thesis attempts to move towards a more integrated analysis.

In understanding the notion of embodiment, Bourdieu's description of the body hexis becomes a key concept informing analysis. Bourdieu (1977) describes body hexis as a set of body techniques or postures that are learned habits or deeply

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25 The work of Mark Johnson (1987) has been particularly influential in demonstrating that the "body is in the mind", and that metaphor, "image schemata" and conceptual mappings arise from physical experience while, at the same time, shaping physical experience itself.
ingrained dispositions that both reflect and reproduce the social relations that surround and constitute them. Bourdieu's analysis is particularly valuable in drawing our attention to the fact that some of the most profound, and often unquestioned, meanings and values that inform social life and the perceived 'natural' order are to be found in the kinaesthetics of daily life. However, for Bourdieu the significance of body hexis lies in its role in reproducing both conceptual and social structural relations, while 'practice' becomes action considered in relation to structure. In this thesis, embodiment - that is, active processes of incorporation - will be seen less in relation to structure and more in relation to the Foucaultian or poststructural notion of discourse. In as much as discourse is "culture in motion" (Ortner 1989:14), embodiment can be about activation, incorporation or resistance, and social and bodily practices can be as much about change, subversion and contested meanings as the perpetuation of the status quo (Butler 1990). In this sense, it is necessary to see embodiment, together with social and bodily practices, as implicated in the active construction of the conscious self relative to others.

Aesthetics
In this study, the use of the term aesthetics is largely informed by the work of Robert Desjarlais (1992). Desjarlais engages with the work of literary critics and philosophers of art, such as Richards 1952, Dewey 1980 and Kupfer 1983, to argue that a more subtle, and indeed a more sensate analysis, of the lived experience of cultural life may be achieved by tracing the continuities between the aesthetics of performative genres - such as ritual, dramatic presentations, dance and song - and those of everyday experience.

The strength of Desjarlais' argument lies in his recognition that metaphors, symbols and aesthetic values may touch the body as well as the mind, and that these may be mediated by class (cf. Bourdieu 1984) and other structural relations of
differential power. Unfortunately, however, Desjarlais gives little indication of how the prevailing cultural schema of aesthetic values may be mutable over time. In the course of this study, then, consideration is given to how aesthetic values undergo historical transformation while being socially differentiated and implicated in the negotiation of power.

Clifford Geertz (1973) has considered how, among the Balinese, high aesthetics (notions of grace, composure, "stage fright") shape behaviour. While Uni Wikan (1989) argues that in practice this behaviour is actually shaped by underlying health concerns, she fails to consider what, in turn, motivates these health concerns. Bateson's (1975) work on Bali potentially provides a bridge between the two positions, for he describes how kinaesthetic socialisation is implicated in physiological changes such as that associated with trance behaviour. In other words, these texts direct us towards the idea that embodied aesthetics may be implicated in experiences of well-being, even illness. Desjarlais, too, touches on this theme when he argues that even illness, suffering and pain—which might appear to be non-aesthetic phenomena (Kupfer 1983) are, in fact "always experienced and interpreted through a lens of aesthetic value; aesthetic sensibilities influence all moments of suffering, even if they lack coherence and completion" (p.68). Such themes become significant in this study when it is demonstrated that there is a degree of continuity between the prevailing historically-specific schema of aesthetic values and the ways that some Gulmiti women physically (and physiologically) manifest their response to the technological innovation of contraception.

To conclude this section, it is apparent that there is a degree of circularity and interdependence between all these conceptual terms. However, I suggest that what may actually be most significant about this study is the way they are brought together to further the analysis of fertility and childbearing in the Northern Areas of Pakistan.

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1.6 Thesis Outline

This thesis begins with ourselves. From the outset, it is necessary to acknowledge how Pakistan has hitherto figured in the collective imagination and historical representations of the 'West'. Chapter 2 of this thesis outlines the history of Pakistan's formation. But more significantly, it explores how Pakistan's eastern location relative to the West combines with its long history of invasions, incorporation into Empires and its Muslim identity, to produce the appeal of the Orient—that idealised place which, for the West, has long been associated with the exotic, the romantic, the spiritual and the irrational. The chapter demonstrates that northern Pakistan, in particular, has been a site where myths of Empire, especially the British Empire, have been created and perpetuated. A Shangrila of lofty Himalayan peaks that came to form a buffer zone between the lands of the British Raj and those of Imperial Russia, northern Pakistan was a land where Victorian heroes were made and adventures (such as those of Kipling's Kim) were imagined. It is argued however that, while constructions of the Orient emerge from post-Enlightenment essentialism, there are, nevertheless, continuities with contemporary discourses of development, and even population control. Yet, these discursive constructions also generate a polemic of occidentalism which, in turn, articulates resistance to the perceived incursions of modern life, of which family planning becomes part. It is suggested, however, that the gross essentialisms entailed are constantly being eroded by the realities of contemporary life and ongoing processes of globalisation.

Pakistan has had a population programme since the early 1960s. Chapter 3 presents a demographic profile of Pakistan and examines how these demographic data have become constructed as "a problem". The history of Pakistan's population programme is reviewed and it is demonstrated that the nature

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26The area was first referred to in terms of Shangrila in James Hilton's novel Lost Horizon (1933) (see Shaw & Shaw 1993:223)
of policies adopted, and the realities of their implementation, ultimately emerge from the complexities of international relations, shifting politico-economic discourse and the political manoeuvrings of individual power brokers operating within international, national and local arenas. The recent paradigm shift in population studies is shown to be emergent from, and woven into, the same processes. Yet, it remains significant because, for the first time, the women and men whose fertility is at stake, are regarded as subjects rather than as objects of policy. The need for a study of this kind, which attempts to access the perspectives of women and men, is thus once again established.

The analytical focus now moves to the fieldwork location proper. Chapters 4 of this thesis provides a general ethnographic description of the village of Gulmit. The geographic and social landscape is described, together with the historical, religious and ethnic background of the Wakhi people who inhabit the village. The contours of reproductive relations are mapped out through descriptions of marriage and kinship patterns, household composition and transforming social and economic relations. A discussion about land ownership and inheritance leads to a brief description of the relationship between local people and land, and shows how this can have implications for reproductive relations. In the course of this chapter it is shown that, in Gulmit, meanings and values associated with reproduction may be implicated in multiple, cross-cutting domains.

Having plotted something of the geographic, social and economic context of this study, Chapter 5 traces continuities between this context and cultural discourses of the sexed body. This chapter describes how, for the Gulmitique, the (gendered) mind, body and soul are an integrated entity situated within a hierarchical cosmological order that is itself constructed through the meta narrative of Islam. While the mind and body are considered to be ephemeral, the
soul is considered to be immortal and have continuities that extend beyond the bounds of the body to the realm of the spiritual and divine. The interdependency of the body and the soul means that things that effect the body have consequences for the soul and for eternal well-being. In Chapter 5, consideration is also given to how the Qur'anic metaphor of reproduction -which compares men to the seed and women to the soil- is elaborated by the Gulmitique and finds resonance with the aesthetics of daily life. Reference is also made to how the gender relations that surround reproduction become actively negotiated through management of the body relative to the cultural concepts of shame and honour. These themes are further developed through examination of embodied emotional discourses and discourses of emotion.

Chapter 6 of this thesis considers how cultural discourse of the sexed body (and related discourses of embodied emotion), in turn, inform the active construction of the geographical, social and economic environment. This chapter provides an account of the gendered organisation of space within the village and the house. The account is complemented by a description of the sexual division of labour over the course of the agricultural year; here too, consideration is given to how gender relations, together with rhythms and cycles of fertility, become actively embodied in an environment where much collective effort is devoted to making barren land fertile. Although cultural constructions of the sexed body clearly support the naturalisation and perpetuation of the sexual division of labour, Chapter 6 also shows how transformations in the social and economic environment can produce changes in the gendered organisation of both space and labour.

Having situated the culturally constructed female body,

27The argument is constructed in this way to show the interdependence of relationships. In reality, of course, these relationships are simultaneously mutually constructed.
consideration is now given to how life-cycle transformations of a woman's body relate to gender identity over time within a changing social and economic setting. Chapter 7 follows the female life course from birth, to maturation, marriage, pregnancy and childbirth, to menopause and death. This chapter examines how, over the course of the lifecycle, there is a movement from a state of relative androgyne and completeness (see Strathern 1993), to a state of heightened gender differentiation and 'incompleteness' in the reproductive years, and finally a return to a state of relative androgyne in old age. Throughout this chapter, metaphors and images alluding to a key cultural theme, namely the cyclical movements between inside and outside, are highlighted.

Chapter 8, examines further the meanings and values that local people themselves bring to reproduction and the gender relations that surround it. This chapter examines what these themes evoke, continuities of meaning, and how these may be different for men and women. The chapter also provides an analysis of Gulmit narratives, performances and symbolic representations to see how reproductive themes recur within the Gulmiti schema of aesthetic values, leitmotifs and scenarios. Chapter 8 is essentially a chapter of folktales, songs and personal narratives which reveal something of the cultural construction of personhood and self. Through analysis of local narrative modes, an attempt is made to discern what Gulmitis themselves have to tell, directly and indirectly, about their experience of gendered interpersonal relationships, and about having children.

Finally, the analytical spotlight returns to population policy. Chapter 9 examines the impact of population policy in Gulmit and the local history of service provision. By drawing upon data collected from structured and unstructured interviews, case studies and personal narratives, an attempt is made to understand something of why, in Gulmit, some individuals and couples use contraception to regulate their
fertility, and others do not. In particular, this chapter follows how fertility and childbearing become situated within narrative constructions of the self while making reference to the aesthetic values described in earlier chapters. Finally, some practical recommendations are made regarding the kinds of reproductive health services that might be most appropriate in Gulmit.

The concluding chapter of this thesis summarises the key findings, theoretical and methodological, of this study. The value of trying to move beyond the limits of our own essentialist and dualistic thinking is reiterated, as is the need to contextualize fertility and childbearing within a broader context. It is suggested that, in keeping with contemporary reproductive health approaches, it may be more helpful to regard processes whereby individuals and couples make reproductive health choices less in terms of rational, economistic planning (the usual demographic approach), and more in terms of narrative synthesis, that is, in terms of the interweaving of multiple themes and concerns that are embedded within a mutable schema of aesthetic values. Analysis of this kind may also provide insight into local constructions of the self relative to others and inform a more constructive dialogue around concepts such as human rights. Above all, this approach attempts to complement those of demography by engaging with the ways women and men themselves see their lives and reproductive health. In this respect, it is an approach which holds the possibility of transforming population growth from 'a problem' into an opportunity.
CHAPTER 2

PAKISTAN, THE ORIENT, AND MYTHS OF EMPIRE:
THE STORIES WE TELL Ourselves

2.1 Introduction

All historical work is concerned with breaking down time past, choosing among its chronological realities according to more or less conscious preferences and exclusions. Traditional history, with its concern for the short time span, for the individual and the event, has long accustomed us to the headlong, dramatic, breathless rush of its narrative. (Braudel 1980:27)

In order to begin the process of situating and interpreting the contemporary world of the Gulmitique, it is first necessary to construct a history of Pakistan and, more particularly, the Northern Areas of Pakistan. This chapter sets out to provide such a history. However, in accordance with the work of Fernand Braudel (1980), Pakistan's history will be considered less in terms of the discrete, bounded incidents of short time spans, and more in terms of the Longue Durée, that is, in terms of the longer view of continuities and pluralities of social time.

A review of the available literature reveals the extent to which Pakistan has been assimilated into European constructions of the Orient. During the 1970s, authors such as Edward Said (1978) began to challenge these constructions by questioning the idea that the Orient is "an inert fact of nature" (p.4). Said argued that the Orient is actually an abstraction, an "idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it reality

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28This position is a departure from that of more structural functionalist approaches which rejected history altogether in favour of synchronic analysis of social structure and function.
and presence in and for the West" (p.5). What is more, Said suggested, Orientalism—that is the study of the Orient—arises from a post-Enlightenment ontological and epistemological distinction that constructs the Orient as the contrasting 'Other' of the Occident, or West. Inden (1986) elaborated the critique further, making particular reference to the Indian subcontinent:

The discourse of the Orientalist, we have recently been told, presents itself as a form of knowledge that is both different from, and superior to, the knowledge that the Orientals have of themselves... the knowledge of the Orientalist, known nowadays as an 'area studies' specialist, appears as rational, logical, scientific, realistic and objective. The knowledge of the Orientals, by contrast, often seems irrational, illogical, unscientific, unrealistic, and subjective. The knowledge of the Orientalist is, therefore, privileged in relation to that of the Orientals and it invariably places itself in a relationship of intellectual dominance over that of the easterners. (Inden 1986:408)

In a more recent contribution, Dirks (1992) suggested that Orientalist constructions that represent the Orient as the naturally-determined world of religion and caste, effectively naturalize (and thereby legitimize) class, gender and race distinctions in Western society itself. Anthropologists, argued Dirks, have also been implicated in the process of constructing colonized lands as "a theater for the Enlightenment project" (p.6) and facilitating the multifaceted incursions of Western imperialism.29 For Dirks, the very notion of culture as the object of study, as characteristic and defining of the Other, emerged from the heart of an Enlightenment project which was both produced in, and supported by, colonialism.

29Dirks (1992) does not acknowledge that a number of anthropologists, such as Edmund Leach, actively resisted the appropriation of their data by the colonial authorities (see Grillo 1985).
Ironically perhaps, these critiques of Orientalism have a tendency to perpetuate the very essentialism that characterises orientalist texts themselves. Moreover, they frequently fail to acknowledge processes of active syncretization and resistance by 'Orientals' many of whom employed 'Western' notions of national integrity, self-determination and culture to justify and defend their claims to independence. This said, critiques of Orientalism do provide valuable insight into themes that may inform both historical and ethnographic constructions of the subcontinent.

This chapter begins with a brief overview of the history of Pakistan. Rather ambitiously perhaps, the first section scans several thousand years of history to identify some of the key events that have contributed to the emergence of a country characterised by ethnic, social and cultural diversity – a country which today struggles to unite itself as a coherent nation-state. This review also reveals how geopolitically and socially Pakistan came to bear all the characteristics necessary to become caught within the cast net of European Orientalism.

The next section of this chapter provides a more detailed account of the history of the Northern Areas of Pakistan. Again, key events contributing to the present situation are described, but attention is also given to textual sources themselves. Fictional, as well as non-fictional texts, are critically reviewed to explore how, in practice, the Northern Areas became a notable site of the British 'Enlightenment project'.

The concluding section of this chapter examines how orientalist themes continue to echo through our literary heritage and contemporary media images, and how they continue to find expression in the world of Realpolitik. But, it is argued, Orientalism has also generated a counter-discourse of Occidentalism that has come to play a part in the
contemporary world of politics and polemical exchanges, including those associated with population planning. Nevertheless, it is suggested that ongoing processes of globilisation effectively challenge the essentialisms of the past such that it becomes increasingly meaningless to talk about "oriental and occidental cultures as separate, autonomous or independent cultural regimes" (Turner 1994:9).

Finally, it is acknowledged that while the present is penetrated by the past (or at least stories of the past), the world of the present is significantly different from that of the past. In short, the world has changed. Today's world is characterised by high technology, processes of globalisation and multiple, cross-cutting discourses (Turner 1994). There is, therefore, a need to understand how social actors continue to make sense of this world and themselves in it. Of course, this thesis is principally concerned with how the Gulmitique actively make sense of their particular social environment, especially with regard to reproduction. Yet, our very interest in the reproduction of others is ultimately set within, and emergent from, wider debates about the 'population problem' and global sustainability. The historical events documented in this chapter underline the fact that, in the longer view, the very structuring of these debates and the policies that emerge from them, are situated within relationships that also have significant continuities with the past.

2.2 A Brief History of Pakistan
Pakistan extends from the mountains of the Hindu Kush and Karakorams in the north, to the Indus delta and the Arabian Sea in the south. To the west lies Iran and Afghanistan, to the north, the Commonwealth of Independent States and China, and to the east lies Kashmir and India. Since the first nomadic farmers settled on the fertile soils of the Indus Valley around 3500 BC, a succession of warring tribes, traders and Empire-builders have descended upon the area. While many of these groups entered the subcontinent via the
mountain passes of the north, others came from the west and the east. For this reason, Pakistan today consists of diverse ethnic groupings whose cultural heritage draws on influences from Arabia, Eurasia, India and China. Indeed, the national language Urdu is itself derived from an amalgamation of Hindi, Persian and Arabic.

The Harappan Civilisation of the Indus Valley reached its height between 2500 and 1500 BC. Archaeological remains indicate that Harappans were a people of relatively sophisticated urban settlements and efficient agricultural production. Decline of the Civilisation is thought to have resulted from erratic flooding of the Indus, which in turn caused catastrophic disruption to local production (Palmer 1990). Around 2000 and 1400 BC, Eurasian Aryans swept eastward from the west, but by 518 BC most of Pakistan had been incorporated into the Persian Empire and was ruled by the Archaemenian rulers of Iran. During this period, the northern principality of Gandhara gained notoriety as a centre of trade and art, while the town of Taxila became a major centre of learning.

In 327 BC, Alexander the Great extended his assault upon the Persian Empire by leading his army across the Hindu Kush and south along the Indus. By 305 BC, however, the Mauryan Empire had expanded west under the leadership of Chandragupta. Chandragupta's grandson, Ashoka, proved a benevolent and progressive ruler who brought unity to the Indian subcontinent. With Ashoka's death in 232 BC, the Mauryan Empire shrank back to the Ganges, and there followed a series of incursions from the Central Asia and China via the Hindu Kush. Bactrians, Sythians and Parthians invaders were followed, in the first century, by Kushans. Under Kushan rule, Buddhist missionaries were able to advance into the north of Pakistan and their influence can still be seen in numerous Buddhist statues and rock carvings found throughout the area.
Following periods of Persian rule, Guptan rule, and invasion by Huns from the north in the fifth century AD, the area came under the increasing control of Islamic Ommayid Empire which was ruled from Damascus. Muhammad Bin Qasim is attributed with bringing Islam to the region during his mission of proselytising and conquest around AD 711. By the end of the 10th century, however, the north of Pakistan had been incorporated into the expanding Turkish Empire which by the 13th century had extended east to the Ganges, despite repeated advances by the Mongol hordes led by Ghengiz Khan to the north.

The 16th and 17th centuries saw the rise of the Moghul Empire in which art, architecture and scholarship flourished. By the 18th century, the Moghul Empire too was in decline, and the Indian subcontinent came under increasing control of the British operating at first through the British East India Company. Following the Indian Mutiny of 1857, the company was dissolved and the British crown took over the administration of India. Throughout much of its rule, the British Raj was concerned to secure territorial boundaries to the north and east (in the areas now constituting the North West Frontier Province and Northern Areas of Pakistan) in order to prevent the advance of Imperial Russia. This period of complex political and military manoeuvrings became known as the 'Great Game'.

By the First World War, the British Empire itself began to show signs of decline. In 1947, Muhammad Ali Jinnah and his fellow representatives of the Muslim League, negotiated independence from Britain and partition from India and formed the new Islamic state of Pakistan. The bloody slaughters that accompanied Partition (see Collins and Lapierre 1977),

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30 During the 1930s, a small group of Muslims from north-west India who were studying at Cambridge University coined the name Pakistan from the words P (Panjab), A (Afghans), K (Kashmir), S (Sind) and "stan", the Persian suffix meaning land. The name also means "the land of the pure" in Urdu (Thomas 1990b:60).
were followed by a post-Independence history checkered by prolonged periods of political turmoil and social unrest. In 1971, East Pakistan seceded from West Pakistan to become Bangladesh following military intervention by India. In 1977, the populist leader Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was ousted, and subsequently executed, following a military coup led by General Zia ul-Haq. General Zia consolidated his power and won the support of much of the religious elite by introducing an intensive programme of Islamization, a programme which effectively heightened sectarian tensions. In 1988, General Zia was killed in a rather suspicious plane crash. Since then, attempts by successive democratically-elected governments to bring political and economic stability to this heterogeneous nation-state have been repeatedly frustrated. Indeed, political, economic, ethnic and sectarian tensions have seriously compromised the leadership of the present Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto (daughter of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto), and continue to manifest themselves in Mohajir (Indian refugee) agitation in Karachi and aggressive demands for the introduction of Sharia (Islamic Law) in the north-west of the country. Meanwhile, the civil war in Afghanistan continues to shape foreign policy and create the conditions for a massive, illegal trade in drugs and arms (The Guardian, 15 June 1996).

This overview of Pakistan's history is necessarily brief and superficial. Nevertheless, it does reveal something of the geo-political and historical significance of this area. For, Europeans, this land with its mountains, valleys and sacred rivers, its warring tribesmen, lost Empires and elaborate arts, has had all the ingredients to become "a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes" (Said 1978:1), an arena of the Orient. Central to this construction, too, is the presence of Islam which Kabbani (1986) and Rodinson (1988) suggest has gradually become integral to European representations of the Oriental 'Other'.

From the days of the Crusades, Islam has been constructed in
terms of ideological opposition to Christianity. However, by the 17th and 18th centuries, the Islamic world was increasingly represented in terms of the mystical and the exotic which, in the post-Enlightenment era, required objective description and analysis. Meanwhile, the Romantics of the 19th century conjured with images of the Arab, the Mogul, the Tartar, and the Turk to create a mythical world replete with scenes of glittering domed palaces, shadowy bazaars, turbans and hookahs, galloping horsemen, harems and veiled women. While Muslim women were imbued with the eroticism of Sherazade and the Arabian Nights, Muslim men were represented as being driven by grand passions, through images of the noble Saracen and the honourable Pathan (Kabbani 1986). By the turn of the century, these images of oriental Muslims permeated the art and literature of northern Europe, often constituting a silent backdrop against which European heroes played out their colonial dramas (Said 1993). Meanwhile, within the emerging social sciences, the oriental Muslim also became the object of study. As a people determined by religious belief, oriental Muslims were located within the evolution of human societies: For Marx, they were subsumed within the pre-capitalist Asiatic mode of production, while for Weber there was ultimately a fundamental incompatibility between the Muslim ideal-type and the development of rational capitalism (see Turner 1994).

The history of the Northern Areas of Pakistan will now be considered in more detail, with particular attention being given to orientalist themes as they appear in the available historical texts.

2.3 Tales of the Orient: The Northern Areas of Pakistan
The Northern Areas of Pakistan, including Hunza and Gojal (see Fig. 2), has long been of strategic interest to neighbouring powers. Among the invaders of the 10th century were the Europoid Shins who drove the native Burushaski speakers to Hunza, Nagyr and Yasin. Today the Shin language, Shina, remains the dominant language in the Gilgit area.
(Fussman 1989). During the 11th century, Mahmud of Ghazni invaded from Afghanistan winning the plains of Pakistan for Islam. From this time onwards, Islam spread into the Northern Areas. During the 11th century, Gilgit (now the regional capital) was part of the powerful independent stronghold of Dardistan, but gradually central power waned and Dardistan fragmented into a number of separate kingdoms, each speaking their own language and following their own customs, and each ruled by a king-like tham (later known as mirs). Throughout this period, frequent skirmishes and wars erupted between neighbouring kingdoms as they competed in raiding caravans and imposing taxes upon traders as they passed to and from China (Dani 1989, Shaw & Shaw 1993).

By the end of the 16th century, the entire area had converted to Islam. Sunni Islam was introduced to the area by Pathans traders as they migrated along the Indus River from Swat. Meanwhile, Shia Islam spread into the area from Kashmir in the east and, in the course of the 17th century, became established in Baltistan, Hunza and Nagyr. Around 1820, during a period of political unrest, the Mir of Hunza, Silum Khan III spent a period of exile in Badakshan (Northern Afghanistan) where he was converted to Sevener Shiism or Ismailiism by the religious pir, Shah Ardabil. Upon the Mir's return to Hunza, his subjects too were converted to the sect (Jettmar 1989).31

The Wakhi are likely to have moved into upper Hunza (Gojal) from the northern Pamirs during the 17th and 18th centuries as they fled from oppressive neighbours and Afghan warlords. Although initially ruled by their own Wakhi Mirs, their rule was eventually ended by a jealous Mir of Hunza who took

31Jettmar (1989:63) suggests that there may have been some initial conversions to Ismailiism in the area as early as the 14th century when a Badakshani prince known as Taj Moghal invaded in a campaign to impose adoption of the Ismaili faith. The precise factors contributing to the process of mass conversion are not recorded. A fuller account of Ismaili beliefs is given in Chapter 4.
control of Gojal. It is likely then that the Wakhi were also converted to Ismailiism along with other Hunzukuts in the 19th century.

It was during the 19th century, too, that the influence of British colonial rule began to be felt in the area. In 1846, the British granted the Rajah of Jammu, Gulab Singh, control of the territories of Kashmir, Ladakh, Baltistan and Gilgit, as a reward for his co-operation in troop movements to the Afghan border. Gulab Singh thus became the first Maharajah of Kashmir. However, as will become apparent shortly, the granting of this area to a Hindu rajah was to become a principal factor contributing to a dispute that is ongoing to this day (Thomas 1990a).

As British rule in India was consolidated, there was a growing interest in the uncharted territory that formed the north and north-west frontiers of British India. For many years, this area was considered too dangerous for exploration. In part, this was because the indigenous people had a reputation for extreme ferocity, and in part it was due to the obstructive activities of the Maharajah of Kashmir who sought to preserve his own political control of the territory (Keay 1990). Nevertheless, the Royal Geographic Society continued to foster scientific interest in the region and, by the end of the 1860s, the first European attempts to explore and investigate the area had begun.

One of the first Europeans to visit the area was G.W. Leitner, a linguistic scholar of German descent. Around 1866, Leitner was invited by the British to make a linguistic and ethnographic survey of the area. Leitner's book The Languages and Races of Dardistan was published in 1877 and was followed by The Hunza-Nagyr Handbook in 1889. Leitner passionately believed he had discovered a pocket of humanity which had been miraculously preserved in something approaching a state of nature (Keay 1990:38-39). For Leitner, Hunza was something of a paradise where the 'naive' inhabitants still believed in
fairies and the power of the ruling Mir to invoke the rain (Leitner 1889). For Leitner, too, it was possible that the Dards were the original Indo-Aryans and that study of their language and lifestyle could provide valuable insights into how other related groups thought and spoke. For this reason, Leitner pleaded with the British to leave the Dards alone so that they might remain the object of further scholarly study (see for example, Leitner 1889: Appendix I).32

The next European to investigate the area was a celebrated explorer of the Royal Geographical Society, George Hayward. Hayward reached Gilgit in 1869 hoping to cross the Darkot Pass in search of the source of the Oxus River. However, in 1870 he was murdered just outside Yasin by a (befriended) local leader Mir Wali, who seemingly coveted Hayward's valuable gifts.33 Hayward's murder (executed when he finally dozed after a sleepless night guarding against a rumoured attack) is said to have "inflamed the Victorian imagination" (Shaw & Shaw 1993:280) and was famously commemorated in Henry Newbolt's stirring poem, He Fell Among Thieves (see Keay 1990:57).

By 1870, there was growing concern that Imperial Russia would encroach upon British India via the mountain passes of the Pamirs. In 1874, the British Officer, John Biddulph, embarked on one of a series of "innocent-looking hunting trips" that were in fact secret missions to investigate possible northern approaches to the passes (Keay 1990:86). During the 1874 mission, Biddulph identified the low, green Baroghil Pass as a likely point of entry for the Russians. Biddulph's subsequent book Tribes of the Hindu Koosh is a

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32 Clifford (1986b) describes how ethnographic texts become informed by allegories of rescue or salvage, although Leitner's work might also be considered to be informed by the "biblical" or "classical" allegory of "origins" that is typical of nineteenth century texts.

33 Keay (1990) has found several inconsistencies in this official account of Hayward's murder and suspects there may have been a political cover-up to protect the Maharajah of Kashmir.
meticulous account of his ethnographic investigations largely completed in 1876. In this account, like many other academic and administrative texts of the period, social groupings at the periphery of Empire are referred to as "tribal", alluding to their apparent unruly nature, that is, to their propensity to resist colonial rule (see Beteille 1986).  

Biddulph himself became the first political agent in Gilgit, but the agency was forced to close in 1880 following an attack led by the Mir of Yasin. It was around this time that the historical period known as the 'Gilgit Game' began. The Gilgit Game was one arena within the wider 'Great Game', that is, the political episode which came to "obsess the minds and dictate the policies of those who ruled Asia" for much of the nineteenth century (Keay 1990:2). Although the term 'Great Game' was coined as early as the 1830s, it did not enter common usage until the 1870s. The term refers to the period of intrigue, subterfuge and out-manoeuvring that characterized relations between the British, the Russians and local people during a period when territorial boundaries were being established. Indeed, it was in the course of the more localised Gilgit Game that the most northerly boundaries of the British Empire were forged:  

A little over a century ago none of these frontiers came anywhere near one another. Gilgit itself was a far-flung, disaster-prone and run-down outpost of the Maharajahs of Kashmir. Beyond it, and on all sides save for a vulnerable supply line back to Kashmir, there stretched virgin territory. South to the Punjab of British India, west to Badakshan in Afghanistan, north to Tashkent in Russia and east to Sinkiang in China, this rectangular sea of mountains stretched for hundreds of all but impenetrable

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34 Such terminology persists in the area even today: It is frequently found in political and administrative documents while local people sometimes present themselves to tourists as "tribal people", suggesting that the term continues to play a part in discourses of local identity.
miles. The Gilgit Game is simply the story of how and by whom such a wilderness was explored and appropriated. (ibid: 1)

Suffice it to say that the available literature principally documents the achievements of the key British players in the Game. The most celebrated of these include William Lockhart, Francis Younghusband and Algernon Durand.

In 1885, Colonel William Lockhart mounted the British Mission to Dardistan using 300 mules laden with gifts (mostly beads) to appease and win the support of local people as the team continued the exploration and mapping of the mountain routes and passes. In 1887, the intrepid Francis Younghusband spent two years investigating and charting all the passes from Hunza to China and Chitral to Afghanistan providing the basis of the borders subsequently laid down by the British Boundary Commission. 35

In 1889, the Gilgit Agency was re-opened and a series of campaigns was undertaken to subdue the surrounding kingdoms. In 1891, the British invaded Hunza when the Mir indicated that he preferred to co-operate with the Russians. The British force was led by Colonel Algernon Durand and advanced to Nilt where a fierce three week battle ensued. Despite the extraordinary resistance of the poorly armed men of Hunza and Nagyr, the British, aided by a Nagyr prince, eventually prevailed. The Mir fled to Xinjinang in China as the British ransacked Baltit Fort in search of legendary treasure that

35 A recent biography by Patrick French (1994) asserts that despite Younghusband's reputation for being the archetypal Victorian hero, he was, in reality, something of a mystical, rather eccentric figure who subsequently came to be regarded as rather deranged. Having being spiritually moved by his experiences in the Himalayan mountains, it seems Younghusband came to believe in superior beings who inhabited other planets and communicated by ether waves. He also eschewed Victorian moral values and advocated free love. In his mid-seventies, Younghusband believed he and his mistress would have a "God-child" who would be even greater than Jesus Christ.
was never found. The British subsequently installed the Mir's brother, Muhammad Nazin Khan, as the new Mir and ally, thereby ensuring free passage to Kashgar in the north.

In 1893, the British drew a frontier between British India and Afghanistan. The resulting Durand Line (named after Algernon Durand's brother) cut straight through Pathan tribal territory and led to formation of the Afghan Wakhan Corridor, which also included many of the mountain grazing lands of the Wakhi.36

While Gilgit might appear to have been a far-flung outpost of the Empire, as Keay (1990:206) points out, it was also a much sought-after posting, for this was the land where honour, medals and military promotion could be won. The attraction of participation in the Great Game also lay, says Keay, in the popular discovery of cricket, football and tennis, for "suddenly everything became a game" (pp.1-2).37 In keeping with this fascination with gamesmanship, the local sport now known as polo became a favourite pastime of soldiers based in the area.38

The Gilgit Agency was, then, a key site in which the heroes of boy's adventure stories were made - adventure stories which, Martin Green (1980) suggests, became "the energizing myth of empire"(p.xi), the stories "England told itself as it went to sleep at night; and in the form of dreams,...charged England's will with the energy to go out into the world and explore, conquer and rule" (p.3). Thus, writes Green, historians and fiction-writers worked together to excite the English imagination, a complementarity which imparted

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36 There were subsequently many skirmishes along the Hunza-Chinese border but the current border was finally settled in 1963 with some loss of Wakhi grazing lands to the east of Shimshal.
38 This is an example of cultural accretion by the West, suggesting that the colonial relationship involved the acquisition, as well as the imposition, of new practices by Europe.
particular potency to the ideology of empire. Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*, largely set in what is now northern Pakistan, is a classic text in which historical themes became woven into a compelling tale of fiction.

*Kim* is the story of a young white boy, Kimball O'Hara. The orphaned son of an officer in the British Indian Army, Kim grows up in the bazaars of Lahore, but carries with him an amulet and some papers attesting to his origin. During his wanderings, Kim meets a saintly Tibetan monk who is in search of the River where he believes he will be cleansed of sin. The boy becomes the Lama's disciple and together they begin their adventurous travels through India. Eventually, Kim becomes involved in a British Secret Service plan to subvert a Russian-inspired conspiracy to stir up insurrection. He is used as a messenger between Mahbub Ali (an Afghan horse-dealer who works for the British), and Colonel Creighton, head of the Service and scholarly ethnographer. Thus, Kim becomes swept up in the Great Game and it is soon discovered that he is white and not an Indian as he appears. He is sent to school at St Xavier's where his education as a white boy is to be completed. However, Kim and the Lama continue to meet and they devise a plot to steal incriminating papers from Russian spies. At last, they are found out but, as a result, lose face with the British. Kim and the Lama become disconsolate and ill, however they are eventually healed by Kim's restorative reflections and renewed contact with the natural world:

And Mother Earth was as faithful as the Sahiba [the widow of Kulu, who has been tending Kim]. She breathed through him to restore the poise he had lost so long on a cot cut off from her good currents. His head lay powerless upon her breast, and his opened hands surrendered to her strength. The many-rooted tree above him, and even the

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39 Kantikar (1994), too, describes how stories of the British Empire introduced boys to an idealized, hegemonic masculinity associated with white racism, muscular Christianity and colonial power.
dead man-handled wood beside him, knew what he sought, as he himself did not know. Hour upon hour he lay deeper than sleep. (Kipling 1976:233)

Thus, drawing upon nurturing female images, Kim's 'natural' and 'civilised' self become reconciled and Kim is both healed and initiated into full manhood. The old Lama, too, understands that through Kim he has found his River. As the novel ends, Kim returns to the Great Game to play an active role in the British colonial service.

The story of Kim is thus replete with orientalist themes (Green 1980, Said 1993). The principal character is an orphaned boy whose natural abilities reveal his true origins but who, nevertheless, must be schooled in the refinements of an English gentleman. While he is also exposed to the wisdom of the Lama, this is always represented as spiritual rather than practical wisdom (Green 1980:271). We are shown, too, how Kim is able to manipulate knowledge, language and beliefs 'objectively' to his own ends in accordance with the skills of the perfect 'secret agent' (cf. Keay 1990:113). The novel is thus suffused with themes of gamesmanship and the "Boy's Own" ethic of adventuring heroes. This ethic was crystallized perhaps by a contemporary of Kipling, Baden-Powell, and his notions of 'boyology' in which these images fed "directly into a grand scheme of imperial authority culminating in the Boy Scout structure 'fortifying the wall of empire'" (Said 1993:166). Moreover, like the historical accounts of empire-building themselves, Kim is a tale which is "overwhelmingly male" (ibid:165). The key protagonists are all men; at best "women help things along: they buy you a ticket, they cook, they tend the ill, and they...molest men" (ibid). Yet, as we have seen, allusions may also be made to idealised images of the female as nurturing, natural mother.

Similarly, there are very few references to women in the available historical and ethnographic texts of the area. Officers' wives first arrived in the Gilgit Agency around
1897 but always seemed to be a silent, background presence (cf. Kantikar 1994:185). Local women are mentioned briefly in some ethnographic texts of the time largely through references to their colourful dress, ornaments and hair and role in marriage customs (see, for example, Biddulph 1977). By the 1930s, however, colonial wives were more established and in 1938 E.O. Lorimer, the wife of a distinguished linguistic scholar, David Lorimer, published her book Language Hunting in the Karakoram. The book is based on her informal research in Gilgit and Hunza when she accompanied her husband during his study tour of the area between 1934-35. E.O. Lorimer (her full name is not disclosed) begins her book with an apology, claiming that this non-fictional account is "not a serious book" (p.5) and refers serious-minded scholars to her husband's publications.40 Nevertheless, E.O. Lorimer's account, while more akin to a travelogue, does provide valuable descriptions of her visits with local women and the more 'female' domains of housing and housekeeping, harvesting, marriage and birth, as observed in 1934-35. Moreover, by adopting a suitably self-effacing style, E.O. Lorimer is able to tell us something of her own personal experiences, although she is not averse to a little sarcasm:

But I was pretty well occupied with the house and the nursery, with humble questions of clothes and linen, with keeping the "godowns" stocked with fuel, oil, food supplies and wine, with supervision of the servants, the household accounts, the entertainment of passing travellers, the occasional bursts of official hospitality entailed by Christmas, the King's birthday, the Annual Jalsa, with routine family correspondence and business letters of various kinds -the thousand and one distracting but essential jobs which are the natural work of what the Census reports describe as "the unoccupied woman": the mere

40David Lorimer's linguistic studies and ethnographic accounts have indeed become standard works on the area, particularly in the form of the revised ethnographies produced by Muller-Stellrecht (1980).
In accordance with her socially-mediated style, E.O. Lorimer tends to represent local people as quaint, charming, even child-like, and always delights in their friendliness and hospitality.

Lorimer's style contrasts rather markedly with that of a British Officer, Colonel R.C.F. Schomberg, whose writings were published around the same period. Schomberg's *Between the Oxus and the Indus* documents his travels throughout the region. While Schomberg's work also provides useful ethnographic and historical data, it becomes clear that seen through the eyes of a male, highly-disciplined, highly-rationalistic officer of the British Army, local people appeared to be "chicken-hearted louts" characterized by ignorance, idleness and rampant procreativity (Schomberg undated:92-93). Today, we may wince at such overtly racist language (while recognizing that it was written with intended humour for a particular audience), but what is significant, too, is that this material demonstrates how orientalist texts can also be mediated by gender.

In 1935, the British leased the Gilgit Agency back from the Maharajah of Kashmir. They built the Gilgit airport which today makes the area accessible to visiting officials, development workers and tourists. The Gilgit Scouts, a unit of 600 men, was also established at this time in order to guard against invasion and maintain peace. Recruitment was largely from among local men. The Scouts' bagpipe band, with its uniform of Black Watch Tartan, became renowned. One local story maintains that, in later years when the Indian air force attempted to bomb Gilgit (1947), they were deterred by the pipe band collecting on the airfield and playing as loudly as possible! Today, a number of local pipe-bands, including the Silver Jubilee Band in Gulmit, still don the

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41 Many of my older informants spoke of the Gilgit Scout Unit with great respect and recalled a number of their relatives who had served in it.
tartan to play at local festivals and celebrations. Towards the end of celebrations, the pipes are frequently dismantled to produce a sound more in keeping with the local music used for dancing. Here, then, artifacts that might initially appear to be products of cultural imperialism become transformed into products of cultural syncretisation.

With time, shifts in relative economic and political power coincided with a loss in the "legitimizing power of the narratives of Western emancipation and enlightenment" (Said 1993:67-68). Throughout the subcontinent, a growing ground swell of counter-discourses began to cohere into a narrative of resistance. As Said (ibid:68) puts it: "modernism is rediscovered in the former colonized, peripheral world, where resistance, the logic of daring, and various investigations of age-old tradition (al-Turath, in the Islamic world) together set the tone" (ibid:68).

So, by the end of the First World War, the counter-discourses of Islam were beginning to be reasserted. During the First World War, Britain had fought Turkey and the Turkish Sultan, who was generally regarded as the spiritual head of the Muslim World. Many South Asian Muslims interpreted this British response in terms of a Christian crusade against Islam (Thomas 1990a:59). Later, as Indian independence was being negotiated, the failure of the Hindu-dominated Congress to consider Muslim demands led Muhammad Ali Jinnah to seek a separate Muslim homeland. Jinnah was particularly influenced by the life and work of the modernist Turkish leader, Kemal Attaturk. Meanwhile Jinnah's ally, the poet-politician Dr Allama Muhammad Iqbal, played a growing role in mobilising pride in Islamic values and scholarship.

Independence was won in 1947, and British India was divided into Hindu-majority India and Muslim-majority Pakistan. However, at Partition, a problem arose over Kashmir, the Muslim-majority state ruled by a Hindu maharajah. Maharajah Hari Singh let the Independence Day accession deadline pass
without joining either Pakistan or India—an apparent bid for independence, or at least a favourable autonomy arrangement. Two weeks before the August 14th Independence Day, the political agent of Gilgit had handed over power to a new Kashmiri governor, Gansara Singh. Yet, as Gilgit waited, the Maharajah procrastinated (Shaw & Shaw 1993).

On 26th October, a Pathan army from North-West Frontier Province invaded Kashmir, declaring a jihad (holy war). Hari Singh fled to Delhi seeking help, agreeing to accede to India, subject to a plebiscite. Meanwhile, Gilgit declared itself an independent republic and later acceded to Pakistan. The Gilgit Scouts and the Muslim soldiers of the Kashmiri army then joined the war against India winning Baltistan for Pakistan.

The first war for Kashmir ended in January 1949 with a United Nations sponsored cease-fire. Pakistan retained the Northern Areas and Azad (Free) Kashmir, while India held the rest of Kashmir and Ladakh. However, today the post-colonial destiny of Kashmir remains unresolved and the cause of ongoing conflict between Pakistan and India. The plebiscite promised in 1947 was never held and Pakistan has resisted making the Northern Areas an official province of Pakistan lest this be construed as permanent acceptance of the cease-fire line. The Northern Areas of Pakistan thus remains "disputed territory" and a "federally administered area" with a disenfranchised population (ibid).

Despite the decline of the British Empire, myths of Hunza have persisted. The enduring image of Hunza as an oasis of tranquillity, contentment and purity owes much to James Hilton’s 1933 novel Lost Horizon in which Hunza is depicted as a blissful Shangrila (see Shaw & Shaw 1993:233). Meanwhile, the supposed miraculous longevity of the Hunzukuts was the claim of Swiss dietician Ralph Bircher who published Hunza, das Volk, das Kline Krankbert Keunt (Hunza—a People Untouched by Illness) in 1942. Despite never having visited
the area, Bircher attributed the phenomenon of longevity to a diet which he supposed consisted mostly of fruit and nuts. The myth was fuelled further by articles in Life magazine ('The Happy Land of Just Enough') and National Geographic ('Every Day is a Gift When You are Over 100') in 1971 (ibid). Meanwhile, in 1960, Allen Banik and Renee Taylor produced the book Hunza Land: The Fabulous Health and Youth Wonderland of the World based on Banik's (television sponsored) journey to Hunza to investigate the truth of the myth. The results were inconclusive, although Banik (an optometrist) did ascertain that the people he examined had perfect eyesight! Here again, then, we find echoes of a lost paradise, a distant land untouched by technology, pollution and all the drawbacks of modernity, a land high above the fray in the mountains of the Orient.

2.4 Concluding Comments: Orientalism and the Contemporary World

This chapter provides a background history of Pakistan and, more particularly, the Northern Areas of Pakistan. It has attempted to provide something of the perspective of the long time span and, more especially, the Longue Duree of a relationship (Braudel 1980). It is a relationship which establishes continuities with the present and draws in social pluralities; it is a relationship that binds together East and West.

In examining the available historical texts, it has been observed that representations of the region have hitherto been mediated by the constructions of Orientalism. While acknowledging that there may be many versions of European Orientalism (Turner 1994:5), it is notable that orientalist representations, in their broadest sense, continue to find purchase in the contemporary world. Orientalist images find particular expression, argue Said (1978b) and Ahmed (1992), in media representations of Muslims who, with the end of

42Said (1993:357) suggests that the Western media repeatedly presents Muslims as an homogeneous group who are collectively "intolerant,
the Cold War, are frequently constructed as antagonists of Western capitalism. Furthermore, it is clear that some continuity can be found between historical representations of the Orient and contemporary representations of the Third World within which the lands of the Orient and Islam have largely been subsumed. The very language used repeatedly constructs and reinforces the idea of another 'less-developed' 'world' in need of intervention and assistance to become more like the 'West'. Inden (1986) describes this relationship further:

Once his special knowledge enabled the Orientalist and his countrymen to gain trade concessions, conquer, colonize, rule, and punish in the East. Now it authorizes the area studies specialist and his colleagues in government and business to aid and advise, develop and modernize, arm and stabilize the countries of the so-called Third World. (Inden 1986:408)

In the post-colonial era, population control initiatives have frequently become part of the development packages financed by bilateral and multilateral donor agencies. Although, these initiatives emerge from a particular post-war environment (Chapters 1 & 3), it is also apparent that the 'First World's' concern about the reproductive activity of the 'Third World' may have certain continuities with its own Orientalist constructions of the past.

However, just as orientalist studies generated 'subaltern studies' and later 'cultural discourse studies' which were segregationist, 'medieval', fanatic, cruel (and) anti-women. Even as I write, the Guardian newspaper (June 15 1996:17-21) carries an extended article on the Taliban, a "fundamentalist militia" in war-torn Afghanistan. Once again, we are fed cliched images of brutish, hypocritical fanatics who trade in heroin to support their holy war, who hack the limbs of petty criminals and (incompetently) hang rebels. Meanwhile, women are merely described in terms of their burqas: "strange triangular tents" of "cheap rayon", "who view the world through a gauze that covers their eyes" (p.18).
concerned to "explore the problems of subjectivity and authenticity among social groups or cultures which are excluded from power" (Turner 1994:3), so counter-discourses have also emerged within international relations. Among many Muslims, this counter-discourse finds expression in what might be described as occidentalism, that is, in "a rejection of everything to do with the West and an implicit rejection of the legacy of modernisation" (ibid:7). Thus, argues Ahmed (1992), for many Muslims the term postmodernism has come to mean something rather different from the meanings generally evoked in the West:

If modern meant the pursuit of Western education, technology and industrialization in the first flush of the post-colonial period, postmodern would mean a reversion to traditional Muslim values and a rejection of modernism. This would generate an entire range of Muslim responses from politics to clothes to architecture...The application of the term thus assists us in better understanding the contemporaneous phase of Muslim history. In Muslim society postmodernism means...a shift to ethnic or Islamic identity (not necessarily the same thing and at times opposed to each other) as against an imported foreign or Western one (ibid:32).

Such perspectives are, of course, informed by the same kind of essentialism that originally fostered orientalism. Nevertheless, it is a perspective which carries considerable rhetorical clout, particularly when it becomes attached to the politics of 'fundamentalism'. Moreover, it is a perspective which finds outlets in multiple arenas. For

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43 Turner (1994) notes that in the 1980s these studies found resonance with similar themes in feminist studies.

44 Ahmed (1992) shows how essentialized orientalist and occidentalist stereotypes proliferate within respective media representations, and have effectively fuelled conflicts such as the Gulf War, the Rushdie affair, the BCCI affair and confrontations surrounding Libya's Colonel Gadhafi.
example, at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, representatives of Islamic nations united to challenge, and temporarily resist, what they perceived to be inherently 'Western' perspectives on sexuality and reproduction. Moreover, some Muslim leaders completely absented themselves from the conference because of the political sensitivity of this issue within their own countries (McIntosh & Finkle 1995). In short, the ideological constructions of orientalism and occidentalism still have currency and, it seems, may even penetrate domains of reproductive health.

Yet, as this historical review has demonstrated, power is never static and fixed, rather it shifts and flows, becomes pushed and pulled within the dynamic -sometimes violent-exchanges of human relations. Indeed, it is this 'post-structuralist' view of power that lies at the heart of the Foucaultian social philosophy that informed Said's original critique of Orientalism. Bryan Turner (1994) builds upon this conceptualisation of power to suggest that the oriental/occidental divide is constantly being challenged and broken down by the *habitus*, of contemporary existence. Today, as the multiple processes of globalisation penetrate our lives, it becomes increasingly apparent that the East is in the West and the West is in the East.45

For some, such as Giddens (1991, 1992) contemporary life is increasingly mediated by the dominant discourses of modernity, and its continuities in 'high modernity'. These discourses are characterised by an emphasis on the project of the self, the body46 and a degree of feminisation of human

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45For example, today, immigrants from the 'East' are established and active members of European society, while Japanese and South-east Asian industry plays an integral role within the European economy. Similarly, tourism, business and aid and trade relations mean that the West remains an integral part of the East. Meanwhile, the media, information technology and global communications fosters and supports multiple interconnections.

46See also, Susan Bordo (1993) Unbearable Weight for a feminist
Considerable evidence can be marshalled to support such analysis, indeed, I suggest, there are linkages to be made between these discourses of modernity, libertarian values of human rights and contemporary approaches to reproductive health. Yet, as Turner (1994) points out, Gidden's insight is flawed by a tendency to excessive periodisation which fails to acknowledge some important historical antecedents of modern phenomena. Noting certain historical continuities in European thought, Turner argues that what is most characteristic, and indeed most interesting, about contemporary life is its heterogeneity, its multiple discourses—old, new and emerging, its paradoxes and contradictions. In Turner's terms, we live in "a world characterised by an incomprehensible plethora of viewpoints, lifestyles, modes of discourse and opinions. In short, we are confronted by the postmodernism of polytheism" (pp.207-8).

It is an appreciation of this "postmodernism of polytheism" that lies at the heart of this thesis. Here, then, I am concerned to understand how Gulmiti women and men operating within a rapidly globalizing world, individually and collectively respond to the heterogeneity of multiple, historically-specific discourses, especially with respect to their own reproduction. It is likely that discourses of population control are likely to be a significant component of such an analysis. The next chapter is therefore devoted to a review of Pakistan's thirty year old population control programme, and the policies associated with it.

47 See also, Theodore Zeldin (1994), An Intimate History of Humanity for an analysis of how the quality of human communication, particularly between women and men, has changed historically.
CHAPTER 3

THE 'POPULATION PROBLEM' IN PAKISTAN:
THE POLITICS OF POLICY FORMATION

3.1 Introduction

Pakistan has one of the oldest and least successful population programmes in the world. Although much has been written about the programme's perceived lack of achievement in fertility reduction (see for example, Robinson et al. 1981, Sathar 1993), relatively little has been written about the broader context of policy formation (Khan 1994a). This, it seems, is a whole different story. Yet, it is one that reveals much about how policy is actually determined, about the agendas actually at stake.

In order to trace how political leaders, bureaucrats and government advisors have come to consider Pakistan's population as 'a problem', this chapter begins with a demographic profile of Pakistan. The chapter then chronicles how international donors, agencies and 'experts' have periodically stepped in to help solve the 'problem', each making recourse to a shared discourse of population control, yet each pursuing multiple agendas, some of which have had little to do with fertility regulation per se. As the history of Pakistan's population programme is reviewed, it becomes apparent that the nature of policies adopted, and the realities of their implementation, ultimately emerge from the instabilities of international relations, shifting politico-economic discourse, and the political manoeuvrings of individual power brokers operating within international, national and local arenas. The recent paradigm shift in population studies -which is only now beginning to shape policy formation- appears to be embedded in, and emergent from, the same processes. Yet, this particular paradigm shift is significant because, for the first time, the women and men whose fertility is at stake are being regarded as subjects, rather than as objects of policy.
3.2 Pakistan: A Demographic Profile\textsuperscript{48}

Pakistan's current population is estimated to be 112 million, with almost 70% of this population living in the rural areas. The population growth rate is among the highest in the world at around 3.0% per annum (see Table 1). Fertility rates remain high, although there has been a slight decline in recent years due to rising age of first marriage (Tables 2 & 4) and a modest increase in contraceptive use (PDHS 1990-91:xix).

Table 1: Population Size, Average Annual Growth Rate by Residence, Pakistan, 1951-1981.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census Year</th>
<th>1951</th>
<th>1961</th>
<th>1972</th>
<th>1981</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>6,019</td>
<td>9,655</td>
<td>16,594</td>
<td>23,841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>27,798</td>
<td>33,324</td>
<td>48,727</td>
<td>60,412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33,817</td>
<td>42,978</td>
<td>65,321</td>
<td>84,254</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source PDHS 1990-91.

Pakistani women currently have an average of 5.4 children by the end of their reproductive years (Table 2) and one third of all births occur within 24 months of the previous pregnancy. There are, however, significant differences in fertility depending on women's educational level: women with no formal education have an average of 5.7 children while women with at least some secondary education have an average of 3.6 children. Residence also has a small impact on fertility with urban women having an average of 4.7 children, compared to 5.6 children among rural women (Table 3).

\textsuperscript{48}This account draws upon the Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (PDHS) 1990-91.
Table 2: Trends in Total Fertility Rate, Pakistan 1975-1991

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Year</th>
<th>1975</th>
<th>1979-80</th>
<th>1984-85</th>
<th>1990-91</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total fertility rate</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source PDHS 1990-91.

Table 3: Fertility by Background Characteristics, Pakistan 1990-91

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Background characteristic</th>
<th>Total fertility rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total urban</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major city</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other city</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education level attended</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No education</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary +</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source PDHS 1990-91.

By the time women in Pakistan are in their mid-thirties, nearly 98% are married. The average age of first marriage has increased from age 17 years in 1951 to nearly 22 years in 1990-91 (Table 4). 63% of women are married to a blood relative: half of these are married to their first cousin and an additional 11% are married to their second cousin; consanguineous marriage is also more common in rural areas.
According to the Demographic and Health Survey (1990-91), Pakistani women say that, on average, the ideal number of children is 4, however, 60% say that their ideal number is up to Allah. While there is generally a preference for sons, 5% of married women who want another child would prefer a girl, and 46% say it would make no difference. 77% of married women know of at least one contraceptive method but only 45% know where modern contraception might be obtained. Husbands are equally knowledgable about modern contraceptive methods but are more likely to know of a source of supply. Contraceptive knowledge (and indeed use) is generally greater in urban areas. Although 21% of currently married women have used a contraceptive method at some time, only 12% are currently using any method. Of these, one quarter are using a "traditional method" such as periodic abstinence or withdrawal. Of modern methods, the most popular appears to be tubal ligation (sterilisation), with one third of female users choosing this option. The most common reason given by women for not using contraception is the desire for more children (43%) and "religious concerns" (13%).

In Pakistan, 16% of women have begun childbearing by 19 years of age, the figures being even higher in rural areas. There are about 5 maternal deaths per thousand live births, and around 70% of women receive no antenatal care whatsoever. 85% of babies are born at home, while only 36% of births are
attended by a trained person. Breastfeeding is the norm with 94% of babies starting out on the breast, and the median duration of breastfeeding being 20 months. Even in urban areas, the median duration of breastfeeding is over 1 year. Supplements are introduced from an early age however: 57% of babies receive supplements other than water before 2 months of age. Infant mortality rates are high at around 91 deaths per thousand live births, although both infant and child mortality rates have fallen significantly (43%) since the 1970s.

This demographic picture, characterised by high fertility rates, high infant mortality rates and low contraceptive prevalence rates, reflects what development planners and policy makers regard as Pakistan's enduring 'population problem'. While other South Asian countries such as India and Bangladesh have experienced considerable declines in fertility rates, the recent decline in Pakistan remains small and controversial (Sathar 1993). Moreover, there is now ongoing debate about "what went wrong" with Pakistan's thirty year old population programme (see Robinson et al. 1981). In order to engage with this question, let us now consider the history of population policy in Pakistan and plot the role played by the principal protagonists, namely, policy makers, international donors, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

3.3 A Review of Population Policy in Pakistan

The collection of demographic data and concern about rapid population growth rates in this part of South Asia dates back to the colonial era (Balchin et al. 1994). However, the first stirrings of a movement for family planning provision came in 1952 after Pakistan's Independence. Following representation by Begum Saeeda Waheed and fellow members of the All-Pakistan Women's Association (APWA) to the International Planned

49APWA was the first women's association in Pakistan. Founded in 1949 to mobilize care for the thousands of destitute refugees who arrived from India following Partition, its membership has tended to be drawn
Parenthood Federation (IPPF), the Family Planning Association of Pakistan (FPAP) was established. From the outset, a number of influential religious leaders, such as Maulana Maudoodi, condemned family planning programmes as un-Islamic. As for the political leaders of the day, they generally regarded such matters as too sensitive, for this was a time when it was considered "indelicate to talk of family planning in polite society" (Khan 1994a:3).

The turning point came, however, in 1959 when Pakistan's Sandhurst-educated military ruler Ayub Khan became convinced that the "menace of over-population" threatened the nation with a standard of living "little better than that of animals" (Pakistan Times, February 25, 1959). The National Board of Family Planning was subsequently established to advise on government policy. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Health and NGOs, such as FPAP, took shared responsibility for the training of personnel and the distribution of contraceptives.

In Ayub Khan's declared view, the population question was an issue of demographic and economic planning that had to be tackled in order to advance modernisation and development. However, it has been argued that General Ayub was "actually using the Malthusian scapegoat as a substitute for any substantial socio-economic reform programme" since his political authority depended more upon the support of the landed elite and monied business houses than on a popular or ideological mandate (Khan 1994a:7). Whatever his reasoning, General Ayub approached successive US administrations, from wives of politicians and prominent businessmen.

In 1956, Pakistan formally became a republic, but in 1958 the constitution was abrogated and martial law imposed under General Muhammad Ayub Khan, who was elected as president in 1960. Under his authoritarian rule, a vigorous land reform and economic development program was begun based on Gen. Ayub's philosophy of "democracy with discipline". However, the position of the poor deteriorated, and after disastrous riots in 1968 and 1969, Gen. Ayub resigned in favour of Gen. Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan.
focusing in particular on requests for supplies of the newly developed oral contraceptive pill: "You have to have some pill...let people eat it, and that should be the end of their activities" (July 15, 196? Dawn, cited in Khan 1994a:7).51

Under Eisenhower (1953-61) and Kennedy (1961-63), the US administration was reluctant to support state interference into the private domain of sexual activity. Moreover, in the immediate post-war years, interventions that contained any hint at eugenics were extremely politically sensitive (McNicoll 1994:401). By the mid-1960s, however, economic growth and higher per capita incomes had become the catchwords of progress and demographers argued that high fertility rates could seriously hamper a developing country's 'take-off' (see Rostow 1960), or transition, to a modern industrialised country. In this context, family planning services began to be seen as a relatively low-cost intervention that could have a direct impact on lowering birth rates.52 Ayub's argument that rapid population growth would undermine development and the effectiveness of other aid programmes thus began to strike a chord.

Under Lyndon Johnson's (1963-69) administration, the go ahead

51Developed during the 1950s and widely prescribed in the West from the early 1960s, the oral contraceptive pill was regarded by many as a "miracle pill" in the promotion of family planning. It effectively became a small but highly potent symbol of how scientific technology might be used to bring order, progress even harmony to the "planned" societies of the post-war world (Cream 1994).

52Towards the end of the 1950s, leading American demographers began to argue that the rates of population growth in poor countries, especially those in Asia, were not only far higher than those observed in industrialized countries during transition, but also originated from different causes. They questioned whether economic growth could occur in developing counties unless fertility rates were first reduced. A particularly influential study was the simulation project undertaken by Ansley Cole and Edgar Hoover (1958) to examine the impact of India's population growth on its economic development. This much-cited study suggested that lower fertility rates would be followed by measurable increases in per capita income over and above what might be obtained if fertility rates remained high (McIntosh and Finkle 1995:226-27).
was finally given for USAID to provide support for Pakistan's Family Planning initiative. Pakistan's Third Five Year Plan (1965-70) therefore outlined the country's first comprehensive Family Planning Scheme and was designed with the assistance of Population Council experts. The Scheme, which was a crash programme designed to have wide impact in the shortest time possible, focused on the training of personnel from provincial officers to traditional birth attendants. Political support and technical expertise were combined with an outpouring of financial aid particularly by the US:

There was a great show of money as well - population staff were enticed to join with salaries higher than other government employees, while USAID funding was the envy of other departments. Programme staff drove about in the rural areas in large white jeeps donated by USAID; this didn't help them to blend in well with the communities they were trying to access, nor were these left-hand drive vehicles considered the most sensible in a country of right-hand drive vehicles. (Khan 1994a:9)

After four years, however, it seemed that the Scheme's only tangible success was to raise awareness and knowledge about contraceptive availability (United Nations 1969). From the outset the Scheme was dogged by problems of implementation extending from poor administration, record-keeping and evaluation to over-ambitious targets (Robinson et al. 1981). Indeed, the bureaucratic legacy of this essentially supply-driven programme is still being felt today. Partly in response to the economic incentives set up by the Population Council, emphasis was placed on IUD insertions. However, poor follow-up led to misinformation and fears about contraceptive side-effects which also endure today (Khan 1994a:10).

53 Although the Population Council is regarded as a neutral research body its principal funders have included the American Ford and Rockefeller Foundations (see Caldwell & Caldwell 1986).
Following the disappointing results of the National Impact Survey (1968-69), some preliminary steps were taken to improve the Scheme. However, in 1969 Ayub Khan was overthrown by a popular movement constituted from the left-wing Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) and right-wing religious parties: "Intellectual and labourers together rejected Ayub Khan's crude adoption of western models of economic development, particularly because they had led to gross disparities in progress at home" (ibid:12). During the demonstrations against Ayub Khan, the family planning programme became symbolic of people's disillusionment with western 'modernizing' interventions and the crowds frequently mocked: "Family Planning for those who want free sex" and burned the programme's publicity hoardings (ibid).

In the ensuing years of political turmoil, East Pakistan seceded from West Pakistan to become Bangladesh and all social sector activities came to a standstill. In 1971, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's People's Party assumed power but faced economic crisis and the suspension of international assistance due to army atrocities in Bangladesh. Bhutto was caught between upholding a leftist non-aligned ideology and the need to re-establish Pakistan's credibility internationally. Pakistan's social sector had long depended upon donor funding and during the 1970s, the principal donor, USAID, was committed to population control both to promote progress and to maintain the conditions for social stability, yet Bhutto needed to distance himself from

54 The late 1960s was of course a period of political radicalization throughout the world as Third World nations struggled to establish their post-colonial identity in a world polarized by Cold War rivalry and conflict. This was also a time of burgeoning social radicalism within Europe and America characterised by the Civil Rights Movement, student marches and anti-Vietnam protests.

55 From the early post-war years, the US Military Assistance Program had been informed by the idea that lasting economic development prevented socialist revolution, and since rapid population growth presented a serious obstacle to economic development, it constituted a serious threat to American interests abroad (Donaldson 1990). By the
policies associated with the Ayub regime. In the end, the lure of US political and economic assistance prevailed, and in 1973 USAID agreed to resume economic assistance to Pakistan. A significant proportion of this aid went to a revised population programme, the 'Continuous Motivation Scheme' (CMS) and to a later additional initiative known as, 'Contraceptive Inundation'.

The continuous motivation approach to family planning was originally conceived by Pakistan's former Commissioner for Family Planning, Wajihuddin Ahmed. Wajihuddin had previously been involved in a cotton productivity programme and applied the ideas of technical innovation used in agricultural extension. The contraceptive inundation component was, however, entirely a USAID addition since its

late 1960s, the control of rapid population growth in developing countries was regarded as something of a priority by First World donors. Addressing the World Bank Board of Governors in 1969, World Bank President and former US Defence Secretary (1961-68), Robert McNamara declared: "The single greatest obstacle to the economic and social advancement of the majority of peoples in the underdeveloped world is rampant population growth" (quoted in Balchin et al. 1994:5).

Wajihuddin Ahmed was the Commissioner for Family Planning under General Yahya Khan, the military leader who succeeded Ayub Khan as President of Pakistan (1969-71). Wajihuddin devised and oversaw the Sialkot experiment which began in 1969 and was to become the basis of the CMS approach. This was a period when the concept of "targeting" informed multiple aid interventions and the techniques of measuring Couple Years of Protection (CYP) and Number of Births Averted were developed in the Pakistan setting with the help of Population Council advisors in order to evaluate target attainment (Robinson 1978). Wajihuddin's experiment based in the Sialkot District of the Punjab drew upon this approach and his experience of agricultural extension: "My concept was to make sure that whatever your material and communication inputs, they are given the widest possible extension. Then you have completed your part of the task - which is to bring family planning to the homes" (Wajihuddin cited in Khan 1994a:13). Technical, material and financial assistance for the Sialkot Experiment came from the John Hopkins University, the Population Council and USAID because, as Wajihuddin explains, there was by then a growing international debate about whether family planning activities could make a significant demographic impact. The Sialkot Experiment was designed to prove one side false (ibid).
experts—who included the imposing Reimert T. Ravenholt (see Donaldson 1990)—favoured a highly supply-oriented approach which involved flooding the country with condoms and oral contraceptive pills to ensure accessibility to all (Robinson et al 1981:87). The application of the approach must also be seen within the context of the ongoing international debate on family planning interventions which came to dominate proceedings at the 1974 Bucharest Conference on Population. At the conference, some experts (broadly those representing the nations of the North) considered fertility rates to be a function of contraceptive availability while others (broadly those affiliated to less developed countries of the South) saw fertility reduction as a function of a nation's complete socio-economic development (Finkle and Crane 1975).

By 1975, the Pakistan Fertility Survey showed that Pakistan's population programme was having no significant impact on fertility and population growth rates (Robinson et al., 1981:88). Meanwhile, CMS and Contraceptive Inundation proved fraught with difficulties. Evaluation reports—which saw population policy as essentially a planning and administrative exercise—criticised CMS for a number of logistical shortcomings. Of these, the most significant proved to be a failure to observe strict criteria in the selection of couple motivators and the privileging of PPP supporters for programme jobs, for both these failings brought the programme into disrepute and implied questionable moral and ethical integrity. Moreover, when AID found that large quantities of the contraceptive supplies were failing to reach distribution points because many of them only existed on paper, it too began to have misgivings about programme implementation and wasted resources (Robinson et al. 1981).

As a response a number of structural changes were set in motion. Among the most significant were measures to make the hitherto autonomous Population Planning Council a Division of the Ministry of Health. This measure, designed to target
resources and expertise more efficiently, contributed to a situation in which population planning was fast becoming an arena in which both politicians and civil servants competed to gain power and control of a sizeable budget.

Throughout 1970s, disillusionment with the modernizing projects of the competing world powers and their Cold War agendas continued to grow. In some quarters this disillusionment found expression in Islamic insurgency. For example, 1973 brought the Ramadam War and the Arab/OPEC oil embargo, and 1979 marked the Islamic revolution in Iran and the fall of the US-backed Shah, as well as the start of the Afghan jihad to liberate Afghanistan (Ahmed 1992). Meanwhile, within Pakistan, industrialists and middle-class traders in alliance with religious leaders, began to agitate against Bhutto's policies. In 1977, there was a military coup and General Zia-ul-Haq took power, subsequently overseeing the execution of Bhutto in 1979.

Zia consolidated his power by courting the support of the conservative middle-class and religious leaders and by making the Islamization of Pakistan the main plank of his political agenda. For three years after Zia came to power, the population programme came to a standstill, partly because Zia's right-wing constituency was traditionally opposed to birth control programmes and partly because the programme's field workers were suspected of being affiliated to Bhutto's PPP (Khan 1994a:21, Robinson et al. 1981). In 1979, the Islamization process resulted in the introduction of the Hudood Ordinances which are based on a highly orthodox interpretation of Islamic Law. These Ordinances made adultery, fornication and rape, crimes punishable by death;

57During the 1970s, a loose alliance of non-aligned states known as the Group of 77 (G77) took a leading role in attempting to bring about a New International Economic Order (NIEO) which would have meant a major transformation in the global economy and terms of trade. While united by a strong anti-colonial rhetoric, the alliance eventually became weakened and fragmented because economic resources and interests proved too diverse.
moreover, for each crime the onus of proof was considered to lie with the woman. Although the Ordinances have been the target of vigorous campaigning by women's activist movements, they remain in place today.

Between April 1976 and September 1978, AID assistance to Pakistan was suspended because of the US's concerns about Pakistan's nuclear programme. It was again suspended between 1979 and 1981 following the burning of the US Embassy in Islamabad. By 1980, however, Zia was beginning to show measured and discrete support for the population programme. Some say this was because he had, to some extent, consolidated his power base and was more open to progressive initiatives, others argue that, more significantly, a point of convergence was reached between Zia's political interests and those of Western donor agencies (Khan 1994a:23).

Following the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Pakistan was proving to be of increasing strategic importance to the US. General Zia, whose Islamicist policies had hitherto lost him favour with the White House, was once again regarded as an important US ally. At the same time, Zia's support for Afghan resistance gained him huge standing, and therefore useful influence, among other Islamic nations (Thomas 1990b:70). In 1985, USAID to Pakistan increased significantly with $73.4 million going to the population programme alone—this despite the somewhat cooled response of the Reagan (Republican) administration to population control programmes in general. Once again, funding was directed towards contraceptive supply, there were few conditionalities, and little attempt was made to engage with the more radical interventions being put in place under a UNFPA-backed initiative (Khan 1994a:25).

During the years that USAID assistance was suspended, Pakistan's population programme depended largely on funding
through UNFPA. In 1980, Zia had appointed Dr Attia Inayatullah (then President of FPAP) as senior advisor to the government on population. Under her direction, a new multi-sectoral strategy linking family planning to health education and women's development activities was developed. Meanwhile, the population division was moved from the Ministry of Health to the Ministry of Planning and Development to facilitate integration with other sectors. Finally, steps were taken to devolve responsibility for the programme's field activities to the provinces (Field Activities Act 1993) and CMS was finally disbanded. Everything was now in place for the launching of the new strategy of the Sixth Five Year Plan (1983-87) which emphasized defederalization, integration of health and family planning services, social marketing of contraceptives and special funding of NGOs, as major initiatives.

58 Although the US had temporarily withdrawn funding for Pakistan's population programme, it nevertheless had considerable influence within other agencies. For example, it was US influence which was instrumental in the setting up of the UN Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA); it was the US that persuaded the World Bank to see population growth as an economic concern and it was the US that influenced the World Health Organization to recognize rapid population growth as a legitimate health issue (McIntosh and Finkle 1995:239).

59 The latter was a timely component that coincided with the UN Decade for the Advancement of Women (1975-1985).

60 The themes of decentralisation and social marketing were in keeping with the structural adjustment policies advocated by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) from the 1980s. These in turn were informed by the monetarist economics of Milton Friedman's Chicago School which also informed the policies of the Reagan administration (1981-88) in the US and the Thatcher administration in the UK. Monetarist perspectives tend to eschew excessive state planning beyond maintaining free market conditions. In this context, US policy makers began to regard population growth rates as a "neutral phenomenon" (Finkle and Crane 1985). Within the scientific community, "revisionism" began to fracture the demographic consensus that had hitherto prevailed as evidence accumulated to suggest that there may be no direct correlation between population growth rates and economic development (Wilmoth & Ball 1992). Indeed, the 1984 UN conference on population in Mexico City was characterised by this rather fragmented, even "confused" state of affairs (Barzelatto 1994:7-8, see also Finkle and
In 1988, General Zia was killed in a plane crash. In 1989, Benazir Bhutto was elected to power as leader of the PPP on a mandate of democracy and federalism. As the daughter of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto — now popularly regarded as a martyr by the masses — her credibility was boosted considerably. Under Benazir's government some tentative steps were taken to further the integration of family planning and health services. Under pressure from the Council of Islamic Ideology, the Qisas and Diyat Ordinances were introduced to make abortion punishable as an act of murder. Following accusations of corruption, Benazir's government was brought down in 1990 and was succeeded (democratically) by the government of Nawaz Sharif and his Muslim League party. Discussions then began with the World Bank to explore how social sector programmes might be integrated and improved to alleviate the worst effects of economic structural adjustment.

In 1992, the Social Action Program (SAP) was

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61 Benazir Bhutto's election was significant because in 1988 she was the first woman prime minister in both Pakistan and the Islamic world. In Pakistan, media representations of the Bhutto lineage may be seen in terms of domestic politics writ large, with Benazir Bhutto's domestic motherhood finding resonance with her image as mother of the nation. Indeed, Benazir Bhutto is explicit that, for her, marriage and having children was as much a political move as a personal decision, for it was only in becoming a wife, and more significantly a mother, that she, as a woman, could consolidate her status and sustain credibility in the political world of men (Lamb 1991). Since being re-elected to power in 1993, attacks upon Benazir's authority have come from her brother, Murtaza (recently killed under suspicious circumstances), and her mother, Nusrat, both of whom made repeated recourse to the cultural meanings of sister relative to brother, and daughter relative to son, in order to make claims upon power. Meanwhile, challenges from other political opponents repeatedly allude to Benazir's cultural status as a woman. Here, then, at the level of the body politic (see Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987) we find the meanings and values surrounding womanhood constantly asserted, ascribed, contested or affirmed.

62 During the late 1980s, institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF had come under increasing international criticism for their harsh structural adjustment programmes which increased the plight of the poor and disadvantaged, and frequently provoked political unrest. In consequence, structural adjustment programmes have, in recent years,
launched with combined goals relating to population growth, water supply and sanitation, rural development and female education providing the main thrust of the integrated programme. Meanwhile, with the end of the Cold War and the republican agenda of the US administration, USAID announced the termination of social sector funding, citing Pakistan's nuclear programme and failure to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty as the principal reason for withdrawing direct assistance.63

Decentralisation and integration of health care and family planning services have been major components of SAP from the outset and measurable advances in these areas remain conditionalities for ongoing World Bank and UNFPA funding. In 1993, Benazir Bhutto was returned to power and, in a successful bid to secure Rs.30 million for the population programme from UNFPA, announced a crash programme to train 33,000 Lady Health Visitors (LHVs) to deliver family planning and basic health care at the village level. It remains unclear, however, how the activities of these LHVs will be co-coordinated with those of the 12,000 village-based family planning workers that are being trained for motivation and outreach as part of the SAP initiative.64 Meanwhile decentralisation and integration requires multiple levels of structural transformation, institutional reform and cumbersome budgetary transfers. More fundamentally, it requires a redistribution of power, control of financial

been somewhat tempered by social welfare measures (Freedman 1990, Guardian Weekly 9/4/95:12).

63McIntosh and Finkle (1995:231-32) suggest that in recent years US foreign policy and aid programmes have been influenced by a decline in its economic standing relative to other industrialized nations. Moreover, "with the fear of communism no longer providing an overriding imperative, prominent American political figures are questioning, more than at any previous time, the wisdom and ability of carrying the global responsibilities of former times". Consequently, the US is now encouraging its Western partners, through international institutions, to absorb a greater proportion of development assistance.

64Nyat Karim (FPAP Field Officer, Gilgit), interview with author, November 8, 1994)
resources and jobs, and continues to be obstructed by individuals and interest groups alike. While the World Bank is insistent that implementation of objectives must be met if further funding is to be forthcoming (World Bank 1993:9), it is by no means certain that this is practically possible within the time-frame envisaged (Khan 1994a).65

Meanwhile, the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo produced another watershed in the history of population programmes throughout the world. The very title of the conference was an indicator that population issues were now being seen in the context of sustainable development with implications for environmental sustainability. Furthermore, in the context of a more fragmented world order, NGOs and women's organisations (following the UN Decade for the Advancement of Women) have become more vociferous, and there was recognition that those who have been persistently excluded from policy planning were the users (in practice, mostly women) themselves. Significantly, the language of conference discourse shifted from an emphasis on population control and family planning to

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65 The fate of the Non-Government Organisations Coordinating Council (NGOCC) provides as example of the practical difficulties of decentralisation and integration. The NGOCC was established in 1985 as part of when the new multi-sectoral approach outlined in the Sixth Five Year Plan. It was conceived of as an umbrella organisation to oversee the distribution of funds to, and co-ordinate the activities of, NGOs involved in the provision of family planning services. The NGOCC depended, however, on the release of funds (donor and government allocations) via government institutions. Bureaucratic hold-ups and the institutional weaknesses of the NGOCC itself resulted in conflict over accountability and ultimate control of these funds, with accusations of corruption flying. Donor agencies intervened to try to bi-pass government bureaucracy and fund the NGOCC directly. Meanwhile, disagreements arose with larger population NGOs, such as FPAP, over the right of NGOCC to monitor their expenditure. In short, "the three main actors, government, donor, and NGO all had different visions for NGOCC and all needed to please their own constituents..." (Khan 1994a:37). Today, there remains considerable speculation about the sustainability of the Council as an institution.
an emphasis on human rights and integrated programmes of reproductive health. In an analysis of the Program of Action produced by the ICPD, McIntosh and Finkle (1995:227) explain:

The new model asserts that programs that are demographically driven, and are intended to act directly on fertility, are inherently coercive and abusive of women's rights to choose the number and timing of their children. Such programs should be replaced by others that "empower" women by increasing their educational levels, providing them with satisfying jobs, lightening their domestic responsibilities, and otherwise raising their status in the family and community. While family planning services should be provided, they should only be one element in comprehensive programs of reproductive health services, designed and managed with intensive inputs from women.

Pakistan was among the signatories to the Program of Action and it is likely that, if nothing else, the rhetoric of the reproductive health approach will seep into national programme documents. In Pakistan, however, Benazir Bhutto's political position is fragile, as indicated by the 1994 uprisings in NWFP and the ongoing unrest in Karachi (EIU 1994-95). In consequence, Prime Minister Bhutto cannot afford to alienate the religious factions. Ms Bhutto's rather cautious contribution to ICPD was therefore highly measured in political terms, even though genuine moral misgivings were expressed.66 While the Muslim leaders of

66The difficulty of Ms Bhutto's position becomes apparent from press cuttings of the time. Consider Farhatullah Babar's contribution to The News (4/9/94:3):

After much debate and dithering Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto leaves today for Cairo to participate in the UN population moot. The obscurantists have threatened her with dire consequences. Professor Ghalfoor threatens that "whosoever goes to the conference will not return home." The JUI faithfuls have forewarned the imminent "wrath of Allah" befalling this country. The Jamaat has observed Friday, the day of prayers, as a black day denouncing the
some countries (Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Sudan) judged it inexpedient to participate in the conference at all, others, such as the representatives of Pakistan, formed a rather curious alliance with the Vatican over abortion and contraceptive interventions. However, the costs of alienation from the international donor community remain high, and as pressure was applied, the alliance was weakened. Nevertheless, the strategic posturing (though brief) had, once again, served its political purpose.

3.4 Concluding Comments
Examination of the history of Pakistan's population policy reveals that multiple meanings of reproduction have intermittently come into play. Indeed, the history of Pakistan's population programme may be seen in terms of contested meanings, and the processes whereby some meanings prevail and others become displaced. At times, policy makers have regarded reproduction and its regulation in terms of the private, the personal and the natural; more recently, they have been seen as matters of individual choice, and even of human rights. At other times, reproduction and its regulation have been seen as matters of state control and scientific

"immoral" moot as a revolt against the divine law. The opposition leader Mr Nawaz Sharif has refused to shake hands with an "obscene and immoral government". In the midst of all this thunder, however, Benazir Bhutto has embarked on the journey to Cairo.

Yet, a few weeks later, Anusheh Hussain and Zia Mian wrote the following in the magazine Newsline (October 1994:21),

But given that it was a conference on population, Bhutto skirted the core issue: sex. She talked about everything else -her dreams, the cold war, political architecture, the planet, women's banks, refugees and God -but sex only crept in when she told the world: "Our people...don't know what sex is, so they don't indulge in something that they don't know about." And as far as she was concerned they weren't going to know, because her government wanted nothing to do with imposing "adultery, abortion, sex education and other such matters," on the masses.
intervention; sometimes they have been regarded as matters of social stability, as well as global sustainability. As in many poorer countries, the regulation of reproduction has often been presented as a matter of development, something to be limited if the country is to move from the status of less developed country to that of more developed country; in this regard it is something to be negotiated. In Pakistan, reproduction has even become linked to issues of national security and military might.

At times, the regulation of reproduction is translated into the economic language of supply and demand. Sometimes it is regarded as something to be targeted separately, sometimes as something to be integrated with other domains such as health, education, women's empowerment. Frequently, reproduction and its regulation become linked to ideas of management, control, strategic planning and scientific technology. But, these are often contested by recourse to ideas and meanings relating to nature, culture and religion. In the end, it seems that the precise meaning, or package of meanings that predominates in any one context at any one time ultimately depends on the prevailing balance of power (see Treichler 1990:123).

This review of the history of population policy in Pakistan, reveals how, since the 1950s, population control became a global project which, while being expressed in the highly rationalistic language of policy planning, nevertheless articulated multiple and diverse power struggles. It is clear, moreover, that the interests and perspectives of international donors have frequently prevailed, for post-Independence Pakistan cannot afford to be alienated from the international community. Yet, while agencies such as USAID and UNFPA exercise influence financially and technically, they also exercise influence symbolically by legitimating population policies as a mark of nation-statehood. Nevertheless, in implementation, the most expertly-honed policies must be cast into the arena of Pakistan's domestic politics, where they fall prey to the manoeuvrings of
politicians and administrators who must struggle to maintain their own power base within a political environment characterised by instability and uncertainty. This is not to say that some of these politicians and administrators are not well-intentioned, rather it is to make the point that Pakistan is a country caught up in its own problems of national identity, inter-ethnic and sectarian tension, economic fragility and political rivalry.

In recent years, however, there has been a very significant reconfiguration of the field of power wherein population policy is beginning to be radically rethought. The fragmenting of the dominant world order, the abating of Cold War imperatives combined with discursive shifts in multiple domains, have created the possibility for the meanings and perspectives of NGOs, women's movements, human rights activists and service providers to come to the fore. Their combined voice challenges the analytical constructions that have hitherto prevailed and declares that there needs to be consideration for "the woman not (just) the womb" (Balchin 1994:3), for people not just numbers, for reproductive rights not just population control. What is more, at the heart of this critique is a radical rethinking of a principle that has remained unquestioned for more than three decades, namely that: population planning = family planning = fertility control (see Balchin 1994, Sen 1994). At last, analysts are beginning to recognise that the issues that inform the construction of the population 'problem' at the macro level may not be the same as those that inform the reproductive behaviour of social actors within the micro contexts of their lives.

While recognising, that this apparent inversion of power relations may be little more than reconfiguration, and that there is, as yet, little evidence of major structural change, it is surely positive that rhetoric at least acknowledges the perspective of the human agents for whom policy is ostensibly designed, and that these human agents are, at last, being
considered as active 'subjects' rather than as passive 'objects' of policy.

Given the apparent sea-change in current thinking, it seems likely, too, that the more process-oriented approaches of anthropology which attempt to integrate micro and macro levels of analyses, may now have a significant role to play. As argued in Chapter 1, anthropology provides a potential theoretical framework and research methodology for investigating the active construction of meaning and embodied experience of social actors themselves within the dynamic, historically-specific context of their lives.

Having reflexively considered some of the main issues that contribute to the macro level context of this study, the next chapter moves towards a more micro level of investigation. Within the chosen fieldwork location of Gulmit, the process of mapping local meanings and values ascribed to reproduction within a specific historical, geographic and social setting, is begun.
CHAPTER 4

GULMIT:
VILLAGE, LAND AND PEOPLE

4.1 Introduction

The uniqueness of each village is felt as soon as one enters -an elusive quality that invades one's senses and colors one's perceptions. It is carried by sounds of dogs or machinery, the scent of the igde (oleaster) or a stand of graceful kavak (poplar), airy home to hundreds of twittering sparrows. It is evident in the structure and upkeep of the houses, in the posture of the people and the faces they turn toward you. It is all these and more. It is nothing tangible, nothing one can name or point to, but a sense of place that seeps through the senses and makes itself felt.

(Delaney, 1991:201)

The village of Gulmit has a population of 1,949 persons and lies in the Gojal (upper Hunza) region of north-east of Pakistan, close to the borders with Afghanistan, China and Kashmir (see Figs.1&2). In recent years, economic transition in China and, to some extent, in the Commonwealth of Independent States to the north, has combined with infrastructural development and the activities non-governmental organisations -such as those associated with the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF)- to produce a period of rapid social and economic transformation throughout the region. Yet, despite more than two decades of development activity and significant economic growth, regional population growth rates have remained high and there is little evidence of a 'fertility transition'. Indeed, the Family Planning Association of Pakistan (FPAP) estimates that the regional population growth rate (1994) could be as high as 4.1% p.a., although this is based on census figures that have not been

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Based on figures of the local Ismaili Council, December 1992.
updated since 1981. What is more, Gulmit village has had a staffed family planning clinic since 1992, yet the contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR) among currently married women of reproductive age has remained low: FPAP records indicate that, in 1994, the CPR in Gulmit was about 5.5%, compared to a national average of around 12% (PDHS 1990-91).

It seemed, then, that Gulmit village was a particularly suitable location for an anthropological study which aims to complement demographically-oriented approaches by investigating fertility within its broader historical, social and economic context, while attending to the perceived meanings and concerns local women and men bring to the management of their own reproduction.

This chapter provides a general ethnographic description of Gulmit village. The geographic and social landscape is first described, and this is followed by an account of the ethnic and religious background of the indigenous Wakhi. In this chapter, I begin to examine the specific ways in which land and landscape become integral to individual and collective identity; I also begin to map out the contours of reproductive relations through descriptions of marriage and kinship patterns, and household composition. Throughout the chapter, attention is given to ongoing transformations in social and economic relations.

And yet, this chapter provides more than just ethnographic background. More importantly, it presents something of the context in which reproductive meanings and practices are actively produced, embodied, interpreted, and sometimes contested. It is argued that in Gulmit, at least, reproduction cannot easily be studied in terms of a discrete conceptual or experiential domain, for its meanings are implicated in, and shaped by, a multiplicity of discursive

Aga Khan Health Service (1993) data suggests that, in the Hunza area, the total fertility rate is likely to be around the national average of 5.4 children per woman.
themes that inform daily life.

4.2 Gulmit Village: The Location.
Gulmit lies at a height of 2,400m (7,900 ft.) above sea level. It is surrounded by mountains that rise almost vertically into the craggy batholithic peaks that are characteristic of the region. Typically, these peaks reach a height of between 7,284 and 7,785m around Gulmit, but some 160km to the southeast, K2 rises from the Karakoram Range to soar to a height of 8,611m (28,250 ft.) above sea level. The Karakoram Range is part of the Himalayan mountain system which extends from the Hindu Kush in the West, and sweeps round through Kashmir to join the Plateau of Tibet and the Himalayas proper in the southeast. The Khunjerab Pass, approximately 95km to the northeast of Gulmit, is the principal overland route into China and lies at a height of 4,733m (15,528 ft.) above sea level. Further to the north, the mountains and plateaus of the Pamirs—the traditional pasture lands of the Wakhi—sweep east-west through the Wakhan Corridor of Afghanistan and north into Tajikistan. Gulmit village, and indeed the whole of the Hunza Valley, lies in the rain shadow of these northerly Pamirs and is hardly touched by the monsoon rains from the south; precipitation rates are therefore low at around 145mm per annum. Nevertheless, the mountain peaks around Gulmit are shrouded in snow from November until April. From May, the snow melts rapidly causing the mountain streams and waterfalls to swell, and verdant mountain pastures to appear on the high plateaus.

Situated on a wide plain above the Hunza River, Gulmit village extends to the foothills of the Karakoram Mountains and the base of the Shtuber Glacier. This glacier, together with the Gulmit Glacier a little to the north, forms the principle source of irrigation water for the village. During
the summer, torrents of silted meltwater rush from the base of the glacier and tumble to the river below.\textsuperscript{69} During the winter, these tributaries are reduced to the barest trickle as the glacial waters freeze once more and the Hunza River shrinks to a glistening thread winding south along an exposed valley floor.

In the summer, the sun rises high above the peaks producing temperatures of 25-38\degree C. When temperatures are at their highest, a blue haze ripples across the mountains and, as the day advances, the glow of the sun traces the contours of the higher peaks to the west. In the winter, the sun only rises above the mountains for a few hours a day before dipping behind the ridge to cast the valley into a gloomy chill; indeed, nighttime temperatures can fall as low as -15\degree C.

This seasonal play of the light upon the mountains is significant for it has come to form the basis of a local calendar used in the organization of agricultural labour (see Appendix I).

4.3 \textit{Landscape, History and Identity}

In Gulmit, the most distinctive peaks lie to the north towards Passu and are known as Karun Kuh (see Photo 1). Karun Kuh is characterised by stacks of pinnacles that rise like turrets of stone the valley floor. This view of Karun Kuh is considered unique to Gulmit and local men returning from travel often comment on their sense of nostalgia when first seeing these peaks from the bus. Indeed, it seems that the shapes, contours and sheer looming presence of the mountains around Gulmit play a significant role in the formation of local identity. Although the mountains are frequently regarded with awe, they are also referred to affectionately as a source of unique beauty and inspiration, as the following extract from a popular children's song shows:

\textsuperscript{69}Drowning, accidentally or as an act of suicide, is one of the principal causes of traumatic death in the village during the summer months.
KHUSHRUI GOJAL (Beautiful Gojal)

CHORUS
Lah, lah, lah, lai li lah...
My beautiful Gojal, how beautiful you are,
How beautiful you are.
In all the world there is no place like this.
Lah, lah, lah, lai li lah...
Red and green leaves make this land like a groom's chipan.70
The rivers fill with water from the mountain glaciers.
But the mountain feels shame,
A white veil71 is laid across its face.
But the mountain feels shame,
A white veil is laid across its face.

CHORUS

The people of this land are known for love and peace,
These virtues are among our customs.
There is peace and love throughout our land,
It is the peace of the mountain spring.
There is peace and love throughout our land
It is the peace of the mountain spring.

CHORUS

It is said that the very soil and water of the landscape contributes to the Gulmiti character, for every village or community is considered to have its own huk—a Persian word sometimes translated as soil, sometimes as water. In a group discussion, one elderly man explained the concept of huk by referring to the people of Chilas, a non-Ismaili community to the south:

70A chipan is a groom's shiny, multi-coloured wedding coat.
71The white veil alludes to the mountain snow. Note that the Wakhi word rui means both "face" and "mountain-side". Here, then, the mountain is represented metaphorically as a beautiful woman.
S.A.: "Yes, huk. Some say its due to the water. For example, the people of Chilas are always angry and if someone from here goes to Chilas they will develop the same habit.....But the huk will never change because the soil is always the same, the land is always the same. Huk comes especially from the water though. Everybody in a village -the men, the women, young, old- all have the same huk. It is like this: here we are gentle and polite, but on the Chilas side they are more hot-headed and aggressive."

Although villagers were not precise about how huk might pass into and between people, nevertheless, huk appeared to express a sense of relationship to the land, with land being presented as internalized and integral to the constitution of self and collective identity. Like the agrarian rhythms described in Chapter 6, huk appears to be actively embodied in Gulmit. Indeed, the concept of huk will prove significant in understanding local explanations of female infertility which sometimes allude to a bride's failure to adjust to the huk of her new marital home (Chapter 7).

Wakhi ethnic identity is also rooted in the history of more distant lands. The Wakhi are said to be of ancient Iranian stock from the Tajikistan region of Central Asia. They are speakers of Wakhi, an Indo-Iranian dialect sometimes referred to in the older literature as Galacha (Shahrani 1979:40). The terms Wakhi, or Wakhani, have also been used to refer to the indigenous population of Wakhan, an area of the Pamirs which became part of Afghanistan when the boundaries between Russia, Afghanistan, the British Indian Empire and China were laid down in 1895 (ibid. p.37). Today, the Gojali Wakhi often hark back to their origins in the Pamirs. Indeed, since the break-up of the Soviet Union, a number of Wakhi have begun working to re-establish links with the Wakhi of Tajikistan through the recently formed 'Wakhi-Tajik Cultural Society' (see below).
For centuries, the Wakhi of Wakhan were repeated victims of war and oppression as they became caught between more powerful neighbouring states and ongoing battles to control taxes, the local slave trade and commercial trade routes to Chinese Tashkurgan. Shahrani (1979) suggests that with the formation of the Wakhan Corridor in 1895, the Wakhi suffered persecution by Afghan Officials and loss of the benefits associated with passing trade caravans. As a result, they began to move south into what is now the Northern Areas of Pakistan during the early part of this century. Backstrom & Radloff (1992), too, suggest that the Wakhi of Gojal probably settled in the area around the beginning of the century. Oral histories and historical accounts of the Wakhi themselves somewhat contradict these views, however, for they suggest that Wakhi migration into Gojal occurred some centuries earlier.

Older Wakhi estimate, from their knowledge of historical stories, that the Wakhi came to Gojal around 300 years ago. Some say that Wakhi pastoralists entered upper Gojal and moved south towards the Burusho villages of Hunza; although some Wakhi may have become integrated into Burusho lineages, it is thought that most failed to settle and continued to look for new land. Oral history has it that Gulmit was founded by three Wakhi brothers, Mahmud, Choshimbi and Bori. Some older men say the name of the brothers' father was Azar Jimshid, an Iranian who travelled first to Gilgit and then to Central Hunza, others say the name of their principal ancestor as Mamu Singh or Sharel. The structural relationship between the lineages of Mahmud, Choshimbi and Bori will be described in the section on kinship below.

The following historical account was also related to me by a group of elderly men and suggests that the Wakhi were well-established in Gojal at least by the nineteenth century. The story tells of how the Wakhi Mir of Gojal was killed by the Mir of Hunza resulting in the Gojalis becoming subjects of the Burusho Mir of Hunza.
THE DEATH OF THE GREAT QUTLOG

It is said then that during the 1800s Gojal was ruled by the Wakhi Mir, Qutlog. Mir Qutlog was a descendant of Mahmud, the eldest of the three brothers who founded Gulmit. Qutlog was considered to have been a great Mir for he was responsible for the building of a long defense wall from Khyber to Chimungul and the once famous portal, Khyber Darvarza which was subsequently destroyed during the construction of the KKH. Qutlog ruled for 12 years.

One day, a visiting emissary of the Mir of Hunza observed Qutlog's abundant livestock and reported back to the Mir of Hunza suggesting that Qutlog was becoming more prosperous than he. The Mir of Hunza was alarmed and sent seven of his strongest men to kill Qutlog. When the men arrived in Gulmit, Qutlog received the men as honoured guests and he and his wife set about preparing a meal for them. In front of the men, Qutlog began to break wood for the fire. The wood was ksunadar, a very hard wood, but Qutlog was able to break the wood with his bare hands, and the splinters flew. The seven visitors were amazed and indeed were frightened by Qutlog's great strength. They made the excuse that they would sit outside because of the smoke, and then fled.

The Mir of Hunza was now very alarmed but an old lady from his court came forward and said she would take care of the matter. The woman arrived in Gulmit frail and in rags and Qutlog received her into his family home as his guest. The old woman took this opportunity to slip a deadly poison into the family's food and all of Qutlog's household died. Qutlog was not therefore defeated in battle, but by the trickery of an old lady who took advantage of his hospitality.

After the death of Qutlog, the Wakhi were ruled by the Mir of Hunza. Only two women were left from Qutlog's family, these were his pregnant daughter-in-law and granddaughter
who were away visiting when the poisoning occurred. Twelve children followed but the last descendant of the lineage, a woman, died around 1980. The land of the lineage has now passed to the Choshimbi line.

While this story is significant in suggesting that the habitation of Gulmit by the Wakhi took place some time before the available literature suggests, its narrative content provides valuable insight into the construction of collective identity. It is notable that the principle Wakhi protagonist, Qutlog, is characterised by supreme hospitality, a quality by which contemporary Wakhi actively strive to define themselves. There is a hint, too, of the very contemporary fear that, in welcoming outsiders, the Wakhi may bring about their own downfall. We also find reference to the origin of the ongoing interethnic tension between the Wakhi and the Burusho. Following the death of Qutlog, the Wakhi were ruled by successive Mirs of Hunza -it is said, extremely oppressively—until the rule of the Mirs was ended by Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1974. The story is also significant because, like many local stories of battles and struggles for power, it ends with the image of one remaining woman who, having escaped death, holds the possibility of continuing the lineage. Indeed, it appears that this theme forms a recurring narrative leitmotif that repeatedly forges a connection, if only subliminally, between reproduction and the continuity of the collectivity.

4.4 Religious Belief
The Wakhi are Ismaili Muslims, otherwise known as Sevener Shias. It is believed that the ancestry of their leader or Imam, the Aga Khan, can be traced back to the Prophet Muhammad himself, although the line of descent becomes rather convoluted in places. Ismaili Muslims may be differentiated from the larger Shia sect of 'Twelvers' in Iran by their belief that the rightful successor of the sixth Imam, Jafar al-Sadiq (d.765) was his eldest son, Ismail. Twelver Shia's claim Jafar al-Sadiq's youngest son was, in fact, the chosen
successor and continued to recognise his descendants until the mysterious disappearance of the twelfth Imam; the twelfth Imam is now considered to be in a state of occultation until the end of time when, it is said, he will return to restore justice and righteousness.

The history of the Ismaili sect is turbulent, and repeated persecution by other Muslim sects has resulted in the characteristic practices of taqiyya (dissimulation) (Daftary 1990). By the eighteenth century, however, Ismaili Imams had established themselves in south-eastern Iran where they began to accumulate wealth and gain political influence. Their status as local chiefs of Kirman was acknowledged by the Qajar Shahs who bestowed upon the Ismaili Imam, Hasan Ali Shah, the hereditary title of Aga Khan. However, in 1843, Hasan Ali Shah (Aga Khan I) was forced to flee to India to seek British protection.

Once in India, it became necessary for the Aga Khan to assert his authority over an Ismaili community that had become dispersed and fragmented. Indeed, Aga Khan I was able to establish his legitimacy by recourse to the British judicial system, one of the most famous occasions being the Great Khoja Case of 1866 (Shackle and Moir 1992). Upon his death, Aga Khan I was succeeded by Imam Ali Shah who died prematurely. Imam Sultan Muhammad Shah (1877-1957) became Aga Khan III and oversaw a period of systematisation of diverse Ismaili traditions and centralisation of authority. Aga Khan III also played a major part in the Muslim politics of British India and, indeed, won the respect of the British for his educated manners and relatively moderate attitudes (Daftary 1990). But, having established the distinctiveness of the Ismaili tradition through the British judiciary, Partition heralded the possibility of further division of Ismaili communities. It was therefore necessary to establish areas of commonality with other Muslims, particularly the Sunni majority of newly-created Pakistan: "Deprived like other minorities of the protection of an imperial power whose
interests had been well served by their separate identity, the Ismaili's distance from their fellow Muslims now appeared more of a liability in countries whose boundaries had been determined by communal allegiance. (Shackle and Moir 1992:10). The last years of Aga Khan III's reign were consequently marked by further reforms designed to align Ismailis more closely with their Sunni co-religionists, a trend that has been continued by his grandson and successor, the present Imam, Prince Karim Aga Khan IV.

The Ismailis of Hunza and Gojal are, therefore, a religious minority who, under the leadership of their esteemed Imam, seek to build alliances with other Muslim sects, who include, not only the Sunni majority, but also their close neighbours the Shias of Nagyr. Indeed, the Wakhi of Gulmit, make repeated reference to their desire to be respected as good Muslims by their neighbours. The way that this concern mediates their response to family planning services will be elaborated in Chapter 9.

Despite recent reforms, the organisation of Ismaili religious life differs in several respects from those associated with Sunni, or indeed, Shia Islam. Although, as for other Muslims, the Quran, and the Hadith are core doctrinal texts, the place of worship is not the mosque but the jamat kaana, that is a house of prayer and assembly for the community—women as well as men. Typically, the jamat kaana consists of a prayer hall, a courtyard and administrative offices and, in the Northern Areas at least, is characterised by distinctive green painted woodwork. Although Friday and standard Muslim holy days are observed, daily services differ from those associated with the five daily prayer-times of other Muslim sects. Instead, three prayer services are held (one in the morning, one the evening and one at night) and consist of the recitation of prayers and ginan (traditional hymns originally associated with Pirs and used for the transmission of the Ismaili tradition). Ginan are performed collectively by the congregation, or by accomplished
individuals who may be women or men. The most distinctive Ismaili ritual is the *ghat-pat* ceremony which involves the distribution of holy water (nowadays blessed by the Imam) from a pot (*ghat*) on a low wooden table (*pat*) in the centre of the prayer hall (see Nanji 1982). This ceremony is held daily before morning prayers and, on Fridays, before the evening prayer.

4.5 *Spatial Layout of the Village*

Gulmit village consists of eight neighbourhoods or *mahallas* which extend outwards from the central polo ground, the oldest part of the village (Fig. 3). The polo ground is the space where all public gatherings, festivals and religious celebrations occur. However, from day to day, the polo ground is essentially 'male' space where old men sit and muse and young men play soccer, volleyball and cricket (Photo 2).72

Just below the polo ground there are two hotels; around the polo ground itself, there are shop stalls, the Government Rest House, a privately-owned guest house, the Family Planning Clinic (established in Gulmit in 1992), the Aga Khan Girl's school (initially built as a Government Middle School for boys in 1974, and converted to a girl's school in 1986) and the Aga Khan Health Centre (established 1979 as a conversion of the old Mir's palace). Beside the jeep track, just above the polo ground, is the Government Health Clinic where a community doctor is based. This "hospital" was established in 1989 and replaced the government dispensary which was first located in Gulmit in 1954. Just behind the clinic is the entrance to the main *jamat kaana* and the Ismaili Council offices and library. Further along the jeep

72In the past, polo was a popular male sport in Gulmit, indeed, it was a sport of which local heroes were made. With the coming of the road and motorised transport, it soon proved uneconomic to keep the work-horses used for polo and the game had largely died out in Gulmit by the early 1980s. Nevertheless, further south around Gilgit, where fodder is easily available, the game continues to thrive.
track lies the small Government Primary School for Boys. Built in 1956 as part of a self-help project backed by the Aga Khan's Diamond Jubilee (DJ) Fund, this was the first school building in Gulmit. A little further along the jeep track is the newest school in Gulmit known as Al-Amyn. This small self-help school is co-educational English-medium school set up in response to the Aga Khan's recommendation that children should try to master English as an international language. Fees for this school are relatively high but even the poorest families in the village save hard in order to send at least one son there.

The mahallas that surround the polo ground do correspond very broadly to kinship groups but are in no way exclusive. In the past, land could be claimed by simply bringing new fields into production and extending the irrigation system. Indeed, irrigated tracts often bear the name of the forefather who constructed the irrigation channel to the area. The mahallas of Dirgelum, Adver and Kamaris follow the ascent up to Shtuber Glacier and lie along the course of the main irrigation channel. The mahalla of Goz skirts around the northern edge of the polo ground, follows the descent of the main irrigation channel down to the river and extends to the northern-most boundary of the village, just beyond Skothor (the main outflow from Gulmit Glacier). The southern end of the polo ground adjoins the mahalla of Lakhsh, which descends down to the Hunza River and extends south to Juchar, the main outflow from Shtuber Glacier. The area below the polo ground between Lakhsh and Goz, is referred to as Mengshi. Beyond Lakhsh, the mahalla of Chimungul (place of the flowers) extends to the southern-most boundary of the village (that is, the bridging point of the river), beyond which lies the village of Shishkat.

In Gulmit, the main concentration of houses lies around the polo ground at the centre of the village. Houses here are older and their entrances open directly onto the main footpaths (tingi). These houses are interspersed with
stables and there is no enclosure or garden attached directly to them. In the surrounding mahallas, houses are slightly larger with walled gardens, and tend to be scattered in clusters along the course of irrigation channels.

A patchwork of small, walled fields surrounds the houses. As we shall see in Chapter 6, these fields are generally used for growing wheat and potatoes and for grazing livestock (sheep, goats and cattle). Since the introduction of potatoes as a cash crop in 1982, the irrigation channels have been extended further and a number of newer houses have appeared towards the periphery of the village, particularly in Chimungul. These houses tend to be relatively large since land constraints are less. They also have walled gardens that are entered via wooden or wrought iron gates -the latter being an indicator of prosperity. The stone-built garden walls tend to be higher around those properties close to the road. In part, this affords some protection to women from the gaze of strangers and, in part, it provides an obstacle to theft, a problem which is said to have increased since the road brought more outsiders to the village.

The lower part of the village is transected by the Karakoram Highway (KKH) which runs in a north-south direction following the course of the Hunza River. Completed in 1978 as part of a joint Sino-Pakistan project, the road connects the metropolitan road systems of Islamabad and Rawalpindi in the south, with the Khunjerab Pass and China in the north.

The completion of the KKH has corresponded with general infrastructural and commercial development. Hence, in Gulmit, the police station, the Government Boy's School (established on this site in 1986), the tahsil (the administrative and judicial offices for Gojal), a small bank, a telephone exchange, a post office, four hotels, a wood factory, potato store, two tea houses and a series of small shops, all lie along the course of the road (see Appendix VI (Fig. 13b) for a PRA diagram showing historical changes in
The main telephone and electricity cables follow the route of the KKH with the electricity supply originating from the village of Khyber to the north where there is a hydroelectricity power station. These services were established around the time of the construction of the road, but supplies remain limited and erratic.

Examination of the spatial organisation of Gulmit thus reveals that while Gulmit may still be regarded as a village, it is rapidly gaining the status of a small town. The geographical markers of the rapid growth and development that have taken place over the past twenty years are clear. The impact of the KKH cannot be overstated, for it has facilitated a number of development initiatives, including the introduction of potatoes as a cash crop. While tourists and traders also bring income, as suggested earlier, they also bring more negative effects. In contrast to the Burusho areas of Central and Lower Hunza, there is still land available to be brought into production and the effects of rapid growth continue to be experienced in terms of burgeoning prosperity, a factor which also has implications for attitudes towards family planning (Chapter 9).

4.6 Village Institutions

Three categories of village institution can be identified namely, Ismaili institutions, social and welfare institutions (secular) and government institutions (see Appendix II for a PRA generated diagram of village institutions and a more extensive commentary upon them). The sheer number of institutions is notable and in part reflects the community-building activities of organisations associated with the Aga Khan Foundation.

Ismaili institutions are dominated by the Local Ismaili Council which is linked to the regional and national council, and is ultimately overseen by the Aga Khan himself. The
local Ismaili Council is responsible for an area which extends from the villages of Passu in the north, to Ayeenabad in the south. Members are elected from each of these villages every five years. Through the local Ismaili Council, other local institutions, such as the Aga Khan's Diamond Jubilee Girl's School and the credit and savings cooperatives (tanzims) are linked to regional and national institutions such as the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP), the Aga Khan Health Service (AKHS) and the Aga Khan Education Service (AKES), all of which are divisions of the international Aga Khan Foundation (AKF). An important subgroup of the local Ismaili Council is the Conciliation and Arbitration Board. This board arbitrates all conflicts from land disputes to marital breakdowns, and exercises considerable authority within the local community.73

Social and welfare institutions are generally self-help interest groups of a more secular nature. They include the Wakhi-Tajik Culture Association and the Education and Welfare Society (which oversees the running of Al-Amyn School). The Village Council (a male institution) and the Women's Integrated Development Group (WIDG) are, however, supported by UNICEF. Similarly, the family planning clinic is supported by the FPAP which is, in turn, affiliated to the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF).

Government Institutions cover all communities from Shishkat to Passu and include the administrative/judicial institutions of the tahsil, with political representation being through elected members of the Union Council.

73 "Social work" or work for the community carries great religious kudos and is highly praised by the Aga Khan himself who every year issues a public commendation to those selected by the Local Ismaili Council. Those selected also gain a title within a religious hierarchy that extends from the grass roots to the Imam himself. Recently (1994), two senior women (who served in village organisations in the area), were selected for minor commendations; this was the first time the social work of women had been publicly recognised in this way.
This brief review of local institutions underlines the fact that Gulmit is not a closed society, for it has multiple cross-cutting structural connections that simultaneously operate locally, nationally and internationally. While many village institutions continue to be dominated by men, development initiatives have increased the representation of women, a factor which, as we shall see, has implications for the ongoing dynamics of gender relations (Chapter 6).

4.7 Land, Inheritance and Wealth.
Although Qur'anic texts and, indeed civil law, support land inheritance by women (Chaudhry 1991), in Gulmit it is customary for land to be inherited by men alone. Land is divided equally (in both quantity and quality) among all sons, although it is customary to give some better quality land to the eldest son and the family house to the youngest son. With the permission of the veruteeg (agnates of the patrilineage), land can also be bought and sold. For all these reasons, land holdings become divided and individual men may own widely dispersed land that varies in both size and quality.

Formal leasing and share-cropping

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74 Although it is customary for men rather than women to inherit land, a woman may inherit land if she has no close male kin. In some exceptional cases -usually when a women holds some other grievance against her male kin- she may appeal to civil law or Islamic law (through the Conciliation and Arbitration Board of the Ismaili Council) for her rightful inheritance (although this may also depend on her finding a suitable male advocate). Generally, however, it is in a woman's interest to accommodate her male kin and maintain good relations with them for -as we shall see in Chapter 6- they are her source of security and she is largely economically and socially dependent upon them.

75 Land quality in Gulmit does not vary greatly, particularly when soils are treated with animal manure and artificial fertilisers, and provided potato and wheat crops are rotated to prevent soil degradation. It is, however, access to irrigation networks that prevents some land being brought into production. Some sites are particularly rocky. These tend to be used for growing a range of fast-growing shallow-rooted trees such as trek (poplar) which are themselves valuable crops providing timber, fuel wood and leaf fodder. The dryer areas can sustain thorn bushes (zakh) which are grazed by goats and are also a source of fuel.
arrangements are not usual in Gulmit, although members of a veruteeg may come to informal agreements over the use of land.

In modified wealth ranking exercises, informants suggested that the majority of villagers are of comparable (middle) income, with only a few being regarded as rich, or conversely as poor. The wealth of a household tended to be defined by the incomes of the men in it, while the wealth of women was defined by the wealth of their husbands or male relatives. In other words, villagers did not spontaneously conceive of women as autonomous economic units or entities.

Although men and women tended to identify similar individuals or households as wealthy, women were often able to name more poor households and individuals than men, for women had a greater tendency to include women who had few or no male relatives to support them. From my own experience of village life, it seems that women are more likely to be aware of poor women because, when formal sources of male support fail, it is women who informally support other women. Consequently, it is women who assist other women with child care, women who make and pass on clothes, and women who share food with other women (and children), particularly when men are absent from the house during the day. Milk, in particular, is passed between women to tide households over periods when dairy production is low, and may come to play a significant role in the formation and maintenance of informal bonds between households.

Villagers were divided in their perceptions of whether wealth differentials are increasing. Men, in particular, had most to say on this matter. A group discussion produced the following contributions:

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wood. Inherited land holdings tend to include a range of sites.

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Although the principle obligation is to women of the veruteeg, assistance may also be given informally to neighbours and even friends.
R.K.: (aged 35 years, hotel manager, middle-income)

"I think the difference between the rich and the poor people is becoming greater... Some people are making a lot of money because they can take business opportunities and they have chances to invest in import/export and so on. They are the people who are educated and have connections or who have some money from a job or pension. These people usually try to buy land. Land is always safe in the long run; its value is going up."

A.U.B: (aged 38 years, President of the Local Ismaili Council, middle-income)

"I think the difference is getting less. These days everyone can make money from potatoes and educate their children. And there is still the same problem that if a man has many sons, he must divide the land between his sons. This happens whether he is rich or poor. A poor man might have only a few sons so the land will not be divided and his sons end up with a lot of land. In the end it balances out."

N.A: (older man, primary education, middle-income)

"The difference is getting less. In the Mir's time there was a big difference between the Mir's family and most other people. Most other people were very poor. Nowadays everyone is better off."

To some extent, then, perceptions pertaining to differential wealth depend on the time frame considered. Villagers did not, however, appear to perceive shifting wealth differentials to be a problem. I suggest that this may be because kinship links remain close and networks of mutual support strong, providing potential channels through which wealth may be distributed. It may be, however, that with the creeping tendency to greater nuclearization of households (Section 4.9), differential access to resources may be perceived as a greater problem in the future.
Villagers identified six men in the village whom they considered to be wealthy. In all cases, the men had inherited large amounts of good quality land, although one man had been a government contractor in his youth and had bought large tracts of land around Gilgit which had subsequently increased greatly in value. Large land inheritance was, in all cases, linked to a favourable relationship with the Mir in the past and the fact that the land had not hitherto been divided between large numbers of sons. It was notable, however, that some rich men were ranked lower than others if they had no, or only one, son for it was said that they had no-one to help them manage the land or help them take advantage of business and investment opportunities that are now being generated in the area. Five of the six men identified had generated capital by selling some land (now of relatively high value since the introduction of seed potatoes as a cash crop). The men had invested in tourism principally by building a hotel or guest house and were involved in cross-border trade with China. The man who was ranked lowest of the six had inherited a great deal of very good quality land and sold quantities of this at intervals. He had not, however, invested the money generated, preferring instead to spend it on conspicuous consumption including large quantities of alcohol smuggled from China, which he was said to drink to excess. It was argued, therefore, that this man's wealth was likely to be short lived.

Villagers suggested that the wealthy could be distinguished by certain characteristics: they tended to own a hotel or guest house; they mixed with foreign tourists and could speak English; they had extra rooms or extensions to their homes; they had a number of electrical appliances such as a music player, a television, an electric cooker, and they usually had a telephone. It was said to that richer people were generally fatter, ate meat more often and tended to wear good quality clothes, including Western style clothing.
In group discussions with men a clear distinction emerged between the concepts of wealth (daulat), respect/esteem (izzat), and power/authority (gauwat). The men suggested that a man could be wealthy but he might not have their respect if he did not operate honestly, for example, in giving fair and timely wages, or if he did not attend the jamat kaana and assist in community projects. Other men, they maintained, may be poorer but have their respect. Here, they gave the example of members of the Ismaili Council who are elected because they are considered to be religiously dutiful and have sound judgement. The President of the Ismaili Council was cited as a man who is particularly respected because he is also gentle (sherif) and courteous (adabi). The men suggested that a man could also have gauwat but not have their respect. Here, the men cited the policemen based at the station in Chimungul. These men are non-Ismailis from other areas. Gulmiti men suggested the policemen were powerful since they had guns, could jail them or impose fines, however, they did not respect them because they considered them to be largely dishonest, unaccountable and excessively aggressive.

Both male and female villagers were insistent that those who were best off or happiest in the village were not necessarily those who had the most money, but rather those who were content and on good terms with God. One elderly man articulated this idea as follows:

N.A.:"The best off (people in the best situation) are those who are content with what God has given them. They are prayerful, religious-minded; they thank God for his blessings.....I think I am well off, I have made a lot of progress in my life without too much work. My parents have been good and given me many blessings. I have enough land. My children are educated and I give thanks to God because I am happy."

By these criteria then, many people were considered to be
well-off in the village. In terms of income, however, most people were thought to be of middle income with most households having access to comparable quantities of land of similar quality. While the wealthy do have greater access to credit and loans, these days there are a number of facilities provided by government or the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) which make small loans available to those of lower income. For men of middle-income who do not find full-time employment, some of the most common ways of supplementing income from agriculture are to establish a shop or run a vehicle (usually bought second hand with a loan) as public transport. Labouring (particularly in the form of construction work, road building and cleaning jobs) is considered demeaning and an option that only the poor would consider unless set within the context of a self-help or community project.

Both male and female villagers identified two households that they considered to be exceptionally poor. In both cases, poverty was associated with some mental or physical disability of a key member of the household which prevented them from working. This, combined with lack of a male relative/spouse who could give assistance and a small land holding, was sufficient to create a cycle of sustained poverty and dependence on the charity of others.

4.8 Land, Conflict and Marital Relations.
Disputes over land are among the most common sources of conflict, both within and between villages. These days, as levels of literacy increase, it is general for newly established land boundaries to be documented. However, in the past land boundaries were established by simply calling members of the concerned veruteeg to bear witness to the agreement. Conflict can therefore arise when the witnesses are no longer available (through death or absence from the village) or, more commonly, when there is exploitation of some ambiguity in the agreement. However, many incidents of conflict that are apparently about land, are actually about
some more fundamental grievance.

One such case, involved Shaukat Ali and his son who, several years ago, built an extension to their house and, in doing so, encroached upon the land of a neighbour. A heated dispute ensued and was eventually brought before the Conciliation and Arbitration Board of the Local Ismaili Council. It transpired that there was a long history of tension between Shaukat Ali and his neighbour because some years earlier the neighbour had divorced Shaukat Ali's niece, accusing her of an extramarital affair. Shaukat Ali interpreted the divorce, and the accusations of adultery, as an offence against the honour (gherat) of himself and his veruteeg. Encroachment upon his neighbour's land was thus, in large part, an act of revenge. Shaukat Ali eventually lost his case. But, what is significant for this analysis, is the way that relations of reproduction (in this case, marital relations) became enmeshed in issues of male honour, and thereby became implicated in other agendas, other domains.

Disputes over land also occur between villages. During my fieldwork period, a particularly acrimonious dispute prevailed between the villagers of Gulmit and the villagers of Shishkat, to the south:

Shishkat is a relatively new village that was established by the Mirs to absorb population growth and to secure a power base in the area. The village consists of three ethnic groups: Wakhi from Gojal, Burusho from Central and Lower Hunza, and Dom, an underclass of musicians whose origins are uncertain. Although some land was given to the new settlers, a large proportion of it remained as the Mir's land (that is, as kutooker land) and local people were obliged to work this land with minimal returns to themselves. In Shishkat, the kutooker land included the high pastures of Rawush which had long been used as grazing land by Gulmiti herders. As Shishkat became established, Rawush was used jointly by both communities. However, with the end of the Mir's rule in
1974, much of the *kutooker* land was divided among members of the Mir's family. Surplus cultivable *kutooker* land was simply claimed by those who were able to bring it into production, but the high pasture of Rawush continued to be shared by the villagers of both Shishkat and Gulmit.

During the 1980s, economic development associated with the completion of the highway meant that local men were eager to avail themselves of the new economic opportunities and were increasingly reluctant to leave the village for the summer months as their transhumant lifestyle had hitherto required. Pasture land near to the village therefore became increasingly valued and the more distant mountain pastures were visited less and less. Around 1989, the villagers of Shishkat started to claim exclusive rights to the use of Rawush pasture on the basis of its proximity to their village. But, the villagers of Gulmit responded by claiming historical rights to its use. The resulting dispute culminated in a series of fights and shoot-outs on the road between the two villages. The case has now been before the civil courts for several years but there appears to be no sign of resolution. Meanwhile, there is ongoing animosity between the villagers of Gulmit and Shishkat and, whereas in the past the two villages were highly cooperative and there were regular intermarriages between them, since the dispute, all such contact has been severed.

In the first story, then, it became apparent that conflict within marriage can manifest itself in disputes over land. In the second story, it seemed that conflict over land manifested itself in the formation (or non-formation) of marital relations. From my discussions with villagers, it was also clear that what was at stake for this frontier people with a long history of persecution, was a desire to ensure that sons of Gulmit continue to have access to Gulmiti land. Indeed, for Gulmiti men this was regarded as a matter of *gherat*.
4.9 Household Composition.

In Gulmit, there are approximately 271 households\(^{77}\) which, especially during the winter months, tend to be concentrated around the centre of the village. FPAP figures for the area indicate that the average household size is 7.1 persons and the proportion of the population under 15 years is 43%.

In Gulmit, closest relatives tend to share the same house (khun). However, a single household (khandon) may contain more than one family unit (zodbud) (that is, a married man, his wife and his unmarried children). Other relatives, as well as friends and colleagues of household men, may also come to stay in the house briefly in order to visit or break a lengthy journey. The wealthiest households in the village may also have one or two servants but these are often a poor or orphaned relative. These days, young men (and in a few cases, young women) may be absent from the house because they are attending a course of study in the city, in which case, they frequently stay with their urban relatives. Mature men may be absent from the house for long periods for training or employment, including army postings. Men who are involved in the hotel business in Gulmit sometimes sleep at the hotel rather than at home, indeed, one elderly hotelier claimed that he had not slept at home for 10 years. During the quieter winter months, married women sometimes visit their father's house for up to one month.

Villagers tend to describe a typical Gulmiti khandon in terms of a man, his wife, their unmarried children, their married sons and their wives and children. In practice, the composition of households depends on the phase of the domestic cycle, space, relative wealth, the distribution of land, personalities and the dynamics of interpersonal relationships (for a more detailed account of variations in household composition over time, see Appendix III).

\(^{77}\)Based on Local Ismaili Council figures, December 1992.
In Gulmit, the division of households and land may come about when the senior male dies but this depends, to some extent, on the availability and distribution of land, the availability of labour and the availability of money for new houses. Households and land may be divided before the death of the senior male if the household becomes too large for the existing space and facilities, if some conflict arises within the household or if individuals simply prefer to live in smaller units. It is said that in the past, it was considered "shameful" for a household to divide before the death of the senior male for it implied that some unresolvable conflict had occurred between father and son. Villagers suggest, however, that these days households are dividing sooner because young men with jobs wish to manage their own income and build their own, more modern houses. It is suggested, too, that these days tension tends to occur in households where educated women work outside the home (usually as teachers), for other women in the household resent the fact that working women do not participate fully in their domestic tasks (Chapter 6).

4.10 Formal Kinship
As mentioned earlier, Mahmud, Choshimbi and Bori established the three original clans or rhum(s) of Gulmit. The Wakhi Mir, Qutlog, was a direct descendent of Mahmud but his line of patrilineal descent came to an end around 1980. The land and property of Mahmud ktor (lineage/family) was then integrated with that of Choshimbi ktor which now forms the largest rhum in Gulmit. However, Bori ktor constitutes the rhum of ritual superiority and senior members of Bori ktor initiate all agricultural rites and celebrations. In part, this is related to Bori's reputed success in growing wheat when his bothers failed (Chapter 6), and in part it is related to tales of Bori's alleged marriage to the supernatural being, Verai (Chapter 8).
Figure 4: DIAGRAM SHOWING THE PRINCIPAL LINEAGES OF GULMIT
Sometimes a rhum becomes too big for tasks such as the organisation of wedding celebrations and work parties (kareeyah) -that is larger than around 36 households. In such cases, smaller ktor units will be formed. For example, around 50 years ago, Choshimi ktor divided into Royi ktor and Said ktor (each new lineage being named after the senior male of the line), although members of these ktor(s) retain a general identification with Choshimi ktor (see Fig. 4).

Other rhum(s) have also emerged since Gulmit was founded. These include Sharel, Budlay, Ruzdor, Hari and Bohor ktors. Most of these are said to have been formed by Wakhi men from as far afield as China and Ishkomen to the west, who have inherited land through their mothers or wives (see n.73). Budlay ktor is said to have been formed many years ago when a man from Nagyr (the Shia area to the south) was awarded land in the area by the Mir. Villagers are uncertain whether this man was a Wakhi, but do consider his descendants to be Wakhi.

Within a ktor, sub-lineages of agnates form veruteeg. The veruteeg will be called upon to discuss any major matters affecting their households, for example, marriage, divorce, the sale of land. A man will not lightly act against the decision of his veruteeg for his agnates are his principle source of support and assistance, financial and otherwise. Although women are also part of a veruteeg through descent or marriage, their participation is not formally recognised. Thus, in local kinship discourses, women's roles are typically relegated to the invisible, the realm of the unseen (cf. Delaney 1991:152).

Descent is therefore traced through men alone and father and son are said to be of the same churg (furrow or line) while each male descendant is said to be a churg soyib (master or owner of the furrow line). A man will also consider a daughter to be of his churg, but once she is married, the churg is effectively cut and she becomes part of her husband's ktor (though not part of his churg) and when she dies she is
buried on the land of her husband's veruteeg. However, if a woman is divorced or widowed without bearing sons, she will be returned once again to her father's ktor. There is therefore a sense in which a woman's identity becomes, not only socially 'invisible', but also somewhat 'fluid', passing between two men, namely her father and her husband.

Although men (and women) trace their churg through their father (tat) and paternal grandfather (poop), they do have knowledge of, and generally good relations with, their mother's ktor -especially her bothers and their veruteeg. Moreover, in Wakhi kinship terminology no distinction is made in the naming of paternal and maternal kin (Fig. 5). Thus, both paternal and maternal uncles are known as bech, paternal and maternal aunts are known as wach, paternal and maternal grandfathers and great grandfathers are known as poop and paternal and maternal grandmothers and great grandmothers are known as moom. What is more, both paternal and maternal cousins are referred to using the same words used for brother and sister, namely, verut and khui respectively.
Fig. 5: DIAGRAM SHOWING KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY IN GULMIT
All members of a patrilineal line, particularly the veruteeg, are described as sherik, meaning 'sharing'. Conversely, affinal kin are described as beesherik meaning 'without sharing'. Here, sherik principally refers to the sharing of 'blood' (see Chapter 5) but there is also an allusion to the sharing of land, property and decision-making. Consequently, villagers suggest that beesherik relationships are (at least, theoretically) based on genuine affection rather than duty and mutual obligation (cf. Fortes 1953).

The Wakhi word for son is petr and for daughter is thegd. Sons and daughters, like brothers and sisters, are frequently distinguished by their relative age, or more literally according to their relative size. Thus, siblings and offspring may be referred to as eldest/biggest (lup), middle/middle-sized (melungejh), or as the youngest/smallest (zaklai). Both fraternal and sororal nephews and nieces are referred to as khariyan while one's own grandchildren (male and female) and those of one's brothers and sisters are referred to as nepus. Great grandchildren, and those of one's brothers and sisters are referred to as nebosa, while all great, great grandchildren are referred to as fel-fel nebosa.

Upon marriage, both husband and wife will refer to their mother-in-law and their spouse's paternal and maternal aunts as khash. They will refer to their father-in-law and spouse's paternal and maternal uncles as khurs. Their spouse's paternal and maternal grandparents will be referred to, once again, as poop and moom. A man will refer to his wife's brother as khesirz and his wife's sister simply as khui. A woman will refer to her sister-in-law as noon and her brother-in-law as simply verut. Both husband and wife will refer to their brother and sister-in-law's children as khariyan, although when a woman lives in the same house as her brothers-in-law, she will often refer to his children simply as kash (boy) or pichod (girl).
All these kinship terms, may be used as terms of address as well as terms of reference. They may also be used as general terms of (affectionate) address for those who are familiar, but not necessarily of one's ktor. The term used will then depend on the approximate generational group of the person addressed relative to the speaker. So for example, I was generally addressed as wach by all those younger than myself, as khui by those of my own age or as thegd or khariyan by those older than myself. In the course of general conversation, it is not usual for a person to be addressed by their actual name, the exception being when the person is being called from a distance or from among a group.

The Gulmitique also tend to refer to their relationships in spatial terms, hence, relatives are described as either khish qaum (close relatives) or thir qaum (distant relatives). Moreover, the experience of closeness to one's relatives can transcend physical distance. Thus, several villagers (including women themselves) explained that one could be married to a distant village but feel it is close if one is marrying khish qaum, similarly, one could marry close to Gulmit but feel more distant if one is marrying thir qaum.

In examining kinship terms and names among the Wakhi of Gulmit, a number of themes thus begin to emerge. While there is clearly a pervasive awareness of temporal, patrilineal descent, that is, of social origins, nevertheless, the active focus appears to rest upon lateral networks of relationships that embrace 'one's own' while underplaying differentiation. So, while villagers are very clear about membership of their patrilineal line (at least up to four preceding generations) and have greater knowledge of this than of affinal lineages, nevertheless, Wakhi terminology does not distinguish between paternal and maternal kin and all ancestors beyond parents are referred to as simply grandfather and grandmother (poop and moom) respectively. Wakhi kinship terminology tends, then, to refer to potentially living relatives and is elaborated more within the present than in the past.
Moreover, family names are not generally passed through generations (Chapter 7). Indeed, in Gulmit there is no ancestor worship, and while the recently dead are recalled in prayers and sometimes through photographs, there is no visiting of graves and, indeed, minimal maintenance or decoration of them. What is more, older graves are sometimes ploughed over to create fields. Villagers explain this practice by reference to the Islamic faith, arguing that the soul of the deceased has gone to its eternal rest and the body that remains merely returns to the soil. Spiritual intercession with God is sought, then, not through ancestors, but through the Imam and through the spirits of pirs (saints or holy men); indeed, the shrines of pirs are visited regularly for this very purpose. So, the daily conversational and active concerns of the Gulmitique tend to be about their relationships with the living rather than the dead and, as will become apparent in the course of this thesis, it is contemporary relatives and children who tend to provide the narrative reference points for the ongoing construction of self.78

4.11 Informal Kinship

If a woman experiences a succession of infant deaths, it is generally suspected that the mountain spirits are angry or jealous of her (pari wushuk) (see Chapter 5). The power of the spirits may be intercepted, however, if the woman's next baby is temporarily breastfed by a zhazh-nan (wet-nurse). Similarly if a mother's breastmilk fails or is insufficient, the assistance of a zhazh nan may be sought (Chapter 7). The child who survives with the assistance of a zhazh nan is said to retain a special bond with her. The child also gains a zhazh khui or zhazh verut ('milk' sister or 'milk' brother) who is the zhazh nan's own suckling child. In keeping with

78An exception is found among members of the Mir's ktor who live in Gulmit. Members of this ktor tend to make frequent reference to their prestigious genealogical origins. Indeed, this was their major claim to legitimacy and authority - particularly when appealing to the elderly - in the local election campaigns of October 1994.
Islamic law, marriage is precluded between zhazh siblings.

A zhazh relationship can also be created if a woman dreams about suckling another, generally a man. If she chooses to tell the person about her dream—a young woman is sometimes prevented from doing so by feelings of sharem (shame)—then a zhazh relationship is established and the special bond means they may legitimately turn to each other for support or assistance in times of need. A similar relationship is established if a lactating woman treats someone suffering from an eye or ear infection by applying her breast milk to the affected site, a treatment known as jo dietk.

When Mirs ruled the area, the children of Mirs were never breast fed by the Mirs wife, the Rani. Instead, the children were sent to selected zhazh nans throughout the kingdom where they stayed for the first six years of their life. In those days, breast feeding was considered to be the work of common women and not appropriate for the leisurely life of royalty. Moreover, the zhazh relationships created established networks of patronage and allegiance that endure even today. In the local elections of 1994, it was those Gulmitique who were related to the Mir through zhazh kinship who remained among his most loyal supporters.

Thus, these examples of zhazh bonds provide evidence of a parallel, informal system of kinship that is based on the female substance, milk. Zhazh relationships tend to be rooted in affection rather than duty, and while they are always open to manipulation by men, they are nonetheless a significant source of informal alliance and influence for women. In particular, a woman may call upon her zhazh alliances if she is involved in any form of dispute, or more commonly, if she requires financial assistance for example, for school fees for her children.

Another form of 'pseudo' kinship that may be called upon by a woman is created at her marriage: When a man is to be
married he selects a good and trustworthy friend (who should not be a member of his own veruteeg) and asks him to be the tat-kash (literally "father-boy"). From the day of the wedding, the chosen tat-kash is said to become the bride's tat or father, despite the fact that he may be of similar age to her. As the groom's friend, he is likely to be a frequent visitor to the house, so by creating a 'kinship' link, some of the codes of sharem can be legitimately circumvented. Moreover, villagers claim, the bride's tat can, if necessary, act as her advocate. In practice it is not uncommon for a woman to turn to her tat-kash for advice or financial assistance.

4.12 Making Marriages: Preference and Practice

During the bleak, cold winters, when the fields are frozen over and the animals huddle in their pens, the Gulmitique gather round smouldering fires. Winter is a time for visiting, for drinking tea and talk. It is a time when married daughters may visit their parental home bringing new offspring to be shown to their maternal grandparents. It is a time, too, for weddings. The talk is, then, of relations and relationships. In Gulmit, such matters are not merely small talk, they are the very stuff of which identity, social location, origins and orientations are constructed and interpreted. For the Gulmitique, such matters provide the essential raw material of social engagement.

Marriage is, of course, about the creation of more formalised kinship bonds. Indeed, the making and acceptance of marriage proposals is a major area of decision-making for the veruteeg. Most villagers express an explicit preference for marriages beyond the field of close kin. Moreover, the Aga Khan himself has advised his followers against first cousin marriage to prevent problems associated with in-breeding. And yet, within the village a significant number of marriages take place between first cousins, particularly between matrilateral cousins. In order to explain this, it is necessary to appreciate that marriage is not simply about
alliance, or indeed, descent; in Gulmit it is also about providing female labour for the house.

The primacy of this latter need is indicated by following the process by which a marriage proposal is constructed. It is always the senior woman in the house who announces that it is time for her son to marry. A proposal is thus initiated when the senior woman makes the rather oblique, though well recognised, pronouncement that she is becoming old and needs help in the house.

Sometimes it is clear, that the mother simply judges that her son's age and circumstances are appropriate for marriage. In such cases it is apparent that there is no urgency and discussions can begin, both within the household and among men and women of the veruteeg, to identify a bride. The bride may be chosen from among Wakhi (and very rarely, Burusho) from as far afield as Chipursan and Shimshal, although the more prosperous village of Passu is generally preferred.

Sometimes, however, if circumstances within the house have changed and there has been a loss of female labour, then it is perceived that assistance for the senior woman is needed more urgently. Loss of female labour occurs when a daughter is married or (in a few cases) is sent away for further education, or becomes ill, even dies; it may also occur if a daughter-in-law goes to the city to join her husband or if a son divorces or becomes widowed. In all these cases, the eldest, unmarried son will be encouraged to marry (or remarry) as soon as possible. Since time is short, the veruteeg tends to turn to a first cousin, for it is said that a proposal to a first cousin cannot be refused as this would risk tension among close kin. It is also said that a first cousin knows the household of her husband well and is likely to settle in, and take on her full domestic role quickly. For similar reasons, matrilateral cousins are often chosen because, as relatives, the women of the household are thought
more likely to work well together. Moreover, if divorce should ensue, the unity of the veruteeg would not be threatened. Patrilateral first cousin marriages do sometimes occur but they are often associated with situations where the line of descent is likely to be broken due to lack of a male issue. While such marriages may keep land and property within the veruteeg, villagers emphasise that what is primarily at stake is "blood" not "land".

In the past, marriages were arranged entirely according to the judgement of the senior men of the veruteeg. However, these senior men were themselves often influenced by senior women who discretely recommended a young woman whom they had observed to be hard working and of good reputation. Although women are formally excluded from such decision-making, nevertheless, they are sometimes referred to as shahb wazir meaning "night counsellors" - a term derived from the time of the Mir's court when the Mir's senior ministers advised him on matters of rule at the end of the day; women are similarly thought to influence their husbands as they lie next to them at night.

These days, however, things are changing. An increasing number of young men, and indeed, some young women, are becoming relatively well-educated, and some even have well-paid jobs. These young men and women are now spending more time in the cities where they are exposed to urban values. One manifestation of these 'urban values' is an expectation that marriage will be preceded by 'falling in love'. As a consequence of such discourses of love, young men in particular, increasingly express a desire to have some say in the selection of their marriage partner. Moreover, their increased status in the household as actual or potential income earners means that their expectations are, to some extent, met. This trend was also given added impetus in the 1980s when the Aga Khan, visiting Pakistan from his home in Europe, recommended that young people should be consulted and should consent to their own marriage, suggesting that such
marriages are likely to be more sustainable. On this basis, even young women are now formally asked to consent to the veruteeg's choice of husband. Most young women maintain, however, that they would never dare to challenge the authority of their father and veruteeg (who remain their source of refuge should the marriage fail). Nevertheless, a few cases are recalled where a young woman refused to give her consent and the marriage arrangements were abandoned.

Despite the degree of autonomy acquired by young people in the selection of a marriage partner, it nonetheless remains shameful for a young man, let alone a young woman, to openly confess an attraction for a person of the opposite sex to his parents or veruteeg. One male villager explained that to do so is to imply that the couple had been meeting secretly and indulging in improper behaviour. Such a suggestion would be counter-productive for it would imply that the young woman was disreputable. The man (who is now about 35 years old) proceeded to recount for me the circumspect conversation he had with his parents to make his choice of marriage partner known:

R.A: "My age-group is the first to have 'love marriages'. But we must still have the permission of our parents, although we cannot say anything directly. If the parents think the boy likes somebody, they will try to find out and arrange the marriage. So for me it was like this: My mother said that she was getting old and it was time for me to marry. Now my interest was with my uncle's daughter. My mother suggested five or six girls but for each one I said there would be some problem. In the end my mother said, "Have you been to see your uncle?". I said, "No, I have not been". She said, "What! You have not been to your uncle's house! -How can this be?" In the end I said I had been there. She said, "Shall I go about your cousin?". I said that there would be no problem in this. The proposal was made and now I am married.....Yes, to my cousin."
This conversational manoeuvring also effectively means that a negotiating space is preserved as long as possible. If parents disapprove of their son's preferred choice of bride, they have an opportunity to try to discourage him. Usually, it seems, a choice of bride is sought that satisfies all parties and to whom there is a good chance a successful proposal can be made.

In ranking the factors considered in choosing a bride, parents ranked ability to work hard highest but also considered good health and gentle temperament important. Young men also valued these qualities most but, predictably perhaps, considered beauty to be an asset. For all those asked, it was considered desirable to seek a woman of comparable wealth, social status and educational level to her prospective husband.

Once a choice of bride has been agreed upon by the veruteeg, then the mother of the young man will visit the house of the chosen young woman bearing a gift of the local bread, komoshdun. The mother will informally establish the likely acceptability of the proposal and whether the young woman has received other proposals. If the prospects are good, this visit will be followed by a visit from both the young man's parents, again bringing a gift of komoshdun, and they will announce "Doman wudruker wezg" ("we have come to catch the dress", in other words we have come to ask for your daughter). After this, there may be many more visits made by either the young man's father or mother, or both, to advance the proposal. The parents may also visit members of the young woman's veruteeg to gain further support. Meanwhile, the young woman's veruteeg will discuss the advantages and disadvantages of this and other proposals that have been received. The process of discussion may continue for several years. At last, if there seems to be agreement, the young man's father, accompanied by a male relative, goes to a selected house of the bride's veruteeg. There, the final decision will be made and all the men present will be served
molida (a mixture of crumbled chapatti, curd cheese and warm ghee that is eaten from a shared bowl and symbolises a uniting of male and female realms (see Chapter 6)).

The formal betrothal ceremony, known as perk vandak (the tying of the necklace) can take place some years, or just some days, before the final marriage ceremony. On the day of perk vandak, members of the young man's veruteeg visit the veruteeg of the young woman bringing gifts of clothes, shoes and cloth for the bride. The young woman will be accompanied by her friends and sisters who examine the gifts (usually with great excitement) while the prospective bride is expected to look demure throughout. A khalifa (religious healer) or mukhi (religious leader) is called to say prayers for the two veruteeg concerned then, the father of the prospective groom comes forward to present the bride with a white79 pitek (translucent veil) and a necklace (perk) which he ties around her neck. Flour, a ubiquitous symbol of well-being and prosperity, is then tossed upon the beams of the house and more celebratory foods are served.

A description of the wedding celebration itself will be provided in Chapter 7. At this stage, however, it is necessary to note that among the Wakhi -and, indeed, among all Ismailis of Northern Pakistan- marriage payments and exchanges are highly regulated by 'Rules and Regulations' laid down by regional and local Ismaili Councils at the behest of the Aga Khan. Initially formulated in 1972, but regularly amended, the regulations are an attempt to prevent

79In the past, other colours might be used, but in recent years white has become symbolically associated with the pre-marital state and, indeed, is now the colour worn by the bride on the eve of her wedding (Sperzhuen). Although the use of white appears to be a relatively new fashion innovation from the urban south, within Islamic tradition it is the colour associated with purity and honour, hence it is the colour donned while at the hajj in Mecca; it is also the colour of the shroud in which a corpse is buried. Of course, white is the colour of milk and curd cheese, and in Gulmit these substances are associated with the female domain, with nurture and sustenance.
the conflicts and heavy indebtedness associated with excessively high dowry payments found elsewhere in Pakistan. In Gulmit, then, dowry payments may take the form of gifts of cloth for no more than ten suits of clothes, one set of bedding, a tea-set and -for the more wealthy- a sewing machine or electric oven, all of which are presented by the bride to her new mother-in-law on the evening of her wedding day. A formal brideprice is not given to the bride's veruteeg but the bride herself is given a mayheir (marriage payment) during the nikah (marriage ceremony). According to the Ismaili Rules and Regulations, the mayheir may be a sum of between 5,000 and 25,000 Rupees (£100-500) depending on the wealth of the groom's family. The sum is negotiated between representatives of the bride and groom's veruteeg but is finally settled by the mukhi who presides over the nikah. The mayheir is a form of insurance for the bride against possible divorce. Generally, only a portion of the full mayheir, known as the haqmeir, is paid to the bride on the day of the nikah, but the full amount becomes payable should a divorce ensue. The haqmeir is generally saved by the bride although she may later spend some on items for herself, gifts for her own family or items for her new home.

These days, the Rules and Regulations also specify the age at which marriage is permissable. In 1994, the rules in operation stated that a woman must be at least 16 years old and a man must be at least 18 years old. In practice, most women marry between 17 and 20 years, although those who enter higher education sometimes wait until 22-24 years. In exceptional circumstances (for example when female labour is urgently needed for the house), men may marry at 18 years, but it is more common for men to marry between 24 and 30 years when they have completed their education and established a livelihood. From life histories, it appears that the age of first marriage has risen significantly over the past 10 to 15 years, particularly for women. Several women currently around 28 years old report that they were married at 13 or 14 years, while older women report that they
were married as young as 9-11 years. Indeed, most older women report that they had been married some years before their first menses appeared. These days, in accordance with the fahrmans (edicts) of the Aga Khan, there is a concern for women to complete an education before marriage, although some young women are now permitted to continue study after marriage. With the increase in young, unmarried, post-pubertal women in the village and the increase in 'outsiders' brought by the road, a number of older villagers feel that it is necessary to impose stricter constraints on their daughters' mobility and activity for fear that dishonour will befall their households, and indeed, the village in general.

4.13 Polygamy and Divorce
Although according to Qur'anic tradition, a man may take up to four wives if he can ensure their fair and equal treatment (Chaudhry 1991), the local Ismaili Rules and Regulations state that a man can only take a second wife if he presents a good case before the Ismaili Council and receives a licence. Generally, second marriage is only permitted if the a man's first wife is chronically ill or disabled, or if she is infertile.

The Rules and Regulations also make provision for a man to divorce his wife. Divorce (talaq) is initiated when a man sends his wife back to her father's house with her belongings. The most common reasons given for divorce are a suspected extramarital affair, infertility or failure to have sons, excessive quarrelling between wife and mother-in-law, failure to perform domestic tasks and failure of "understanding" between husband and wife, a concept that can

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80 On the basis of Islamic tradition, it is not legally possible for a woman to divorce her husband, however, villagers did recount one recent case where a young woman found employment with the AKRSP and, with the permission of the Conciliation and Arbitration Board, was able to save enough money to repay the full mayheir and persuade her husband to grant her a divorce.
refer to constant quarrelling between husband and wife or some sexual difficulty. Attempts may be made informally to reconcile the couple but if the husband's behaviour seems unreasonable or unfounded, then members of the wife's veruteeg frequently perceive the husband's action as a grave offence to their collective honour. Abusive exchanges, even fighting, may then break out. The case may then be brought before the local Ismaili Conciliation and Arbitration Board (generally preferred to the civil court) and if reconciliation is impossible, a divorce settlement will be made. Provision is made for the payment of outstanding mayheir to the woman and for care of any children. All children are considered to belong to the father's ktor and will, therefore, ultimately be returned to his household. If the children are very young, however, they may stay with the mother for an agreed period of time before returning to their father's house. Sons are generally permitted to stay with their mother until they are three years old but daughters are permitted to stay until they are considerably older, although money must be given for their care. Both husband and wife may re-marry after the passing of three months during which time it is likely to become clear whether the wife is pregnant. Should this be the case, the pregnancy must be completed before she can remarry.

Even when the divorce settlement is agreed, however, tension between the veruteeg(s) concerned may persist for many years.

4.14 Concluding Comments
This chapter has been concerned with providing an ethnographic description of the fieldwork location, Gulmit. This description contributes towards the contextualization of fertility and childbearing in Gulmit and identification of some of the culturally-specific meanings and values that inform local perspectives.

In Gulmit, the geographical location, the landscape itself, becomes assimilated within an embodied schema of aesthetic
values that is intrinsic to the construction of individual and collective identity. It is also apparent that, for the Gulmitique, there are metaphorical associations to be drawn between the constitution of land and landscape, and the constitution of people.

The Wakhi's long history of oppression as an ethnic and religious minority proves to be a factor in understanding their collective concern to prevent 'outsiders' encroaching upon their land. This factor, too, contributes to a social context in which having many sons (to inherit Wakhi land) becomes positively valued. Moreover, as followers of the Aga Khan, the Gulmitique are these days concerned to be accepted, even respected, within the Islamic state of Pakistan. This, in turn, manifests itself in a concern to ensure that local reproductive practices are in accordance with Qur'anic prescriptions.

The layout and patterns of construction within the village bear witness to the rapid social and economic change that has taken place over the past twenty years, particularly since the construction of the KKH. Far-reaching infrastructural and institutional connections with the outside world indicate that the Gulmitique are no longer an isolated mountain community, and remind us that reproductive beliefs and practices must be situated within the multiple dialectical exchanges that take place at numerous points of intersection between the local and the global. Like other local communities, the Gulmitique must compete for access to economic resources. In Gulmit, it is well understood that government funds are distributed via the Northern Areas Council according to population size. This, then, becomes another factor contributing to a context in which having many children is positively valued. Education and urban experience also contributes to the ongoing transformation of social and cultural values, particularly among the young. These transforming (sometimes conflicting) values can also mediate the relationships within which reproduction is
embedded, and may be articulated through emotion discourse that relate, in particular, to themes of love, shame and honour.

In Gulmit, kinship and marriage are principally concerned with the creation and maintenance of alliances and lateral relations; while inheritance is a factor, descent is relatively (though not entirely) downplayed (cf. Weiner 1979). In an inhospitable mountain environment where the local economy has long operated at subsistence levels, access to land, having children, and the maintenance of networks of support become key elements in ensuring ongoing access to labour and long term security. Women's informal kinship networks, mediated by exchanges of milk, prove particularly significant in establishing and maintaining complementary social alliances (cf. Harris 1981). Although it has been established that the sustainability of a marriage can depend on a woman having children (particularly sons), this study's particular concern with the procreative aspects of marriage should not obscure the fact that in Gulmit, marriage is also fundamentally about the redistribution of female labour (see Collier and Rosaldo 1981).

It is clear, then, that in Gulmit reproduction does not necessarily form a discrete conceptual or experiential domain. Rather, meanings and values associated with reproduction appear to be implicated in, and shaped by, a number of overlapping discursive themes. Consequently, in order to understand the factors that may influence reproductive decisions, it is necessary to appreciate that reproduction is not just a matter of sexual relations and biology. Indeed, in Gulmit, reproduction may also relate to issues of land, history, ethnicity and religion, as well as, marriage, kinship and emotion. These themes form an integral part of the contextual landscape in which reproductive choices are perceived, and decisions made.

In Gulmit, some of these contextual themes, especially those
of religion (Islam) and emotion have particular continuity with discursive constructions of the sexed body. This, then, will be the subject of the next chapter.
Photo 1: KARUN KUH, GULMIT

Photo 2: GULMITI BOYS PLAYING CRICKET IN THE MALE SPACE OF THE POLO GROUND
Photos 3 & 4: WOMEN OF THE TANZIM (note how only older women wear the traditional 'skith' head wear)
CHAPTER 5

EMBODIED MEANINGS:
CONSTRUCTING THE GENDERED BODY AND THE EMBODIMENT OF EMOTION
IN GULMIT

5.1 Introduction

Our natural and therefore universal characteristics do not determine the meaning of the body, since the same characteristics are not universally emphasized. Bodies do not exist outside of culture, but are shaped physically and figuratively within culture. (Delaney 1991:28)

In order to understand and interpret Gulmiti accounts of reproductive health, it is necessary to understand, not only the wider social, economic and historical context of reproduction, but also the ways that local people construct, think about and interpret their bodies. In short, it is necessary to understand the meaning of the body in Gulmit. In investigating the body, there is a need to transcend the essentialist/constructionist divide of previous analyses and investigate how cultural constructions of the body mediate the relationship between sex and gender; in Broch-Due and Rudie's (1993:32) terms, it is necessary to investigate "the multiple manners in which flesh (and fluids) are sexually formed, whether carved into 'male' and 'female' or remaining more neutral."

This chapter examines how the body is constituted and situated within a particular behavioural environment (see Hallowell 1955) that includes not only the geographic, material and social world, but also a world of spirits and the spiritual. The chapter also examines how, in Gulmit, the management of bodily fluids becomes implicated in the construction of relations with the Divine and, through elaboration of Islamic concepts of pollution, informs the social construction of gender relations. Consideration is also given to how the 'carving of the flesh' in male
circumcision contributes to gender differentiation—a precursor to the conjoining of complementary genders through reproductive acts. The relationship between sex and gender is further explored through investigation of local metaphorical constructions of reproduction, conception and foetal development.

In Gulmit, there are significant continuities between discourses of the sexed body and discourses of emotion. Some of these continuities are traced in the course of this chapter, with particular attention being given to the embodiment of gendered emotions such as shame and honour. Analysis of this ethnographic data reveals some of the limitations of previous investigations of human emotion which—like studies of gender—tend to operate either from positions of biological essentialism (Konner 1982, Kemper 1987) or from positions of social constructionism (Myers 1986, Lynch 1990). Here, it is suggested that this polarisation of analytical positions is less than helpful for in Gulmit discourses of emotion simultaneously mediate, and are mediated by, physically-grounded discourses of the body.

5.2 Situating the Body
The Wakhi word for the body is mytan, a word which refers to the intimately combined body and soul. A second word, jism, refers to the material body alone. It is used when locating physical characteristics and certain kinds of pain and illness that are considered devoid of emotional or spiritual content. Emotional pain (dard), or illness ascribed to an encounter with spirits (wushuk), is considered to cause distress to the whole being hence, in such cases, the word mytan is generally used.

The soul (rooh) is considered to be an essence that is

81Karen Ask (1993) provides a comparable analysis of the relationship between gender differentiation and the social construction of emotion in Northern Pakistan. She attends, in particular, to the concepts of 'love' and 'friendship'.

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located within corporeality while simultaneously transcending it. In accordance with classical Islamic texts, the soul is considered to have three faculties that exist hierarchically: the vegetative or natural faculty associated with the liver, the animal or vital faculty associated with the heart, and the rational faculty associated with the brain. However, as an integrating essence, the soul is considered to be infinitely disseminated throughout the body. The local religious poet, Nasir Al-Din Hunzai (1977:12) articulates this as follows:

Soul is itself an indivisible substance. However, where the soul is connected with jism-i latif (subtle or ethereal body), there are innumerable particles of the soul, for the soul either rides upon each of these particles or has them in its grip. These particles fly back and forth, and there are innumerable number of these also in the elemental body (of man).

The Ismailis of Gulmit generally agree that the soul enters the body of a boy at 40 days, and a girl at 80 days after conception, and is felt as the first stirrings in the womb. The soul is believed to come from God and is carried by an angel to the ghurong (foetus) which thus becomes activated by the will of God.

Upon death, it is said that the angel Israil accompanies the soul (now occupying a new eternal body) either to the fires of hell (duzakh), or to the eight gates of heaven (janath). Passing through the appropriate gate, the embodied soul is met by relatives and friends and, men at least, are attended by beautiful female houris.

So, Gulmiti Ismailis consider the earthly body encompasses, contains and carries the soul. While the earthly body is mortal and finite, the soul is continuous with all that is eternal, infinite and spiritual, the realm of what Nasir Al-Din Hunzai calls "the Universal Soul". The universe is
therefore conceived to be without and within and, for human beings, becomes accessible through introspection and prayer (see Hunzai 1977:17-18).

It is said that human bodies occupy and move within the material, visible world. However, in keeping with Islamic epistemology, there is no clear-cut conceptual opposition between the natural and the supernatural, rather they are part of a unified hierarchy, a gradient in which each created form occupies a distinct ontological level. Thus, the earthly world of minerals, plants and animals is a realm of generation and corruption, interdependence and transformation, while the spirit world (itself graduated) is a realm of pure form where there is no generation or decay. The intermediate space between is uniquely occupied by human beings who manifest aspects of the two realms, and are therefore regarded as microcosms of the entire universe.

In accordance with Islamic tradition, the spirit world is said to contain a number of beings which include angels (fereshta) who are messengers of God and guardians of human beings, the devil (shaitan), a fallen angel who tempts human beings to sin, and nature spirits. Among the Ismailis of Gulmit, the realm of nature spirits is particularly well elaborated, with each nature spirit being distinguished by its bodily appearance when it becomes fleetingly visible. Nature spirits include male spirits such as the ugly, one-eyed male giants (diuw or jinn) and the bad-smelling begush, as well as female spirits, such as the beautiful, green-eyed, slit-mouthed pari, and the ugly, dishevelled laow -who can sometimes be heard whistling at night. The Gulmitique also suggest that the carnal spirit, or animal soul, of an

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82 Bouhdiba (1985:62) asserts that the image of the one-eyed being was also found in pre-Islamic Arab societies where it was considered that "God punishes wicked, indiscrete voyeurs, by depriving them of the sight of one or two eyes".
83 Within Arab symbolic systems, this slit-like imagery is considered to allude to the female vulva (Bouhdiba, 1985:62).
individual (generally women) may leave the body during the night to perform dark deeds. Such spirits are called belas.

In keeping with the pan-Islamic cosmological hierarchy, the Gulmitique consider that fereshta are made of air and blessed with aql (knowledge, reason, moral action) but no nafs (appetite, passion, sensuousness); conversely, nature spirits are made of fire and nafs but no aql; mature human beings of both genders are considered to be a mixture of nafs and aql. In human beings, morally and socially correct behaviour is said to depend on maintaining a balance between aql and nafs. Reprehensible behaviour is usually associated with unrestrained nafs (cf. Ask 1993).

Nature spirits are, then, full of nafs and are sometimes wicked and mischievous, and sometimes kind. They are said to exist intimately with human beings, observing them, communicating with them, even have sexual relations with them. Indeed, nature spirits may have a profound effect on the way the body is experienced. Among the Gulmitique, pari appear to be the most potent of nature spirits. The pari generally inhabit the high mountain pastures, from where they observe the activities of human beings. At times, they become jealous or angry, particularly if a mortal man deceives them or proves unfaithful to them. On such occasions, they may appear at night, often accompanied by pari shimol (spirit wind) and cause the illnesses of 'fright' (wushuk), to which menstruating and pregnant women, as well as, the newborn are particularly vulnerable (cf. DelVecchio Good 1980). Alternatively, they may temporarily possess susceptible individuals causing tars, that is, fitting and speaking in tongues. Again, women are said to be particularly susceptible to tars. Treatment for illnesses

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84 Individuals afflicted by tars usually speak in the language of Shina. Shina is both the language of the pari and the native language of the Shins, a long-established neighbouring ethnic group to the south.

85 cf. the work of Jansen 1991 on spirit possession among Muslim women in Algeria. In Gulmit, it was typically suggested that women's vivid
associated with pari are sought from religious healers (khalifa) who ritually prepare amulets (timor) from verses of the Qur'an; treatment is also available from local shamans (bitan) who have gained privileged access to the pari through scrupulous attention to their sexual purity.

For Gulmiti Ismailis, as for Muslims in general, acts of excretion and elimination of bodily fluids are considered to be polluting and to leave the body in a state of impurity which precludes contact with the sacred and the spirit world in general. Bouhdiba (1985:44) explains this as follows:

The angels who normally keep watch over man and protect him leave him as soon as he ceases to be pure. So he is left without protection, despiritualized, even dehumanized. He can no longer pray, or recite sacred words, still less say the Qur'an.

It is therefore necessary to cleanse the body according to the rites of pok as soon as a state of pollution is detected. Indeed, because the consequences of impurity are so serious, there is a tendency to extreme vigilance over bodily functions (cf. Bouhdiba 1985:43). Two types of impurity (nopok) are distinguished. Minor impurity (biwuzu) results from defecation and urination, while major impurity (bighusl) results from emission of sperm, menstrual blood and lochia. Contact with the Divine is thus mediated by the physiological functions of the gendered body.

5.3 Constructing the Gendered Body.

5.3.1 Nakedness
For the Ismailis of Gulmit, both male and female genitalia

imaginations, emotionalism and "tendency to worry" increased their susceptibility to tars, but as in Jansen's analysis, tars also appears to be a socially acceptable way of publicly expressing unhappiness (for example, in a unhappy marriage) or comment upon the behaviour of others.
are associated with shame (sharem) and nakedness (chand), both of which should be avoided, for in the Qur'an it is written:

Say to believers, that they cast down
their eyes and guard their private parts;
that is purer for them. God is aware of
the things they work.

(Qur'an, Sura XXIV, 30-1).

It is said that even in private, husband and wife should avoid looking upon their partners genitalia since, according to Islamic tradition, sight of them is punishable by blindness and other gruesome penalties on Judgement Day. It is perhaps not surprising then that my Gulmiti informants found discussion and description of the sex organs both difficult and embarrassing (cf. Delaney 1991:50).

5.3.2 Constructing the male body
The Wakhi word for the adult penis is pat, for the child's penis is jok, and for the testicles is sivol. All male children are circumcised before the age of two years. For Ismailis, as for other Muslim sects, male circumcision is replete with symbolic significance for it links the creative acts of men with those of God the creator (see Combs-Schilling 1989:303-4); moreover, through allusion to the blood sacrifice that sealed the covenant between God and Abraham, it becomes a sign 'carved in flesh' of belonging to the Muslim brotherhood (see Delaney 1991:85). Indeed, in accordance with Islamic tradition, the removal of the foreskin is deemed necessary to prevent pollution by trapped semen which could leave a man in a state of impurity and thus unable to communicate with the Divine.

In Gulmit, circumcision or "cutting" (shou khak) is performed on boys of 1-2 years in the month of October.\(^86\) In the past,\(^86\) It is said that in October the temperature is neither too hot nor too cold and therefore optimal for healing (see section 6.4). It is also

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the operation was performed by a senior male of the rhum who commenced the operation by raising an apple and walnut (symbols of abundance and fruitfulness) in the air saying, "chaku pat" (penis knife), or, as some informants suggested, chak pat (full/filled penis). Today, the surgery is performed at the hospital in Gilgit or at a mobile clinic by a visiting doctor. On the child's return home, members of the veruteeg are formally invited to the house to participate in hithoyie (ritual animal sacrifice and the distribution of meat).

For Gulmiti Ismailis, like other Muslims, ritual blood sacrifice seems to symbolically replicate the bloody incision of circumcision, which itself finds symbolic resonance with the blood of birth and death, that is with the blood of divinely-ordained creative cycles (see Combs-Schilling 1989:304). However, the incision of the male member may also be seen as the 'incompleting' of the hitherto 'complete' (Strathern 1993). In other words, through the ritual act, gender identity is created from relative androgyne and the necessity and potential for marriage is produced: "the completed result of reproduction is turned into a reproducer who will complete itself in new relationships" (pp. 48-49). What is more, through the removal of the foreskin, that which is inside becomes outside, echoing a key cultural theme for the Wakhi (Chapter 6). The social transition to be made by a male child (in particular) thus becomes incised upon the body (see Chapter 7).

5.3.3 Constructing the Female Body.
The Wakhi word for vagina is kush, while the labia and entire area between a woman's legs is referred to as sut. In group discussions, women suggested that kush is both an entrance to the zaman jaei ('place of the child' or womb) and the season when fattened goats are available for hithoyie (religious sacrifice).

87I was unable to elicit any specific words for labia majora, labia minora or clitoris.
an entrance to the whole of the interior body.

*Shak wukhen* (bad or dirty blood) is said to be produced only in the bodies of women and must be released monthly through the menstrual bleed. *Shak wukhen* is considered to come from the entire body rather than a single site and, during menstruation, is thought to drain from the upper body downwards.88

As a young girl matures, *shak wukhen* is thought to accumulate in her body until it precipitates menstrual flow.89 The onset of menstruation is an event that is treated with great discretion. Young women report having started menstruation between 11 and 14 years. It is not usual for a girl to be warned about menarche and several young women recalled being distressed when they found themselves bleeding for the first time. Girls tend to seek advice from an older sister or their mother who then advises them about the appropriate practice of *pok* and shows them how to prepare strips of cloth (*lug*) to be placed between the legs and tied around the waist, or stitched lightly into *shalwar* trouser bottoms. Soiled *lug* are discretely washed, burned or buried in holes between the rocks near to the river.

Among themselves, women refer to menstruation rather bluntly as *lug-rim* (literally, dirty rag) or, more euphemistically, as *bimorig* (illness), or *dohr rizd* (belly ache). A menstruating woman may also be referred to as *bee-nimoz* (literally, without prayer), for in accordance with Islamic

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88cf. Emily Martin's (1987) interviews with black and white working class women which suggest that their experience of menstruation - and indeed pregnancy and childbirth- arises from a more integrated sense of body and self, while biomedical models of these phenomena focus excessively on the relatively bounded organ of the uterus.

89Unlike the women of rural north India described by Jeffery, Jeffery and Lyon (1989), Gulmiti women do not describe menstrual cycles and pregnancy in terms of the accumulation of heat (*garem*), however, an optimal internal body temperature is required for normal menstrual flow.
custom, a woman must not attend the *jamat kaana* for prayer, fast, or touch the Qur'an for the 5 days of her menstruation. In order to remove the *nopok* of menstrual pollution, a woman must ritually bathe 3 times over the course of her bleed: once at the beginning, once after 2-3 days, and finally at the end.

It is said that in the past women were not permitted to handle bread, milk products or the household cow, to pass in front of a man, or to even allow her clothes to touch that of a man, for a woman's *nopok* state was potentially contaminating. Until around 10-15 years ago, a menstruating woman was confined to the *past rarj* where she would perform sedentary tasks such as carding and spinning wool, or sewing. Older women suggest that in the distant past, menstruating women gathered in a special house or menstruation hut. Over the past 5-10 years, however, it seems that all but religious restrictions have mostly died out. This phenomenon seems to be related to female education, health education, and the increased urban experience of many Gulmiti women. Some women from wealthier households also suggest that these days their fathers or brothers bring them sanitary towels from China and this gives them greater freedom of movement. Nevertheless, if there are several women in a house, it is still the case that a menstruating woman is allocated lighter tasks and may take the opportunity to knit and sew. Some women also suggest that such activities discretely indicate their menstrual state to their husbands.

Failure to observe codes of ritual cleansing is not only

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90 The practice of going to a menstruation hut (*bashali*) can still be observed among the Kalash of north-west Pakistan. Although this ethnic group are non-Muslims (and indeed are sometimes described as animists) they do, like the Wakhi, originate in Northern Afghanistan and this may account for a commonality of customary practices in the past (Loude and Lievre 1987).

91 Buckley and Gottlieb (1980) argue that menstrual restrictions may sometimes be seen as concessions acquired by women rather than as manifestations of oppression.
shameful but it also thought to invite misfortune or wushuk upon the household or children. One village woman who had a mute son, confessed to me that this misfortune probably occurred because she did not bathe appropriately when she was in a state of nopok.

In the past, it seems that girls were married before, or soon after, menarche and after that were often pregnant, so menstruation was not a frequent event. Today, with the average age of first marriage being between 17 and 22 years, menstruation is a more regular state. This phenomenon can sometimes become a focus of anxieties about new institutions and the changing lives of women. For example, one elderly woman whose garden lay below the Aga Khan's Girl's Academy in Karimabad complained that the burying of luq rim around the school had contaminated the soil and was damaging her crops.

Menstruation is carefully monitored by women as an indicator of their potential fertility. Any irregularity can, therefore, be a cause of considerable concern. Advice is sought from fellow kinswomen, a tabeeb (wise woman) or a lady health visitor (LHV). A male hospital doctor will only be consulted as a last resort, or if the condition is severe.

Diminished menstrual flow is usually attributed to cooling of the internal organs (requiring warming therapies) or the use of family planning practices, while the resulting accumulation of shak wukhen in the upper body is said to cause joint pain, headache, painful eyes or disturbed vision. Menstruation is therefore regarded as a necessary release of shak wukhen and vital for the maintenance of female health and well-being.

None of my female informants recognized the symptoms of premenstrual tension.92 For dysmenorrhoea, women are often able

92There is some evidence to suggest that the symptoms of phenomena such as premenstrual tension and menopausal "hot flushes" may be culturally specific and linked to particular constructions of gender identity and

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to buy extremely strong analgesics from the local dispensary. In the past, however, women drank infusions of 'warming' valley herbs such as chorrow and hafchur and took small amounts of truk tel (bitter apricot oil) on the basis that 'cool' menstrual blood could become more viscous and cause painful blockages (cf. DelVecchio Good 1980)\textsuperscript{93}

Heavy menstrual bleeding is said to cause weakness and may be caused by a "husband being too big for his young wife", by a woman carrying very heavy loads, by contraceptive injections, or may be the result of mad thir vitk (the back having moved far away from the abdomen). Mad thir vitk is said to affect women who have been pregnant before and is treated by stretching a cord from behind the neck over the front of the shoulders, down between the legs and up over the back to the shoulders, where it is tied at the neck. This procedure known as miun takh is said to draw the back and abdomen closer together. The reasoning is that when the abdomen and back are far apart, blood may be funnelled out of the body too quickly. An alternative or complementary treatment is to catch some wood smoke in some fat, such as butter, and eat it. It is said that the 'warm' fat carries the smoke to the blood where it covers the blood and stops it flowing too fast.

To conclude this section, it is clear that menstrual blood is a significant marker of female reproductive health and well-being. Nevertheless, menstrual blood is polluting, hence

relations which become manifest in certain emotional, psychic, and ultimately, bodily phenomena (Martin 1987, Macdonald 1993:199).

\textsuperscript{93}In keeping with the Galenic-Islamic medical tradition, hot and cold states here refers to states of bodily humours, as well as, bodily temperatures (see Good 1994:101-110). Although it is generally only khalifas (traditional healers) who systematically elaborate this theoretically, it is widely understood that herbs and foods possess intrinsic 'thermal' qualities that do not depend on their temperature but invest them with inherent therapeutic potential. For the Gulmitique, foods such as meat, eggs, oil and apricot kernels are thermally hot foods, while foods such as yogurt, curd cheese and apricot juice are thermally cool foods.
from menarche a young woman experiences a 'turning inwards', exclusion from collective activity, and marginalisation. The words of Marilyn Strathern (1993:42) appear apposite for it seems menarche is indeed "a matter of puberty rather than initiation" wherein female subjects become unable to "obtain the 'complete' status of a full member of society; they remain incomplete by virtue of their less-than-whole-hearted incorporation through collective events." Thus, it is as Wakhi girls become 'incomplete' that their full gender identity is assumed, and the need for gender complementarity in the 'completion' of marriage is reaffirmed. With each subsequent menstruation -and as we shall see, with each childbirth- the ritual of turning inward, of making incomplete, is repeated, made afresh and once again, establishes gender identity.

5.3.3 Reproduction: Making the Incomplete Complete.
The coming together of the two 'incomplete' genders in sexual intercourse is usually referred to euphemistically as keti nysetk (lying together).\(^94\) It is considered a polluting act and must, therefore, be followed by ritual washing (yupk chiramn). Sometimes a sister-in-law will prepare hot water for yupk chiramn, alternatively the couple may go to a secluded irrigation channel or stream.

A wife should neither initiate nor refuse the sexual advances of her husband unless she is menstruating. Women see keti nysetk as a duty, some comparing it to their duty to make

\(^{94}\)A few young Gulmiti men did admit to homosexual experiences when they were students in the cities. Male homosexual relationships are not uncommon in Pakistan but tend to be temporary; they are not usually associated with a permanent sexual identity and do not preclude heterosexual marriage (Herald, March 1994:32). Lesbian relationships are very rarely acknowledged in Pakistan. I encountered no evidence of transsexualism in Gulmit, although transsexuals (hijras) from Rawalpindi and Lahore do visit Gilgit from time to time. Sex workers are available in Gilgit and across the border in China, but it was beyond the scope of this study to assess rates of attendance among Gulmiti men. As we shall see later in this study, some extramarital affairs do occur in Gulmit.
bread and clean the house. Nevertheless, among the few women with whom I was able to discuss such matters, it was clear that some at least associate this "duty" with excitement and pleasure. As far as I could ascertain, only the missionary position is used and the minimum of clothing removed, although there was some evidence to suggest that some younger couples with the use of private rooms (see Chapter 6) are becoming more adventurous.

The Wakhi word for procreation is tukhem. Although this word literally means 'seed', it tends to be used to refer to male, procreative 'seed' rather than to plant seed, for which the word taagem is generally used. Because of the associations with sex, discussion of tukhem seemed to cause considerable embarrassment. Indeed, on a few occasions my fieldwork assistants earnestly advised against asking questions about this topic. Moreover, it was suggested that only older people would be able to tell me about tukhem.

In discussion with older people, tukhem was explained by reference to the Qur'anic text which compares women to the

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95 Some accounts of sexual relations in South Asian societies, such as that provided by Jeffery, Jeffery and Lyon (1989: 29) emphasise how the sexual act is implicated in the subordination of women. Such accounts fail to acknowledge the long history of 'the art of the erotic' in South Asian cultures (see for example, Lynch 1990) and how -as Foucault's (1980) work suggests- pleasure may be deeply implicated in the maintenance and perpetuation of power relations.

96 I was unable to gather as much information as Delaney (1991:49) on this matter and Gulmiti women simply suggested that the man goes on top. It may well be that what was actually being described was the position described by Delaney in which the woman's legs are raised and placed on the man's shoulders. Delaney suggests that this position is reminiscent of the image of the traditional plough and the sowing of seed; according to ancient texts this position is more conducive to pregnancy and finds resonance with Qur'anic references to conception.

97 Some joking references were made to the "unnatural positions" that young men returning from the city expect their wives to adopt and, in cases where there are new bedroom extensions to the traditional communal house, the inordinate amount of time that young couples spend in them.
soil and men to the seed. The metaphor has clear resonance for this agricultural community, but one older man expressed the connection particularly clearly and, indeed, was inclined to extend the metaphor beyond pregnancy and childbirth:

F.B: "The water, the air and the soil combine to make things grow. Women are definitely like the soil because men put seed in women and then a baby grows inside them...Later, when children are fully grown, they can do great works. But it is not definite. Some children may not thrive or do anything great, while others do well. They all do differently. It's like when the soil is watered, some crops do well while others don't. Some crops get plenty of water but others can't."

Moreover -for older men at least- the association between tukhem and divinely ordained agricultural cycles means that human reproduction falls within the domain of the sacred:

R.K: "In the Qur'an it says that a woman is a man's field that he can sow at any time. But our Imam helps us to interpret the Qur'an, the word of God, for these times. The making of a human being and his character is part of

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98 In the Qur'an it is written: "Women are given to you as fields to be sown, so go to them and sow as you wish." (Sura 2:223). Similar metaphorical allusions are made in other verses, particularly those referring to creation -arguably one of the principle themes of the entire Qur'an (Delaney 1991: 285-86)). Consider for example: "O mankind! reverence your Guardian-Lord, Who created you from a single Person, created of like nature, his mate, and from them twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women" (Sura 4:1), and "Verily, we created man from a product of wet earth; then placed him as a drop of seed in a safe lodging,..." (Sura 23: 12-13). These metaphorical associations may have deep resonance, for as Bouhdiba (1985: 8) argues, "the sexual relation of the couple takes up and amplifies a cosmic order that spills over on all sides: procreation repeats creation." It is not suggested that other (non-Qur'anic) metaphors of procreation are not used in Gulmit, but it is important to understand that, within the context of Islam, talk of sex and procreation is a 'shameful' thing, and the most legitimate, or socially-appropriate, language available is the metaphoric language of the Qur'an.

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God's system. We can't interfere with these things. It is like this: in the woman's zaman jaei we don't control what happens, whether a boy or girl is made. These things are to do with God."

Such interpretations appear to preclude human intervention in reproduction and perpetuate the identification of maleness with that which is dynamic and animating, and femaleness with that which is passive and nurturant (cf. Delaney 1991). Yet, what may be significant about the Ismailis of Gulmit is that, as followers of the Aga Khan—the living descendant of the Prophet Muhammad—there is the possibility of active and

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99 The use of the soil and the seed metaphor by the Gulmitique begs some comparison with Delaney's (1991) account of its cultural elaboration in Gokler, Turkey. I am in agreement with Delaney that within Muslim societies, Islam can provide a highly pervasive cosmological schema which transcends the conventional Christian divide between the sacred and the secular, and penetrates the minutiae of daily life. I am in agreement, too, that this schema may have been underestimated by eminent theorists such as Bourdieu. However, within the context of northern Pakistan, Delaney's analysis proves rather overdetermining, and excessively conservative. I suggest that in northern Pakistan, the most interesting thing about 'root' metaphors (such as the metaphor of procreation) is how they remain open to interpretation and available to be re-worked within the context of human relationships, relationships which themselves operate within a dynamic context of change and transformation. Delaney's assertion that Islam induces Muslims to be more concerned with the recuperation rather than the transformation of society appears, within the context of Gulmit, to be something of an over-generalisation. As we have seen, within a rapidly globalizing world, the Ismaili Muslims of Gulmit must deal with change and innovation. In Gulmit, men and women are generally concerned about prospering, taking opportunities, and securing land for their sons. In short, there is evidence that through their children, they look towards the future, as well as the past. Personal and social narratives provide a window into how Gulmiti women and men weave together competing discourses, scenarios and metaphors (many of which have their source in the meta narrative of Islam) in the process of making sense of a changing world, and the dynamics of relations and relationships that unfold within it. But, as will be shown in Chapters 8 & 9, narrative construction is not simply an intellectual exercise, for tropes such as metaphors, may also touch the body and the deepest feelings, and it is at this level that change may ultimately be resisted, or embraced.
ongoing (re)interpretation of Islamic texts for the needs of the present.\textsuperscript{100}

The Gulmitique believe that what is essentially carried in the male seed are the determinants of blood. While other physical characteristics, such as facial features, may come from the mother's line, it is the inheritance of blood from the father that ensures the continuity of his patrilineage. Behavioural characteristics are said to be acquired after birth, while something of the mother's temperament may be transferred in breastmilk.

Once the embryonic ghurong has implanted in the mother's zaman jaei, it is said to receive necessary sustenance from retained shak wukhen and yupk (water) (see Appendix IV for Gulmiti women's drawings depicting their understanding of pregnancy). From around 3 months, the developing ghurong is more able to ingest converted shak wukhen so, it is suggested, the mother may begin to feel more healthy. Towards the end of pregnancy, some shak wukhen will be converted into breastmilk but the remainder will be discharged at childbirth as lochia and is considered extremely polluting. For this reason, the placenta (khas) must be disposed of carefully and the mother must be rigorous in her ritual cleansing and post-partum washes (sur yupk ketak) (see Chapter 7).

5.4 The Gendered Body and the Embodiment of Emotion

The natural propensity of women to cyclically produce polluting shak wukhen means that, as elsewhere in the Muslim world (cf. Abou-Zeid 1966, Mernissi 1975), women's bodies become associated with sharem and must be appropriately hidden or covered.\textsuperscript{101} Although the Aga Khan does not

\textsuperscript{100}At the time of writing, the Aga Khan had made no official pronouncement advocating the use of family planning methods but AKHS (Gilgit) is considering providing reproductive health services in the future.

\textsuperscript{101}See also Douglas (1966) who argues that menstrual blood is widely
advocate the strictest observance of *parda* by Ismaili women, Gulmiti women do ensure that their bodies and limbs are covered at all times by a *shalwar kamiz* and that their heads are covered before non-relatives and strangers. Women are seen as inherently sexual beings -the field in which a man "can sow at any time". Indeed, the Qur'an, itself, entreats women not to "display their beauty and ornaments" and to "draw their veils over their bosoms" (Sura 24:31). It is therefore considered a woman's duty to keep herself appropriately covered, so as not to arouse the natural desires of men other than her husband. The observance of *parda* may also be seen as a way of protecting a man's seed, because covering a woman's body helps to ensure her virginity before marriage and her fidelity after (cf. Delaney 1991:39-41). The 'open field' is therefore closed and hidden, and this is socially recognised by a woman's conformity to appropriate behaviour and dress. In short, the Qur'anic metaphors of reproduction -which have particular material resonance for the Gulmitique- become extended and manifested in the management of the body. Moreover, through the practices of *parda*, a woman's body becomes conceptually associated with the 'inside', the hidden, and the closed, and complements the circumcised male body which has conceptually become associated with the 'outside', the revealed, the open.

In Gulmit, female hair is a particular focal point of female sexuality. In part, this may be due to a symbolic displacement from genitals to hair that is commonly found in Islamic cultures (Sabbah 1984, Bouhdiba 1985, Delaney 1991). Yet, in Gulmit there are significant generational differences in the way women dress and cover their hair: While older women (over 35 years) tend to braid their hair seen as impure, polluting and dangerous because it is normal and cyclical rather than harmful and exceptional, and therefore conceptually anomalous.

102 In Gulmit, as in other Islamic societies, a girl will begin to grow her hair long from puberty and pubic hair is removed by shaving, plucking or sugar depilation.
into two plaits and wear an embroidered skith ('pill-box' hat) beneath their pitek, younger women simply tie their hair at the back in a loose pony-tail or single plait, and cover their heads directly with a pitek (see Photos 3 & 4). Moreover, it is not uncommon for women who have experience of the urban centres to have shorter hairstyles, and simply drape their pitek between their shoulders when walking through the village. The frequent village debates about the appropriateness of the latter behaviour suggests that, in Gulmit at least, parda becomes a means through which gender relations are both symbolically and explicitly negotiated.

While parda is a collection of observable behavioural practices around covering or veiling, as suggested above, it is mediated, and subjectively experienced, through the emotion of sharem. Sharem is also associated with other expressions and bodily manifestations -some of them as subtle as a tilt of the head or a down-casting of the eyes- which effectively complement the practices of parda. Although men are also expected to experience and display sharem (for example, in the presence of elders and women), nevertheless, it is an emotion that is more highly elaborated with respect to women. Sharem means modesty, timidity, shame and deference. Women in the presence of men exhibit sharem by silence, service and obedience, by asking no questions, lowering the eyes, sitting at a lower level than men, and by eating only after men have finished. Yet, while sharem is exhibited in visible behaviour it is often profoundly felt, as one young Gulmiti woman explained:

F: "Oh yes, we really feel it! We become confused, we cannot talk, we blush, we are embarrassed. If our pitek slips down we become nervous and worried."

Nevertheless, in group discussions, Gulmiti women were quite

\[103\text{Untied hair is considered shameful in women for it suggests unbridled sexuality.}\]
clear that through subtle manipulations of displays of sharem, they could express respect or disdain, and even attraction for a male guest (cf. Sharma 1978).

The embodiment of sharem can, however, vary with a woman's age. Young women are particularly expected to exhibit sharem if they encounter their fiance, when they are pregnant and after the birth of the first child, since these are occasions when attention is drawn to the young woman's sexuality. Older women beyond childbearing age tend to be less rigorous in their displays of sharem, for their postmenopausal state means there is less need to demonstrate contained sexuality. Nevertheless, throughout a woman's life, appropriate displays of sharem are a sign of honour, both of the woman herself and, perhaps more significantly, of her male kin (cf. Papanek 1973).

Just as sharem is elaborated with respect to women in Gulmit so gherat (honour) is elaborated with respect to men. Yet, gherat should not be seen as simply the conceptual opposite of sharem (cf. Wikan 1987), for like sharem it describes a schema of interpretive practices and subjective experiences that may be shaped by relative status and context. Broadly, however, gherat refers to themes of pride, dignity and loyalty; it can operate at the level of the individual or the collective, and may be articulated in relation to such matters as women, kinship, land, village, nation and religion. Several Gulmiti men described gherat in terms of the expression: "soz ghash, soz band" meaning "ready with the mouth, ready with the stick", in other words, he who insults another man can expect a thrashing. The expression of gherat can range from the provision of hospitality and shelter, to extreme aggression or suicide.

In Gulmit, the more violent expressions of gherat tend to be provoked by perceived offences relating to women. Generally, it is a woman who must take responsibility for any
extramarital affair; if she is found out she risks a beating, divorce, even death. However, I also heard of one story where a "weak" younger brother found his wife sleeping with his "strong" older brother. The young man considered himself to have been so dishonoured by his older brother that he himself committed suicide. Let us be under no illusion, then. In Gulmit, honour, and indeed shame, are not simply transient emotions or strategic postures, rather they are the stuff of which lives can be made, broken and lost.

Sometimes, older men suggest that the thiz wukhen (fast blood) of younger men makes them act too rashly in the defence of gherat. Indeed, in Gulmit, discourses of emotion and emotional discourses are often articulated through reference to disruption of optimal body states. Moreover, where emotion is mediated by the broader emotion schemata of sharem and gherat, bodily and behavioural manifestations of emotion can also be conditioned by gender.

For example, the emotion anger (gar) may be mediated by gherat and sharem and manifest itself as agitation and violence in a man, and as sullenness or disobedience in a woman. However, extreme anger—or indeed grief (gham)—on the part of a woman is expressed by abandonment of the constraints of sharem, particularly with respect to the hair; Wakhi expressions referring to anger of this type therefore include, "khu shafsh chiren" (to pull the hair) and "shafsh rator ghrirda" (the hair has fallen over the face). Very often, however, anger is described in terms of the altered thermal state or hue of the body. So, someone may be "red with anger" (seker giretk), while the peak of anger may be described as "gar peshte" (the anger is ripe/cooked); when

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104 It is considered that the woman has wickedly and irresponsibly aroused the natural desires of a man.

105 The precise outcome often depends on how secure the woman's position is in her husband's household. A woman's position is made more secure by having sons and a good relationship with her mother-in-law.
the anger is passed the person is said to have "become cool" (sur vite).

Some people are said to be constitutionally hotter or cooler than others. Indeed, in Wakhi, temperament (mizaaj) tends to refer to a person's inherent thermal balance rather than personality type. Mizaaj can affect a person's response to illness, wushuk, and certain foods. As mentioned in Chapter 4, mizaaj can be affected by climate and geography; it may also be affected by age. The blood of young people may be slightly warmer, as well as, faster than that of older people, whose slower, cooler blood is said to make them calmer, more cautious and susceptible to cold. It is said that young men, in particular, are inclined to be "hot tempered" (garem majoz), that is, they are irritable and angry, especially if they have been fed excesses of 'hot' foods such as apricot oil as a child.\textsuperscript{106} Nevertheless, some individuals, young and old, may be described as "cool tempered" (sard majoz) if they are unfriendly and rarely laugh.

For the Wakhi, the optimum emotional/thermal state is to be warm, that is neither too hot nor too cold. Indeed—as illustrated by the account of menstruation—health and well-being is considered to depend on maintenance or restoration of this optimal thermal state.

Other discourses of emotion also have continuities with discourses of the body in Gulmit. Profound emotions such as love (ishq) or grief (gham) tend to be articulated by reference to the viscera, especially the heart (pesuv) and the liver (jigaar). Thus, a mother may affectionately refer to her child as lakhteh jigaar (a portion of my liver); similarly, gham is frequently expressed in terms of burning (tau-tsart) or drying (wesk-tsart) of the liver or heart (see

\textsuperscript{106}While women may be temporarily cool after childbirth, they are not generally considered to be any hotter or colder than men even during adolescence, menstruation and pregnancy (cf. Jeffery et al 1989).
Chapter 8). The heart, in particular, is considered to be a centre of emotional functioning by virtue of its being the central physiological organ. Thus, individuals monitor sensations of the heart -its rate, squeezing, burning- as indicators of physical or emotional disorder. So, in Wakhi, heart language forms a basic 'idiom of distress' (see Nichter 1989) with pesuv perishoni (heart worry) regarded as a cause of a number of illness from headache to goitre (zhaaghar) -the latter being attributed to the swallowing of worries. Women are said to be particularly prone to pesuv perishoni because they are inclined to worry about their children and menfolk; they may even transmit their worry in breastmilk causing their infant to become ill (cf. Mull et al. 1990). Pesuv perishoni, and associated illnesses, may however be treated by a khalifa (generally male) who will ritually prepare a timor and counsel the woman regarding therapeutic diet and action to be taken.

Other physical manifestations of emotional states include those relating to jealousy, baghateegh or nazar "giving the eye". Baghateegh -usually a response to another's beauty or good fortune- can be so powerful that in some individuals (often those perceived to be psychically-gifted) it can manifest itself as chezhum kak (the evil eye) bringing misfortune, illness, even death, to the person upon whom it is inflicted.

5.5 Concluding Comments
In this chapter, I have described how, in Gulmit, the body becomes constituted and situated within a behavioural environment which is shaped by Islamic cosmology, and which includes the material and the spiritual world. Indeed, it is apparent that, for the Gulmitique, things of the body can have implications for the eternal well-being of the soul. An understanding of this factor proves particularly significant in interpreting local objections to family planning that are articulated in terms of 'religion' (Chapter 9).
An appreciation of the continuities between body, soul and the Divine also proves significant in analysing how bodily 'flesh' and 'fluids' become culturally elaborated, through concepts of pollution, to inform cultural constructions of gender identity: The ritualised circumcision of the male child reduces the risk of pollution and ensures privileged communication with the Divine, while the spilling of blood symbolically seals the relationship between the individual, the brotherhood of men and God the Creator. Circumcision is also an act of transforming that which is 'complete' into that which is 'incomplete'; it is an act of revealing and opening that which was hitherto hidden and closed. Reproductive acts thus become acts of completion, a conjoining of the incomplete male with the female who, by virtue of her menstruation and partial social exclusion, has herself been made 'incomplete'. Reproductive acts are, moreover, creative acts which ensure the continuation of the blood line.

Blood is, then, a rich and potent symbol which suffuses gendered bodies and acts of reproduction. In the form of shak wukhen it becomes central to a Gulmiti woman's gender identity and perceived reproductive capacity. Consequently, when Gulmiti women articulate their resistance to hormonal contraception in terms of menstrual irregularity (Chapter 9), they are expressing more than a practical inconvenience, for they are also registering a disturbance to the principal indicator of their reproductive health and well-being.

In the final section of this chapter, I examined how the incomplete 'inwardly turned' body of the Gulmiti woman is sustained through the self-management of emotion, particularly the interpretively produced emotion of sharem. The complementary emotion of gherat was similarly shown to articulate male gender identity. It was suggested that the emotion discourses of sharem and gherat tend to support the gendered construction of other emotions but, significantly, these are ultimately mediated by physically-grounded
discourses of the body. This rather subverts essentialist and constructionist formulations of emotion. But, perhaps of more immediate relevance here, is the fact that these discourses of body and emotion yield sets of meanings and values that will usefully inform the interpretation of local narratives of reproductive experience (Chapter 9).

It seems, then, that in Gulmit the body is a vehicle through which social relations are made, felt and given meaning. Through the body, too, the deepest responses to change and intervention may be perceived and given expression. This chapter has been concerned with how a historically-specific behavioural environment becomes implicated in an actively constructed discourse of the sexed body. In the next chapter, I examine how this discourse of the sexed body itself mediates the active transmission and transformation of particular historical, geographic and social realities.
CHAPTER 6


6.1 Introduction

But it is in the dialectical relationship between the body and a space structured according to the mythico-ritual oppositions that one finds the form par excellence of the structural apprenticeship which leads to the em-bodying of the structures of the world, that is, the appropriating by the world of a body thus enabled to appropriate the world.

(Bourdieu, 1977:89)

For Pierre Bourdieu, the house is a key site where cultural categories become actively embodied. For Mark Johnson (1987), too, bodily movements through domestic spaces (for example, between inside and outside, up and down) can inform the basic cognitive templates established in childhood and subsequently elaborated in metaphoric thought. And yet, while domestic space may be principal area where cultural themes are rehearsed and reinforced, it may also be a site where change is incorporated, where new meanings are created and new practices explored (Moore 1986).

This chapter is principally concerned with showing how the discursively constructed sexed body mediates -through Islamic codes of sexual segregation—the gendered division of space and labour. In the course of this chapter, the ways in which the female becomes symbolically associated with milk and milk products, while the male becomes associated with grain-seed, are described, as are the ways in which the rhythms of domestic and agricultural labour constitute an active embodiment of the relationship between the key

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cultural categories, 'inside' and 'outside'. The historically-specific nature of all these relationships is also acknowledged, and throughout this chapter attention will be given to the effects of significant socio-economic change.

6.2 The Gulmiti House

Gulmiti houses built before about 1985 were mostly constructed of wood and stone sealed with mud. Houses and extra rooms built since this time have largely been constructed from concrete blocks. The concrete blocks are made by village men using cement imported from China, and sand and gravel from the river. Concrete is popular because the interior of the finished building remains cool during the hot summer, construction is quicker (keeping labour costs lower), and because concrete blocks provide a flat surface that can be rendered and decoratively painted or stuccoed. In winter, however, the interiors of concrete buildings are cold and difficult to heat, so most households retain at least one room or house that is built of traditional stone since these hold the heat more efficiently.

The roofs of both older and newer houses are flat (see Fig. 6) and are used as a drying area for fruit, vegetables, fodder, as well as, laundry. This roof area is reached by via a wooden ladder which leans against an outer wall. Towards the rear of the roof is the roof store (marah) and the roof verandah (bildi). The marah contains lesser used household equipment, such as large cooking pots for celebrations, storage baskets, as well as, kerosene for lanterns. The roof area is essentially female space since a number of drying and food processing activities take place here. It is from the roof, too, that women chat with their neighbours and observe the events and activities of the surrounding village.

The roof itself sits upon a wooden frame to which is added alternating layers of dried grass and daub made from sand mixed with a little clay. In modern houses, a layer of
plastic sheeting may also be placed between the layers. During construction work, the whole household takes part in stamping down the roofing layers until the surface is flat.

The roof of a Gulmiti house is supported by four hard wood (usually apricot, mulberry or poplar) pillars (iston) and a supporting arch consisting of two pillars and a main beam (wass). The four pillars and the supporting arch are said to represent the five pillars of Islam. In houses built prior to the 1950s, these pillars were hand-carved using ornate designs in which curving leaf and flower patterns were surrounded by, or contained within, straight lines or geometric patterns (see Photo 7). A particularly common motif is the six or eight petalled flower contained within a circle. This is frequently found at the tops of pillars, as well as around carved doorways to houses and stables. In some modern houses, the open flower is modified to become a five-pointed star and the surrounding circle is contracted into a crescent moon to form the symbol of Islam found on the national flag of Pakistan.

108 There are five 'pillars' of Islam: the first three are considered obligatory for all Muslims and include the profession of faith, the five compulsory prayers to be said daily and daily fasting during the month of Ramadam. The two other pillars are only incumbent on those who are wealthy enough to bear the expense: the pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj) and payment of alms to the poor. Although Ismailis, under the leadership of the Aga Khan, do not observe these tenets literally, nevertheless, the aesthetic resonance retains an appeal.

109 Although this motif was described as simply a flower by the Gulmitique, it is nevertheless an ancient symbol that is found in art forms throughout South Asia; in Gandaran art it is said to represent the 'wheel of Dharma' and in the ancient Harappan art of the Indus valley (c. 2500-1500 BC) it appears to be associated with fertility and cycles of regeneration (Craven 1976). Another common motif found in Gulmit, particularly around doorways, is that of the swastika. The swastika is also an ancient motif found throughout South Asia, its general symbolic potency deriving from its geometric symmetry (ibid).
Figure 6: SIDE VIEW OF A TYPICAL WAKHI HOUSE

Figure 7: CHARACTERISTIC PATTERN OF ROOF BEAMS INSIDE THE HOUSE (skylight in centre)

Figure 8: FLOOR PLAN OF A TYPICAL GULMITI HOUSE

• = pillars of wass  ○ = istin (pillars)  --- = raised step
In houses built since the 1950s, the pillars are relatively plain, with simple straight lines (cut by machine tools) extending along their edges. In both old and new houses, however, the design of the carved spirals that extend from either side of the pillar along the side beams, has been retained. These curves mirror the curled handles of the metal tongs known as toshghir, which are used for tending the fire and are kept by the hearth. During the February festival of Kith-thit, which marks the end of winter and the resumption of agricultural activity, the handles of the toshghir are bound with cotton, dipped in dampened flour and pressed along the house beams leaving a white motif of two outwardly turned spirals (Photo 8). Flour is an oft-used symbol of prosperity and food security and is tossed upon the house pillars at rites of passage, agricultural festivals and when loved ones depart for long journeys. It is likely, then, that the carved spirals allude to similar themes.

The basic design of Gulmiti houses has remained the same (Fig. 8). Both old and new houses are built around a single central room at the centre of which is the hearth (dildung). This central communal room is known as the khun - the same word that is used for 'the house' in its entirety. The khun is sunk below ground level to help retain heat and is the principal living and sleeping area for the whole household. Extra bedrooms, guest rooms and kitchen areas that are beginning to appear in new houses are built around the central khun and are effectively extensions or annexes to it.

The square khun is entered from the front left-hand corner via two corridors. On entering the house through the main outside doorway (a simple wooden door sometimes with a carved surround), one steps down into the first corridor, the soroiyi. This corridor reduces drafts into the khun and is sometimes used as a grain and potato store. In some old houses, a stable or store-room may lead off from the soroiyi but in recent years many households have extended these to make a bathroom and/or an extra bedroom. After passing
through the soroiyi (generally about 3m in length), one enters another doorway and steps into the second smaller corridor known as the kunj. From the kunj one turns left, passing under a wooden lintel (serak) and steps down onto a floor area of the khun known as the yurch. As a guest entering the house, one must always wait to be greeted by the inhabitants of the house rather than initiate greetings oneself. Once welcomed to the house, shoes are removed in the yurch and the visitor steps up onto the nikard (quilted floor area around the hearth) and is invited to sit.

Although the khun is a single room, it is conceptually divided by notions of gender and social status. Thus, that which is to the left and rear of the hearth (the latter being the cooking area and food stores) is essentially female space, while that which is to the right of the hearth is essentially male space. Male guests are always invited to sit on the nikard to the right of the hearth; if the men of the household are present, they will move to the left-hand side of the hearth while women serve food and tea from the kitchen (chikish) or sit cross-legged or kneeling behind the hearth. Occasionally, if a senior or esteemed female guest arrives, she will be invited to sit to the right of the hearth, however, if a male guest arrives she will move as a gesture of respect (although a young man will often defer to her). If several male guests arrive, there is generally much debate about the order of seating; this ultimately becomes a negotiation of status with each actor underplaying his status to display appropriate humility. Where relative status is not clear, the negotiation can be very prolonged, with he who is offered the place to the right of the hearth generally refusing it several times until the majority insist.

As mentioned above, the wood fire (rakhni) and the hearth lie at the centre of the khun, indeed, the hearth (dildung) is often used metonymically to refer to the home as the centre of family life. What is more, a new bride and groom always kiss the hearth when they visit a house during the
wedding celebrations since, once again, the hearth symbolises the heart of family life. Until the 1970s, the fire was made within a semicircular gap within the hearth. The walls of the hearth were then used for baking bread known as dildungi ('of the hearth').

In the past, the only escape for the wood smoke was via the skylight (ritzn) in the roof. The timber of the ceiling was, therefore, laid as a series of diminishing squares upwards towards the ritzn, thereby funnelling the smoke towards the outlet. This pattern of diminishing squares in the ceiling timber (see fig. 3) is characteristic of all Wakhi houses and is being retained even in newer constructions. In the 1970s, circular steel stoves (bukhori) that could be fitted into the hearth were introduced. The appeal of these stoves was that a flue could be attached to the end to draw wood smoke out of the house through a small hole in the roof. What is more, a flat skillet could be placed on the top of the stove for more efficient cooking. Since 1990, the cooking functions of the wood fire have also been augmented by the introduction of small Chinese electric ovens, electric rings and two-ringed gas stoves (fuelled by Chinese cylinders). Unfortunately, however, the supply of gas cylinders remains irregular, and the electricity supply extremely erratic. Indeed, the recent increase in ownership of electrical apparatus has placed excessive demand on the supply of electricity, and all villages in the area now experience severe load shedding. Nevertheless, the availability of alternative means of cooking does mean that women can now cook more quickly and spend less time collecting firewood. However, this does not mean that women work less, for they now spend more time in the family's fields and working with the tanzim(s).

The nikard is surrounded on three sides by sleeping platforms or rarj. While the left-hand rarj (tokben) is generally the sleeping area for women and children, it is also ritual or ceremonial space. Indeed, on occasions of ritual ceremony this area may be associated with transgression or inversion.
of the usual gendered ordering of space. So, for example, during wedding celebrations, the bride and groom and their escorts (two men and two women) are seated towards the rear of the tokben and principal guests (senior men of the respective clan(s)) are seated in front of them with the mukhi (religious leader) sitting at the very front of the tokben. Similarly, during a funeral wake (delil), the mukhi and clan elders (akobir) are seated on the tokben where they perform the appropriate religious ceremonies and prayers that send the soul of the deceased on its journey to the afterlife (Chapter 7). On the occasion of a delil, the mature women who are admitted for mourning move to the male sleeping platform (kêlah rarj) to the right of the nikard.

The sleeping platform to the front of the yurch is called the past rarj (literally lower sleeping platform) (see Fig. 8). Generally, married couples who wish to have sexual intercourse will use the past rarj, particularly in houses where there are not yet bedroom extensions. It is said, too, that in the past menstruating women used to sit and sleep upon the past rarj. The very elderly and infirm will often lie wrapped in blankets on this sleeping platform (Chapter 7).

The entire floor area of the nikard, the rarj and the left and right hand sides of the upper hearth are covered, first with durable goat's hair matting (pulos) and then by one or two layers of cotton-filled quilts (shapos). Bedding (a quilt plus a sheet, blankets and a pillow) is rolled up each morning and placed against the walls and may be leaned against during the day. Quilts are usually brightly coloured and are made by women using cloth from down-country or imported from China. However, only men may make pulos for this involves handling goat's hair which is conceptually associated with the ritually clean (Photo 6).

While the maintenance of the external walls of the house are the responsibility of men, the maintenance of the internal
walls and the surfaces of the hearth and yurch are the responsibility of women. Every one to two years during the summer, the women empty the house and re-render the surfaces using a sand-clay daub which they apply with the flat of the hand. Often a number of female friends and relatives will be called to assist in this task, a favour which is then reciprocated. When the walls are dry, a length of colourful cotton fabric (again brought from down country or China) is pinned (using Chinese drawing pins) around the lower part of the wall to create a warm, protected surface to lean against when sitting during the day. In recent years, with the increased availability of glass, many households have constructed a window in one of the outer walls to allow more light into the khun.

As mentioned earlier, the area to the rear of the house, that is, behind the hearth, is female space. This sunken area is the kitchen (chikish) where food stuff is prepared and processed. Utensils, trays, crockery and saucepans are generally stacked on wooden shelves here. Again, the range and quality of these items reflects increasing trade with China. The backs and surfaces of the shelves are often lined with pages from magazines and newspapers. It is younger women who tend to renew the pages, hence the pictures frequently reflect their taste in male and female film stars, female models and cricket players. On either side of the chikish there are general storage areas and behind a door to its rear is the main food store, the ghranz. The wooden door to the ghranz is generally kept padlocked, with the senior woman of the house holding the key. It is the duty of the senior woman to ration and allocate the food stores and to ensure that the staples of flour and potatoes last throughout the year. In the past, when there was minimal cash and access to markets, this was probably a more onerous task, nevertheless, it remains clear that older women continue to take this responsibility very seriously.
In 1994, a new house cost between 90 and 300,000 Rupees\textsuperscript{110} which included the cost of building materials and labour. While most households would try to cover the cost of a new room from savings, a new house frequently required a loan from a tanzim (women's or men's village organisation) or from the government backed House Building Finance Corporation (HBFC) in Aliabad or Gilgit. In the past, before the recent phase of rapid socio-economic development, house building was a matter of clearing land, cutting wood and stone locally and bringing it to the site by horse or donkey. All the veruteeg would participate and provide the necessary labour. Nowadays, a contractor is employed to hire labourers and artisans such as a mason/carpenter, a plumber and an electrician. In 1994, the contractor was paid 30% of the total cost of construction (ie. around 27-90,000 Rupees), labourers (generally young men from the poorer Wakhi area of Ishkomen to the West) were paid around 100 Rupees/day and artisans were paid around 150 Rupees/day, with the average house taking 6-7 months to complete. Building materials are now transported by tractor or pick-up truck which, in 1994, cost 120 Rupees/hr including the hire of the driver.\textsuperscript{111}

Changes in construction patterns also has implication for

\textsuperscript{110}Household incomes (generated from agricultural and livestock production, wage labour (including that from migrant labour), sale of women's handicrafts, import/export business with China and tourism-related business) generally range from 30,000-1000,000 Rupees p.a. Basic household expenditure, which tends to include factors of production, food and school fees, health care and travelling expenses, amounts to an average of 25,000 Rupees p.a. depending on household size, but obviously increases with growing expenditure on clothes, household items, consumer goods and luxury items, all of which are increasingly desired.

\textsuperscript{111}The construction of a new house also has a religious dimension to it. The period of Hammal (P) between 21st March and 21st April, is considered an auspicious time to lay the first foundation stones, while the completion of a new house is always celebrated the following autumn by a dawat (a night of prayer and hymn singing that is accompanied by animal sacrifice, to which all relatives and friends are invited).
this study of reproduction in Gulmit. As mentioned earlier, increased surplus income is frequently being spent on building extra rooms and even new houses. Young men returning from the cities increasingly expect access to a separate room to sleep with their wives, to study, or to receive male friends. If the young men find jobs, their own incomes contribute to the cost of new building but there is also kudos to be gained for older men in providing for their educated sons. Young men, then, have a more developed sense of privacy than their fathers, and in many cases this appears to correspond to a rather more bounded or individuated sense of self.112 The phenomenon is generally less marked in women, but is nevertheless beginning to become apparent among those young women who have received higher education in the cities, or who have been employed in other villages as teachers and lady health visitors.

It seems, then, that the house is a space in which conceptual categories become rehearsed and embodied both in the use of space and movement through it. Change, however, does enter domestic space as transformations occur in the wider social, economic and physical environment. In Gulmit, household members access and incorporate these transformations (according perhaps to socially constructed agendas (see Moore 1986)), by selecting and adopting new technology, by creating new kinds of space or simply by manipulating the aesthetics of decor. As change is incorporated, as the construction of personhood takes on new forms, pre-existing cultural categories contain, yet simultaneously create, new possibilities for the experience of the body in the occupation of space.

Let us now examine how these themes are played out within the context of the sexual division of labour.

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112 This observation is based on one to one conversations with young men who took a particular interest in discussing their personal ambitions and goals.
6.3 The Sexual Division of Labour in Gulmit

6.3.1 Seasonal Work
In Gulmit, sex is a principal determinant of the division of labour. Other determinants include age, wealth, health, educational attainment and household composition, all of which frequently cross-cut sexual divisions of labour. There are also ongoing transitions in the nature and type of work being done. The introduction of technology both inside and outside the home, together with the changing socio-economic environment have, moreover, created opportunities for women to work outside the home, and for men to find new kinds of employment inside and outside the village.

It is estimated that in this area 35.5% of the population are unemployed, and of those employed, 35.53% are engaged in agriculture, 3.61% are principally employed in manual labour, and 5.53% are principally employed in 'various services'; the percentage of women employed in 'service' is estimated to be 0.04%. The educated, in particular, may take advantage of employment opportunities. Men tend to find work with the Aga Khan Services, the government sector, the army, as well as, in businesses related to tourism and import/export with China. Many young men do find themselves unemployed for long periods of time, but most are optimistic that, through their networks of contacts (based on kinship, friendship or religious affiliation), work can eventually be found. A few find work abroad, particularly in the Middle East, Europe and the United States, but more commonly work is found in cities such as Karachi, Islamabad and Rawalpindi, as well as in the regional town of Gilgit. Nevertheless, many young men are recognising that potato growing can provide significant income particularly when combined with trading and provision of tourist services.

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113 This data is based on a survey by the Local Ismaili Council (December 1992) which was designed by the German academic, Hermann Kreutzmann.
Educated women sometimes find work with the Aga Khan Services and government sector, although opportunities tend to be restricted to teaching or health visiting. Women also participate in growing potatoes. However, it is men who buy the seed and other inputs, and it is men who subsequently sell the potatoes and who, thus, control income from them. It is only when men buy and sell on behalf of the women's tanzim that they are obliged to hand money over to women. However, when women take loans from the tanzim, they generally give money to men to cover expenditure on school fees, house construction and weddings. Women who earn money from employment, or from selling needlework and handicrafts through the tanzim(s), are generally allowed to keep the money since this income is relatively small. Many spend this money on school fees and household items, but most women also like to spend money on cloth for clothes. These days, most women own between five and ten shalwar kamiz, while it is said that during the Mir's time women generally owned only two. What is more, women today like to have a new shalwar kamiz about three times a year, particularly for festivals and celebrations, such as family weddings. Educated women with urban experience tend to be particularly known for their sophisticated tastes. Indeed, for women, new cloth and clothes design are regular conversational themes and are an

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114 According to a Local Ismaili Council Survey (January 1994), 22 women in Gulmit have been educated to matriculation level and above. Of these, 10 work as teachers in the local schools and 1 woman works as an LHV employed by FPAP (the 2 LHVs who work for AKHS are non-local). From my verbal enquiries, it is estimated that 7 local women are employed in teaching, health visiting or Aga Khan services elsewhere.

115 In Gulmit in December 1994, 167 women were registered members of the three AKRSP tanzims and 128 women were registered members of the two UNICEF tanzims. From my own observations, total weekly participation in the work of the AKRSP tanzims ranged from 50-90 members, and in the work of the UNICEF tanzims from 20-65 members. The most active participants were young, unmarried women and older women since they had less domestic responsibilities than young, married women. Women who participated in the UNICEF tanzim could earn -depending on their productivity- a small individual income from sewing, knitting and other craft activities.
integral part of their social commentary on differentiation and well-being.

While men frequently suggested that it was good for women to look clean and presentable, many also complained that women spent too much money on clothes. In a group discussion with male teachers, one young teacher argued:

*First Teacher:*

"Another thing, these women save money with the *tanzim* but they spend it all on new clothes. Look at us men, we are all in second-hand clothes. Mr Amir's coat cost 60 Rupees, but you will never see a woman wearing second-hand clothes or a *shalwar kamiz* that costs less than 300 Rupees. And they all have big credit debts at the shop. The educated women are the worst."

Generally, villagers find it difficult to directly express reservations about the education and employment of women since this implied criticism of the innovations recommended by their Imam. Here, however, in the discourse on women's clothes, there is indirect male criticism of women's education and their ability to deal with the limited economic independence they may have acquired. As the group discussion progressed, another male teacher articulated further concerns about working women:

*Second Teacher:*

"Yes, and when these educated women work outside [the home] there is sometimes a problem. The women teachers do not get home until after 2pm and their children go hungry and unwashed. There is no-one to care for them."

For the working women themselves, however, the fact that they cannot be at home to care for their children is a frequent source of guilt and frustration. These women depend on their mothers-in-law and sisters-in-law for help in caring for children. These female relatives, in their turn, often resent
the extra work created by such responsibilities and their complaints are a frequent cause of conflict within such households. One angry mother-in-law expressed her perception of the situation as follows:

M.B: "She [her daughter-in-law] sits on a chair in school all day and when her children cry, it's me that has to feed them!"

While the financial contributions of working women are not unappreciated, they are not sizeable and it is generally felt that these women's domestic duties should not be compromised. It appears, then, that in Gulmit, as elsewhere in Pakistan, there is no necessary relationship between women's wage employment and increasing relative status and decision-making power within the household or community (cf. Ayesha Khan, 1994b).

The apparent intolerance of older women becomes rather more understandable when we examine life histories and begin to appreciate some of the changes that have occurred in the nature of both male and female work in recent years.

During the time of the Mir's rule, the Wakhi were transhumant pastoralists who provided meat, hides and dairy produce for the Mir's court. Today, in Gulmit there are only a few older people who take herds of goats and sheep to the high pastures during the summer months. Indeed, these herders now take the livestock of their relatives to the pastures while young boys become carriers providing the herders with items such as vegetables and salt from the village and returning with cheeses and yogurt, which are then exchanged or sold. Some high pastures are about 4 hours walk from the village while others are up to two days walk away. The high pastures are verdant mountain meadows strewn with multi-coloured wild flowers. One elderly herder described his visits to the pastures as follows:
"Some leave for the pastures in May, but some like us go in February. First we go to the low pastures where there is not much snow and later we go to the high pastures. It is very beautiful there in the summer. The grass covers the mountain side and there are lots of flowers, especially in July. July is the time of umbaar and baneefshar (red and yellow flowers frequently recalled in Wakhi poetry and song). Sometimes we go to Bildihel which is about 4 hours walk and sometimes we go to Shimijarav which is about 6 hours walk. It is a good life in the high pastures. There is lots of meat and milk and kurut [curd cheese] because we have the animals. It is a very healthy place to live."

The edges of some of the high pastures are visible from the village and, indeed, villagers observe how the snow line descends and recedes across the peaks and pastures as winter advances, deepens and gives way to the spring. Moreover, the quantity and lie of snow across the pastures provides an indication of the amount of melt water that will be available for irrigation (or cause flooding) later in the summer. The high pastures therefore become an integral part of a collective experience of landscape that is both lived and felt.

Elsewhere in Gojal, where there is more limited access to water or arable land near to the road, pastoralism remains central to the local economy. But these days, in Gulmit, most families keep only a dozen or so sheep and goats and between one and three cows, and there are only 6 or 7 families left who continue to go to the high pastures annually. Today, the Gulmitique find it more profitable to put their time and labour into arable farming, while the young and the educated express a desire to be near to the facilities of the village and available for the opportunities of trade and tourism which are greatest during the summer months. Although pastoralism does not play as great a role in the local economy as in the past, nevertheless, the care of livestock and the processing of secondary products
-whether in the village or in the high pastures—remain an integral part of local livelihoods. What is more, the tasks associated with pastoralism are both mediated by, and implicated in, the sexual division of labour.

Either men or women may take animals for grazing, although in the high pastures it is usually men who accompany the flock to the meadows so that they can spend the day cutting firewood. Women in the high pastures usually stay in the vicinity of the house where they make yogurt and cheese. During the winter months, it is more commonly women who take the flocks for grazing in the vicinity of the village. Cows remain in the village all year round, and are principally the responsibility of women.

Men manage the fertility of animals. He-goats and rams are generally castrated in the high pastures during the month of July, when they are around 5-6 months old. The castration (khisee) is performed by an experienced man using a blunt instrument known simply as a "khisee misheen". It seems that the act is seen as a routine task and is not accompanied by any particular ritual. Every year one healthy young male is spared for breeding. This male mixes freely with the rest of the flock and is expected to impregnate females from about one year old. At 18 months old, this male is also castrated and his place is taken by another male selected from the newborn. Male calves are castrated at 1 year old and two men in the village who have plentiful grassland keep one fertile bull each. These are lent out on request. AKRSP have recently introduced large Punjabi cows that have a high milk yield, however, and for these payment is required for impregnation by a bull.

Checking for the impregnation of animals is a female task and is part of the annual ritual of Pizen Dedigitk. Around the middle of February, the senior woman of the household will visit the stable with a bowl of sehmen (a thick, sweet, porridge made from sprouted wheat) upon which sits a layer of
congealed butter. The women is accompanied by a young boy whose presence is said to confer protection and luck. On reaching the stable the woman dips her fingers into the butter and feels the teats of the female animals to see which are enlarged as a result of pregnancy. It is said that it is important for her fingers to be greased with butter because butter is derived from milk and, as one village woman put it: "to use a dry hand would mean the teats would also be dry". In other words, through symbolic association, the use of butter secures the plentiful production of milk. After checking the teats, the boy must eat some sehmen. The two then return home where the whole household celebrates good news with a meal of sehmen. One young man remembered his boyhood experience of this occasion as follows:

"I remember my mother and I going for Pizen Dedigitk. After checking the animals, my mother forced a large piece of sehmen into my mouth. I could not eat it but she forced me saying it would be unlucky for the sheep and goats if I did not eat."

As we have seen, wheat is associated with the domain of men, hence the ritual use of sprouted wheat in the confirmation of animal pregnancy symbolically conjoins the male and the female domains such that the activation of wheat becomes allied with the activation of pregnancy.

Older women assist any animals who have difficult births. It is also women who subsequently milk lactating animals morning and evening, senior women usually taking responsibility for milking the cows. Some milk is kept for making tea but the rest is converted (by women) into butter (maskah), yogurt (pie) or curd cheese (kurut).

Butter is made by churning the milk either from a standing position using a wooden barrel with a plunger (soghro) or from the sitting position (cross-legged on the ground) by rolling a large hide pouch (yazn) between the knees. These
days, some households also make small amounts of butter using electric mixers, while tinned ghee (rhugen) is generally used for cooking. A mother with sons will anticipate their wedding day by preparing talkh. This is made by placing butter in a hole beneath an irrigation channel and then leaving it for between five and ten years. Some of the resulting talkh is mixed with flour to form a rancid, pungent cake known as khast which is eaten to celebrate a betrothal (perk vendak), while the remainder is eaten with nigan on the day of the wedding.

Yogurt is made for warmed whole milk to which is added a small amount of yogurt culture (pie khaamir) from an earlier batch. Kurut is made by mixing a special khaamir (rennet-type substance, leaven) into warmed milk which causes it to separate into curd and whey. The curd is then placed in a cheesecloth bag and hung from the branch of a tree near to the house. After about a day, when the curd has drained and begun to set, it is patted into balls and placed on a tray to dry in the sun on the roof of the house. Sometimes the dried kurut is eaten with bread, sometimes it is mixed with water and poured over cooked vegetables and sometimes it is made into a soup (moch) which is said to be particularly good for warming the body in winter and for restoring strength. Moreover, it is said that eating a lot of kurut can make a man feel amorous, hence older women sometimes tease men by encouraging them to take extra kurut with their evening meal before sleeping with their wives.

From examination of the sexual division of labour, it is apparent that milk, its production and products are the domain of the female. What is more, in the production and use of milk there are constant allusions to reproduction. This association is further indicated by the ritual performed for the bride and groom in their respective home on the eve of their wedding (Sperzhuvian). This ritual known as, Zhazh Ska Yisp Katuk involves, as the Wakhi literally suggests, pouring milk over the right shoulder of the bride and groom
respectively. One male villager explained the meaning of this act quite explicitly:

"Milk is said to be sacred. It must be poured over the right shoulder by a person whose marriage is happy and who has been fortunate in having children. It is our tradition and brings similar good fortune to the couple."

While milk products may themselves require "activation" to be reproduced (cf. Delaney, 1991:247-8), nevertheless, it is apparent that milk is regarded as a source of vital and vitalising nourishment that is actively produced and complementary to the products of men.

It is men who shear the coats of animals (veringh) using special scissors known as siril. While women card and spin sheep's wool, as we saw earlier, it is only men who spin and weave goats hair to make pulos.

It is men, too, who slaughter animals, for animals must be killed according to the principles laid down in the Qur'an to ensure the meat is halal. Indeed, the spilling of sacrificial blood has particular symbolic resonance for men (Chapter 5). Animals are usually slaughtered between 4 and 7 years old. The front and hind feet are first tied, then the slaughterer utters the prayer "Bismillahirrahmanirrahim..." (in the name of God...) and, using a sharp knife, slits the animals throat in one clean cut. Goats and sheep are then hung from a tree to allow the blood to drain while cattle are laid across wicker racks before butchering.

In Gulmit, pastoralism has gradually given way to arable farming. These days, agricultural production centres on the growing of potatoes and wheat, with barley and maize grown as fodder crops.\textsuperscript{116} Potatoes have long been grown on a small

\textsuperscript{116}In the past, buckwheat (bakla) was also grown but this was largely displaced by the introduction of seed potatoes. In recent years, it has begun to re-appear in small quantities because it is associated with
scale in Gulmit but, in the early 1980s, the FAO completed trials which demonstrated that the high altitudes and sandy soils of Gojal were ideal for growing virus-free seed potatoes. In 1983, FAO handed over distribution, collection and marketing of seed potatoes to a private Punjab-based company (Jaffer Brothers) who worked in collaboration with the all-male Village Councils in the area. Research and Development was continued initially by the government-backed Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) but, in 1988, was handed over to the Directorate of Agriculture in Gilgit. Jaffer Brothers have appointed a village representative (recommended by the village elders) who advises farmers, monitors production and grades the potatoes at the end of the season. In 1988, the buying price of seed potatoes doubled from 1.5 Rupees/kilo to 3 Rupees/kilo. It was therefore at this time that seed potato production began to become particularly profitable.

After 1988, however, the relationship between the community and Jaffer Brothers began to deteriorate as the buying price of seed potatoes fell below the market price for eating potatoes. In 1992, local farmers refused to sell to Jaffer Brothers demanding a price above the market price. In 1993, Jaffer Brothers refused to supply pre-basic and basic seed potatoes for planting, but most farmers had kept back seed from the year before and were able to produce a crop. By 1994, Jaffer Brothers had returned to the area agreeing to pay 1 Rupee/kilo above the market price. However, 1994 also saw the establishment of new locally owned companies who set up in competition with Jaffer Brothers. By 1994, most farmers expected to earn 30-40,000 Rupees p.a. from selling potatoes, while one farmer in the neighbouring village of Ghulkin is said to have earned 100,000 (1 Lakh) Rupees in 1993. For the villagers of Gulmit, then, the commercialisation of seed potato production has both generated income and facilitated -directly and indirectly- the 'healthier' diet of the past.
institution-building, thereby becoming a significant contributor to rapid socio-economic change in the area.

Although the traditional Wakhi calendar begins in mid-December (see Appendix I), the agricultural cycle begins in February with the festival of Kith-thit. During this festival, women sweep the cobwebs from the house and, as described in the previous section, the head of the household decorates the pillars and beams of the house with flour motifs. After Kith-thit, men begin to prepare the fields for planting. They also begin to repair the irrigation channels and haul manure from the stables to the fields. This latter task is, for the Wakhi at least, a task that is strictly for men since manure—a substance which is considered to have great potency in making the land fertile—is regarded as polluting of women. By early March, the fields are ready for ploughing and planting. Around the beginning of March a group of men climb to a point just below Shtuber Glacier where the principal irrigation channels divide. After praying at the site, the men lift the barriers that had sealed off the water channels for the winter. Once again, water cascades through the village channels and the sound of summer returns. For a few days, the smell of dung, urine and rotting vegetation hangs in the air as the debris of the winter is washed away. The preparations for ploughing and planting are now complete, but neither can proceed until the festival of Taagem (literally, 'the seed') is celebrated around the second week of March.

Taagem is a festival in which there is ritualised metaphorical play upon the notion of coming out from the withdrawn state of winter. During the festival, a man dressed as an ox pretends to sleep in a make-shift stable (Photo 9). The men and boys of the village then taunt and prod the 'ox' with sapling branches until, at last, he is woken from his winter slumber and provoked into leaving the stable, all the time displaying his resistance in a flurry of dust and wild dancing. To the laughter and cheering of all,
the 'ox' is caught and yoked to a plough so that he can begin his Spring labour. The man-ox is now replaced by two real oxen who cut the first furrow of the year on the field below the polo ground. The first wheat seeds are planted by two small boys dressed in gold jackets and feathered woollen caps. The boys are always selected from the *rhum* of *Bori ktor* because of a story told about the origins of the village:

It is said that the three brothers who founded the village, (Mahmud, Choshimbi and Bori), attempted to plant wheat during their first season in Gulmit. Mahmud planted his wheat first but, as it sprouted, it began to grow downwards rather than up and soon began to fail. Choshimbi planted his wheat next but, as it grew, it began to turn black until it too failed. Bori, the youngest brother, planted his wheat last and it grew perfectly. So now it is said that, to ensure an abundant crop, a male from the family of *Bori ktor* must plough the first furrow and sow the first seed.

Once again, for the festival of *Taagem*, women prepare *sehmen* from sprouted wheat. The dish is sealed with apricot oil and is served first to men at the *jamat kaana*. Women then bring gifts of *sehmen* to the homes of relatives and neighbours. Similar visits are made with gifts of food during the course of the year, particularly on occasions of celebration or grief (cf. Grima, 1992: 46-69) and are a key way in which women create and sustain good relations between households.

It seems that during the time of the Mir's rule, women participated more fully in this festival. On the eve of *Taagem*, young women used to swing on rope swings in the celebration of *Kardang*. These days, this practice occurs only in hidden parts of the village, away from the potential gaze of strangers, while stricter fathers do not allow their daughters to participate at all. Older women also recall

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117 The sensitivity of this festival appears to relate to the implicit allusions to burgeoning (opening) sexuality.
that on the day of Taagem, they used to tease the procession of men by throwing buckets of water at them, often mixed with animal dung. Indeed, one old woman claimed that, during her youth, the Mir was participating in the procession and as he passed by her, she grabbed his elegant coat and threatened to drench it in dirty water if he did not excuse her from three years of tax payments. The woman proudly boasted that the Mir conceded. These days women are merely observers. Villagers generally agree that this is because outsiders may misinterpret their frivolous behaviour, and as one middle-aged man put it, "would think that we cannot control our women" or, that it is "unislamic". One woman suggested, however, that men prevent women from throwing water because, these days, men wear fine clothes and are more concerned about their appearance.

Ploughing is a male activity. In large fields with access from the road, ploughing is now done with the aid of a hired tractor. In smaller or more inaccessible fields, however, ploughing is done with a wooden hand-held plough harnessed to two oxen. Wheat and barley are planted first, with the task of sowing of the seed and creating networks of irrigation furrows over the field, generally being done by the men. Planting of the first potatoes begins around the middle of April and is something in which all household members (men and women) and nearby relatives participate. Eating-potatoes may be grown from the previous year's potatoes but potatoes for seed are (usually) supplied free of charge by companies such as Jaffer Brothers. Some days before the planting, women cut several sacks of potatoes into a uniform size. On the day of planting, men and boys of about 9 years upwards and some young women, dig and stack the soil while women and girls crouch at their feet laying the seed potato, cut side down, at regular intervals within the soil beds. The stacking of the soil into ridges above the seed potatoes is strenuous work and is done rhythmically with feet astride, back bent from the hips, with the lifting action coming from the shoulders to reduce back-ache. Nevertheless, the work is
arduous and the sun can beat down relentlessly, while intermittent gusts of wind along the river valley cause flurries of sandy soil to lift and sting the face and eyes. Women must, of course, keep their heads covered while they are working in the fields, but young unmarried women work exceptionally hard, either stacking the soil or playfully competing with one another to lay the seed potatoes as speedily as possible. This is an occasion when the ability to work hard (the most valued quality in a young bride) may be observed by others and a good reputation can be made.

Planting potatoes is then a social activity in which men and women, young and old, participate. Even when women gather to plant the fields of their tanzim, male relatives come to help. Some rest while others work, and women come and go bringing Chinese thermos flasks filled with salt tea and bread as refreshment. Groups of women huddle together at the edge of the field, many cutting extra potatoes for planting or refilling buckets of those who are working. Men generally sit separately resting against the scattered rocks. The collective activity generates a constant buzz of conversation and every now and again laughter erupts as witty observations are made and amusing stories are exchanged.

After planting, men take responsibility for watering the fields through the management of irrigation channels. It is only in a minority of cases where there is ill-health or where male labour is absent due to employment elsewhere, that women perform this task. Indeed, male informants were generally emphatic that this work was their responsibility. Men also take responsibility for fertilising the soil with artificial fertilisers about mid-way through the growing season. These artificial fertilisers are bought commercially in the larger towns or through AKRSP, with whom payment can be delayed for up to 6 months. While men scatter the fertiliser, women, young men and older boys do the heavier work of digging it into the soil and resetting the ridges. Once again, then, the association between mature men and the
process of fertilisation is reasserted.

As the crops become established, women take on the daily task of weeding. Weeding is done by groups of women who, with heads covered, crouch in the fields while exchanging stories and observing the comings and goings of the village. Thus, while weeding is an extra chore for women, it does, nevertheless, provide an opportunity for legitimately leaving the domestic environment and for making social contact with other women.

At the end of June, a few families still celebrate the festival of Ungas Tui (the wedding of the birds) in which the head of the household places grain on the rocks beside the fields of the ripening crops. The birds flock down and flutter around the rocks. It is said that the birds will not destroy the crops of those who provide grain for Ungas Tui.

By the first week of July, the fodder crop barley is ready for harvesting. This first harvest is celebrated in the festival of Chinir. Although this festival is still widely celebrated, villagers claim that festivities were greater in the past because the first harvest marked the end of the hunger months, that is, months of food scarcity when stores were at their lowest. These days, with the shift into arable production, there are larger stores of food crops (particularly potatoes) as opposed to fodder, and the presence of the KKH means that stores can be supplemented by market bought items.

On the morning of Chinir, the senior male of the household collects a small bundle of barley from the field. He places a few grains on the grinding stone, then taking the remainder of the bundle, he dips the barley heads into butter, then flour. He then shakes the flour onto the five main pillars of the house and finally ties the bundle of barley to one of the pillars of the chikish. Next, the household members gather around a single bowl of yogurt (the chinir). All bow
their heads and open cupped, outstretched hands (a sign of offering and receiving before God) as the eldest male leads the prayer: "Bismillahirrahmanirrahim...". Finally, the eldest male sprinkles a little barley grain on the yogurt and takes three sips with a spoon. The spoon is then passed to each member of the household in order of status. Thus, the spoon is first passed to all males in order of age, and then passed to all females in order of age. Each takes three sips from the bowl. Later in the morning, men gather at the jamat kaana for prayers and to share a meal of nigan and baat (a porridge made from flour, water and clarified butter). As at all times of collective celebration, the food is served in large shared bowls, rather than in the individual bowls nowadays characteristic of daily meals. Eating itself therefore becomes a celebration of sharing, a recall of co-operation and interdependency. While men later visit each other's houses to drink from the chinir, women visit more informally to bring gifts of baat, meat, sehmen and bread.

Thus, in the celebration of Chinir there is a coming together of domains, indeed, this is perhaps most evident in the symbol of the chinir bowl itself. The grain recalls the male domain for it is both the seed and the product of the field—that space which is managed, controlled and contained by men. Yogurt is the product of milk, the essence of that which is female. In drinking from the chinir, the complementarity and interdependency of the two domains is actively imbibed. Yet, while the integration of the two domains is physically enacted, at the same time, hierarchy and status is also rehearsed through the order of drinking, and practices of exclusion.

Men, women and children participate in harvesting. All participate in cutting grain crops using a small hand scythe known as a thutr, however, it is usually women who tie the

118 These prayers tend to be muttered and even my fieldwork assistants found it difficult to discern what was being said. Local prayers tend to be combinations of Persian, Arabic and Wakhi.
stalks into bundles ready for threshing. It is men, some older boys and stronger young women who dig up the potato crop, while all others collect the potatoes and place them into sacks. Towards the end of the season, work parties also begin to reap grass for hay from the foothills. Generally, these work parties are composed of men who have been called by a relative or neighbor to help. Villagers are very explicit about the reciprocal nature of this work which they call "kareeyah". A man who calls upon his male relatives and friends for kareeyah is obliged to slaughter a sheep or goat to feed them and must assist them when they call upon him for kareeyah. Normally, women do not participate in kareeyah, however, the women of the host household are responsible for tying the grass into bundles and cooking for their guests.

Although a few villagers (mostly women) do thresh small quantities of wheat by beating it with a spade-like pay, by 1994, most households, or groups of households, were hiring one of the four threshing machines in the village for 120 Rupees/hour. The threshing machines were owned by the same men who owned the four tractors. One threshing machine and tractor was collectively owned by a group of twelve related men in Goz, the rest were owned privately by individual men who had taken loans from the Agricultural Bank in Aliabad (Central Hunza).

Winnowing is done by tossing the grain in the air with a fork-like bung. This work is sometimes done by men, but more often it is done by women on a flat area near to the house (Photo 11). Residual chaff is separated using a small hand brush, and the final separation is completed by women squatting outside their houses using a large wood-framed sieve (frukhbiz).

These days, the sacks of wheat are usually taken by men to depot stations in Central Hunza or Gilgit for grinding into flour. However, some families do still use the small water mills (khaadorg) scattered throughout the village. These
water mills are fed by fast-flowing irrigation channels that are diverted downwards through steeply sloping wooden troughs to turn the grinding stones (wurt) via the mill wheel (werdan). The grinding mechanism is constantly supervised (by women or men) when in operation to ensure the continuous trickle of wheat grains through the hole in the centre of the grinding stone (Photo 10).

During August, women and children collect basket loads of fruit from their gardens and orchards. This is a time when women can take brief opportunities to sit and rest in the shade of trees heavy with fruit and to eat dreamily of plump apricots and mulberries. These are days that feel slow, ambling and hot; days of pausing at intervals to dip one's feet in the tingling chill of a wod. This is a time too to bask, to gaze upon hazy peaks, and exchange tales of demanding mother-in-laws.

In order to gather fruit, individual young women or boys scramble up the trees and shake them vigorously (ulunger) thereby causing the ripened fruit to fall. In the case of apricots, women and children pick the fruit directly off the ground and load it into wicker backpacks (wurgesht). Apricots may be eaten fresh or dried, with the kernel kept to be eaten whole or ground for oil. To collect mulberries, a group of women stand under the tree holding the edges of a stretched sheet. As the mulberry tree is shaken, mulberries rain down staining the skin and causing the sheet to tug with the sudden weight of fruit. There is generally much laughter and delight as there follows a collective gorging upon the sweet fruit -the abundant surplus being set aside for drying or conversion into the sticky sauce, khundah.

By the second week of September, daytime temperatures are beginning to fall and the days are shorter. The main crops of potatoes are beginning to be harvested and the reddening apples are ripe for picking. As autumn sets in, and the leaves begin to fall, women sweep them into sacks using
thornbush branches (Photo 12). These leaves provide a major source of fodder for the animals over the winter. In September, the animals return from the high pastures, many suitably fattened for the celebration of winter weddings. During October, young men go shooting ducks by the river as they fly south for the winter from the Kazakh lakes to the north. In the past, men also went on regular hunting trips to the mountains, but in recent years hunting has been severely restricted since the government -responding to international pressure- now strives to protect endangered species such as Marco Polo sheep, snow leopard and ibex.

With the potato harvest in, one final arduous task of late autumn remains, that is, to stock up firewood for the winter. While men deal with felling trees and the carrying of the heaviest loads, women haul large bundles of thorn bushes from the gardens and mountain slopes. As autumn yields to the advancing winter, the period of withdrawal into the warm stone-walled houses begins again.

6.3.2 Daily Domestic Tasks

Although the year's agricultural tasks are now largely complete, women must continue daily domestic tasks that are ongoing throughout the year. Only a few wealthier families in the village have servants who assist with cleaning, laundry, cooking and child care, but even in these households resident women participate in, as well as oversee, these activities.

Typically, women rise around 5.30 am in the summer, and 7.30 am in the winter. Upon rising, one woman prepares the fire for making tea, while another more junior women sprinkles water on the mud floors, shakes out the floor quilts from around the nikard and sweeps the entire house and pathway up to the outer gate. Women then take their breakfast of salt tea and dry bread gathered around the fire, making way for

\(^{119}\)For daily and seasonal time charts, see Appendix VI, Fig. (g).
the men as, one by one, they too rise. After breakfast, the senior woman goes to milk the cow, while mothers make sure their children are up, given breakfast and, if necessary, prepared for school. Depending on the composition of the house and the time of year, two women then accompany one another to take livestock to the enclosures for grazing. Upon their return, one woman generally sets about washing or ironing clothes. Laundry tends to be the responsibility of younger women, however, no single woman is responsible for the laundry of the entire house. Rather, married women are responsible for the laundry of themselves, their husbands and their children, while unmarried women are responsible for the laundry of themselves, their parents and their unmarried brothers (Photos 13 & 14).

Around the middle of the morning, one of the more junior women in the household begins the daily task of bread making. Senior women tend to confine their bread-making to the preparation of specialised dishes such as gulmindi (a dish which again combines the products of wheat and milk by stacking alternating layers of nigan, rughen and kurut) which are made at celebrations such as weddings and the birth of a son. The Wakhi make eight different types of bread which are principally distinguished by the way that the basic dough (a mixture of flour, water, leaven and a little salt) is cooked:

For daily consumption, the basic dough is made into a thin nigan or a thicker version (shir-shir) and cooked on a metal skillet; these two breads form the basis of most meals when eaten with a vegetable, lentil or meat sauce. When the basic dough is pressed into rounds of about 5cm deep, set into an iron dish with a lid and allowed to bake in the ashes of the wood fire, the resulting bread is called komushdun. A gift of komushdun always precedes a proposal of marriage. If the same dough is pressed into an aluminium baking tray and

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120 This is a time when older women tend to meet each other on the path. Milking the cow can therefore be a highly social task.
cooked in an electric oven, this is *pitoč* and is distinguished from *komushdun* by being somewhat shallower and firmer. *Komushdun* and *pitoč* form the second daily staple and are taken with, or broken into, salt tea for breakfast and snacks between lunch (*chosht*) and the evening meal (*shot*). As mentioned in the previous section, the same basic dough may be flattened into rounds and pressed against the hearth (*dildung*) walls to cook in the heat of the fire; the resulting *dildungi*, which is firm with a slightly smoky flavour, is used in the celebration of weddings. Sometimes, particularly if for some reason there has been no time to bake bread, the basic dough is pressed into a flat square, the corners are turned in and this 'envelope' of dough is cooked in a little oil on the skillet. The resulting *khasta* is a fairly filling bread taken with tea. A second very filling, oily bread is known as *prunta*. This is made by smearing the rolled dough with oil, coiling the dough up, then re-rolling it into a flattened circle which is deep-fried in oil. As a heavy bread, *prunta* tends to be eaten at the religious festival of *Eid-ul-Fitar* which celebrates the end of the annual fast of *Ramadam*. Finally, the slightly yellow bread *shareek* is a round scalloped-edged bread made by baking *prunta* dough in a similar way to *komushdun*. *Shareek* is used to commemorate the dead in the annual festival of *Vull* (literally meaning smell, or scented air) (Chapter 7).

In Wakhi, the generic word for bread is *shapik* and this is also the general word for food. Bread is therefore a central and elaborated part of the Wakhi diet, indeed, it is regarded

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121 It is not obligatory for Ismailis to observe the Ramadam fast since the Imam recommends that self-discipline be practised throughout the year. Nevertheless, some pious individuals do observe the fast and most villagers attended the *jamat kaana* service for *Eid-ul-Fitar*. There is then a collective recall of the cycles of absence and abundance. It is also not customary for Ismailis to practice the Shia rituals associated with the month of *muharram*—rituals of self-flagellation which mourn the martyrdom of Muhammad's grandson, Hussain. Indeed, Ismaili non-observance of such rituals has become a key theme in local discourses of sectarian identity.
as the staff of life. For this reason, its main ingredient, flour, has particular symbolic significance and is used in all the principal rituals and rites of passage in Gulmit.

6.4 Concluding Comments
From description of the seasonal festivals and practices of the Gulmitique, it becomes apparent that they effectively mirror and embody agrarian rhythms (cf. Bourdieu 1977). Just as the seed incubates within the shelter of the earth before germinating in Spring and coming out into the summer sun, so the Gulmiti festivals of Kith-thit, Kardang and Taagem celebrate the emergence, or coming out, of human beings after a winter season of relative inactivity and withdrawal. Similarly, the harvest festival of Chinir marks the culmination of the season of growth and fruitfulness, and for human beings, the season of heightened activity and social contact. Finally, the autumn vigil of Dawat marks withdrawal and retreat once again towards that 'fallow' time when people spend long hours within the female domain of the house thinking, day-dreaming, talking and making marriages. So it is, that the seasonal rhythms and cycles, the creative order, become actively integrated within the embodied 'aesthetics of the everyday'.

But, while the aesthetic values of daily life are pervasive and encompassing, they are not necessarily fixed and immutable, for change (social, economic and material) produces the possibility of alternative configurations that become mediated by social actors themselves.

In this chapter, I have suggested that, in Gulmit, discourses of the sexed body mediate the sexual division of space and labour. Investigation of the Gulmiti house revealed how shared space becomes conceptually, if not physically, divided in accordance with social categories of status and gender. But, it has been observed, too, that social and economic change may also become integrated and made manifest within domestic space, while being mediated by pre-existing cultural
categories and themes (cf. Moore 1986). Of particular significance for this study, is the increasing requirement for private space expressed by young men and young, educated married couples. This appears to parallel a generational transition in the active construction of self, as well as, a degree of transition in the qualitative nature of marital relations (see Chapter 9).

The Gulmitique often describe the respective roles of men and women as complementary and mutually dependent.\(^{122}\) It is clear, however, that the roles of women and men are not fixed but changing, and may also be seen as situated within negotiated relations of differential power, which themselves operate within a wider, dynamic social field. In recent years, social and economic transformation have necessitated women spending more time outside the home, either for studying or agricultural labour. But, the movement of women from 'inside' to 'outside' requires a negotiation of gender relations, not only practically and verbally, but also symbolically (most notably through manipulation of practices of parda). This will be a recurring theme in subsequent chapters.

Despite transformations in the nature of women's work, it is clear that the tasks of women's daily life continue to require skills, competence and physical energy. Having considered the (expanding) workload of Gulmiti women, there is perhaps an appreciation of why, for villagers, the most highly ranked quality of a new bride is her ability to work. It may be appreciated, too, that the ability to work is an integral part of a Gulmiti woman's sense of self-validation, an integral part of her status and identity. Consequently, anything that is perceived to undermine this ability to work (for example, the perceived side-effects of hormonal contraception) may be regarded with suspicion, even

\(^{122}\)This perspective is very much in keeping with the aesthetic schema described above.
In the last three chapters, I have been concerned with how historical, geographical and social context mediates discourses of the sexed body, and how these in turn mediate historical, geographical and social realities. In particular, I have been concerned with how meanings and values associated with reproduction shape, and have resonance with, each of these processes. Although reference has been made to historical transitions, little attention has so far been given to how these processes are also mediated by time, and the fact that the human body is destined to mature and age. Situating fertility and childbearing within historically-specific lifecycles is, then, the subject of the next chapter.
Photo 5: **TRADITIONAL WAKHI HOUSE WITH MODERN ROOF EXTENSION**

Photo 6: **GULMITI MAN SPINNING GOAT’S HAIR TO MAKE A PULOS**
Photo 7: CARVED PILLAR DECORATED WITH FLOUR

Photo 8: FLOUR MOTIFS APPLIED TO HOUSE BEAMS FOR THE FESTIVAL OF KITHE-TIT
Photo 9: GULMITI MEN ESCORTING THE 'MAN-OX' TO THE POLO GROUND FOR THE FESTIVAL OF TAAGEM

Photo 10: THE HARVESTED WHEAT IS GROUND IN A WATER MILL
Photo 11: **GULMITI WOMAN WINNOWING**

Photo 12: **YOUNG GULMITI WOMAN GATHERING AUTUMN LEAVES**
Photos 13 & 14: WOMEN AT WORK (note how the squatting position is adopted)
CHAPTER 7

THE SEASONALITY OF LIFE:
SITUATING CHILDBEARING WITHIN THE FEMALE LIFE COURSE

7.1 Introduction
It has been established that, in Gulmit, the contours of the body are mapped through both material and spiritual dimensions; consideration has also been given to how the sexed body is read—by opening some body surfaces and orifices and closing or reinscribing others—to determine gender identity. This chapter is concerned with examining the sexed body in relation to another dimension, namely time. Particular attention is given to how the biological, the social and the cultural converge in a mutable aesthetic schema that mediates the meanings and values ascribed to body, gender and reproduction over the course of the human life cycle.

The chapter begins with an examination of childhood and differences in the valuation, care and socialisation of male and female children. The female life course is then followed through to menopause, old age and death, with emphasis placed on themes central to this thesis, namely, pregnancy and childbirth. Attention will also be given to the interpretation of, and responses to, infertility. I shall also touch on cultural practices, other than contraceptive use, that effectively contribute to the management of reproduction in Gulmit. Throughout this chapter, gender differences and the effects of socio-economic transformation are highlighted to illustrate how continuity and change are mediated relative to a shared aesthetic schema which incorporates the themes of thermal states and emotional values. I shall also explore how the body/self is continually constituted and positioned within the hierarchical relationship of the material world, the spirit world and God, as well as, how continuities between the
agrarian year and the 'mythical year' of the human life course imbue life with a seasonality within which reproduction becomes situated. In short, this chapter is concerned with how cultural metaphors, imageries and scenarios contribute to the ongoing making, moulding and interpretation of sexed bodies in the households of Gulmit.

7.2 A Child is Born in Gulmit
In Gulmit, the birth of a son is matter of great joy. A son means continuity of the lineage and access to inheritance; it brings the possibility of income generation, and security for parents in their old age; it is regarded as a blessing from Allah. The messenger who brings the good news to the waiting father is rewarded with a gift of money, and within minutes, gunshots ring from the roof of the father's house. Within half an hour of the birth, close relatives and neighbours arrive to offer congratulations and give gifts of money and clothes. Rukhan tabakh ("the white plate" consisting of a bowl of warmed milk, a little butter, wholewheat grains, served on a flat plate of white flour chapattis) is passed around to unite all in the celebration.\(^23\)

The birth of the first child -be it a boy or a girl- is also a matter of joyful celebration for it establishes a woman's fertility. However, if the first-born is a girl, there is no firing of guns.

The birth of a girl is generally something of a disappointment.\(^124\) A daughter will leave her father's home

\(^123\) In 1994, there were 176 recorded deliveries in the health district Gojal 1, which extends from Shishkat to Passu and includes Gulmit. Of these, 72% were delivered by a trained person and 28% by an untrained person (Source: AKHS records).

\(^124\) Since the Aga Khan explicitly advocates equality between men and women, many villagers are reluctant to admit their differential response to the birth of sons and daughters. However, observation reveals that the birth of second (and subsequent) daughters is a matter of minimal celebration, with visiting and gift-giving significantly diminished. During my fieldwork period, the local Ismaili Council
at marriage and —although for Ismailis there is no dowry payment to be made— does not bring the same prospects for prosperity and security as a son. Sometimes, if a woman has had many sons (at least three) a daughter may be welcomed. Moreover, in speculating on ideal family size both men and women often suggested that it is good for sons to have at least one sister to care for. Nevertheless, when a daughter is born, visitors to the house generally greet the mother with rather equivocal salutations, such as: "Muborek khui, thegd gokht. Fiker nast, tsan tsebas petr gotten" (Congratulations sister, you have a daughter. Don't worry, next time you will have a son!).

If the mother has given birth at the health centre, then the day of her return home is one of celebration, which is of course heightened if the baby is a boy. Visitors arrive and are served baat, mul and other festive foods such as chilpunduk and molida, all of which are made from combinations of wheaten products and milk products. As the baby is brought across the threshold of the house, the senior householder tosses wheat flour onto the beams and lintels and chants prayers of thanksgiving.

If the baby is born at home, then this ritual takes place around 7 days after the birth when the baby is named, swaddled and placed in the goraj (wooden cradle) for the first time. The day of this ritual is called gorakta (putting in

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recommended that there should no longer be gun-shots for the birth of a son since this was discriminatory and effectively contravened the teachings of the Aga Khan. Despite the influence and authority of the Council, the recommendation was, in practice, largely disregarded.

125Although a delivery room has been available at the health centre since 1979, the majority of women still prefer to give birth at home. The Aga Khan Health Service (AKHS) has therefore established a system of fees, incentives and fines to encourage women to make full use of the health services available: For home deliveries, the LHVs are given standard payment of Rs 200 plus a small fee for any drugs used; if the delivery takes place at the health centre, the fee is only Rs 150; if women do not call any trained attendant, they are charged a fine of Rs 200 (however, the LHVs admit this is often difficult to extract).
the cradle) or nam yau thak (to give the name). 126

7.3 Visiting
Throughout the first month visitors arrive to offer congratulations and to present small gifts of money or clothes for the baby. Such congratulatory visits (Muborekbodi) are among the obligatory visits that support and maintain relationships between households (cf. Grima 1992). Neighbouring women bring gifts of food for the mother and for the other guests, thereby perpetuating the more informal system of food exchanges between women that creates and maintains alliances.

Following the birth of the first child and subsequent sons, the mother's natal kin must make a special Muborekbodi to offer congratulations and bring gifts. The visit can take place up to a year after the birth. The precise timing of the visit depends on the financial circumstances of the maternal kin, since gifts are expected to be substantial. 127 The host family are also expected to be generous with their hospitality, and on the day of the visit, a goat or sheep will be slaughtered for the shared meal. Such visits effectively underscore the alliance that has been created

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126 The name of a new baby is decided after the birth through household discussion. All may make suggestions but it is usually a senior man or woman who makes the final choice. Generally, names are taken from the Islamic tradition and tend to recall respected ancestors or religious leaders, although in recent years there has been a vogue for naming babies after celebrities such as film stars, politicians and cricket players. Among the Wakhi, there is not usually a single family name that passes through the generations - although women sometimes take the name of their father or husband for official purposes. An exception is found in the Mir's family who do keep the family name 'Khan'. Men of the Mir's veruteeg also tend to adopt titles such as Shah or Raja to denote social status. At the naming ceremony, a khalifa or mukhi chants "Bismillirrahmanirrahim..." (in the name of God) and whispers the baby's chosen name in its ear. Having heard the word of God and its own name, the baby is considered to be a Muslim with an established identity.

127 Gifts tend to include items such as cassette players, tea services, cloth and money (cf. Jeffery, Jeffery & Lyon 1989).
between the two families, an alliance based on the gift of a
daughter who has proved fertile and capable of producing sons
that ensure continuity of her husband's rhum. It is notable
that such visits do not occur, or become tokenised, after the
birth of a second daughter, and after third and fourth sons.

7.4 Care of the Newborn
The Wakhi consider babies to be full of uncontrolled nafs
with no developed aql (Chapter 5). Babies are also perceived
to be soft, malleable and vulnerable beings that must be both
physically and socially moulded, while simultaneously being
protected from the physical and social environment. A baby
-particularly if it is a son- is also vulnerable to the
jealous glance of chezhum kak from a visitor or even a
mountain pari. Thus, for a month or so after the birth, the
mother generally keeps a knife or axe hidden beneath the gorab
for protection. Nevertheless, the mother and baby should
never be left alone during this time (Photo 22).

If the mother has a history of miscarriages, stillbirths or
neonatal deaths, it is said that special precautions must be
taken to protect a newborn baby. A history of such misfortune
is frequently attributed to wushuk which may be passed to the
baby in breastmilk. In such cases, the baby should be
temporarily fed by a zhazh nan while a khalifa or bitan is
called to ritually prepare a special timor.

128 The woman who is asked to be the zhazh nan tends to be a respected
close relative or friend. To be a zhazh nan in these circumstances is,
however, a perilous responsibility for the zhazh nan effectively
confronts the power of the pari. It is said that the price is often
paid later in life when the zhazh nan may fall victim to disabilities
such as twisted bones or blindness.

129 If wushuk is suspected, the newborn baby is removed from the house
immediately after birth and both parents are forbidden to see it for 7
days. After 7 days, the baby is returned, but before being brought
into the father's house it is first passed 3 times back and forth over
the threshold of the outer door. The parent's first viewing of the
baby must then take place through a ghrel bel (flour sieve) -a symbol
of good fortune. A respected bitan (shaman) may be called to prepare a
timor which is ideally made from hair of a horse's tail (horses are
For most of the first 3-4 months of its life, the vulnerable newborn is kept in the secure, warm environment of the gora (Photo 13). However, before being placed in the gora, the baby must be carefully swaddled. Swaddling is said to ensure that the baby's bones become strong and straight. It is also considered to keep the baby warm and protect it from hurting itself through uncontrolled movements. Swaddling is a precise practice, and a new mother will be carefully supervised by her mother-in-law until she masters the technique. The procedure is as follows:

The baby is cleaned with water or oil and massaged with apricot oil. Mitti (a paste of crushed apricot kernels) is applied to the umbilical stump (nof) of the newborn baby to promote healing.\(^{130}\) The baby is dressed in a cotton vest. A folded cloth sprinkled with absorbent baked and powdered cow dung (kshitch) forms a diaper (ustubun) and is pinned in place. Mitti may also be applied to heal nappy rash. In wealthier households, talcum powder is sometimes used. The baby's head is also massaged with oil and pressed gently into shape. A small cotton square and cloth strip (sarband) is then wrapped around the head to mould the skull bones and produce the desired perfectly rounded shape. Failure to mould the head adequately is said to result in an unattractively pointed and flattened chek sar skull shape; such skull shapes are said to be typical of the Shias of Nagyr and the less sophisticated Wakhi of Shimshal.\(^{131}\)

\(^{130}\)When the umbilical stump eventually falls off it is said that it should not be dropped on the floor of the house since this would bring bad luck to the baby, rather it is stored on the wass (roof beam) until it can be buried outside. One elderly lady suggested that in the past the dried cord was sometimes ground to make a medicine for sore eyes.

\(^{131}\)cf. Delaney (1991:71) who notes that in rural Turkey many people have heads that are flattened at the back as a result of spending the
the sarband is in place, the baby's head is covered with a woollen hat for warmth. A small square blanket (dun) -these days a synthetic blanket from China- is then wrapped firmly around the baby and fixed with a colourful binding cord (kur), leaving the head free (Fig. 9). Before the baby is placed in the gora, its facial bones may also be gently massaged and pressed to produce the desired pointing of the nose and roundness of the cheek-bones and chin.

A mattress (gora hilta), packed with absorbent grass, is placed on the base of the wooden gora, and this is followed by a small square of plastic to provide a water-proof layer, a cotton mattress (tishetk) and a small flat pillow (worzik). The swaddled baby is laid on its back in the gora and quilts and several blankets placed over it, since babies are thought to be very vulnerable to cold. A wide band of strong cotton (pozvash) is drawn across its middle and tied firmly to the sides of the gora so that the baby cannot move. Finally, layers of blankets (gora gin) are placed over the top of the gora to create a warm, darkened, tent-like space within (Fig. 10).

first months of their lives swaddled and laid flat on their backs in a crib.
Figure 9: DIAGRAMATIC DRAWING OF A SWADDLED BABY

Figure 10: DIAGRAMATIC DRAWING OF A GORA
For the first 3-4 months, the baby is only taken out of the *gora* for washing and nappy changes, and for visiting. When the baby cries or sounds restless, the cradle is rocked by any of the household women or an older child. The carer may also lift a corner of the blanket to talk to or check the child. If crying persists, it is assumed the baby is hungry and requires feeding. Feeding is on demand and does not require the baby to be removed from the *gora*. Rather, the mother simply lifts the blankets, leans over the *gora* and places a breast in the baby's mouth, taking care not to put weight on the baby's nose since this is thought to cause unattractive flattening.

It is said to be desirable for the baby to receive the colostrum or *tremis zhazh* (first milk), as this is considered to be very strong milk (*kuchin zhazh*). Wakhi women maintain that it is the strength rather than the quantity of their breastmilk that must be maintained:

D: "It depends on the woman's body. I had only a little milk but it was strong and all my children are healthy. Some women have a lot of milk but their children are not healthy."

It is said to be thermally warm foods—such as meat, butter and eggs—that keep a mother's milk *kuchin* and ensures that it remains better for a baby than cow's milk:

Z: "...a cow gives a lot of milk but how can it [the milk] be strong? it only eats grass!"

It is said that a baby should not, on any account, be given water to drink especially during the first month of life. Since babies are thought to be especially vulnerable to cold, and since water is regarded as a thermally cool substance, it is feared that the water may produce stomach pains or illness; it is suggested too that a woman should avoid drinking water (a thermally cool substance) while she is
breastfeeding for the same reasons. If a baby cries
continuously it is thought that the mother may not have
enough milk or that it has become nilishan (thin, weak).
This is said to be more likely in older women, or women who
have had many children. If the baby is judged to be hungry,
it will then be given warmed cow's milk or the powdered baby
milk available from local shops with a cup and spoon. Sheep and goat's milk is considered unsuitable for unweaned
babies for it is said to be hazm (rich, concentrated) and
likely to give the baby stomach pains.

Although no physical attributes are thought to be acquired
directly from breast milk, villagers suggest that
breastfeeding creates a close bond between a mother and her
child. Mothers who for some reason were unable to breastfeed
a child, suggested that they felt a greater distance from the
child concerned. Indeed, as noted in Chapter 4, the sharing
of breast milk - and other milk products- is understood to
establish close social bonds.

Breastfeeding continues for between 18 months and 3 years,
with the average duration being 2 years. Women suggest that
ideally breastfeeding should be continued for at least 2
years for both daughters and sons. Some women suggest,
however, that it is mothers-in-law who, in practice, judge
when breastfeeding should be discontinued. Breastfeeding may
be discontinued early if the mother becomes ill, shows signs
of wushuk, or becomes pregnant, for in all these cases it is
believed the breastmilk becomes shak (bad), causing illness,
weakness, even disability, in the baby. Some women with many

132 Bottle-feeding is not common in the village. Following educational
campaigns by the LHV and the doctor, women understand well that they
should not give milk from a bottle because it is "difficult to keep it
clean in the village". Several women also suggested that the cleft
palate and associated speech impediment of one young girl in the
village had been caused by bottle feeding with a teat that had become
hardened from excessive boiling.

133 The PDHS 1990-91 indicates that, nationally, there may be
significant sex differentials in breastfeeding.
children suggested that they might discontinue breastfeeding after 18 months if they had many chores that required them to be absent from the house for long periods of time.

The process of weaning begins around 3 months. Weaning foods include *moch* (soup), thin *mul* (porridge made from wheat flour) and soft potatoes. The baby is expected to be taking a reasonably solid diet by 9 months. Although a mother and infant may share the same plate, the father and breastfeeding child will never do so for fear that the father's food become contaminated with breastmilk. It is said that if a man ingests his wife's breastmilk, he becomes like her child, in other words, subordinate to her.

From 3-4 months, head moulding is considered complete and the baby begins to spend more time out of the *gora* under the supervision of an older child or household adult (the baby's own mother is generally at hand for breastfeeding but usually has multiple other domestic duties). By 7 months, the baby spends most of its waking hours outside the *gora* and swaddling is reduced to loose wrapping with a blanket. From the age of 3-4 months, the mother brings the infant with her when she goes visiting, attends the *jamat kaana* or communal gatherings such as festivals. On these occasions, she either carries the infant in her arms or ties it to her back with a *chador* (thick veil). When leaving the house, the mother continues to take precautions against *chezhum kak* by marking the infant's eyes, cheeks and forehead with *kak-shak* (kohl); the black markings are said to draw the eye of a jealous observer away from the infant's beauty.

7.5 *Care and Socialisation of the Child*
Toddlers are toilet trained by taking them to a corner of the garden or latrine area at intervals and encouraging them to squat. Toddlers do not wear an *ustubun* when out of the *gora*, rather they are dressed in long garments or loose trousers that cover the lower half of the body and are easily
While in the house, the toddler is sat on a chador and if an observant carer notices that toileting is required, the child is rushed to the garden or at least to the yurch (a conceptually 'dirty' area of the communal house). If soiling occurs, the child is reprimanded with words such as "rim!" (dirty) or "shareml!" (shame), to indicate disgust.

From 2-3 years, after circumcision of a son has been completed, differences are observable in the way that girls and boys are dressed. Girls tend to be dressed in long colourful dresses or shorter dresses with trousers underneath. Boys sometimes wear cotton pyjama suits but are frequently dressed in Western style clothes. As toddlers, both boys and girls stay around the house and garden with the mother and other household members. Here, they play with sand, water, small animals and, these days, plastic Chinese toys, while their carers complete their household chores.

Sometimes, children are taken to neighbours' houses to play with children of a similar age.

As children become more mobile and communicative, men begin to spend time cuddling them and teasing them, appearing to give at least as much attention to daughters as to sons. While many villagers maintain that, these days at least, boys and girls are given equal treatment (some making explicit reference to the Aga Khan's fahrmans), a few did admit that preferential treatment is given to sons for, it was suggested that, as infants, boys are more delicate than girls:

134 Unlike the rural Turkish society described by Delaney (1991), children never run around nude and attention is not drawn to male genitalia to reinforce gender identity. Even in children, uncovered genitals are treated as shameful and in need of covering. From a very early age, both male and female children show considerable embarrassment if their genitals are exposed.

135 I observed little of the purposeful 'child-centred' play that is typical of mother-child interaction in modern, industrialised societies (see Everingham 1994), although play with older siblings often had a highly didactic quality to it.
A.B: "Even if you give one drop of cold water to a boy, he will become ill, but if you give the same to a girl, nothing happens!"

By 5 years old, play between boys and girls becomes increasingly separate, with boys beginning to venture outside the domestic space to participate in boy's ball games (such as football and cricket), kite flying and stone throwing competitions. Meanwhile, girls tend to remain within the domestic space and play ball games (putt), skipping/jumping games, and games that mimic domestic activities such as making mud chapattis (ret pitock). They are also frequently required to help with domestic tasks and looking after younger children. When looking after younger brothers, girls must not be caught shouting at, insulting or striking them, since disrespectful behaviour towards a brother, no matter what his age, is regarded as reprehensible.

Although the day to day care of children is thought to be the exclusive domain of women, it is said that both parents - as well as grandparents - must teach children baf adati (good habits). This must be done when children are young and impressionable for it is considered necessary to, "shepk de briki khamuth" (bend the stick when it is thin). Girls are said to require less disciplining than boys at this age, while boys are generally disciplined by adult males rather than women.¹³⁶

These days, girls as well as boys attend school unless they are sickly or disabled. With the opening of the village Aga Khan Girl's School in 1986, most girls complete secondary school¹³⁷ while the most academically successful girls attend

¹³⁶ In Gulmit, male school teachers are well-known for their harsh disciplining of male pupils.
¹³⁷ Aga Khan Education Service (AKES) figures for the locality indicate that female literacy rates in the district have already reached 12%, compared to an average of 3% for other rural areas of Pakistan.
the Aga Khan's Girl's Academy in Karimabad. Attendance of Al-Amyn English-medium school tends to be associated with status; what is more, although it is a co-educational school, it tends to have a disproportionate number of male pupils. Children generally attend religious (tariko) school in the early afternoon. After a meal at home, girls are usually required to assist with tasks around the house while boys have greater freedom to go and play. Nevertheless, both boys and girls assist with seasonal agricultural tasks that are allocated according to the general sexual division of labour. Homework is usually completed at night, by the light of erratic electricity or a hurricane lamp.

By 9 years old, the principles of sharem appear to have been well internalised by girls who increasingly lower their eyes in the presence of strangers, cover their heads when leaving the house and place a hand or veil across their mouths when talking to men from outside their household. Around the time of menarche, adolescence girls generally begin to grow their hair longer, abandoning the short practical styles of childhood to adopt the longer styles of womanhood.

7.6 The Adolescent Years
With advancing sexual maturity, the behaviour of young women and men becomes increasingly informed by the shame-honour complex. As shown in Chapter 4, recent changes in the area—such as rising age of first marriage, infrastructural changes bringing more begona halg (strangers) to the village, and issues relating to ongoing ethnic and sectarian tension—mean that young women are urged to observe codes of sharem rigorously. It has been suggested, too, that in practice the dynamic quality of gender relations emerges from active manipulation of the shame-honour complex. In Chapter 8, I shall also show how the shame-honour complex can become more emotionally charged by becoming implicated in flirtation.

Attendance figures of the Al-Amyn English medium school indicate that around 61% of pupils are male and 39% are female.
falling in love and potential challenges to authority. Nevertheless, young women are expected to demonstrate obedience and appropriate deference to authority while moving within demarcated physical and social domains. In contrast, young men are expected to spend time with their peers outside the home where interaction is principally governed by themes of competition, autonomy and hierarchy (see Ask 1993:212).

7.7 Marriage

Arrangements for marriage, within the context of historical change, have been outlined in Chapter 4. Despite change, marriage in Gulmit remains a significant focal point in the life of a person, and his or her family. Indeed, it will be shown in Chapter 8 that socially-meaningful adult life only really begins for men and women after marriage.

In Gulmit, weddings generally take place in winter between the months of November and February when there is still plenty of food in the stores and there is a minimum of agricultural work to be done. Preparations for a wedding begin three days in advance when women and men of the rhum(s) concerned gather to make bread for the wedding feast: while teams of women rhythmically knead and roll the nigan dough on the tokben, a group of men takes responsibility for tending the hearth fire and turning the nigan on the skillet. The three day period before a wedding is also known as the mirgetch. It is a time when the celebrating bride and groom are deemed particularly vulnerable to expressions of jealousy in the form of wushuk or chezhum kak, consequently, they must remain within the safety of their respective father's houses until the day of the nikah.

Bread making and the adjustments to new clothes continue on the second day of preparations (Photo 17). On the third and final day, special festive foods are prepared: the wedding bread dildungi (hearth bread) is baked by women; goats and sheep are ritually slaughtered and cooked by men, who also take responsibility for preparing huge vats of baat (Photo
The night before a wedding is known as Sperzhuven. This is the night when the bride and groom are bathed, groomed and dressed in their respective homes with the assistance of close friends and kin. Bathing also includes the ritual of Zhazh Skar Yisp Katuk (Chapter 6).

After bathing, the bride and groom are presented to their respective rhum(s) wearing white wedding regalia (Photo 15). The bride enters the room wearing an old pitek and this is ceremonially replaced by a new white pitek by her mother or grandmother.139 Her hands and feet are then decorated with henna by her sisters and friends (Photo 16). In the groom's house, his bare head is crowned with a glittering wedding helmet (tipok) and he is presented with a chipan (glittering wedding coat) or bett (embroidered woollen coat) and warrior's sword (khengar). Both bride and groom, in their respective homes, are then festooned with garlands (har) and showered with sweets and apricot kernels - symbols of abundance and good fortune. After the sharing of festive foods, the bride must formally bid farewell to her family, friends, neighbours and all the members of her rhum. This is a time of great sadness, of tears and wailing.

On the morning of the wedding, the bride's white wedding garments are replaced with red ones.140 She wears a skith bedecked with jewellery and over this is draped first a white pitek, then a red pitek and finally a red and gold cloth coat. At the appointed time, the fully-attired groom, his chosen tat-kash and his veruteeg depart for the bride's

139 See n.80 for an account of the symbolic significance of the white veil.
140 In Gulmit, as in other parts of the Islamic world (cf. Delaney, 1991:273; Combs-Schilling, 1989) red, the colour of menstrual blood appears to symbolise procreative potential. Red cloth is therefore used for the bridal dress, while the bride's rite of passage is symbolically represented by the henna applied to her hands, which turns from green to red in the heat of her body.
father's house, visiting the houses of the bride's veruteeg along the way. At the bride's house, the bride, the groom and the tat-kash are seated with senior women of the bride's rhum, either on the tokben or in a decorated extension room. Here, it is not uncommon for older female relatives of the bride to subtly tease the groom and the tat-kash about their sexual abilities. Eventually, the groom leaves with his bride, who again displays great sorrow. The departure is also marked with the ritual of pituk dikht - the ritual tossing of flour on beams and lintels of the bride's house. After a short, religious nikah ceremony in the jamat kaana during which the mayheir is settled, the wedding party - which includes male veruteeg of the bride and groom's rhum and a female escort for the bride - depart for the groom's home (Photo 19). Sometimes, the wedding party stops off at an open space for celebratory dancing (see Appendix V), and again may visit many homes along the route. When the wedding party finally reaches the groom's home, the bride is warmly greeted by the women of her husband's rhum. The bride must, however, continue to look forlorn, since to do otherwise would indicate lack of sharem (Photo 20). On entering the groom's house, the bride and groom move directly to the hearth which they bend and kiss the hearth.141 The rite de passage ceremony of pituk dikht is then repeated. The wedding food is consumed and the celebration may continue until late at night.

In Gulmit, the bride and groom rarely sleep together on their wedding night. Indeed, several weeks, even months, may pass to allow the bride to become established in her new home, especially if she is very young. There is also no checking for the blood-stained sheets of lost virginity after first intercourse (cf. Grima 1993).

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141Chapter 6 describes the symbolic significance of the hearth.
7.8 Pregnancy

Pregnancy—for which the Wakhi word is ghrung (literally, heavy), and less commonly, dijon (with life) or lup wanj (with big belly)—is not itself a state of pollution because there is no associated loss of body fluids. Nevertheless, it is associated with a state of sharem since it draws attention to a woman's sexuality. This sense of sharem seems to be experienced most acutely by women who are pregnant for the first time. However, when women are alone they often tease or question one another about such matters. This is particularly true of newly married women, women who have not been pregnant for some years, and women whose husbands have returned after a long absence. Such questions also indicate interest about the success of the marriage concerned and the quality of relations between husband and wife.

Women deduce pregnancy from the cessation of menstruation, nausea, morning sickness or feeling the baby kicking. Generally, women do not tell anyone of their pregnancy preferring to let a mother-in-law or husband guess from the swelling of the belly or changes in behaviour.

A woman is considered to be especially vulnerable when pregnant and must take special precautions to protect herself from jealous pari and belas. A woman should not, therefore, walk outside the house alone after dark or look up at the night-sky (to the mountains) through the sky-light. A pregnant woman should never attend a birth, for birth is itself a dangerous time, and a pregnant woman may fall prey to sources of misfortune. Since pregnancy is a matter of sharem, but not intrinsically polluting, the pregnant women may attend the jamat kaana. She must ensure, however, that her swollen belly is suitably disguised by a chador. It is not generally considered appropriate for a woman to visit her natal home when pregnant unless some special event—such as the marriage of sister, or death of a close relative—occurs; this is because pregnancy underscores a woman's tie to her husband's home and hence greater separation from her natal
home. However, where a woman is alone—for example if there has been separation from the parent-in-law's home and the husband is away from the village—a pregnant woman may be visited by natal kin (usually a mother or a sister) who will help her with her domestic work. In the exceptional circumstance of a man living with his wife's parents (*khun domod*), the pregnant wife must go to live with her parents-in-law for the final weeks of the pregnancy, thereby acknowledging that the child will belong to the husband's household. Generally speaking, the restrictions of pregnancy are more strictly observed towards the end of pregnancy when the woman's "shameful" condition is most obvious.

Among the Wakhi, a woman's body is considered to provide a nurturing, essentially fluid, environment during pregnancy (see Appendix IV). Prescriptions and precautions associated with pregnancy therefore allude to the maintenance and stability of this fluid environment. For example, it is said, that pregnant women should be protected from extremes of emotion, as one elderly traditional birth attendant explained:

M.B: "A pregnant woman should not get jealous or angry or other strong feelings like this, because this can cause pressure of the blood and she will become weak."

When available, the pregnant woman should eat thermally warming foods since these are believed to be particularly good for making blood. If she experiences food cravings,

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142See Appendix III. *Khun domod* usually occurs when a man has several brothers and his wife has none so that there is plenty of male labour in the man's house and a shortage in his wife's house. Very often the arrangement is agreed in the premarital negotiations and associated with increased access to land on the part of the husband. Nonetheless, the arrangement can become a source of tension between the two households.

143cf. Jeffery, Jeffery and Lyon (1989) who describe a number of similar pregnancy restrictions in north India.
these too may be satisfied. The allocation of all such foods to the pregnant woman depends, however, on the mother-in-law or senior woman of the household. Thus, the amount allocated to the pregnant woman depends, not only on food availability and household income, but also on the quality of the relationship between the two women. Moreover, some older women believe that a pregnant woman should not become baj (fat, big) because she may then produce a big baby that is difficult to deliver. It is sometimes suggested that the pregnant woman should avoid heavy work, particularly lifting heavy loads, since this may increase the pressure within the belly and cause miscarriage. For this reason, and also because of the shameful associations of pregnancy, a woman's work outside the domestic compound is usually reduced. The amount of outdoor labour done depends, however, on the availability of other women and the season (cf. Jeffery et al. 1989). Moreover, middle-aged woman suggested that, these days, pregnant women have to work more outdoors because women, in general, have more work. Yet, there does appear to be a certain virtue in continuing to work hard throughout pregnancy, as one woman with nine children explained:

N: "It is said that a woman should rest when she is pregnant but in Gulmit we say that she should try to work hard for as long as possible."

A woman's pregnancy is counted in lunar months and it is frequently her mother-in-law who is most meticulous about counting the weeks that pass. It is said that the sex of the child is established when the rooh enters at about 40 days after conception. Although it is generally said that only Allah can know the sex of a child before birth,

144 In Gulmit, the most common pregnancy cravings seem to be for curd cheese, meat, salt, spices, raw onion, pickles and tea leaves.

145 See Chapter 6. Women's work -especially outdoor work-is considered to have increased because of changes in agricultural production, the increased absence of men, the establishment of tanzims and because some women now do paid work.
sometimes an informal prediction is made. For example, it is said that if the baby lies to the right of the belly then it is likely to be a boy; if it lies to the left, or if the woman experiences a craving for tea-leaves, then the baby is likely to be a girl. Gulmiti women suggest that the most common problem of pregnancy is pesuv thit (heart pressure) and should be treated with a special moch. It is said that a woman may continue to sleep with her husband during pregnancy until the sixth month. In the final months of the pregnancy, the woman may be advised to drink an infusion of a wood bark known as seresh; found locally, seresh produces a juice or resin when placed in water and is thought to lubricate the birth canal if imbibed by a pregnant woman. In the last months of pregnancy, the pregnant woman and her mother-in-law will also begin to gather together cloths and rags and place them in the ghranz in preparation for the birth.

7.9 Antenatal Care
Although local AKHS records suggest that, in 1994, 89% of registered pregnant women attended an antenatal clinic (ANC) at least once during their pregnancy, only 15% of registered women attended an ANC during the third trimester. From interviews, it was clear that women consider ante-natal examinations to be simply "checking" and, unless they have a worry or problem, see little point in drawing attention to their "shameful" state. Primigravidas are especially shy about attending, and tend to delay until the LHVs hear about them by word of mouth and personally call them to attend. The most common problem identified at the ANC is anaemia. For this, women are given vitamin and iron tablets for a small fee. Pregnant women are happy to take these tablets for they understand well that there is a close connection between the amount and 'strength' of their blood, and the health of their baby.

7.10 Childbirth
In the course of my fieldwork, only one close female friend gave birth and she was taken to Gilgit late at night for a
Caesarian Section. Although I did make efforts to befriend some pregnant women, I was never successful in being invited to witness a birth. In Gulmit, giving birth is a matter of sharem, it is associated with extreme pollution and is therefore a private event in which only close female relatives, experienced older women and well-established LHVs participate. The following account is therefore based on in-depth interviews with post-partum women and key informants such as traditional birth attendants and LHVs.

Wakhi women talk of three stages in the delivery of a baby. The first stage nusun khubar (the announcing of activity) refers to the period of mild to strong contractions. The second stage serkh shak refers to the baby coming down or dropping into the birth canal and the final stage chavde refers to the actual birth of the baby and the delivery of the khas.

Shyness frequently prevents primigravida women from telling anyone about initial contractions, but this also depends a little on personality, the relationship with the mother-in-law, and whether the breaking of waters makes the imminence of labour apparent. Older women also suggest that they may be alerted to a shy daughter-in-law's condition if she appears to be especially irritable and reluctant to work. As nusun khubar advances, men and children depart for a neighbour's house leaving mature household women, who generally include the mother-in-law and sisters-in-law, to attend the birth. If the pregnant woman's own mother and older sisters live nearby they may also be called, particularly for a first birth. During nusun khubar, there is emphasis on keeping the woman warm so that her internal organs and fluids do not become frozen or sluggish.

Anxiety regarding impending birth depends on previous

There is a notable difference here between Gulmit and the north Indian villages described by Jeffery et al. (1989) where the women's natal kin are excluded from the birth.
experience while several primigravida women admitted feeling a little frightened about the prospect of childbirth. Women were unclear about what stimulates labour to begin, saying simply "it is just the time". The pains, contractions (dard) are said to become thiz, that is fast and strong, as the labour advances. Many Gulmiti women see the pain of childbirth as simply a woman's lot, however, several considered the availability of some form of pain relief at the health centre as a major incentive for giving birth there.147

Some women do choose to attend the health centre for delivery but attendance tends to depend on the season, the time of day, how quickly the labour advances, whether the pregnant woman feels able to walk the distance to the health centre, and the availability of a vehicle. It also depends on the opinion of the senior women in attendance, for many perceive there to be considerable risk attached to a labouring woman leaving the house, this risk being expressed in terms of practical concerns, sharem and fears about attack from pari or belas.

The delivery room at the health centre is built of white washed concrete blocks and contains a delivery table, a bed, chairs for relatives and a curtained off 'sluice' area at the rear. It can only be heated by an a small electric fire when electricity is available, hence in the winter and at night, women prefer to deliver at home. In the summer, the coolness and cleanliness of the health centre does appeal to some women.

If a woman is giving birth at home, she moves to the left-hand tokben as the contractions become severe; here protective plastic sheeting is generally laid out. It is only in recent years, however, that women have started giving

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147 Generally, it was only oral analgesics such as buscopan that were available at the health centre.
birth on the tokben. In the past, women squatted or knelt over sand in the yurch or past rarj, that is, in areas of the house conceptually associated with soiled things and polluting activities. During labour, the pregnant woman's lower back is usually massaged and pressed by one of the women present.

It is only when contractions are regular and strong that the LHV or a trained birth attendant is called, if at all. Although there is a doctor in the village, because he is male, he is only called if the woman's life is seriously at risk or if there is concern about the neonate. These days, trained attendants encourage women to give birth in a reclining position on the tokben where they lay down extra plastic sheeting. LHVs suggest that the reclining position

\[\text{In Gulmit, LHVs have a rather ambiguous position. Among women, they have a relatively high status because they are regarded as educated and trained. Men are generally more reticent, however: They respect the education of the LHVs but disapprove of the fact that they are based away from their home villages and sometimes travel with "strangers"; moreover, they regard their work as rather lowly. For these reasons, fathers are reluctant to encourage their daughters to undertake careers as LHVs. Traditional birth attendants tend to be older, experienced relatives and are therefore treated with considerable respect. During formal and informal interviews, the LHVs in Gulmit displayed a strong sense of their own educated, professional status and tended to socialise with other professional women, such as teachers. Nevertheless, they were also highly aware that, as single women living away from their father's household and village, their moral behaviour had to be beyond reproach. Indeed, they perceived that their behaviour was constantly being observed and monitored by villagers. For this reason, they always made a discrete appearance at religious gatherings, and were more scrupulous than other (local) educated women about covering their heads in public spaces. It is notable that the LHVs were generally attended by an elderly local woman, while their immediate superiors within the AKHS system were all men. To some extent, the elderly woman and male supervisors acted as moral guardians, and sometimes as advocates, for the young female LHVs. Although, the ambiguous position of the LHVs is undoubtedly mediated by gender, it is notable that single male professionals, such as the doctor and the magistrate at the tahsil, perceived that as "outsiders" their moral behaviour was also monitored by villagers, and that their professional status also depended on maintenance of a good reputation.}\]
is better that the traditional squatting position because it prevents excessive "stretching of the perineum", "stricture of the urethra" and facilitates examination. Most local women accept the new position, but their reasoning may be slightly different:

D.S: "But now they say that this [the squatting] position is dirty because blood will fall on the baby's head."

A few local women do not share this logic, however. Indeed, one woman, who had had six home deliveries became very agitated when she went to the health centre to deliver her seventh baby. She refused to lie horizontally because she believed the baby had to pass downwards unimpeded. Finally, when the LHVs approached with raised gloved hands to examine her internally, she angrily sent them from the room and summoned the elderly female attendant to assist her to deliver in the traditional position.

If the birth takes place in the health centre, the LHVs will ask the female relatives to leave the room. If the birth takes place in the home, female relatives are dismissed to the chikish or to the opposite side of the room, but remain in attendance. It is only LHVs who examine women internally to assess the dilation of the cervix and this is done discretely under a blanket. Traditional birth attendants do not undertake such tasks unless they have had some formal training, and even then it is not common practice. Frequently—and particularly if, as with most multiparous women, the labour is rather short— the LHV only arrives as the birth is almost complete, so no internal examination is required. Only LHVs do any special cleaning of the vulval area before the delivery, and only LHVs give enemas as a strategy for advancing prolonged labour. Women, themselves, explain prolonged labour in terms of a cooling of the internal organs, so the labouring women's back and abdomen are massaged through her clothes and she is given 'warming' foods such as shurgan (warmed mixture of butter and milk),
chorrow moch and bakla shapik (a heavy, filling bread made from buckwheat flour). In the past, if the labouring woman did not respond to 'warming', an attendant women would wrap her in a blanket and then roll her in a pulos in order to "straighten" the baby. If the woman was in labour for more than 2 days, then concern would grow and measures would be taken to make things more auspicious for the birth: The labouring woman would be laid on her back and "a healthy and clean woman" of reproductive age who had had successful pregnancies would pass over the labouring woman's abdomen three times. The woman would then place her hand in her sleeve and stroke the labouring woman's belly downwards and finally massage the belly with her hair. In the days before the completion of the KKH, the journey to the nearest medical assistance in Gilgit was extremely arduous and obstructed labour or other complications invariably proved fatal.149

LHVs report that episiotomies are very rarely required among local women, but if a tear does occur they are trained to suture the perineum. Older women say, however, that if there has been tearing it is much better to apply mitti since it is much better than hospital treatments (which involve the embarrassment of perineal suturing) for promoting healing. If delivery of the khas is delayed, an attendant woman will massage and press the belly to encourage it to leave the body. The LHV, if not already present, will also be summoned to give an injection.

If a LHV or trained birth attendant is likely to arrive, women will generally wait to allow them to cut the cord (nof) with "special scissors". Women also say that the cord should not be cut until the baby cries because the khas and nof give the baby blood while it recovers from the birth; if the cord

149Happily, these days it is far less common for a woman to die in childbirth. During my fieldwork, there were no maternal deaths in Gulmit, although I heard of one case in a neighbouring village. 3 women from Gulmit had Caesarian sections in Gilgit during the fieldwork period.
is cut before the baby cries it is said the baby may die. The baby can be encouraged to cry, by blowing upon it through a fine *pitek*. Women agreed that in the absence of a trained birth attendant, a new razor blade should be used to cut the *nof* and then thrown away because it would be polluted with *shak wukhen*.150

The *khas* is regarded as highly polluting material for it is full of the woman's bodily fluids. It is generally the responsibility of the mother-in-law or an attendant female relative to wrap it in cloth and discretely carry it to the garden where it is buried, generally beneath an apricot tree (such an area is shady and unlikely to be used for growing other things). Disposal of the *khas* is the same whether the child is a boy or a girl.

Childbirth is believed to have a cooling effect on the mother's body, so after the birth she is given light 'warming' foods to restore optimal body temperature and aid recovery.

Because childbirth is highly polluting, the three ritual postpartum washes (*sur yupk ketak*) are an important feature of the confinement period. The first wash is brief and takes place when the cord is cut. The precise timing of the other two washes depends, to some extent, on the season:

N: "I was not allowed to wash for 7 days because it was cold. In the summer we can wash straight away. It is the same for the baby. In the winter we do not wash them with water for 1 month, but in the summer you can wash them straight away."

In the winter, then, the second wash takes place after 7 days and the third and most thorough wash takes place after 9

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150 These ideas may, of course, be influenced by health education messages and indicate a synthesis of interpretations.
days. In the summer, when there is less risk of the weakened woman becoming cold, *sur yupk ketak* is completed within the first few days.

The postpartum woman is confined to the house for 15 days after the birth. After 15 days she may start to walk around the vicinity of the house and resume light activities.\textsuperscript{151} She does not resume her usual chores for 1 lunar month, after which she may also begin to attend the *jamat kaana*. During this month, the new mother is given large quantities of 'warming' foods to encourage the production of breastmilk and to promote healing of the internal organs. Vegetables and coarse foods are to be avoided because they are thought to be abrasive and liable to damage the weakened internal organs. During the postpartum period, a yellow paste known as *persup*, which is made from the leaves and bark of a mountain tree, is applied to disperse the brown pigment of pregnancy and restore an attractive pale complexion. Finally, the postpartum woman may sleep with her husband again after 3 months.\textsuperscript{152}

7.11 Cultural Practices Relating to the Management of Reproduction

In Gulmit, non-users of modern contraception tend to regulate their fertility through abstinence and *coitus interruptus*; no details of herbal medicines or douches could be elicited.

\textsuperscript{151}It seems that in the past, the post-confinement rite of passage was a more elaborate ritual. After 15 days, the postpartum woman would take a knife and some flour and go with a small boy to a nearby water channel. The knife and the presence of the small boy were said to provide her with protection from nature spirits and belas. On reaching the water channel, the postpartum woman would drop some flour into it for good luck and then pass over the top of it three times. On completion of this ritual, she was said to be "clean" and could begin to visit neighbours to eat mul and baat with them. While several older women remembered performing this ritual, today it seems to be regarded as simply a lost tradition.

\textsuperscript{152}Although there was general agreement about this period of postpartum abstinence, it seemed to be a period that is estimated rather than strictly timed.
Often, an assertive mother-in-law may organise sleeping arrangements to restrict sexual contact.

Gulmiti women are clear that abortion (kharj) is both illegal and, generally, immoral. However, there is cautious acknowledgement that sometimes kharj might be desirable if a woman already has more children than she can cope with, or if there are doubts about legitimacy. Traditional methods of inducing kharj or miscarriage involve altering the pressure in the belly by carrying extremely heavy weights, such as sacks of flour. This is sometimes combined with jumping off the roof of the house (a drop of 3-4m) and landing on the heels of the feet, legs astride. Failure to land in precisely the right position can mean the baby does not "come out". These methods can also be combined with a complete 24 hour fast which is finally broken with 'hot' chorrow moch to stimulate labour.

In Gulmit, some perinatal deaths are genuinely associated with illness or failure to thrive (Chapter 9), however, infanticide does occur from time to time. During my stay in the village, I heard of two such cases within the village and one case in a neighbouring village. Infanticide is, predictably perhaps, surrounded by secrecy and discretion and only one or two of my closer friends would discuss such matters with me. Infanticide is an extreme act to protect the honour of male kin if a woman is suspected of immoral sexual activity. It occurs following premarital pregnancy, or if there is doubt about the paternity of a newborn baby. Indeed, if a husband indicates such doubts, it is said to be the immediate duty of his wife and the senior women in the house to bring about the death of the neonate through strangulation or denial of food.

7.12 Infertility
In the village, six women were said to be sitrin, that is barren, infertile (a word that may also be applied to land). Of these, three women suffered from primary infertility and
three suffered from secondary infertility, that is, they had had at least one pregnancy.

Wakhi women generally associate both primary and secondary infertility with a cold zaman jaei. If the woman comes from another village, it is said her infertility may result from incompatible huk, that is, the local land and water affects her body negatively. Infertility may also be associated with displacement of the zaman jaei or even displacement of the heart (pesuv wudruk), which some say is connected to the organs of the lower abdomen by the cord that lies behind the navel. Displacement of the internal organs is thought to result from lifting heavy weights. Infertility is sometimes regarded as simply qismat (luck, fate), and sometimes it is attributed to the effect of a timor or bad wish that originates with a person who has a grievance against the woman and her household. Similarly, a past misdemeanour by the woman or her husband can result in divine retribution in the form of infertility. For example, I was told the story of one man who made his wife commit infanticide and subsequently divorced her for suspected adultery; the infertility of the man's second wife is said to have resulted from his harsh treatment of the first.

Infertility is typically attributed to the wife rather than the husband. It is only when men fail to marry that they are suspected of being impotent.153

153 One such man, Zohran, developed an elaborate story to justify his single status. Zohran is an elderly man who was married briefly but divorced his wife claiming she did not observe ritual cleansing adequately. Zohran maintains that he is related to the mountain pari and therefore preferred to take a pari wife:

Z: “There is another world. There are swimming pools of milk and the houses are built of gold and marble and it is very beautiful. Now it is closed. But they used to take me on a spinning wheel to the land. They speak Shina there, but I did not understand so I used Burushaski and they understood me.”
Women who suffer from secondary infertility tend to attribute it to poor management of the previous birth. One woman maintains that her belly became very cold after her last birth and the zaman jaei subsequently proved impossible to warm completely.

The infertile women interviewed tended to relate their reproductive health to menstrual flow. In particular, they related their infertility to scanty, absent or irregular periods. Two women who had been prescribed medicine by a doctor for their infertility, stopped taking it because the tablets appeared to disrupt their menstruation and so it was thought, could not be working.

All six infertile women had tried multiple treatments for their condition. Four had been to urban hospitals with their husbands but none had attended follow-up appointments. All claimed that money was a factor or their husbands would not take them.

Infertility is suspected if pregnancy has not occurred after 5-6 years of regular sexual relations. When infertility is suspected, women tend to go first to a tabeeb. If the tabeeb suspects the problem to be due to cooling of the internal organs, she will warm the woman's back against a fire and give her a 'warming' mixture of truk tel mixed with chorrow seeds. If the tabeeb suspects there to be displacement of the uterus, she will lie the woman on the tokben and deeply massage the belly with apricot oil, pummelling it in the direction of the navel. When the zaman jaei is judged to be in the correct central position, the woman's abdomen is firmly bound with a pitek. This binding must be left in place for 3 days before the woman can begin "lying with her husband".

Women may also visit a bitan with the problem of infertility. The bitan divines the cause of the infertility by examining the palm of the hand. The local bitan told one (secondary)
infertile woman that someone had prepared some bad food for her after her last pregnancy. To another he said that she had been "frightened" by a pari causing pari wushuk. In both these cases, he prayed upon a mixture of truk tel, sugar and whole wheat grains and told the woman to drink the mixture and later to offer hithoyie. To another woman, the bitan suggested that some malevolent person had buried a timor beneath her house. For this woman, he prayed upon a nail in the sand in order to destroy the timor.

Infertile women also make regular pilgrimages to the shrine of Pir Baba Ghundi which lies to the north near to the Chinese border. Here, they pass three times round the shrine, chanting prayers, kissing the walls and sometimes prostrating themselves. They also drink of obshefo (sacred waters from a stream near to the shrine), and participate in hithoyie.154

Women who are infertile are not ostracised or excluded, indeed, they may play an active role in looking after the children of others. Nevertheless, they are pitied by other women and infertility is something that causes the women themselves great distress and worry. One of the key concerns for these women is their ongoing insecurity. Women who are married for the first time worry constantly that their husband will divorce them or take a second wife. Some women claim, however, that they have actually encouraged their husbands to take a second wife in order that there will be less pressure upon them. One woman I spoke to, actively sought a second wife for her husband and made preliminary enquiries on his behalf. The marriage was agreed but as the time of the marriage approached, the infertile woman became increasingly anxious:

N.S:"I weep always. Maybe he will prefer his second wife. Maybe he will send me away. My mother has said, "Don't

154Unfortunately, I was not able to visit Baba Ghundi's shrine because it is in an area (Chipursan) which is closed to foreigners.
worry. Your father's house is always open for you". [She weeps] I have worked until I am old for my husband but now he says he will marry again."

Two of the six women had already been divorced from their first husbands. They were, however, married again within a few months to older, widowed men who already had children (including sons) by their first wives. In these cases, it was the women's ability to work both in the house and in the fields that was especially valued. Nevertheless, they still considered their position insecure, as one older infertile woman explained:

S: "I have not been affected greatly. These days I don't feel it but maybe I will in the future. If my husband dies -and he is a little old now- I might have to return to my brother's house because I have no children to look after me".

In Gulmit, then, women who have no, or very few children, are entirely dependent on the goodwill of others, especially their husbands and their brothers. In other words, in losing their fertility they lose a principal source of security. But more than this, women who cannot have children lose the source of that which both fulfils and encapsulates life meanings (Chapter 8). Life remains incomplete, for in Gulmit adults not only socialise children, but having children also completes the socialisation of adults.

7.13 Maturity and Old Age
Much of this thesis has been concerned with exploring how adult women with men become implicated in, and concerned with, the creation, maintenance and reproduction of a complete, meaning-full social world. Although women are constantly manoeuvring amidst the insecurities of their lives (which may be exacerbated by failure to bear sons, death of a son, divorce or widowhood, all of which may necessitate return to a father's house), nevertheless, with time a
woman's position within her husband's household does generally become more secure. A woman's relative status within the household is likely to increase as she matures, and may increase significantly if her mother-in-law dies, or if there is separation of households.

Ageing tends to be perceived in terms of a slowing and drying of the blood. It is also articulated in terms of mechanical failing of the body, for example, in wearing out of joints and muscle fatigue. Excessive hard work and suffering is said to advance the ageing process and several middle-aged Gulmiti women perceived themselves to ageing faster than their mothers because, they suggested, women today have more worries and responsibilities.\footnote{Gulmiti women generally rank worries about their sons travelling and living in the cities, and worries about finding money for educating and marrying their children as the worries that, these days, cause them most concern.}

Once a woman's children begin to marry, it is considered that sexual relations between herself and her husband should cease. Nevertheless, I did encounter one case where a mother-in-law and daughter-in-law were pregnant at the same time, but most people seemed amused rather than outraged by this.

Menopausal women do not appear to recognise symptoms such as "hot flushes",\footnote{See n. 93.} although they do complain of feeling more tired. Generally, menopause seems to be regarded with relief rather than grief and several women described it as "God's family planning". Although, as in other Islamic societies,\footnote{\textit{cf.} Mernissi (1975: 71-2) who writes of Moroccan women: "It is only by understanding the pressure on the ageing woman to renounce her sexual self and her conjugal future, that one can understand the passion with which she gets involved in her son's life".} postmenopausal women are expected to renounce their sexuality, nevertheless, Gulmiti women do generally continue to take a pride in their clothing and appearance. For these
women, 'dressing-up' is about distinction, status, as well as about representing the success of their husbands and sons. Although the older non-reproductive woman appears to gain a degree of male status (for example, she has greater decision-making power within the house and has greater freedom of movement) nevertheless, her gender identity remains essentially female, and she is still caught up in relations with men that are essentially dependent. Indeed, I was often a little amused to watch older women, at one moment, commanding great authority over younger women in the house, and in the next, becoming transformed into a coy, meek figure if a grown-up son entered the room.

Older women consider that they have earned status within their homes, particularly relative to younger women. However, several older women complained that, these days, younger women—particularly those that have had some education—no longer give them the respect they are due. Nevertheless, so long as an older woman remains active and can manage the food stores and participate in domestic and agricultural activities, older women usually retain significant authority in the household. If, however, there is chronic illness or infirmity, women (like men) move to occupy the past rajar, that is the area of the communal room furthest from the central hearth. There, they will sit huddled in blankets for warmth. It is reasoned that in this location, the infirm are not disturbed, but it is also clear that in this location they are peripheral to, and largely excluded from, social contact. Some women who suffer from incontinence or other gynaecological problems that may be a complication of childbearing, also move to the past rajar, particularly if guests arrive. Despite improvements in health care, it remains difficult for such women to find treatment for these conditions, while codes of sharem generally preclude examination by a male doctor. Thus, in

158 Older women tend to eschew the more routine domestic tasks of bread-making, daily cleaning and laundering for the more 'outdoor' tasks of caring for the cow and other animals.
such cases, then, women are often obliged to collude in their own social ostracism.

7.14 **Death: "Oh God, make her journey easy"**

When it is clear that death is immanent, the person (be they man or woman) is moved to the corner of the tokben. On receiving news of terminal illness, friends, neighbours and kin -including, for a woman, representatives of her natal kin-will visit and gather round the hearth to sit quietly with the dying person. At the point of death, a khalifa or mukhi will read a verse of the Qur'an and blow upon the body so that their spirit is carried upon the sacred verse towards God. Others will mutter, "Hithoyie, yow manzhid ason go" (Oh God, make his/her journey easy). Shortly after death, kin of the same sex will wash the body and pack the orifices. This final ritual washing is considered to free the body from pollution in preparation for the final journey to the place of divine reward or retribution. The cleansed body is wrapped in a white shroud (kefan) and, while women weep\textsuperscript{159} at the house of the deceased, men carry the body to a family graveyard.\textsuperscript{160} According to Islamic law, a woman's grave must be deeper than a man's for her body is intrinsically associated with more pollution and shame and consequently requires greater covering.

Over the next 7 days visitors arrive to offer condolences (shum). Within the house of the deceased, usual seating patterns are inverted with men sitting on the left and women sitting on the right. Men lead prayers (*nimoz jonaza*) and religious hymns (*durud*), and sometimes an elderly woman spontaneously sings a mourning song (*lus*); memories of the deceased are usually exchanged in hushed whispers. On the

\textsuperscript{159}As women wail they often throw down their pitek thereby demonstrating that the extent of their grief is so great, the codes of sharem are inconsequential (cf. Goodwin Raheja & Grodzins Gold 1994).

\textsuperscript{160}If the deceased is a married woman with children her body will be buried with her husband's kin. If she is childless, her natal kin may make a special request to take her body.
third day, special prayers (fortia) are said and a sheep or goat is slaughtered. In the evening, the ritual of cherow is performed in which a cotton wick is burned in apricot oil so that the smoke will further assist the departure of the deceased's soul.

Official mourning continues for 40 days, during which time condolence visits continue and close kin avoid participation in frivolous behaviour such as singing and dancing. The following March, the festival of Vull is celebrated to mark the final departure of the dead of the preceding year.

7.15 Concluding Comments
This chapter has been concerned with exploring how, in Gulmit, the sexed and transforming body is continually constituted and situated within the wider, mutable schema of aesthetic values—a schema that incorporates both the material world and the spirit world. It is intended that an understanding of this schema will inform an interpretation of local narratives of reproductive experiences (Chapter 9).

In the course of this chapter, I have attempted to show how (transforming) processes of socialisation complement discourses of the body in the ongoing construction of gender identity. It is clear that, for the Gulmitique, the making and moulding of human beings continues after birth, and the nurturing, protective and sheltering role of a mother and close kin continues, within the confines of domestic space, throughout the initial years of childhood. Moreover, within this context, breastmilk becomes a significant substance in strengthening the relational bond between mother and child.

By adolescence, gender identity (the 'incompleted' state) has been established and marriage marks a movement outwards, an embarking on adult life. For men, this time generally corresponds with a period of increased, or broader, social contact through work and travel. For women, this time means leaving the childhood home to enter the new environment of a
husband's home. Strathern (1993:51) sees such phases in terms of a metaphorical re-working of the concept of birth:

Marriage, the point at which a 'male' lineage expels a 'female' it has produced, is analogous to birth, in this sense the point at which a 'female' body expels a 'male' child (the reference is to agnation not its sex). The image of the maternal body enclosing a paternally derived child reproduces the image of every agnate's paternal body containing maternally derived substance.

There is clearly an expectation that the mature, married adult will achieve 'completion' through reproduction. Indeed, there is a sense in which those who prove infertile remain 'incomplete'. For women, in particular, infertility is likely to lead to a degree of insecurity. In other words, compromised fertility can mean compromised well-being. Consequently, in such cases, repeated efforts are usually made to find effective treatment.

Throughout adult life, until the 'fallow' years of old age, the shame/honour complex continues to mediate gender relations. The fact that the containment (or control) of female reproductive capacity is a matter of male honour becomes apparent in incidents of abortion and infanticide. Both these practices may be seen as ways in which, historically, the Gulmitic have (to some extent) regulated their fertility as a 'natural fertility population'.

It therefore seems, from examination of socially and culturally mediated human life cycles in Gulmit, that there are certain continuities between the agrarian year and the "mythical year" of the human life course (cf. Bourdieu 1977:96-158). In chapter 6, it was argued that the domestic and agricultural practices of the Gulmitic effectively mirror the rhythms of the agrarian year. It was shown that there is an annual movement from inside (female) spaces -spaces conceptually associated with sharem, covering, the hidden- to outside (male) spaces, the domain of the hotter
of jazbaati or sargarem temperament and the brightness of social contact. It was shown, too, that after the heightened activity of the summer, the harvest festival of Chinir, and the autumn vigil of dawat, mark retreat and withdrawal to the 'fallow' time of winter. If we now map out the description of the human life course as a "mythical year", evidence of the active embodiment of further homologies is revealed. Thus, it seems, the period of gestation and the initial growth of infancy and childhood takes place within the inside, 'covered' spaces of the female domain; marriage marks maturity, adulthood and movement to the outside; there is then a period of maturation and reproduction, and finally, there is a 'fallow' period of old age which precedes death.

For the Wakhi, then, the Qur'anic reproductive metaphor of the seed and the soil is potent and resonant and, while not necessarily determining, can be meaningfully sustained in the interpretation of life itself. What is more, homologies between the agrarian year and the mythical year of the human life course suggest that, in Gulmit, the meanings of fertility and childbearing are enmeshed with those that are, at once, about the natural, and the created order of the Divine. In short, they are meanings that simultaneously have implications for mind, body and soul.

Yet, while the agrarian year may be said to form the basis of a key cultural schema (or scenario) in Gulmit, this does not mean that change and innovation cannot be assimilated. Throughout this chapter, it has been observed that new materials, services, practices and ideas combine with the construction of new spaces to become selectively woven into this culturally recognisable schema.

Having discerned some of the actively embodied aesthetic values that inform daily life in Gulmit, the next chapter considers how these might inform interpretation of Gulmiti narratives of experience, particularly those relating to the gender relations that mediate reproduction.
Photo 15: BRIDE DRESSED IN WHITE ON THE EVE OF HER WEDDING

Photo 16: THE BRIDE'S HANDS ARE DECORATED WITH HENNA
Photo 17: GULMITI WOMEN PREPARING WEDDING BREAD (DILDUNGI)

Photo 18: GULMITI MEN PREPARING WEDDING 'BAAT'
Photo 19: GROOM AND HIS 'TAT-KASH' ESCORTING THE BRIDE TO HER NEW HOME

Photo 20: THE BRIDE IS EXPECTED TO LOOK SORROWFUL THROUGHOUT HER WEDDING
Photo 21: *BABY SWADDLED IN THE GORA*

Photo 22: *BOOK FROM WHICH THE KHALIFA PREPARES HIS TIMOR*
CHAPTER 8

LOCAL NARRATIVE FORMS: AESTHETIC VALUES, LEITMOTIFS AND SCENARIOS

8.1 Introduction
Through narrativisation human beings attempt to make sense of their world, and themselves in their world (Schafer 1981, Reissman 1993). Moreover, through narrative forms -such as stories, song, poetry and drama- experience is represented, recounted and evoked, and its relative significance in the construction of meaning "emplotted" (Good 1995:146). In practice, however, subjective experience -which incorporates sensual and affective experience, as well as patterns of thought- extends beyond the bounds of description and becomes saturated with multiple potential meanings. For this reason, narrative representations are always open to being recast and reformulated as new questions, situations and language emerge (Bruner 1986a), and as shifts in relations of differential power take place (see Treichler 1990). This does not necessarily mean, however, that truth or authenticity is compromised, only that relative significance is, individually or collectively, re-evaluated.\footnote{This observation informs a number of works which critique the concept of tradition as a fixed or natural backdrop against which change unfolds (see for example, Hobsbawm and Ranger's collection The Invention of Tradition 1983). Similar critiques have been applied to the related concept of 'authenticity' (see Handler and Saxton 1988).} In other words, narrative representations contain several provisional readings of the past and present and have, in Byron Good's (1995:144) terms, an inherent "subjunctivizing" quality to them. Moreover, with few exceptions, cultural narratives are not complete, the stories not finished, for they can only be told from "the blind complexity of the present as it is experienced" (Ricoeur 1981:278).

Since narrative representations can never completely capture subjective experience, direct access to the experience of

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others remains elusive, as Kapferer (1986:189) observes: "I do not experience your experience...I experience my experience of you." Narration involves, then, both narrator and audience and is intrinsically an intersubjective process in which the audience actively appropriates and reconstitutes the narrative story in order to experience it. As Ricoeur (1981:278) argues, both the art of narrating and the art of following a story require that we be able "to extract a configuration from a succession" and engage in a form of aesthetic synthesis through which the whole -the story, the "virtual text" of the narrative- comes into being. The synthesizing process of following and interpreting a story involves, then, an imaginative entry into the world of the narrator, a shifting of viewpoints, a reconfiguring and revaluing of the events, actions and characters presented to expose the "culturally embedded" potential meanings available (Good 1995:146). For Iser (1978:22-23), however, analysis must also move beyond following and interpretation and reveal "the process of meaning-production" itself.

Bearing in mind the nature of the relationship between narrative mode, narrator, audience and interpreter, I now turn to an analysis of narrative representations in Gulmit in order to explore "potential meanings" that may inform the study of fertility and childbearing. In examining the process of meaning-production, attention will given to configurations of leitmotifs, scenarios and aesthetic values which may themselves complement daily and seasonal practices. In particular, points of intersection with more macro-level narratives such as Islam -and more specifically, Ismaillism-will be identified. I shall also draw upon earlier accounts of emotion discourse in Gulmit to explore how the social relationships that surround reproduction may be charged with emotion -from passion and desire, to regret, despair and grief. Consideration will also be given to how

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162 For an account of how the religious calendar becomes integrated with the agrarian calendar (which itself becomes homologous with the seasonality of the human life course (Chapter 7)) see Appendix I.
emotions may mediate, and be mediated by, scenarios and aesthetic values, thereby becoming implicated in the production and reproduction of meaning, self and social relations.

From the outset, this chapter attempts to engage with the notion that cultural meanings are not simply concepts operating within the realm of cognitive structures (Levi-Strauss 1967) or symbolic poesis (Geertz 1973), rather there is an "appreciation of the busy interchange between bodily experience and cultural forms" (Desjarlais 1992:38-39). The chapter begins with an investigation of the male genre of folk and adventure stories in order to explore how men, operating from a particular structural vantage point, actively configure and represent some of the embodied moral and spiritual values that support gender relations and relations of reproduction. The love songs that are presented by men at annual festivals and celebrations also give insight into some of the emotional aesthetics and scenarios that inform male cultural perspectives in Gulmit. The stories told by women to women, and the songs of elderly women (lus) reveal, however, that cultural values, leitmotifs and scenarios are also actively configured by women who are themselves structurally situated. Furthermore, examination of women's life stories also reveals something of how narrative constructions of the self inform action, and how these narrative constructions may transform over time. Investigation of lus, reveals how a woman's reproductive capacity also becomes implicated in the reproduction of the self, and how, for women, the reproduction and maintenance of certain lateral social relations may be of central importance to a sense of well-being.163

163In translation I strove, with the help of my fieldwork assistants, to achieve a detailed understanding of the underlying meanings and values involved. The narrative presentations of this chapter are not always a literal translation of the Wakhi, although I have tried to retain the sense and metaphorical imagery of every sentence or group of sentences used. It would not, however, be appropriate to use these texts for a detailed analysis of sentence structure, rhythm or
This chapter therefore attempts to contribute further to an understanding of reproduction as a socially and culturally constituted process, as well as a biological event (Greenhalgh 1995:14). It is an attempt to examine how, in Gulmit, the meanings of fertility and childbearing become culturally situated, how they are deployed and alluded to and how they echo through the discourses and practices of collective life. In short, this chapter is an attempt to listen to some of the stories Gulmitis themselves have to tell.

8.2 The Stories of Men
Story-telling is an integral part of domestic life in Gulmit, particularly in winter when darkness falls as early as 3.30pm. Towards the end of the day, an older male will often sit with a child at his feet and tell a story. The story may be a tale of the adventures of his youth or it may be a story of mountain spirits and witch-like belas. Like love songs and poetry, folk stories and adventure stories tend to be a male genre in Gulmit. Nevertheless, in my own house, when poop (grandfather) told a story, others continued their activities in silence so that they too might listen. The stories told thus became the cultural heritage of men, women and children alike.

While folktales frequently tell of encounters with the spirit world, they are redolent with mortal themes. So, for example, mortal men may have enchanted love affairs with beautiful pari(s), but must then deal with the pari's jealousy when they return to their wives and children. Alternatively, tales of great lineage ancestors frequently involve conjugal relations with a pari who bears her mortal husband sons to establish the lineage line. For example, the story of the lineage ancestor, Bori, tells of how Bori kidnapped a female spirit164 from the diuw(s). After bearing

linguistic patterning.

164some villagers say this female spirit was a pari, while others say she was a laow, a less beautiful spirit who, nevertheless, brings good
him sons, the female spirit returned to the mountains through a cleaved rock which drew apart when she hurled flour at it. While we can only speculate about the sexual symbolism of the cleaved rock, flour is a familiar Wakhi symbol marking a physical, social and emotional rite de passage.

Other stories tell of young men who travel to the mountains on a journey that alludes to initiation and quest. Men must always beware, however, of the huge, awesome diuw(s). Nevertheless, it seems that diuw(s) can always be outwitted by the superior cunning of men. Alternatively, in return for wise assistance or an act of kindness on the part of men, diuw(s) may become loyal and stalwart allies. Either way, the cosmological superiority of men over nature spirits is reaffirmed.

While the central protagonists in the stories tend to be men, reference is sometimes made to their interdependence with women. For example, it is not uncommon for a man embarking upon his adventure to be assisted by a clever and faithful wife, who is later rewarded for her virtues. One story tells of a poor man who is sent in search of wealth by his wife, who provides him with two hen's eggs for his journey. In the course of his travels, the man meets a rich diuw and challenges him to a competition of strength, on condition that, should he win, the man may take the treasure in the diuw's cellar. The man declares that he is so strong that he can squeeze oil from a stone. The diuw attempts the feat with a real stone and fails. The man then takes an egg from his pocket and, claiming it is a stone, crushes it in his hand until the sticky contents are released. When the man repeats the trick a second time, the diuw admits defeat and the man departs with the treasure. He is, however, pursued by the diuw and a hungry fox. Eventually, the man reaches his home where his wife awaits him. The clever wife feigns great hospitality and, as she makes tea, allows the diuw and fortune.
the fox to overhear her conversation with her husband. In loud whispers, she congratulates her husband on his timely return for, she claims, the diuw he slaughtered with his great strength some months earlier has now been eaten, and the fresh diuw and fox will make tender meat for the cooking pot. The diuw and fox flee in terror, leaving the man and his wife with the treasure.

An ambivalence in men's relationship with women seems to be expressed, however, in tales of belas. As mentioned in Chapter 5, belas are thought to be the hungry spirits of living women which, at nighttime, leave the body and go in search of men and other disliked women in order to devour them; only husbands and lovers are safe. Belas may transmute into cats and birds or may appear in their human form; they may hunt individually or, more commonly, in groups. Human beings who sleep alone or walk out at night are most at risk, while if a woman sucks upon the finger of another, this is a sign that she will return as a belas and take their life. Death by belas is characterized by consumption of the entire inside of the body leaving the outer carcass intact. Tales of belas are stories of how men may defeat belas by strength, cunning and the assistance of other loyal women; however, they are also stories of how men must be constantly on their guard, for belas may return after many years to take their revenge. We might speculate that stories of belas metaphorically allude to the potential for a married woman to destroy by attacking from within rather than without, that is, to disrupt relations between her husband and his patrilineal kin from inside the home itself (cf. Goodwin Raheja & Grodzins Gold 1994:121-123). This analysis is also supported by the fact that, as shown in Chapter 4, Gulmiti men sometimes describe women as shahb wazir, alluding to the belief that women can influence their husbands through malicious whisperings at night.

A recurring theme in local folk stories is that of the orphaned lamb or kid-goat that is breastfed by a woman whose
own child has died. A man (usually a king such as the legendary Mir of Gilgit, Shir-i-Badatt) subsequently eats the meat of the slaughtered animal, acquires a taste for such meat and begins to eat human babies. The man's craving turns him into a wicked and much-feared tyrant. What is significant for this study is that in all these stories, it is a woman's breastmilk which appears to 'humanize' and transform the flesh. Such narrative motifs suggests that, for the Gulmitique at least, female breastmilk may be seen as an activating substance which effectively complements male 'seed' in the reproduction of human beings.\textsuperscript{165}

Other folk stories tell of prophesizing shamans and travelling holy men such as the \textit{pir}, Baba Ghundi, whose shrine lies in the Wakhi area of Chipursan near to the Chinese border. Pilgrimage to Baba Ghundi's shrine takes place throughout the year but especially in October when the harvest is over, and prior to retreat into inner (female) spaces of the house. Although Ismailis are under no compulsion to undertake the \textit{hajj} pilgrimage to Mecca,\textsuperscript{166} nevertheless, the pilgrimage remains for them a potent metaphor for the Muslim's life journey towards the sacred or divine (cf. Delaney 1991:303-311). Baba Ghundi's shrine is visited by all those who seek blessings or recovery from chronic illness, and is especially recommended for those who are infertile or who desire the birth of sons. The precise connection between Baba Ghundi's shrine and fertility is not made explicit but pilgrimage to the shrine involves ritual \textit{hithoyie}, that is animal sacrifice and the generous distribution of meat to kith and kin in order to foster goodwill and good relations before Allah. Stories of Baba Ghundi, himself, include tales of how he rescued a young

\textsuperscript{165}cf. Delaney (1992) who suggests that Islamic constructions of reproduction imply that only men contribute activating substance, while the female contribution is considered to be passive.

\textsuperscript{166}The Ismaili Imams have successively taught that it is the inner spiritual pilgrimage which is more significant than the physical pilgrimage.

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virgin from the jaws of the hungry dragon of the lake who had terrorized the people of Chipursan for many years. In later years, however, Baba Ghundi punished the people of the area with a terrible flood because they failed to show him hospitality when he appeared as a weary traveller. All but an old woman, who gave him warm milk from her meagre store, are said to have perished.

Stories of shamans and holy men tend to emphasize themes of the need for good and honest relations among human beings and between human beings, earth spirits and Allah himself. When all is not well, earth spirits may become angry or jealous and inflict misfortune, rock falls and other natural disasters upon human beings. In such cases, a shaman may divine the problem and recommend hithoyie. Similarly, travelling holy men may, in the name of Allah, punish or reward human behaviour according to the observance of collective values. Here, then, there is reference to a shared schema of values and a suggestion that well-being depends intrinsically upon all things, at multiple levels, being well.

8.3 Songs of Love

Annual festivals (including more recently, the summer "Culture Show" for tourists and visiting dignitaries) are occasions for the presentation of military marches, dance (see Appendix V) and songs.

The principal presenters at public performances are male. When the celebration is not of an overtly religious nature, individual men may present popular songs. These songs can be

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167 Here, it might be inferred that Baba Ghundi represents an archetypal male who is the protector and defender of female virginity/fertility.

168 Once again, the association between women and milk recurs as a potent theme, or leitmotif, for the Wakhi. Here, the reference to the old (non-sexual) woman who is rewarded for generously giving milk despite sacrifices to herself, resonates with Qur'anic themes of the rewards that will accrue to the dutiful mother (see Chaudhry 1991:1).
traditional or -as in the case of the much-admired Bul-Bul ("Song-bird") Nazir- contemporary songs that have been composed by the singer himself. The lyrical themes of these popular songs tend to recall the classical genres of Arabic poetry namely, eulogy, love, hunting, wine-drinking, polemics and satire (see Hunzai and Kassam 1996:3). Indeed, many songs combine several of these elements at once. For example, hunting songs frequently include a love-encounter with a beautiful pari (female spirit), while the experience of love is often compared to the intoxicating effects of wine. Bul-Bul Nazir is known principally for his love songs. In his lyrics, Bul-Bul makes repeated reference to the concept of ishq, which in this particular context refers to passion or love between a man and woman. Significantly, however, the concept is also found in the spiritual discourses of both Ismaili and Sufi poetry where it describes the ascetic's abandonment of self to God through elaboration of a metaphor alluding to the lover and the beloved (Ask 1993). Although it must be emphasized that this profound spiritual love is conceptually distinct from carnal love, the metaphorical play rests upon the similar all-consuming effect upon the subject. In consequence, many of the images, motifs and metaphors found in Bul-Bul's lyrics echo those of traditional spiritual poetry.

When Bul-Bul rises to sing, the audience becomes hushed and still. As one young man observed: "If you watch, even the elders listen with concentration. You see, the songs make them remember their youth."

Bul-Bul sings almost exclusively about unrequited love,

169 Young women often play locally-produced cassette tapes of Bul Bul's songs. These cassettes, together with those of Urdu film music, are played in the confines of the house as young women complete their domestic tasks while older women and men are absent. Here, in the privacy of domestic space, younger women hum tunes, sing along to songs and even try a little dancing.
impossible love, illicit love. As the following extract shows, he sings of how attraction may be communicated through a chance glance, of how love is expressed through the eyes:

When I look into your eyes
I drink of the wine of love
I become intoxicated with love
But I can only gaze upon the book of your beauty.170

But Bul-Bul sings, too, of the pain—a very visceral pain—of longing and frustration produced by the codes of sharem and the constraints of parda:

When you pass me on the path
You avert your eyes,
Oh, how you darken the world of my heart
Why hide your face with that wretched veil?
When you greet me
Your voice is like the music of the lute
In my heart

And when you pass me

170 The metaphorical comparison between beloved as 'book' and love as 'intoxication' recurs in Ismaili spiritual poetry. Consider the following from the work of a famous religious poet from the area, 'Allama Nasir Hunzai:

I had neither knowledge nor
the strength to acquire it until
you, the living book of light, began
to speak in my heart with wisdom.

Many a night have I spent in
remembrance of your name
and intoxication of your love,
until the light of dawn burst out.

(From the poem, Quatrains of Love in Hunzai and Kassam 1996:126)
Why do you glance back?
Do you not know what that does to me?
Do you not know how my liver and heart burns?\textsuperscript{171}
Don't be cruel to me, this heart is mad with love,
For a life so short, will one day pass away.

Everyday I dream of you
And when I awake my body and soul
Are but charred remains.\textsuperscript{172}
When I look into your eyes
I am drunk with the wine of love,
I am absorbed by the book of your beauty.\textsuperscript{173}

In my dreams, you do not hide your face in shame,
But in the day, you are hidden by a veil of virtue.
Why do you do this?
What is your reward?
Why such righteous\textsuperscript{174} behaviour?

\textsuperscript{171}Emotional pain is often described in terms of burning or roasting of the internal organs. Consider the opening verse of the spiritual poem \textit{Quatrains of Love} by 'Allama Nasir Hunzai:

\begin{quote}
Until I gain the friendship of my sovereign of both the worlds,
I will continue to roast my liver in the fire of his love.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{172}The pain of unrequited love is once more compared to burning that touches the very soul. Compare again the work of 'Allama Nasir Hunzai:

\begin{quote}
I make incense of your love
by casting the wild rue of my soul
into the fire; but alas, you show no mercy even as I burn.
\end{quote}

(From the poem, \textit{Quatrains of Love} in Hunzai and Kassam 1996:125)

\textsuperscript{173}See n. 209

\textsuperscript{174}Here the Wakhi word \textit{haiya} is used and refers to the appropriately demure behaviour of women.
This world is transient and fickle\textsuperscript{175}. Why do you do purdah for me? What is my sin? Why am I so treated? Others may gaze upon your wondrous beauty Yet I am excluded.

Why is the innocent man so punished? You talk with those who are my enemies And wound my body and my soul\textsuperscript{176}. Why can my enemy wrap himself in the cloak of your beauty,\textsuperscript{177} And I am left swathed in the shroud of sadness. If your intention is to destroy me, Then tell me now Say "Bul-Bul, Sir, you intrude,

\textsuperscript{175}In Wakhi, worldly things may be described as bay wafa (transient, unreliable) implying that human beings should keep their sights on the afterlife. A similar entreaty is found in the spiritual poetry of 'Allama Nasir Hunzai:

\begin{quote}
O brothers! Abandon your love of the idol-temple of existence, because the light of the Creator of every beauty in the world has arrived.
\end{quote}

(From the poem, \textit{Glad Tidings for the Soul} in Hunzai and Kassam 1996:131)

\textsuperscript{176}In Wakhi, the word mytan is used which refers to the body-soul unit (the word jism refers to the body alone). Bul-Bul suspects that another man has won the affections of his beloved. This man, he now regards as the enemy of his whole body-soul being. The notion of battling against (spiritual) enemies recurs in both the Quranic texts and Ismaili poetry (see Chaudhry 1991:127 and Hunzai and Kassam 1996:124)

\textsuperscript{177}In Wakhi, the word chipan is used and refers to the beautiful and exotic wedding coat of the groom. Similar metaphoric association are found in the Qur'an where the relationship between husband and wife is described in terms of the closeness of clothes upon the body: "They are your garments and ye are their garments" (Sura 2:187). Comparable metaphoric usages are also found in local Ismaili poetry (see Hunzai and Kassam 1996:127).
And you must leave my garden forever".178

Such love is often made more painful, and perhaps heightened, by the necessity of waiting for a chance meeting:

Wait, wait, I always wait for you.
When I hear the breeze outside
I think my love is at the door.
But when I rush out, there is no-one there.
I am perpetually restless.
I always wait for you.179

Love between a man and a woman must, however, be protected from jealous glances and the obstructions of others:

When we are on the path of love
Others become jealous.
But do not be troubled, my treasure,
We will continue on our journey of love
And never care about them.

178 The experience of love is often compared to being in a beautiful garden. Consider 'Allama Nasir Hunzai's spiritual poetry:

His breath fills the garden of my existence
with colour and fragrance most sublime;
as the season of new spring arrives
to the meadows, he has arrived.

(From the poem, Glad Tidings for the Soul in Hunzai and Kassam 1996:129)

179 The association between love and longing is also found in local spiritual poetry. Compare Bul-Bul's verse with the following:

I will await you continually,
even though my sight fades away,
until the miraculous light of
your footsteps draws near to me.

('Allama Nasir Hunzai. From the poem, Quatrains of Love in Hunzai and Kassam 1996:126)
Let them be jealous.\textsuperscript{180}

Here Bul-Bul refers to the difficult "path" and "journey of love". Indeed, within regional culture there are a number of paths, or 'scenarios' available to illicit lovers. Ask (1993: 219) describes one such scenario that is found in much popular writing and song throughout northern Pakistan, and indeed, the northern regions of the subcontinent. The legendary scenario concerns Leila and Magnon, star-crossed lovers who are never able to unite in this life. Eventually, the man becomes mad (U: magnon) with love. But the couple's love for one another is their fate: Magnon's love for Leila has entered his body with his mother's milk and will not leave him until his soul leaves his body. Leila knows that in the 'religion' of lovers, proximity and familiarity will bring destruction. Love is therefore manifest in the suffering and longing for the beloved, and she ends her life on the grave of Magnon.

Bul-Bul picks up these latter themes in other songs. For example, in the following extract he reflects upon the theme of his beloved coming to him when he is in his grave:

\begin{quote}
Why are you weeping, dearest?
Now I am but dust and ashes in the grave.
It is useless that your lovely eyes
Are now blind with tears.
Eyes that could never look upon me
When I was alive,
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{180}The image of love as a journey or path checkered with difficulties is also a familiar theme in spiritual poetry:

\begin{quote}
The journey of pure love to
the destination of his vision
is difficult; courage therefore...
\end{quote}

('Allama Nasir Hunzai. From Quatrains of Love in Hunzai and Kassam, 1996:125)
Eyes that made blood well in my stomach.
Why do those eyes now
Lose their light?

In Gulmit, as elsewhere in Pakistan, illicit love affairs carry the risk of public shame and dreadful punishment, particularly for an incriminated woman. What is more, under Pakistan's 1979 Hudood Ordinances, those found guilty of fornication or adultery may be stoned to death, while it is disproportionately difficult for a woman to prove her innocence (Mumtaz and Shaheed 1987). Nevertheless, in Gulmit extramarital affairs do occur. Although cultural scenarios allude to a kind of unconscious 'pull' or momentum, they are perhaps not sufficient to explain why so much is risked. Boesen (1983) analyses the phenomenon in Paxtun society and argues that the taking of such risks is a response to the rigid constraints of social structure and an active attempt, particularly by women, to break the strict control of their personhood and bodies. It is perhaps ironic, however, that when—as in Bul-Bul's case—the affair remains confined to the imaginative realm of love song and poetry, the effect may be to express the narrator's ultimate commitment to existing social structures and cultural codes, thereby increasing his social prestige. Abu-Lughod (1986:246-248) explains this idea as follows: "by exposing the other side of experience, individuals impress on others that their conformity to the code and attainment of the cultural ideals are neither shallow nor easy...poems win for those who recite them admiration along with sympathy".

Gulmiti villagers themselves often explain such love affairs—be they fantasy or reality—by referring to the unhappiness or restlessness that may result from an arranged marriage. In the following more polemical song, Bul-Bul describes such a marriage. It is a marriage in which the young man is presented as the victim of social institutions. In particular, he complains about his troublesome wife and the pressure he experiences from affinal kin who are concerned to
protect the interests of their daughter. Bul-Bul's song thus challenges simplistic structuralist analyses which represent men as an undifferentiated group and women as passive objects of exchange.

CHORUS
This marriage at so young an age
Makes me feel ashamed.

Now my life is useless
My education has been cut short
And my old parents refuse to educate my wife
Only the unlucky marry early.

CHORUS
My parents-in-law are angry with me
So I am facing many difficulties.
My wife is always fighting with me
And climbing on my head and shoulders
This fatherless woman is shameless

181Several contemporary studies acknowledge the significance of enduring relations between women and their natal kin in South Asian societies. For example, in a study based in Uttar Pradesh, Jeffery, Jeffery and Lyon (1989:31-36) stress the importance of a woman's continuing ties to natal kin in resisting the authority of her husband's kin. However, they also note that the husband's kin may draw upon a shared ideology relating to the necessity of a wife's separation from her natal kin in order to assert their authority over her (see also Goodwin Raheja & Grodzins Gold 1994).

182When a marriage is being arranged, it is not uncommon for the husband's kin to promise that the bride's education will be continued after the wedding. However, this promise is frequently broken.

183To 'climb on the head and shoulders' is expressed in the Wakhi words: swori skem zhu tor vitk and suggests that his wife has become a burden.

184The phrase 'fatherless woman' is expressed in the words bee-tat nan in Wakhi. It is a phrase commonly used by men in talking to or about women. It can be used aggressively as an insult or affectionately depending on the tone of voice adopted and the context.
The skin on her face has become coarse as cow hide\textsuperscript{185}.

**CHORUS**

My father-in-law has pressed me,
My stomach is full up with my mother-in-laws words\textsuperscript{186}
My wife chatters too much
My heart is broken by all the nagging.
This custom is a good way
To destroy a life.

**CHORUS**

Bul-Bul's songs thus reveal something of his subjective experience of gender relations in Gulmit. It is an experience that is shot through with deeply-felt emotion that touches his entire body-soul being. He therefore describes his experience by borrowing from the language and imagery of familiar spiritual poetry. Bul-Bul's songs also describe the conflict he experiences between cultural scenarios of passion and social conformity - experiential conflicts that often remain hidden in functionalist analyses of the social relations of reproduction. However, as suggested earlier, the very expression of Bul-Bul's painful dilemmas may ultimately confirm his commitment to shared social values.

Gulmiti love songs, folk and adventure stories therefore provide us with valuable insight into the meanings and values ascribed to reproduction and the gender relationships that surround it. However, since these are largely male genres, they tend to be presented from a particular structural vantage point. Let us now turn to female narrative genres to

\textsuperscript{185} Coarseness of skin refers to ageing but may also imply a woman is shameless because she has been exposed to sunlight without the covering of a veil.

\textsuperscript{186} This means the young man is fed up with listening to his mother-in-law. Note that women are associated with incessant verbal nagging while men are considered to merely press their case.
see what might be discerned of the perspectives of women.

8.4 The Stories of Women

In Gulmit, it is not customary for women to relate folk or adventure stories, rather women's stories tend to be accounts of their experiences, sufferings and the twists and turns of relationships within kinship circles. Indeed, older women are recognised as having detailed knowledge of kinship relations and men often referred me to older women for authoritative accounts of complex genealogical relationships. Women's stories are frequently autobiographical, but women who have been visiting, or older women who have greater mobility within the village, may bring back stories of events or incidents that have occurred elsewhere. Indeed, in Gulmit, curiosity about people and domestic and local incidents, about other women's lives, is the basis of a major 'woman-to-woman speech genre' (see Grima 1993:87). For this reason too, women's story-telling tends to be accompanied by careful questioning on the part of the principal listeners - generally the most senior women present. Thus, while it is culturally unacceptable for women - even older women - to interrogate men, among themselves women are active and probing listeners who aim to gain a detailed understanding of the people and relationships involved.\(^\text{187}\)

Although women's story-telling tends to be relatively informal and confined to women's circles, children and adolescents (male and female) are frequently present, and I have, on occasion, observed older women relating short anecdotes in the presence of close male kin. Autobiographical stories are told by mature women who are, or have been, married. Older women tend to be the most spontaneous story-tellers, while younger, unmarried women are considered not to have had sufficient life experience to have

\(^{187}\)Grima (1993:119-120) describes a similar phenomenon among Paxtun women who describe themselves as "story seekers" who "know how to draw out a person's heart".
any story to tell.\textsuperscript{188} Indeed, in the course of my research it was almost impossible to extract life stories from unmarried women - even those who were relatively well educated - without frequent prompting. In Gulmit, then, meaningful, emotionally-rich life experience is considered to occur for a woman only after marriage when her principal adult relationships are established. There is therefore a sense in which marriage marks the beginning of a woman's life-story.

Women's story-telling often takes place in the women's gatherings associated with the obligatory or badal (exchange) visits following serious illness, death, or departure of close male kin on a long journey, as well as during pilgrimages to shrines. Such gatherings are effectively 'public' events within the 'private' sphere of women, suggesting that these conventional analytical categories may be more helpfully conceptualised in terms of continuum rather than opposition (cf. Grima 1993:118).

Women's story-telling may also take place, however, within the relatively more 'private' domestic space of the household. Here, older women tell autobiographical tales to younger women, especially newcomers such as a new daughter-in-law, as well as, to grandchildren. Indeed, it was in this kind of setting that I, as a female newcomer, gathered most of my stories of women.

Women's autobiographical stories are generally tales of grief and suffering (gham), for these are considered to be the stories most worth sharing. As in many other Indo-Iranian cultures, gham is a key expressive emotion for the Wakhi (see Grima 1993; Good, DelVecchio Good & Moradi 1985). However, while gham is a recurring theme which informs both male and female narratives modes, there are slight gender differences in the sources of gham elaborated. It has been shown that

\textsuperscript{188}Similarly, unmarried women in Gulmit are excluded from events such as funerary gatherings because they are considered neither mature nor experienced enough to understand sorrow and grief.
Bul-Bul's love songs are pervaded by the sense of *gham* associated with a broken heart, but male narrative modes also engage with *gham* of poverty, unemployment, having no sons, and death of a mother or wife. In contrast, female narrative modes focus more on the *gham* associated with life events such as death of a husband, son, father or brother, divorce and having no sons. In other words, women's narratives suggest that, for them, *gham* derives mainly from relationships with the principal male protagonists in their lives.

While *gham* is pervasive in Gulmiti narrative modes (albeit cross-cut by gender differences) it was my impression that, among the Ismailis of Gulmit, the discourses of *gham* are not embraced to quite the extent described by Grima (1993) in her analysis of the Paktuns of Pakistan, and Shias in general. Indeed, Gulmiti men and women frequently impressed upon me the importance of being cheerful and happy: "Don't worry, be happy!" was a favourite English expression of one of my neighbours. While Grima (1993:146) suggests that the discourses of *gham* are integral to the very religious and ethnic identity of Shias, I suggest that a counter-discourse of *khushi* (happiness) may also be integral to the religious and ethnic identity of the Ismailis of Hunza, as they actively differentiate themselves from their historical enemies, the Shias of Nagyr. In other words, these differences demonstrate that in Gulmit embodied discourses of emotion are integral to the active construction of collective, as well as, individual identity relative to others.

The following stories are drawn from a series of taped interviews with women in Gulmit. Two stories have been selected, one told by an older married woman, and one told by a younger divorced woman. They are stories that should be seen as stories of life experience, rather than as

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189 As we saw in Chapter 2, European travellers have long been impressed by the cheerful demeanour of Hunzukuts, a demeanour which has contributed to the mythology of the mountain Shangrila.
comprehensive life histories. Moreover, they should be regarded as illustrative rather than as representative. In particular, they illustrate how the cultural values, leitmotifs and scenarios identified in male narrative modes may be reconfigured by Gulmiti women. The age differential between the two women also illustrates how narrative constructions of the self might be constituted differently with historical change.

**Story 1**

**Introduction:**

One day I visited the home of Aman Begum, who is an elderly woman well-known for singing lus. In the course of our conversation, I asked her if she had a eulogy, or lus, for her husband. In reply, she told the following story to explain her rather ambivalent relationship with the man who is, in fact, her second husband. But before reproducing the story, it is first necessary to situate it by presenting some contextual information elicited through a series of probing questions.

Aman Begum is now about 60 years old. She was born in the distant Wakhi village of Shimshal and was married there at a very young age. She had one daughter but when this daughter was little more than a year old, her husband fell in love with another (divorced) woman. Aman Begum says that her husband became very quarrelsome and eventually divorced her so that she was obliged to leave her daughter and return to her parents. After some time, she was married to a man in the Wakhi village of Hussaini (a neighbouring village to Gulmit), where she now lives. Aman Begum reports that on her journey from Shimshal to Hussaini, she stopped at the shrine of the Pir, Shah Shums, and prayed that she would have no more daughters. And, indeed, she subsequently gave birth to 3 sons, and had no more daughters. Unfortunately, one son died from smallpox at 5 years old and, Aman Begum claims, she was so bereft after this loss she was unable to have more children. Aman Begum tells this story about her second
marriage:

"At first my husband was good, but then I found out he was visiting a woman. It was very difficult for me. What could I do? I was very worried [she sighs]. In the end, I brought a khalifa from Gilgit because I had heard that he could help in these things. He made me a timor (amulet) but nothing happened.

After that, I wasn't able to speak -and you know I am a very talkative person! My daughter-in-law was very worried about me and she called the [local] khalifa to see me. He asked me who my enemy was and I named my husband's girlfriend. So he prayed over some timor [in this case pieces of wood] and put them round the house and buried one piece near an apricot tree and he said, "Now the woman will die in one week."

When my husband came back, he found out about this thing, he was very angry and beat me and he said, "Why have you done this thing?" He got the khalifa to take the timor away and then the woman lived.

After two months my speech came back but my husband carried on visiting the woman. But after some months, the woman and her daughter were killed in an accident up in the high pastures. But we should not speak of these things."

Comments:
Preliminary conversation with Aman Begum revealed something of the insecurity she experienced as a young woman, particularly when she had no sons. The journey to her second marital home was combined with a pilgrimage. In other words, there appears to be a degree of conflation between journeying to a sacred place and journeying to the destiny of married life. From Aman Begum's report of her visit to the shrine, it is clear that she believed the sustainability of her second marriage depended upon her having sons. Moreover, her
reference to the physical consequences of profound bereavement following the death of her son seems to have some resonance with the idea of the close natural bond between mother and son that is recurrent in both Islamic texts and local narrative forms.

While Bul-Bul's songs convey the passion and pain of an extramarital affair from the perspective of the male protagonist, Aman Begum's story reveals something of the distress and anxiety experienced by the jilted wife -anxiety which in this case was more deeply felt perhaps because of previous experiences. Indeed, Aman Begum's distress was such that it became physically manifest in an inability to speak. As mentioned earlier, a man in such a situation may legitimately defend his honour by beating and divorcing his adulterous wife and, technically, has legal recourse to the Hudood Ordinances. In contrast, a woman risks compromising her own security if she makes accusations against her husband. Nevertheless, Aman Begum's story reveals that women are not necessarily completely passive in such situations. In matters concerning the heart and the maintenance of acceptable social relations, assistance may be sought from the khalifa, who mediates relations with the spirit world. It was her husband's girlfriend whom Aman Begum perceived as her enemy. Although initial interventions were foiled, Aman Begum hints that the nature spirits of the high pastures became eventual arbiters. In short, Aman Begum constructs her narrative of self within a behavioural environment that includes the world of spirits, moreover, it is a construction which enables her to suggest the relative moral righteousness of her position.

**Story 2:**

**Introduction:**

During the summer, I often joined the women of my household as they went on their daily walk to the stone-walled enclosures of Chimungul. Here, the few smallstock that had
not been taken to the high pastures were released for grazing, and women would complete agricultural tasks such as collecting wood and gathering basket-fulls of apricots and mulberries. During these trips, I sometimes met Malika as she went to a neighbouring enclosure where she generally worked alone. Malika was always cheerful in conversation, but sometimes as she worked alone she appeared sad and weary. One day, I visited Malika in her house near the polo ground, for she had promised to tell me her story—a story which other women had said would be particularly interesting to me. The house was old and rather dark, since no modern windows had been installed. My fieldwork assistant and I sat by the fire as Malika finished her breadmaking and then prepared tea for us. Malika's 12 year old son joined us briefly. I asked Malika some preliminary questions and then she told me her story.

Malika is about 34 year old woman and is among the first generation of Gulmiti women to cease wearing the traditional embroidered hat, preferring instead a simple pitek. Malika is uneducated, divorced and does not have any paid employment. She has two brothers and two sisters and her parents are both dead. Malika's sisters are married and living in neighbouring villages. Her older brother is married but lives with his wife in Gilgit, where he works in a bank. Malika's younger brother attends the Government Boy's School in Gulmit, but hopes to go away to college in the next year or so. Malika lives in her father's house with her younger brother, who has formally inherited the property. Although Malika and her brother are supported by relatives, they are regarded as one of the poorer households in the village.

Malika was married at 15 years old to a man who is now securely within the middle-income stratum of village life. Malika and her husband, Shaukat, had two children—one daughter and one son. Shaukat was renowned for being rather jazbaati, and when he was on leave from the army, frequently
argued with his brother and his neighbours. Following one such argument, Shaukat's older brother moved out of the shared family home with his wife and children. Since Malika's mother-in-law was rather old, Malika then had to do most of the household chores. What is more, Malika claims, her husband began to direct his hot-temper at her. Later, he became suspicious of her behaviour while he was away on military duty. Eventually, Shaukat heard a rumour that Malika was having an extramarital affair and this led to divorce. Legally, Malika's son and daughter were obliged to remain with their father, however, Malika's son (who was then 8 years old) refused to leave his mother. Malika begins her story:

"My husband used to beat me and wouldn't give me any food or clothes even though I worked hard in the house. I became very sad and that summer I jumped in the river to kill myself. They rescued me near the Chinese bridge. After that we were separated and later my husband divorced me."

At this point, Malika's story becomes interspersed with comments about the bread and the problems of the irregular electricity supply, and instructions to her son to bring sugar from the store. She explains, however, that after the divorce, she returned to her father's house, even though her father had died some years earlier. Malika lived at the house with her mother and her younger brother. Some months after her return, Malika's mother had a stroke and was left paralysed on one side:

"I spent 6 years looking after my mother because there was nobody else to care for her. I received some offers of marriage but I refused to leave my mother because there was no-one else to look after her. I went a little mad at that time. I had to do everything for my mother, wash her, take her to the rakhdung (outside toilet area); she was very heavy."
After the divorce, my son wanted to stay with me. Several times, my husband snatched him from the school, but he always ran back to me. He loves his mother. So now they don't give any money for him and it's me that has to pay for his education. I sew at the sewing centre and sell clothes to pay for his fees. But I don't know about the future. I went to the Family Planning Centre to ask for work, but I haven't heard anything. I want to get a job and educate my son.

This year a proposal came, but my son didn't want me to accept. He came to my bed and cried. He would not eat, and then he went missing for a whole day. He said, "Why are you going to leave me now when I have left my father for you. If you marry, I will have to go back to him. Things will be very bad for me." So now I want to get a job and teach my son for as long as he is with me."

But Malika also has other plans:

"I want to take our case to court to claim my son's land right. I have discussed it with my veruteeg (lineage elders) but they will not allow this yet. They say my son is still very young but when he is older they will support me in this."

Comments:
The first part of Malika's story alludes to the extreme shame of being suspected of having an extramarital affair. As mentioned earlier, a woman is held disproportionately accountable in cases of adultery, for it is assumed the woman has consciously invited the attentions of a man who is naturally sexually excitable. When shamed in this way, a woman may have to resort to extreme measures to retrieve her honour and reputation. Throughout the subcontinent, scenarios of the shamed or accused women committing suicide, or submitting to death as an honourable act (despite their innocence) are common, and may prove potent and compelling
(see Grima 1992, Ahmed 1988). In Gulmit, the classic modes of female suicide are jumping in river and eating bitter apricot kernels which contain small amounts of cyanide. These, then, are culturally-recognisable scenarios with which Malika appears to engage.

Central to Malika's story are the leitmotifs of the parent-child/mother-child relationship. Malika refers to the difficult duty of caring for her infirm mother, a duty which she suggests takes precedence over preserving her own immediate interests through re-marriage. In Gulmit, the responsibility for care of the elderly and infirm falls principally upon daughters-in-law and unmarried daughters. Thus, in the absence of her sister-in-law, Malika bore the full burden of the responsibility.190

Malika's story touches upon the difficulty of leaving her children in their father's house following divorce. Malika explains how the love between herself and son becomes central in her life. It is a relationship with which her son also engages in order to justify leaving his father's house, potentially abandoning his lineage identity and inheritance rights. This, then, becomes a story of competing discourses, for there is conflict between the discourse of patrilineal descent (embodied in the father-son relationship) and the discourse of maternal love (embodied in the mother-son relationship). Malika calls upon her agnates to support her. They, of course, are non-committal for although they acknowledge a responsibility to protect the interests of their kinswoman, in the longer term, it is not in their interest to undermine the socially recognised principles of patrilineal descent.

190Health and family welfare clinics throughout the region tend to make 'mother and child health' the focus of their services, while there is little support for the care of other household dependents -such as the elderly and disabled- who may actually place the most sustained demand on women's time and labour. It may be in this more 'hidden' area of women's lives that they also need support if they are to be "empowered" to consider alternative choices.
If we now compare the two life stories, similarities and differences in the narrative construction of self begin to emerge. Both women have constructed a story of self which informs their action. In other words, these self-narratives appear to mediate how each woman actively engages with her own perceived destiny. Each story may be seen as an active interweaving of life events and familiar cultural discourses, values, scenarios and leitmotifs in a form of aesthetic synthesis. Yet, within the two stories there is evidence of change. Whereas Aman Begum draws upon discursive themes associated with khalifa(s) and the spirit word, Malika is beginning to engage with the discourses of female "empowerment" that have become available in Gulmit through, among other things, the activities of NGOs and institutions supporting female education. Thus, Malika constructs the possibility of being an independent working woman who brings up her son without a husband, a woman willing to protect her interests by recourse to the judicial system.

Nevertheless, in both stories there is "evidence of how the community of women judges its members and their experience" (Grima 1993:116), for both stories justify action and contrast the narrator's righteous behaviour with the moral failings of others. In short, women's stories, like men's love songs, ultimately establish commitment to the very social values from which they emerge.

8.5 The Songs of Elderly Women

Women are not generally permitted to sing publicly, other than to piously present religious hymns. Singing -like dancing- is considered potentially shameful for a woman since it draws attention to her body and, hence, her sexuality. Nevertheless, there is a genre of song known as lus which is the preserve of a few elderly women. Lus are eulogies: they are usually songs of mourning but may also include songs of appreciation for a living male relative. They tend to be rather spontaneous songs, although certain lines and themes recur. The song may also be repeated on more than one
occasion, each time, songlines being added or omitted. Lus also tend to be characterised by a recurring chorus that plays upon the verb parwana, a verb used to describe the circling dance of a moth around a candle flame, as well as the prayerful circling of pilgrims around a saint's shrine. In the following lus which is a song of appreciation sung by a mother for her son, informants explained that the use of the verb parwana draws upon the idea that, just as a moth is naturally drawn to a candle flame, so a son is naturally the centre of his mother's attention and affection. But, just as the moth's wings may be singed by the flame, so a mother's love for her son can bring her suffering and pain.

In the first lus below, an elderly woman, Aman Begum, sings of her son who is in the army. Despite her age, Aman Begum's voice is powerful and haunting, seeming to be produced from the very centre of her being. It is this aesthetic quality to her voice which augments the apparent simplicity of the words, words which in Wakhi are redolent with associations and images —indeed, several village women who listened to these lus were moved to tears.

Lus for a Son

Ah loy, loy ah loy,
Loy ah, loy, loy.....
You are not here,
The flowers in my garden worry for you.
You, who are strong enough to fight in the army.
Ye loy ah, loy eh,
Lo, loy ah, loy eh....
You are (like) my mother's father.\textsuperscript{191}
You will get a medal in the army.

\textsuperscript{191}khu nan-tat, my mother's father, is a form of address implying affection and respect.
CHORUS

A mother circles around (her son)
A mother circles him like a moth.

You will get a medal because you fight in the trenches.
You are in the trenches of the enemy,
But one day you will receive your reward
For fighting against the enemy.
How difficult is the way of fighting

CHORUS

You will get a medal.
How hard is the way of fighting.
And your mother’s heart is broken.
When you return,
Your mother will make you a bett
There is a big door to my heart,
It has a golden hinge.

CHORUS

There is a door to my heart
It has a golden hinge.
When will my own dear medal return to me?

CHORUS

Ah loy, loy ah loy,
Loy ah, loy, loy.....

192In Wakhi: Khu nan powye gird, Yow nan yor parwana.
193Informants suggested that here the idea of fighting against the enemy resonates with Qur’anic themes relating to the defence of Islam. See also note 15.
194In Wakhi: pesuv shkend vitk.
195bett: traditional embroidered woollen coat.
In this lus, Aman Begum refers to the "golden hinge" of the door to her heart. This metaphor alludes to the Wakhi maxim that sons are gold and suggests that a son has privileged access to his mother's affections. Aman Begum also refers to her son as her own "medal" (tamgham), suggesting that she regards him as the source of her own reward. The theme of the rewards that will be bestowed upon the dutiful mother recurs in a number of Islamic texts (Chaudhry 1991:1-6), including the Qur'an itself.196

Aman Begum devotes a second lus to her brother. While the words are relatively simple, they honour her brother's accomplishments, his service to the community, his status. It is a song in which Aman Begum emphasises her respect and affection for her brother. Here, then, we are reminded of the importance of the brother-sister relationship in providing an enduring source of support and security for a woman.197 Once again, the obligations of this relationship are enshrined in the Qur'an (Chaudhry 1991:24-25).

**Lus for a Brother**

Ye loy, loy,
Loy, loy, lol,
Loy, la loy, loy, loy......

196 Consider, for example, the following Quranic verses:

We have enjoined on a man kindness to his parents: In pain did his mother bear him, and in pain did she give him birth. (Sura 16:15)

Be kind to parents...And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility and say: My Lord! bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood. (Sura 17: 23-24)

197 Goodwin Raheja and Grodzins Gold (1994) suggest that the brother-sister bond is important throughout north India but is sometimes underestimated in studies of kinship that emphasize descent. See also Weiner (1979).
CHORUS

A sister circles around (her brother)
A sister circles him like a moth.
But I don't see him.

The head of my house,
You took part in military competitions,
And won in front of many people.
For your training,
They took you to the Gilgit Agency,
And your victories were many
While you served in the Gilgit Agency.
In every kingdom, you did great things.
The head of my house,
You will go to Ghrushan,
There you will find a cluster of zart chivar,
The zart chivar will be all around you.
My brave brother,
My wrestler man poised for the fight.

CHORUS

And your sister has no bad words for you,
She will always respect you.
Hu loy, loy, loy, lah
Loy a loy, loy, lah....

Aman Begum's final lus is a song of bereavement that was sung following the sudden and tragic death in 1995 of a young man, Zamir, who had been married only six weeks earlier. Zamir

198That is, the head of her natal house, her brother.
199Ghrushan is thought to be a place in Iran.
200zart chivar is a yellow flower from which a food colouring -possibly saffron- is derived. Informants suggest that Aman Begum's brother has a golden hue to his skin and the references to zart chivar make an association between the colour and a beauty that others will admire.
was working in an office in Gilgit and climbed onto the roof to repair a telephone line. He slipped on the wet sheet metal and fell onto an overhead electricity cable. He was fatally electrocuted and his horribly charred remains were returned to his father's house in Gulmit. Aman Begum's lus reminds us of the potential griefs and sufferings of being a wife and a mother, in other words, we are reminded that the moth's wings may be singed:

Lus for Zamir

My brave Zamir.
He was an amanat in this world.
Now, he is the groom of heaven.
He the brave,
Who went to the Gilgit Agency.
His sudden disappearance
Has shocked his friends.
His poor father!
His poor mother!
You are so unfortunate,
You have lost your son.

CHORUS
A mother circles around (her son)
A mother circles him like a moth.

My brave, you are the groom of heaven.
My brave, who went to Gilgit.
He has been brought here unexpectedly.
His wife is like the little milk-bird

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201 Amanat is a Persian word referring to a temporary gift, a keep-sake, that is given to another while the giver is away. When the giver comes back, the keep-sake is returned to them.

202 A milk bird (zhash ungas) is a small grey bird with a white face that looks as if it has been dipped in milk. The bird is regarded as a symbol of peace. Small boys are often warned not to kill this bird with their catapults since this would bring bad luck. Some informants suggest that Aman Begum's words were actually hanzo ungas (queen bird),
Who is weeping on his sad demise.

Aman Begum's lus are thus a salutary reminder that while academics may reduce reproduction and parenthood to such motives as a desire for lineage continuity, or to the need for security in old age, in Gulmit, having children may be about something more. Study of Wakhi cultural texts suggests that having children—and indeed, the reproduction of social bonds—may also be about that which imbues life with its very emotional texture, its joys and pains, its narrative richness, its very sources of meaning.

8.6 Concluding Comments
In this chapter, I have attempted to draw out contextual meanings, particularly those that relate to the relationships which mediate fertility and childbearing in Gulmit. This chapter is an attempt to go beyond that which can be obtained directly through surveys and questionnaires, and move into the realm of that which cannot easily be articulated in single sentence answers. Moreover, in seeking meanings, I have been less concerned with finding new or alternative definitions, and more concerned to understand that which is evoked. From the outset, it has been acknowledged that human beings tend to construct meanings through processes of narrativisation. Since these processes are mediated by narrative mode, narrator, audience203 and interpreter, it has also been necessary to attend to the process of meaning-production itself.

In Gulmit, folk and adventure stories are essentially a male genre. These stories reveal something of human relations with the (gendered) spirit world, and their role in the reproduction of the aesthetic order. Within these stories, the leitmotif of the breastfeeding, nurturing mother recurs, with breastmilk being depicted as a critical, activating

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203 Appendix V contains some notes on observations made of the audience during public presentations of songs, poetry and dance.
substance in the reproduction of human beings. But, what can be discerned in nearly all male stories are the mixed feelings of desire, ambivalence and anxiety experienced by men regarding women (cf. Rosaldo 1980).

The male genre of love songs reveals more about their subjective experience of gender relations. In particular, it reveals something of the male ghām of forbidden, unrequited and unfulfilled love. Drawing upon familiar scenarios and metaphors that evoke religious experience, Bul-Bul reveals that the delights and pains of such love may be physically felt, and may seem to touch the entire body-soul being. Bul-Bul's songs also reveal the conflict that may be experienced between scenarios of passion and scenarios of social conformity, in other words, he exposes some of the hidden dilemmas that can underlie (apparently) functional relations of reproduction.

The constraints of sharem mean women cannot easily express such feelings and desires, but the popularity of these songs among women suggests that these themes are also meaning-full for them.204

Women's life stories, and the lus of elderly women, reveal something of how women configure the world within their own modes of aesthetic synthesis. These narrative modes also illustrate how women may situate their reproductive capacity and reproductive experiences within representations of themselves and their social relations. The life stories of Aman Begum and Malika show how women's experiences of ghām tend to relate to the principal male protagonists in their lives. Malika's story illustrates how a women's relationship with her son can become a key theme in the narrative construction (and representation) of herself, as it is actively shaped within a transforming social and economic

204Here a contrast may be made with the work of Ardener (1975) who suggests that women may hold a (muted) model of the world that differs from that of men.
environment. However, Aman Begum's *lus* reveals that, while women may be in dependent relations with men, these relations may, nevertheless, be an abundant source of meaning-rich narrative themes; it is the joys and pains of such relationships that add emotional texture to the stories of self told to the self, and sometimes to others.

Of course, changing circumstances and events can sometimes mean that the story of self told to the self is no longer coherent or workable. This may be physically experienced as anxiety, crisis (in Malika's case, leading to attempted suicide) or as illness (in Aman Begum's case, associated with loss of speech). It seems, then, that there is an important relationship between the narrative of the self and general health and well-being. It is this understanding that informs my analysis of local responses to family planning services in the next chapter.

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*A number of theorists writing from the perspective of Western psychoanalysis (see for example, Schafer 1981; Phillips 1994, 1995) build upon the legacy of Freud to argue that there is no fixed core within the human psyche, there are only stories, including the stories people use to make sense of themselves. According to this perspective, crisis or breakdown occurs when the story of self no longer 'works'. The role of the therapist is then considered to be that of co-author, one who assists the individual in reconstituting a new or modified story, a story that re-works or draws out significant events from the past to explain and make sense of the present, while being perceived to be sustainable in the future. Drawing on material from other cultural contexts, Levi-Strauss (1963) suggests that healing may depend on healers facilitating engagement with symbolically-rich myths and stories, while Dow (1986) suggests this may be a universal aspect of symbolic healing.*
CHAPTER 9

FAMILY PLANNING IN GULMIT: POLICIES IN PRACTICE AND NARRATIVES OF EXPERIENCE

9.1 Introduction

It has been established that narratives, whatever their mode, can be seen as a form of aesthetic synthesis that contributes to the active process of making sense of a changing world. Where personal narratives are concerned, the process of narrativisation may also be seen as part of the active construction of personhood and self. However, aesthetic synthesis should not be regarded as just gentle artistry, for it frequently takes place within a context that is characterised by struggle, contested meanings and rapid transformations. It has been suggested that, in Gulmit the body itself is implicated in responses to, and indeed the production of, such contexts. In other words, the process of active making sense of the world involves physical and emotional sensibilities as well as cognition, practice as well as conceptualisation. Consequently, the responses of social actors to change -be it the change that occurs within dynamic interpersonal relationships, or the change of socio-economic transformation and innovation- may manifest itself in physical symptoms, emotional displays and modified behaviour, as well as in verbal exchanges. What is more, the interpretation of these physical manifestations and verbal exchanges is likely to be informed, at least in part, by a prevailing shared schema of aesthetic values.206

Having systematically plotted some of the key aesthetic values that are likely to inform personal narratives in Gulmit, I now turn to the stories Gulmiti women (and men) have to tell about their reproductive experiences,

206As demonstrated by the references to gham in Chapter 8, the aesthetic 'disharmony' associated pain and suffering may gain moral significance by being experienced and interpreted through a shared schema of aesthetic values (see also Grima 1992, Desjarlais 1992).
particularly with respect to the recent innovation of a family planning service.

The account which follows is based on a series of case studies of women users and non-users of family planning in Gulmit. Each case study derives from a core in-depth interview combined with more longitudinal investigations based on ongoing observation and informal discussions with the woman, and relevant others, over the fieldwork period. Although case study notes were kept on a number of women, the following five case studies were selected partly for their completeness, and partly because they provide a narrative focus from which to describe the range of experiences of other women interviewed.

While each case study derives from a triangulation of research methods, each narrative account is ultimately my own representational construction. For my purposes, I consider narrativisation to be the most appropriate mode of representation for it enables me to weave in multiple contextual themes and influences, just as women themselves interweave multiple themes when presenting narratives of the self. In the analysis of each narrative account, attention is given to events, constructions of the self, cultural values, and the positioning of the subject within transforming social and economic relations. In this regard, the following case studies can be seen as crystallizing many of the component themes of preceding chapters. Although the case studies should be seen as exemplars that are illustrative rather than representative, an attempt is, nevertheless, made to situate them within the larger picture; reference is therefore made to survey data and data derived from secondary sources to give some indication of how typical these cases might be. Ultimately, however, this chapter should be regarded as, first and foremost, about acquiring

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207 The demographer McNicoll (1994) advocates narrative modes of explanation for similar reasons.
understanding before it is about asserting answers.

9.2 Policies in Practice: A Review of Service Provision
Since government family planning services in the Northern Areas of Pakistan remain minimal, the non-governmental organisation FPAP has (since 1986) been the principal agency supporting family planning services in the region.

In 1986, one woman from Gulmit village was trained as a birth attendant and family planning advisor. She was supplied with condoms and subsequently taught to administer contraceptive injections. Around this time, it was also possible to purchase contraceptive pills from private pharmacies in Gilgit and dispensers could also administer contraceptive injections. In Gulmit, however, stories still circulate about the experience of those who tried using contraception during this time. It seems that several women developed injection abscesses following contraceptive injections; indeed, two women described to me how they had to go to hospital "for an operation" as a result. Other stories tell of how women were given contraceptive pills either by pharmacists or female relatives but received no assessment or detailed instruction about their appropriate use. One woman, who has a mentally subnormal son claims that she continued taking contraceptive pills well into pregnancy not knowing her condition; she believes her son's abnormality is directly attributable to the contraceptive pill. Such stories are salutary for they show that when 'contraceptive inundation' is not backed-up by adequate support services and follow-up, it can contribute to negative perceptions of family planning that persist for years.

Since 1986, FPAP has trained 8 more health guards/TBAs in Gulmit -these include both younger and older women. In 1992, FPAP opened a family welfare clinic in the village. Malika, the Lady Health Visitor (LHV) who staffs the clinic, is responsible for providing primary health care to mothers and children, giving family planning instruction and providing
contraceptive cover, including the insertion of IUDs. In general, however, family planning is not positively regarded in the village and Malika, a local woman with 3 children, has found it difficult to remain well-motivated over the years. Like the other local LHV in the village, Malika must constantly weigh her desire to be regarded as an educated, professional woman against her desire to maintain good relations with the villagers with whom she must spend her life (see n. 187)

In December 1994, 34 village women were registered at the family planning clinic in Gulmit. Another 14 women had had tubal ligations, and Malika estimated that around 10 women came for condoms on a regular basis, but these were not registered. Of the 34 users of contraception registered at the clinic, 6 had registered in 1992, 18 had registered in 1993, and 10 had registered in 1994. Malika attributes the 1993 increase to an intensive FPAP promotion campaign during that year.

Of the 34 women registered, only 1 used contraceptive pills, 5 used an intrauterine device (IUD) and the remainder received contraceptive injections (Depo-Provera or Norigest) every 2-3 months. It is usual for new users to be commenced on contraceptive injections, but, since it is recommended that only 9 injections be given consecutively, these women are subsequently advised to have an IUD inserted or consider tubal ligation.

The mean age of registered users was 27.4 years with 14 women being over 30 years. Women over 30 years were more likely to be using contraception because they wanted no more children, rather than for spacing. Among women who had completed their family, the mean number of living children was 6.4, with all but 1 having 2 or more sons. Among the 17 women who stated that they were using contraception to space their children, the mean number of living children was 3.6, with 13 of these having 2 or more sons, and a further 2 having at least 1 son.
Of the 34 registered users of contraception, only 9 were educated to secondary school level or above and only 1 of these was in paid employment (as a teacher). Of those with little or no formal education, none was in paid employment but 5 earned extra income by selling garments made at the UNICEF sewing centre. 16 of the 25 users with little or no education, were married to men who also had little or no education. Of the secondary educated women, all but 1 were married to men who had also completed secondary education. Thus, while there appears to be some correlation between the educational level of couples and contraceptive use, it is notable that 74% of female users have little or no education, and in 47% of user cases, neither husband nor wife has any secondary level education.

The 14 women in Gulmit who had had tubal ligations were all at least 33 years old at the time of surgery. In this group, the mean number of living children was 6.2, with the smallest completed family size being 4 and the largest being 10, and every completed family containing at least 2 sons. Only 2 of the women had received any secondary education and these were both married to men with secondary education; only 1 one of the lesser educated women was married to a man with secondary education. Again, it seems, the correlation between educational level and contraceptive action is not clear-cut in Gulmit.

In the course of the fieldwork period, I conducted in-depth interviews with 29 of the women who were users of contraception and 12 of the women who had had contraceptive

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Local Ismaili Council figures indicate that in Gulmit about 35% of men and 22% of women have at least some secondary school education, but the vast majority of these are below 40 years of age. Several studies indicate that in Pakistan, primary education has minimal impact on fertility rates but secondary education has a significant impact because it is associated with increased age of first marriage, a desire for fewer children, reduced loss of children through death, and increased contraceptive use (see for example, Sathar 1984, Sathar et al. 1988).
surgery. I also conducted in-depth interviews with 38 women who were non-users of contraception. This latter group was a judgemental rather than a random sample and included both educated and non-educated women, women who were in paid employment and those who were not, as well as, young women (less than 30 years) and older women. 6 post-menopausal women were interviewed in order to collect data about experiential and perceptual changes over time. Whilst I did note wealth and social status in my interviews, as explained in Chapter 4, differentials are not great in Gulmit. In-depth interviews with women were complemented by innumerable informal discussions, observation and focus group discussions. I also completed 11 formal interviews and 6 focus group discussions with men stratified by age and education.

From this research, 5 key case studies of women have been selected. These case studies include 1 non-educated woman who has had contraceptive surgery, 2 users of contraception (1 younger, educated woman and 1 older, non-educated woman) and 2 non-users of contraception (1 younger, educated woman and 1 older, non-educated woman). In presenting these case studies, a commentary is also provided to situate the accounts within the range of other informant experiences and perspectives gleaned in the course of my research. In comparing the stories of younger and older women, educated and non-educated women, I hope to capture something of the changing attitudes, perceptions and, indeed, anxieties, that accompany rapid social and economic transformation in Gulmit, as well as how these relate to reproduction and the relationships that surround it.
9.3 Case Studies

Case Study 1: Contraceptive Surgery and the Problem of 'Pari'.

Introducing Sher Banu

Sher Banu is 40 years old but looks rather older. Her long plaits are completely grey and unlike other women she does not dye her hair with henna or the commercial hair dyes available from the bazaar. Sher Banu is generally cheerful and chatty. She is uneducated and comes from the Wakhi village of Markhun, about 30 km to the north of Gulmit.

Sher Banu was married when she was about 15 years old. Her husband, Abdul Muhammad, has received no formal education and is considerably older than Sher Banu. When they married, Abdul Muhammad's parents were already dead. Abdul Muhammad has no brothers so he alone inherited his father's land and property. At the time of his marriage to Sher Banu, Abdul Muhammad already had a wife, Shahnaz, who had borne him 3 daughters. Shahnaz was chronically ill with "leg pain" so she could not work and was thought unlikely to be able to bear more children, in particular, a much desired son. Shahnaz died 12 years after the second marriage. Both Sher Banu and Shahnaz were related to Abdul Muhammad: Shahnaz was Abdul Muhammad's matrilateral cross-cousin (MBD) and she was also Sher Banu's maternal aunt.

Commentary
Like other local women of around 35 years and older, Sher Banu had no opportunity for education. For these women, the typical age of marriage was between 11 and 16 years. Even today, first cousin marriage is not uncommon in Gulmit and close kinship relations between a first and second wife is thought to increase the likelihood of domestic harmony. For many women, marriage marks a traumatic severing from their natal kin particularly if, as in Sher Banu's case, the natal
home is some distance from Gulmit. Older women talk of separation being particularly painful before the KKH was built because they were unlikely to see their natal kin for many years. These older women describe how, in the first years of marriage, they kept watch daily, longing for visits from brothers and other male kin who might bring news of home. They describe, too, the excitement and joy of such visits when they actually occurred. Thus, from the day of her marriage, a young woman left childhood behind and—skipping the years of adolescence that seem to have become the privilege of educated youth—embarked upon her adult life of domestic and agricultural tasks, childbearing and childrearing. Older women frequently observe that their youth was characterized by such predetermined patterns, other scenarios being simply unimaginable.

Everything is in my heart...

Sher Banu is well known for suffering from tars and communicating with the pari. She has had episodes of tars from an early age and while she was initially open and willing to talk to me of such matters, other women who joined us suggested that it was not good to talk of these things. Nevertheless, Sher Banu commented:

"When I was small, I became unconscious and started talking. First I went to a bitan for help but then I became like the bitan because I could talk with the pari...These days, I don't see the pari very often, sometimes on Fridays. Even if I don't see the pari, everything is in my heart."

Soon after I visited Sher Banu, there was a road accident. Late one night, four men from the neighbouring village of Ghulkin were driving home from Sost where they had been drinking large amounts of Chinese alcohol. Tragically, the drunken driver drove off the road and the vehicle fell to the river below. Three were killed, and one had serious back injuries. When visiting the house of one of the
deceased, Sher Banu fell into a state of *tars*, and loosening her clothes and tearing at her hair, bemoaned the evils of alcohol. Finally, she said that the *pari* demanded *hithoyie*; the appropriate animal sacrifice was then made by the people of Ghulkin.

**Commentary**

While women may appear to lack relative autonomy or social and political influence, *tars* - as suggested in Chapter 5 - is socially recognized behaviour whereby women's perspectives may be given voice, and may be seen as a response to anxiety or disquiet. It will become apparent that Sher Banu's propensity for expressing anxiety in this way is significant when she considers the prospect of contraceptive surgery.

**Socio-economic Context:**

Abdul Muhammad owns two houses both of which he inherited from his father. One house is in Gulmit proper and the other is in Chimungul, near to the bulk of the inherited agricultural land. In the summer, the entire household moves to Chimungul in order to tend the potato fields. Both houses are old and consist of a single communal room. Following the UNICEF initiative 6 years ago, the Gulmit house now has a bathroom area with a latrine. A number of consumer durables from China and down-country are kept within the communal living space, these include an electric oven, an electric iron, a radio and Chinese kitchen-ware such as a tea service and thermos flasks.

Abdul Muhammad's household is regarded as middle-income. Sources of household income include Abdul Muhammad's post office pension (he is a retired postman), sale of potatoes and income from Abdul Muhammad's small business (he transports goods between Sost and Gilgit by private truck). Abdul Muhammad's truck was bought with the help of a loan from the women's *tanzim* which Sher Banu attends. However, at the time of interview, Abdul Muhammad was unable to drive because he was recovering from a leg injury. Earlier
in the year, he had gone to Lahore because he was worried about his eldest son who was working there as a diver and was said to have become addicted to hashish. Unfortunately, while in the city, Abdul Muhammad was run over while crossing the road and sustained a broken leg. This year (1994) his hospital bills have proved the biggest item of household expenditure and Sher Banu has had to take a second loan from the tanzim.

Sher Banu and her husband have 5 living sons and 2 daughters. Sher Banu's 3 stepdaughters are married, and her eldest son married just over a year ago. Sher Banu's daughter-in-law lives in the house and was pregnant at the time of interview. Of Sher Banu's other children, 1 son attends Al-Amyn English-medium school, 2 younger sons attend the government school and the 2 daughters attend the local Aga Khan school; the youngest son who is 4 years old, will begin school next year. Usually, school fees make up one of the main items of household expenditure and Sher Banu hopes that with time, they will be able to afford to send their other sons to the English-medium school. She comments, however, that the loss of income following her husband's accident has made the last year very difficult.

Commentary
Most older Gulmitique agree that living standards have increased during their lifetime: there is greater food security and cash for buying consumer durables. Nevertheless, Abdul Muhammad's story demonstrates that, in the absence of a comprehensive welfare system, many people continue to live a rather precarious existence. Although considerable support may come from relatives in times of hardship, nevertheless, accident and loss of employment can be debilitating, producing a relentless cycle of loans and debts. Like many women, Sher Banu's loans from the tanzim are used less for her own private needs or entrepreneurial activities, and more to support the education of her children and the welfare of her household. For most households in
Gulmit, school fees have become a major expenditure. In this Ismaili community, it is now considered a duty to educate daughters as well as sons, however, where resources are limited, it is sons who attend the more expensive English-medium school.

It is now usual for sons who have completed secondary education to go to the city for employment and/or higher education. Most tire of the city after about 5 years and return to Gojal to marry and seek longer-term employment in business, service industries or agriculture. Whilst in the city, young men have many new experiences and a few admit to brief encounters with drugs, male and female sex workers and blue movies. Nevertheless, doctors suggest that substance abuse and sexually transmitted disease are not yet significant problems in Gojal.

**Fertility History**
Sher Banu has had 12 pregnancies including 3 miscarriages. She became pregnant about 1 year after her marriage and gave birth to her first son who died of an unknown cause at 6 months old. Her second son survived and is now married, but her third son died of a "stomach problem" at 4 years old. 3 months after the death of her third son, Sher Banu was pregnant again but had a miscarriage at 5 months. 6 months later she was again pregnant and gave birth to her fourth son. A year later, she conceived again but had another miscarriage. About 18 months later, she found herself pregnant once more and gave birth to a son. Following another miscarriage, she became pregnant approximately every 2 years and gave birth to another son, two daughters, and finally a son who is now 4 years old.

Sher Banu's first birth was the most difficult:

"The first child took three days to come. At that time there was no treatment. Maybe my husband's heart was not happy, this is why it was such a difficult birth!"
Commentary

This latter comment is a humorous allusion to the local superstition that childbirth may be obstructed by a husband's anger. Although women sometimes tease each other about such matters, the idea does not appear, in practice, to inform action to relieve obstructed labour. However, in Gulmit, as in other parts of Pakistan, a history of difficult births can in some cases contribute to the decision to use family planning (see Blinkhoff 1990).

Like Sher Banu, many older women tell stories of prolific childbearing and regular child deaths. Indeed, as Sher Banu's story suggests, it is only in recent years that child survival rates have improved. Today, infant mortality rates in the area are relatively low. AKHS figures suggest they are of the order of 70/1000 p.a. compared to a national average of 90.5/1000 p.a., while FPAP figures suggest that in the more isolated parts of the Northern Areas, the infant mortality rate may be as high as 425/1000 p.a. Interviews and focus group discussions reveal that villagers generally perceive there to have been a significant improvement in infant and child survival rates over the past 20 years. Older villagers recall that in the past, couples generally had between 8 and 14 children but expected at least half of them to die. Villagers mostly attribute improvements in child survival to the availability of mother and child health care through AKHS and the presence of a doctor in the village. However, it is notable that the availability of these services is paralleled by improvements in water and sanitation, increased food security, improved literacy rates for men and women and a (perceived) general increase in living standards. But, whatever the reason (or combination of reasons), research elsewhere in South Asia suggests that declining infant mortality rates may be an important precursor to demographic transition and declining fertility rates (Sathar 1992).
**Fertility Regulation:**
After the birth of her last son, Sher Banu began to visit the family planning clinic for monthly injections:

"I had 5 sons and 2 daughters. I could not look after my children properly and I wanted to stop."

Moreover, the wedding day of Sher Banu's eldest son was approaching and, with the arrival of her new daughter-in-law, Sher Banu was conscious that her own childbearing should be curtailed. Although she thought her husband would agree that she should try family planning, she felt shy about discussing such matters with him. However, since her house is near to the family planning clinic, it was possible for her to attend secretly. Sher Banu experienced no significant side-effects following the injections but knew that in the long-term she would have to find an alternative means of limiting her fertility. The LHV, Malika, suggested that contraceptive surgery, that is the "operation", might be an appropriate solution. At last, Sher Banu raised the matter with her husband. He acknowledged that they had enough children and agreed to accompany Sher Banu to Gilgit for surgery.

**Commentary**
Although some women explained their decision to have contraceptive surgery in terms of the economic costs of raising and educating children, many, like Sher Banu, justified their decision in terms of the difficulty of providing total care (that is, care above and beyond economic provision) for large numbers of progeny.

Of the 12 interviewees who had had contraceptive surgery, 7 had tried contraceptive injections first. While 4 women experienced no significant side-effects from the injections, 3 were driven to consider contraceptive surgery because they could not tolerate the side-effects, as one woman explained:
M: "I used injections twice. They did not suit me. I started bleeding and it did not stop for one year. I went to Gilgit and got some medicine, then I got better. After that, my husband refused to let me use anything else like the chala ("ring", IUD). I had two more children after that [one daughter and one son], then I thought maybe I should have the operation."

In all cases, women claimed that it was they who initiated discussion about contraceptive surgery with their husbands, although several admitted initial shyness. Most interviewees learned of contraceptive surgery by word of mouth, but 3 women reported that they first thought seriously about surgery after hearing radio broadcasts produced as part of an FPAP campaign in 1992. What is more, 5 women described how they responded to the campaign and went to Gilgit with their husbands in a vehicle provided by FPAP. Discussions with these women suggested that they benefited from the mutual support of being part of a group and that this support has been ongoing. Other interviewees reported that they went to the hospital privately with their husbands but were generally accompanied by a female relative. All women who undergo contraceptive surgery in Pakistan receive Rs.50 (the equivalent of a kilo of rice) as an incentive payment. Although this payment was welcomed as a gift or token by informants, in practice it was too small to be regarded as an incentive.

A Problem of Pari...

Although Sher Banu and her husband had agreed that she should have contraceptive surgery, Sher Banu felt unable to go to Gilgit for several months:

"I wanted to go but then I got some pari problems and it was not possible for me."

Sher Banu admits that there was a period during this time
when she was at risk of getting pregnant again.

Commentary

Sher Banu was reluctant to elaborate on the "problem of pari" but, as we have seen, such problems tend to be associated with anxiety or unease. In other words, it seems that Sher Banu experienced some disquiet about the surgery, about taking active measures to terminate her fertility. Other women were more explicit in expressing a their disquiet:

G.B: "Before the operation my heart was worried. We have to work on the land and our children need education. If I become ill, who would help me? I am alone in the house. I also thought I might die. Then who would look after my children? For the down areas, these things are good but here we have a lot of work so it is more difficult for us."

In other cases, too, it became apparent that fears about the prospect of contraceptive surgery, and lack of professional support, together lead to prolonged periods of ambivalence or indecision in which women were at risk of further pregnancies (cf. Blinkhoff 1990).

Contraceptive Surgery Recalled:

At last, Sher Banu's husband told her that he had arranged transport to take them to Gilgit. Sher Banu and her husband did not tell anyone why they were going. On arrival, they went to see the FPAP field officer who is a man from Gulmit. He helped them to make arrangements for the operation.

Sher Banu describes her experience of contraceptive surgery as follows:

"They said I must not use any family planning medicine before-hand. They gave me an injection. I went to sleep straight away and I did not know what they did. The others [other village women who have had the surgery] say they
were not so quick and they felt a little of what they were doing. They put me in a bed and we stayed for 4 hours. When I saw them coming with a wheelchair for me, I laughed...

"...We stayed in a relative's house in Gilgit and the next day we came on the wagon (private minibus) to Gulmit. When we got to the bridge, there had been an avalanche so we had to pass on foot, but there was a vehicle on the other side..."

"...Some other women ask me questions about whether it was good or bad. I have had no pain or problems. I do get some menses, just a little and not every month. I do get ill and become weak sometimes but that is not to do with the operation. Last year I could not hear or see suddenly. I went to Gilgit and they said it was because I was thinking too much. I don't know what they meant but I was doing a lot for my son's wedding at that time. In the past I had some problems but now I am alright."

Commentary
None of the Gulmiti women interviewed said that they found surgery itself particularly traumatic. Moreover, 6 women said that they were completely satisfied with the surgery and had experienced no significant after-effects or problems. 1 woman, like Sher Banu, was a little more hesitant and mentioned problems that she, at some point, thought might have been related to the surgery. 1 teacher experienced repeated backache and urinary problems in the years after the surgery. Although she herself did not attribute these symptoms to the contraceptive surgery, other village women who heard of her condition suspected a direct connection. This kind of speculation and hearsay is not uncommon in women's discussions about contraceptive surgery and, indeed, about family planning in general. For example, there is also a well-known story of a woman from the next village, Hussaini, who went to Gilgit for contraceptive surgery. It is said
that while she was away, her youngest son became ill and died. In one focus group discussion, it was suggested that this was retribution from God for "trying to stop the souls from coming".209

3 women interviewed made direct connections between their contraceptive surgery and after-effects which were typically experienced some months after surgery. These after-effects included weakness, impaired vision, lower back pain and absence of, or reduced, menstrual flow. While these after-effects might appear vague or inconsequential, for the women who experienced them, they had have profound implications for their sense of health and well-being. Consider, for example, the case of Nilufar. Nilufar has 5 sons, 1 daughter and a 17 year old step-daughter, Gohar. Nilufar had contraceptive surgery soon after I arrived in Gulmit. Almost a year after her surgery, Nilufar described her condition:

N: "Last March I had the operation. I had no problems at the time, but nowadays I am not strong. I have lost my appetite and I am weak. At the time of the operation, I did not have good food like eggs and meat, so now I am not strong. Since then I haven't had any menses. I am worried about this. Now my eyes have become weak and some women have said it is because my menses has stopped. If my husband were here [he is in the army], he would take me to the hospital in Gilgit for a check-up...Before I was plump like Gohar. I ate a lot, but now I cannot eat."

Nilufar's references to food suggest that she perceived that contraceptive surgery had a cooling effect on her body. Indeed, in the course of my fieldwork study, I watched Nilufar become transformed from a woman who was jovial, slightly flirtatious, spritely and hard-working, to a women who was frail, forlorn and eschewed social contact.

209 Blinkhoff (1990:23) describes similar reasoning in a northern Punjabi village when a husband tried to dissuade his wife from having contraceptive surgery.
Concluding Comment on Contraceptive Surgery

From this study of contraceptive surgery in Gulmit, it seems that, at present, Gulmiti women are unlikely to consider contraceptive surgery until they have had at least 2 sons and until they have a degree of confidence that these sons will survive. Information and stories about contraceptive surgery comes from peers, as well as from the media and professionals, and there is a clear need for women's fears and misgivings to be meaningfully addressed.

While the financial costs of childrearing may be a factor in fertility decision making, women are generally concerned about the total care they can give to a large number of children within the context of the social and life-cycle transitions of the household. Concerns about the care of existing children, debility, and even death, may contribute to anxiety about undergoing contraceptive surgery, and this may be expressed explicitly, or more obliquely in behaviour such as tars. It is notable that anxiety or disquiet can manifest itself some considerable time after surgery itself. In such cases, it seems that physical symptoms become encoded and read within the cultural schemata through which women understand and experience their bodies. Thus, whilst these symptoms may appear vague or incomprehensible within a biomedical framework, they can, nevertheless, be profoundly debilitating for they relate to culturally-recognisable (embodied) responses to a change that may profoundly affect a Gulmiti woman's construction of self, and have implications for her relationships with significant others.

Case Study 2: Contraceptive Use and Baby Shows

Introducing Naseema

Naseema is about 35 years old. She is sturdy and hard-working. She is an active participant in her local tanzim and while Naseema's household is considered to be slightly

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210See Good (1994) for a theoretical elaboration of this idea.
poorer than others, she commands considerable respect among other women.

Naseema was born in Gulmit and received 3 years of primary education. She was married at 14 years old and her education was then discontinued:

"At that time there was pressure on us to marry. Nowadays at 14, they go to school. At that time, there were no choices about life. Nobody asked us what we would like. We were under pressure from our fathers and brothers. You know, after I was married another tooth came; I didn't even have all my adult teeth!"

Naseema's husband, Ayub, is 10 years older than her. He completed his secondary education and worked as a teacher for some years. He now helps to run a small roadside hotel-restaurant, but the income from this is not great. Ayub is the youngest of 5 brothers. His father died 6 years ago. In accordance with local custom, the land was divided equally between all 6 sons. As a result, Ayub did not inherit much land but, as the youngest son, he did inherit his father's house. While Ayub was working as a teacher, an extension room and a bathroom was added to the house. Ayub regularly plays in the Silver Jubilee pipe band but the money earned from this goes into a community fund. Last year (1993), the household earned approximately Rs. 20,000 from the sale of potatoes. During this year, the household's greatest expenditure was on school fees and other educational expenses. Naseema had to take a small loan from the tanzim to help pay for these and other outstanding debts from the house extension. Consumer durables in the house include a radio and an electric cooking ring.

Naseema and her husband have 8 living children: 6 daughters (5 of whom attend the Aga Khan Girl's School), and 2 sons who attend the Government Boy's School. Naseema's mother-
in-law also lives in the house but she is blind and frail and needs a good deal of care from Naseema. Naseema takes great pride in her children and is prepared to make personal sacrifices to ensure their well-being:

"I worry a lot about finding money for my children and their education. Sometimes I eat just half a chapatti so they can have food, and I wear old clothes so I can educate my children. I work very hard for my children."

Commentary
Naseema's story reveals that in Gulmit, as elsewhere in Pakistan, it is principally women who bear the burden of raising children and caring for the elderly and infirm with limited resources. It is notable, too, that the burden of caring for children - that is the "cost" of childbearing - can fluctuate daily depending, at least in part, on the demands of other household dependents and the availability of assistance. Thus, the desire for children may not be fixed and enduring as KAP Surveys sometimes imply.

Fertility History
Naseema gave birth to her first son 4 years after her marriage. She was not worried about the initial delay because, she explains, at first she was still "zaklai" (young, small). Unfortunately, Nassema's first son died 4 days after the birth because "there was nothing available to keep him warm" and, Nassema adds, because at that time there were no health care facilities:

"Later the health centre came and we could get better medicine and they taught us about keeping clean. Before there were no medicines and a lot of children died."

Within a year of her son's death, Nassema was pregnant again and gave birth to a daughter. She was only able to breastfeed her daughter for 10 months before she got pregnant again. Naseema subsequently became pregnant at
average intervals of 2 years. She had 4 more daughters before giving birth to 2 sons and, finally, another daughter. On each occasion, Naseema continued breastfeeding until she became pregnant again.

For her first 3 births, Naseema stayed at home and was assisted by her mother-in-law and female neighbours. For the next 4 births, the LHVs came to the house to assist, and for the last 2 births she attended the health centre:

"I like the health centre [for giving birth] because at home a lot of blood comes out. At the health centre they can give injections to stop the bleeding and they have facilities for cleaning."

Naseema also comments proudly:

"My children have all been very healthy. 3 of my children began walking at 10 months and my 2 sons had teeth at 5 months. I got a prize at the baby show for one of my daughters because she, and all my children, are healthy."

Commentary
Like most women in Gulmit, Naseema's birth intervals have been determined by biological factors (which are themselves shaped by social and cultural practices). As elsewhere in Pakistan, prolonged breastfeeding is a principal determinant of birth intervals and fertility rates. Page et al. (1982:163) estimate that among Pakistani women "breastfeeding adds about 11 months on average to the period of non-susceptibility to conception after each birth." Few women in Gulmit recognised the contraceptive effect of breastfeeding for most related fertility more directly to the onset of menstruation. In Gulmit, unlike other parts of Pakistan (see Blinkhoff 1990:27), I found no evidence of the differential breastfeeding of sons and daughters. Although there is a cultural ideal of breastfeeding children for 2 years, it appears that, in practice, breastfeeding is often interrupted
by pregnancy.

Although Naseema herself has only minimal education, her personal-narrative suggests a receptiveness, an openness, to integrating new or 'modern' values. Many Gulmiti women are wary of the baby shows run by both FPAP and the health centre because they fear that drawing attention to their baby's health and beauty could attract chezhum kak. In contrast, Naseema appears—at least in her representation of self to me—to have no such scruples. She is also attracted by the more professional environment of the health centre, while as shown in Chapter 7, other women prefer to give birth at home using more traditional positions and practices. Naseema's perspective may be summed up by a comment she made on another occasion. Discussing recent changes in Gulmit she says:

"Before there was nothing for us, no jobs. Now we want to go forward with the world."

It is this narrative representation of the world which may be the key to Naseema's ultimate openness to the use of contraception to limit her fertility. Let us consider the narrative account describing the process whereby Naseema eventually adopts family planning:

**Fertility Management:**

Naseema explains that having had 8 living children, including 2 sons, she felt this was enough.

"We like many children. I had 5 daughters first but I was not worried because they were all healthy. Then I had 2 sons and then another daughter. When she was about 2 years old, I said to my husband that maybe I would go for family planning."

Prior to this, Naseema and her husband had never discussed how many children they would like, or the possibility of using family planning. When Naseema did bring the matter
up, her husband was not enthusiastic:

"...But my husband did not like the idea because there is a lot of work and he was worried that I would become weak. Now I have had two injections and it suits me so I will carry on. Now my husband knows. He was not angry because I am still healthy."

Naseema justifies going against the will of her husband by arguing that, "while the father is away it is the mother who must listen to the crying of her children".

Before using contraception, Naseema consulted other women. The possibility of side-effects was mentioned but she was reassured:

"I talked to some other women about it [family planning] and they said it was good. At the clinic they told me about the injections and they said that they were the best thing...There were some bad stories about the injections -that they make the woman's legs become swollen- but this was before the clinic opened, now it is not a problem. I go to the clinic every month and I have no problems at all."

**Commentary**

It is notable that at 35 years old, Naseema is effectively the senior woman in her household. This, together with the relative hardship she deals with in managing the household, appears to have contributed to a relatively autonomous sense of identity, and she feels able to use contraception despite Ayub's initial disapproval. Naseema's house is in Lakhsh and it is significant that here she had heard somewhat favourable reports of family planning. In the *mahalla* of Lakhsh, there is a small concentration of women who have been trained by FPAP as health guards and it is perhaps no coincidence that a relatively large proportion of registered users (47%) of contraception live in this area. Focus group discussions
reveal that in upper Lakhsh, attitudes towards family planning are generally much more positive than in neighbourhoods such as Goz, where stories of negative side-effects abound. It is also notable that the family planning centre is itself at the edge of the polo ground and has several back entrances via upper Lakhsh. It is therefore easier for women from Lakhsh to attend the clinic discretely and, if necessary, secretly. All these factors, I suggest, contribute to a micro context which supports women using family planning.

Concluding Comment on the older Woman and Contraceptive Use:
Very few women over 30 years in Gulmit have had the benefit of secondary education. However, from in-depth interviews with the small number of mature women who use contraception in Gulmit, I tentatively suggest that they are characterised by a world view that embraces change and 'modern' ways. But more than this, they tend to be women whose personal narratives imply a relatively autonomous construction of self. While occupying a senior position in the household may contribute to this, it also appears, from my small number of interviews, that relative autonomy tends to be associated with narratives of the self in which tales of hardship and difficulty figure large.\textsuperscript{211} We might speculate, therefore, that such experiences produce a sense of struggle, a defining of self against others, an openness to alternative discursive constructions of the world.

This study of the older woman and contraceptive use also picks up a theme that began to emerge from the preceding study of contraceptive surgery, namely that women's networks or informal alliances may prove critical in supporting a woman either considering, or embarking upon, family planning.

\textsuperscript{211}As suggested in Chapter 8, Islamic texts are replete with leitmotifs and scenarios in which the self-sacrificing, suffering mother is figural. For Ismailis, the Prophet Muhammad's daughter, Fatimah, is a key figure whose suffering conferred virtue; indeed, the Ismaili sect was originally known as the 'Fatimids' (Daftary 1990:91-143)
It has been observed that the precise location of a village family planning clinic can have a bearing on who uses it. Closer attention may need to be paid to issues of access via the more concealed village paths and tracks used by women. In short, these are some of the micro-aspects of women's lives with which policy planning needs to engage.

**Case Study 3: The "Friendly" Marriage: Contraceptive Use and the Younger Woman**

**Introducing Jamila**

Jamila is 26 years old and comes from Gulmit. She is confident and attractive and generally wears modern Punjabi-style clothes, even when she is working. Jamila is married to 28 year old Umar Ali who is college educated and chairman of the Local Union Council. They live with Umar Ali's father who is considered to be one of the wealthier men in the village for he owns a large quantity of land in Chimungul, as well as, a wood factory and a shop. Umar Ali has one brother who is at college in Karachi, and three sisters who are all married. Umar Ali's mother died 2 years ago. The shared house is old but large. There is one communal room, a bathroom, and two extra bedroom extensions are currently being built. It is anticipated that Umar Ali and Jamila will use one of these bedrooms when it is complete.

This is Jamila's second marriage. She was briefly married to a man from Ghulkin when she was 18 years old. She did not like her first husband and spent much of her time at her father's house in Gulmit. They had no children. Eventually, after one year, her first husband divorced her and after a few months her father received a proposal of marriage from Umar Ali and his veruteeg. The two families are only distantly related:

"I had seen him before because we live in the same village and of course we saw each other sometimes, but I cannot
answer why he selected me."

Jamila is educated to secondary level but after their marriage Umar Ali helped her with her studies and encouraged her to take her matriculation exam which she passed. Jamila reads newspapers and magazines and sometimes books, but claims such things are difficult to find in Gulmit. Jamila sometimes attends the sewing centre and she is secretary of her local tanzim.

Jamila and Umar Ali appear to be very happily married and Jamila maintains her husband is a very good man and they are always on good terms.

Commentary
Jamila's story reveals that while women often lack autonomy in choice of marriage partner they can, through their behaviour, make a resented marriage unsustainable. Although Jamila has been married before, comparison with the case studies of older women reveals that in the course of a single generation there has been a significant increase in the age of first marriage. This is largely related to the directives of the Aga Khan, and to the expectation that daughters should receive at least some secondary education before marriage. To some extent, Umar Ali takes an interest in Jamila's education for its own sake, indeed, he himself is explicit about valuing a relationship with his wife in which they can discuss matters "as equals". Nevertheless, Umar Ali is highly respected in the village and it clearly befits him to have an appropriately educated wife. Such themes are recurrent in discussions about marriage among young married people and it is clear that while female education is frequently instigated as a matter of religious duty and status, it can have profound implications for the nature of husband-wife relations.

Fertility History
Jamila has had 3 pregnancies and no miscarriages or abortions. She has had no particularly difficult
pregnancies or births. She became pregnant for the first time about 1 year after her marriage to Umar Ali. From the fifth month she attended the ante-natal clinic at intervals for "checking":

"They tell us if the child is sehatmand (healthy, strong). They asked me if I suffered from pesuv rizn (heartburn) but I had no problems because I am sehatmand."

The first birth, a home birth, was attended by Jamila's mother-in-law and sister-in-law; her own mother also came towards the end. Because the four hour labour occurred during the night, they did not go to the health centre, instead, the LHV's were called in the morning:

"They came and said they would check me but I told them not to touch me. I said, "I am alright, the birth is finished" and they did not touch me."

Jamila breastfed her child, a son, for 1 year until she became pregnant again. She weaned him from 4 months and was never tempted to give him bottled milk because she had read in magazines that a mother's milk is much better. Her son, Abdul Salam, is now 6 years old and attends Al-Amyn English-Medium School.

Jamila's second child was a daughter. She died of pneumonia at 5 months old. Within a year Jamila was pregnant again and gave birth to a son whom she breastfed for 2 years. In each case, Jamila gave birth at home and the LHV's were only called at the end.

**Commentary**

Like other women, Jamila is clear about the relationship between her own health and that of her child. Despite her education and general progressive outlook, she prefers to give birth at home and avoids internal examination by the LHV's suggesting, perhaps, that she does not embrace all
modern ways uncritically. The village LHVs suggest, however, that young primigravida women, no matter what their education, tend to be more shy and fearful of the (biomedical) procedures surrounding childbirth than older women.

**Fertility Management:**
Jamila now has an IUD in situ to space her children. She explains, however, that when she was first married, family planning was not a consideration:

"When we first get married it is important to get pregnant -to get a child. But we cannot tell when this will happen, when it does we are very happy and then we want 2 children."

**Commentary**
In Gulmit, it is widely believed -as Jamila suggests- that a woman must establish her fertility in order to secure her marriage. Furthermore, it was sometimes suggested that a young woman's fertility is regarded as precious and delicate and not something to be tampered with.

Jamila mentions that she and her husband discussed family size early on in their marriage because "we are educated and we thought that between 2 and 4 children would be enough." Jamila recalls that it was she that initiated the conversation:

"The idea was mine. I thought 4 children would be enough. I thought this because if we have a small number of children we can look after them well. If we have many, we cannot look after them and they become weak. Nowadays, we think about these things. I can talk to him [her husband] freely because we are friendly."

**Commentary**
This case study illustrates the qualitative change in the
nature of conjugal relations that appears to be taking place in Gulmit. Younger married people, particularly those who are educated, tend to conceptualise themselves, at least in part, as couple units who subscribe to the ideal of a relatively close relationship of equals. While closer questioning reveals that, in practice, husbands tend to retain ultimate authority, nevertheless—as Jamila's story suggests—there does seem to be earlier and more open discussion of matters such as family planning among younger couples. This is likely to be facilitated by the creation of the private bedroom spaces which younger couples increasingly desire.

Jamila describes in more detail why she considered family planning:

"I heard about it before my first child but I did not care about it. Then after my first birth, I got pregnant quickly and she died. I couldn't care for her properly. At that time I started to think about family planning to give a gap, because my daughter died. But then I got pregnant again quickly. It was a big shock for me. What could I do?

After I had the third child, I started the family planning. I am still using it. I used injections for 2 years. After that you have to stop. The nurse said that the injection time is finished. I said I want a longer gap because my child is still small and she advised that I use the chala."

Jamila explains that she did have some "bleeding problems" with the injections but she was given some medicine at the clinic and these subsided. She has experienced no problems with the chala. At the moment she would not consider the operation:

"I do not want many children but my father-in-law has a lot of land so after a few years I will try for some more
children—my father-in-law wants some more grandchildren. Maybe I will wait for 5 years gap. Maybe after 2 more children, I will have the operation; maybe by then there will be something else that we can use."

Jamila's father-in-law overhears this part of the conversation. Later, he comments:

"I do not interfere in the number of children. I have money and land, but it is up to them."

Commentary
Here, Jamila confirms (perhaps for the benefit of her father-in-law) her subscription to a schema of cultural values. According to this schema of cultural values, Jamila's reproductive capacity potentially provides her father-in-law with the security of the perpetuation of his lineage, the transmission of property and, to some extent, the perpetuation of his identity. Jamila's story reveals that, despite her closer, more "friendly" relationship with her husband, she remains actively influenced by other household members, such as her father-in-law. While recognising that open interview sets up an interactive dynamic between those present that effectively mediates presentation and representation, nevertheless, it is worth acknowledging that the unspoken expectation of significant others—men, as well as women—may shape fertility decisions, and be yet another 'hidden' variable contributing to the apparent 'gap' between a woman's ideal family size and actual fertility outcomes. It is also clear from Jamila's case, that even when fertility decision-making is active and conscious, it may be ongoing and open-ended rather than fixed and final.

It seems, too, that although Jamila experiences some side-effects from contraceptive injections, she regards these as acceptable given the benefits accrued. While Jamila reports no significant side-effects from the use of an IUD, some other women had experienced heavy bleeding and pain and had
had to have the IUD removed. Blinkhoff (1990:22-23), too, reports that side-effects from IUD insertion can be severe and traumatic and that there is a need for more quantitative and qualitative research on this matter. The LHV maintained that there was no necessity to explain to women how contraceptive methods such as IUDs actually work. However, in focus group discussions, Gulmiti women were sceptical about the effectiveness of the chala. Some were concerned that the 'string' would cause discomfort to their husbands and that they might become "tied together". Although this last remark was said with some humour, it is worth considering that among women who do not clearly conceptualise their internal anatomy and physiology, devices such as IUDs can represent an image to which vague fears, myths and misgivings become attached.

Concluding Comments on the Younger Woman and Contraceptive Use
In Jamila's case, it seems to be a combination of her world view, personal experience and relationship with her husband that contributes to her decision to use contraception to space her family. In the longer term, however, it may be the expectations of others, such as her father-in-law, which also determine the number of children she actually has. Indeed, several young, educated women with whom I held informal discussions, articulated an acknowledgement that 'social pressure' would probably prevail over their own preferences. We have also seen from Jamila's case study that fertility decision-making can be ongoing, even contingent. Thus, KAP surveys which only refer to the bounded decision-making of married couples, and to decisions that are discrete and final, may be misleading. Moreover, as Dixon-Mueller and Germain (1992) suggest, such conceptualisations perpetuate the assumption that women already using contraception have no "unmet need" for family planning services.
Case Study 4: "If We Don't Think Then We Have Many" - the Older Woman and the Non-Use of Contraception.

Introducing Sahar Jan

Sahar Jan is 36 years old and was married when she was 14 years old. She comes from the village of Passu and can only read and write a little. Although she did have the opportunity to go to school she did not enjoy it and regularly absconded. Nevertheless, Sahar Jan is bright and ambitious and has trained as a teacher at the sewing centre. For the past 2 years, she has worked at the sewing centre for about 3 hours/day and earns a small income (about Rs.1,300 per month) from making and selling clothes. Sahar Jan spends this money on clothes for herself and the children, food items, school fees, and items for the house. She greatly values the autonomy this income gives her.

Sahar Jan's husband, Jibhar, is educated to degree level and is a teacher at the Aga Khan Girl's School. He is one of 3 brothers, and his 3 sisters are all married and living elsewhere. One brother has an office job in Gilgit and the other manages the small roadside hotel that was established by their father in the 1970s. Jibhar's father was a favoured servant in the Mir's court and travelled with him extensively. Jibhar's father is renowned for having been a fine polo player and the first man in Gulmit to have flown in a plane. Jibhar's father is widely respected but is said -particularly by younger men- to be rather strict and conservative. The family is considered to be middle-income but their financial position is considered to be particularly secure.

There are 3 bedroom extensions to the large, old house. Sahar Jan usually sleeps with the children in the main communal room, while her husband prefers a separate bedroom. There are a total of 17 people in the household, these include Jibhar, his parents, his wife, Sahar Jan, and their 7 children, as well as, Jibhar's younger brother and
his wife and 4 children.

The 3 women of the household all share the domestic tasks and childcare, while older siblings assist in the care of younger siblings. Sahar Jan's sister-in-law has completed secondary education and has worked as a teacher at the Aga Khan Girl's School for the last 9 years. In the past, when the children were a little younger, Sahar Jan was resentful that she had to take so much responsibility for childcare while her sister-in-law was at the school. Now, most of the children are themselves at school and Sahar Jan works at the sewing centre, so she feels a little happier:

"Nobody complains that I work at the sewing centre. Before nun (sister-in-law) worked at the school and I stayed at home, did the work in the house and looked after the children with shash (mother-in-law). Now who can complain that I go to the sewing centre?"

Sahar Jan is Jibhar's matrilateral cross-cousin (MBD) and she is 10 years younger than him. Sahar Jan comments on her age of first marriage:

"At that time, it was the time of marriage -for women around 14 to 16 years and for men around 25 years. In those days, it was not in our minds to question. We just followed what others told us. These days they can think about such things."

Commentary
Like other older women, Sahar Jan alludes to a perception that these days -due to education and other social and economic changes- young people perceive themselves to have choices, they exercise a degree of autonomy and are more active in decision-making about their lives. It is such transformations in the 'decision-making environment' that may prove a significant factor in transitions in fertility management.
Fertility History

Sahar Jan has 3 sons and 4 daughters. She has had no miscarriages, abortions or child deaths. She gave birth to her first child 3 years after marriage. She explains that for the first 2 years of her marriage she slept with her mother-in-law because she was still zaklai. After that, she had a child about every 3 years, with the longest interval being 4 years and the shortest being just over 2 years. She breastfed all her children for 2 years, except for the sixth child, a daughter, whom she only fed for 1 year and 8 months because she became ill. Sahar Jan never had any difficulties with breastfeeding except for her last child:

"With my last child, I thought that I had a little less milk, but I thought this was because I had had many children and my breasts were becoming a little dry. The child cried a lot so I gave it some cow’s milk and some butter and oil."

Sahar Jan explains that her fifth child suffered from prolonged diarrhoea from around 4 months:

"This was because of chezhum kak. I took him to the hospital in Gilgit twice, but he did not get any better so I took him to a khalifa in Khyber. He made a timor and heated some bakla and prayed on it. He said that we should bury the bakla under the dirt at the crossroads and when it was broken the child would be better. On the way home, I stopped at my village, Passu. Somebody there told me that yak’s milk is good so I mixed it with heldi [saffron-like yellow food colour] and made a special baat called halwashir. These things worked well.

Commentary

Although, as we shall see, Sahar Jan appears to lack autonomy in managing her fertility, nevertheless, her resourcefulness in finding treatment for her child’s diarrhoea reveals her to
be far from passive and unable to take initiative. Narratives such Sahar Jan's suggest that Gulmiti women are rarely completely autonomous individuals or completely sociocentric, rather they move within and between these manifestations of self according to situation and context.

Pregnancy and childbirth:
When Sahar Jan was pregnant she attended the antenatal clinic occasionally:

"I did go to the clinic sometimes. Sometimes they say come every week, sometimes every month. At first they gave vitamins to everyone, now they only give them to those who are weak."

Sahar Jan was the first woman in Gulmit to give birth at the health centre. She approves of the health centre because "if there is a problem they have the facilities". Nevertheless, she gave birth to 3 subsequent children at home "because it was cold".

Commentary
Here Sahar Jan's account touches on the fact that at the antenatal clinic, there is little explanation of the rationale for attending. From my own observations, there is a tendency for LHVs -like many medical professionals in Pakistan- to perform their duties competently, yet guard their professional status by systematically surrounding their activities with mysterious, unexplained biomedical rituals.212

As mentioned in Chapter 7, most women in Gulmit acknowledge the superior facilities at the health centre, yet prefer, in practice, to give birth in the comfort and warmth of the

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212 A number of texts deal with how biomedicine is culturally mediated (see for example, Good 1994) and with the use of ritual and symbolism in the therapeutic encounters of biomedicine (see for example, Moerman 1979).
Family Planning:
Sahar Jan explains that she prefers not to think about her ideal family size:

"No, I don't think about how many children I would like. If we don't think then we have many, if we do think then we have few."

She has never discussed such matters with her husband but deduces from comments she has overheard that he does not approve of family planning. Sahar Jan also refers to conversations she has had with her 2 sisters who are more educated than her and are married to educated men, an engineer and a doctor. Sahar Jan is reassured by the fact that these men tell their wives not to worry about such things, that they will work and provide money and it is the women's job to look after the children that God sends.

Sahar Jan adds:

"Many women say that family planning is not suited to them. I know 4 or 5 who have had the operation. After the operation, they say they don't feel good -they get pains in their thighs and in their sides. Some have bleeding problems. It is the same with the injections. Now I want to stop [having children] but what can I do? I am already a little weak. Those who don't have much work, they have no problem in using family planning but if there is a lot of work, we cannot become weak."

Commentary
Sahar Jan's comment that she does not think about family planning was echoed by many -both men and women- in individual and focus group discussions. For such people, it seems that reproduction is something that is largely unquestioned; it is something integral to the seasonality of
life, to the divine creative order, and tampering with such things is to risk making things inauspicious for future births.

Sahar Jan's husband, Jibhar, is, as Sahar Jan suspects, opposed to family planning despite being 'progressive' in many of his attitudes (for example, in his attitude towards the education of women). Jibhar comments that "children are given by God" and that "it is against our religion to stop them from coming".

In general, Gulmiti men's opinions about family planning are mixed and varied. A medical team offering vasectomy operations did visit the village about two years ago but, it seems, the take-up was zero. All the men questioned knew of the availability of contraception from the family planning clinic. All had heard about "the operation", contraceptive injections and most about condoms. Knowledge of IUDs, pills and other contraceptive methods was more rare. In individual and focus group discussions, the view that all children are a gift from God and should be welcomed, was frequently expressed by men - old, young, educated and non-educated alike. Some argued that in the past there was no family planning yet, with God's help, their predecessors were still able to provide for all their children. Those opposed to family planning often suggested that good Muslims do not interfere with the will of God. As mentioned in an earlier chapter, the full significance of being regarded as "good Muslims" in Gulmit must be understood in the context of local sectarian divisions, and in terms of regional affiliation to Muslim Pakistan. A few men suggested that childbearing is natural and simply something that every woman has to go through, while 2 men interviewed maintained that family planning is "durusti nast" (not true), that is, cannot work, for such matters are beyond the control of human beings.

In focus group discussions, young, educated men who had spent time in urban centres, tended to be the most supportive of
family planning (at least in their discussions with me) and generally associating it with the practices of those who are modern and accomplished. Many of these young men were aware of the possible (perceived) side-effects of injectable contraceptives and concluded that condoms are the safest method; several believed, however, that condoms reduce sexual pleasure. Most men interviewed knew that condoms could be obtained from the family planning centre, as well as, from some hotels and shops. Moreover, a few married, younger men claimed to be using condoms regularly. One 30 year old male user admitted, however, that "sometimes there is no time" when desire is great.

Sahar Jan's case study reveals that like many other Gulmiti women, she deduces her husband's opinion from overheard comments and judges his receptiveness to possibility of family planning. Several women interviewed also suggested that raising the question of family planning is a delicate matter because their husbands would resent the implication that they could not provide for their children.\textsuperscript{13} My female fieldwork assistant also observed that in Sahar Jan's case, the conservative attitudes of her father-in-law would also inhibit the use of family planning. Here, it is perhaps significant that Sahar Jan's sister-in-law, an educated teacher with 4 children, also eschews family planning. Once again, then, we see how the pervasive attitudes and expectations of senior household men can subtly shape the conduct of women.

Sahar Jan, like most other married non-users of contraception, knew of at least two contraceptive methods available through the family planning clinic. She articulates her own reluctance to the use of family planning partly by reference to an aesthetic of the everyday, that is, around

\textsuperscript{13} We might infer that such implications touch upon issues of gherat. Blinkhoff (1990) reports a similar phenomenon in northern Punjab. She suggests that among Muslim men the ability to have and provide for many children also relates to issues of virility and manhood.
the naturalised 'rightness' of gender roles, and partly in
terms of anxiety about possible side-effects of contraception
that might undermine bodily well-being, which, she implies,
is already compromised by the experience of ageing. While, in
Gulmit, a woman's value and identity derives fundamentally
from her ability to work, Sahar Jan's concern about her
physical strength may also be related to the fact that her
mother-in-law is becoming more frail and incontinent and
increasingly moves her seating position to the socially-
removed past rarj. If domestic and agricultural tasks
cannot be completed efficiently, Sahar Jan may well have to
sacrifice the degree of autonomy and financial independence
she has already won. Thus, it seems that Sahar Jan's
decision -or non-decision- not to use family planning may
emerge from the pursuit and management of other agenda which
she finds meaningful.

Concluding Comment on the Older Non-User of Contraception
From this study of mature women who do not use contraception,
it appears that this non-use may be the outcome of multiple
cross-cutting dynamics that produce their effects directly
and indirectly. The attitudes and expectations of
significant others -who may include male, female, near and
distant kin-contribute to a social context in which family
planning may, or may not, be considered. While resistance to
the use of family planning may be expressed by reference to
religion and 'the natural', as well as, by reference to
feared side-effects, as shown in earlier chapters, these
concepts encode a multitude of other themes from ethnic and
sectarian identity to aesthetic schemata and notions of
auspiciousness. It is these underlying themes which are not
easily articulated in relation to family planning, for they
are the stuff of habitus and deeply embodied values that may
be the most enduring sites of resistance.
Case Study 5: "Sons are Gold" - Young Women and the Non-Use of Contraception.

Introducing Soofia:
Soofia is 26 years old. Having completed some of her secondary education, she was married to a matrilateral first cousin at 15 years old. Soofia married a little younger than her peers because her husband's sister was due to marry and his mother would need help in the house. Soofia's husband, Hamid, is educated to matriculation level and used to work as a driver, but is currently unemployed. Hamid has one brother and two married sisters. Hamid's brother is currently studying in Karachi.

Hamid's father owns a moderate amount of land and potatoes form their principal source of household income. The shared house consists of a single room and a bathroom but no other extensions. Several consumer durables are to be found in the house, these include a small oven and iron and gas stove from China. Last year the household's greatest expenditure was on school and college fees, and the celebration of Hamid's sister's wedding for which the cost of clothes, gifts and food was substantial.

Soofia explains that she would like to have continued her education but there is a lot of work in the house and there is no time for her to study.

Fertility History:
Soofia was married for 6 years before she gave birth to her first daughter. She admits that she was beginning to get a little worried but it was her own mother who voiced concern:

"My mother said that nobody will keep a wife if there are no children. She said that there must be children for a happy life because children give beauty to the home."
At last, when Soofia gave birth to a daughter there was great celebration. She subsequently gave birth every 2 years and was 6 months pregnant at the time of interview. She now has 3 daughters and explains that she will continue having children until a son is born:

"It depends when God will give to me." Soofia considers that a son is important because "they give land to sons and a brother will always help his sisters if they need help."

Commentary
As a young married woman, Soofia experiences pressure from her own mother to get pregnant. Younger women, in particular, frequently refer to the advice of their mother or mother-in-law regarding reproductive matters. Nevertheless, this advice tends to be given indirectly since it is generally considered shameful for young and old to openly discuss matters pertaining to sexual relations.

In explaining her desire for a son, Soofia reminds us that a son is important not only for reasons of descent and inheritance but also because of their role in providing security for sisters, that is, for their role in the reproduction of lateral kinship relations.

Of course, a son is also important in providing security for ageing parents. Although, there is considerable formal unemployment in the area, many villagers perceive that, these days, there are many opportunities for educated sons to find jobs that have high status and income and the adage "sons are gold" is often heard. Indeed, one 37 year old woman who had 9 children, 7 of whom were sons, saw no economic reason for using family planning:

P: "My eldest son is at the army college in Gilgit. He is very intelligent. He wants to be a doctor or a manager. In a few years he will make lots of money and help his brothers with their education."
This case might appear to contradict demographic orthodoxy, for it seems that, in this case, perceptions of 'progress' and opportunity actually increase rather than decrease the desire for sons. However, it is notable that, in Gulmit, such households frequently depend on the assistance of relatives and informal kinship networks to help them meet the financial costs of raising and educating large numbers of children. When interviewed, some educated, employed men expressed resentment about having to support the "irresponsible" reproductive behaviour of their relatives. Indeed, in the case cited above, considerable tension was developing between agnates over this issue. It may be, then, that the phenomenon described is only temporary.

Breastfeeding:
Soofia would like to have breastfed her babies for 2 years. She adds, however, that a baby should not be breastfed for longer than 2 years otherwise it will develop cracked skin, especially on the cheeks. She explains that despite her desire to breastfeed for 2 years, she has had to stop feeding her youngest daughter a little early because she is pregnant again. She recalls, too, that when she was breastfeeding her second daughter, she became ill so her neighbour breastfed the baby for a few days. She comments, however, that these days zhazh nans are not as common as in the past and they tend to be called upon only if there is illness or death. Soofia adds: "these days, mothers are healthier and have more milk and mothers do not like to give their baby away to another."

Commentary
In the course of my research I did indeed come across a number of young, (mostly) educated women, and women who lived in Gilgit with their husbands, who were developing something of, what might be described as, a more one-to-one relationship with their babies. These women took great pride in dressing their babies in shop-bought clothes and surrounding them with the paraphernalia of modern
childrearing such as baby talc, lotions, and soft toys. It may be that a key aspect of demographic transition is the transformation of mother-child relations such that there is less sharing of childcare with others, and the child is treated—at least initially—as a projection or extension of the more individuated self (see Everingham 1994, Glenn et al. 1994).

**Pregnancy:**
Soofia finds pregnancy unpleasant and tends to feel sick and gets very tired. Despite being 6 months pregnant, her condition is not obvious for her swollen belly is covered by a loose *kamiz*, cardigans and a shawl and she giggles with embarrassment when I draw attention to it. Soofia does attend antenatal clinics intermittently “to see if the baby was weak or healthy.” She attended the health centre for the first birth but subsequent births took place at home “because it was cold and they came quickly.” On these occasions she was assisted by her mother-in-law and some female neighbours: “The LHVs only came at the end to cut the cord.”

**Fertility Management:**
“If I have a son, I will stop. If God gives one son then we will see. Family planning is good, but I would not use it—maybe, if I have 1 son. My mother-in-law says to wait until I have a son.”

Soofia has not discussed family planning with her husband but she is reassured by the fact that when she gave birth to her last daughter he told her not to worry. From discussions with Soofia it is clear that her principal concern is the security of her marriage. It took her many years to get pregnant and now she needs to have a son to ensure that her husband does not have grounds for divorce or for taking a second wife. The medicine Soofia would actually like is “medicine for a son”, which she does not believe is available even from a *khalifa*. Until she has at
least one son, Soofia will not take anything to curtail her fertility even temporarily.

Shortly before I left Gulmit, Soofia gave birth to her fourth baby. God had given her another daughter.

Commentary
As mentioned earlier, pregnancy is not in itself a state of pollution, however, it is surrounded by codes of sharem and covering since it draws attention to a woman's sexuality. Younger women, whose position in their husband's household is not well-established, must be especially careful to ensure that their behaviour is beyond reproach.

Once again, it seems that senior female kin play an active role in managing the fertility of younger women. A mother-in-law will monitor her daughter-in-law's behaviour and appearance for signs of pregnancy, she will attend births — often only calling the LHV for cutting the umbilical cord, she may also give 'reproductive health' advice directly and indirectly to her daughter-in-law, for she too has invested in the stability and continuity of the household and lineage.

Concluding Comment on the Younger Woman and Non-Use of Contraception
Soofia's story underlines the situation of young women in Gulmit. In order to preserve their marital status and long-term security, they must both establish their fertility and bear sons. This appears to be the case no matter what the level of education or income of the young woman or her husband. Despite the significant changes that have occurred, and continue to occur, in Gulmit, a woman will rarely do anything to regulate or curtail her fertility until these basic criteria have been met, for in Gulmit a woman's fertility remains her principal asset in ensuring her status and well-being.

This study has revealed, however, that just as a woman or
couple may experience social pressure to produce children, so they may, with time, experience pressure from the educated employed—who indirectly share the burden of childrearing—to curtail their fertility. This may ultimately be a significant phenomenon contributing to demographic transition.

9.4 Family Planning in Gulmit: Conclusion
This chapter began with an overview of the provision and uptake of family planning services in Gulmit. In Gulmit, these services are almost entirely woman-centred but, while some Gulmiti women do avail themselves of the services, overall contraceptive prevalence rates are relatively low. In Gulmit, there appears (as yet) to be no clear correlation between educational level and contraceptive use. It was therefore necessary to investigate in more detail why some Gulmiti women use contraception (or undergo tubal ligation) and others do not.

In keeping with the methodological strategy of collecting personal narratives, attention was given to the stories women themselves have to tell about their reproductive experiences, particularly where these relate to perceptions of, and responses to, newly-available family planning services. The research findings have been presented through elaboration of five in-depth case studies which provided an illustrative comparison between older, younger, educated and uneducated users and non-users of contraception or contraceptive surgery; where appropriate, the general perspectives of men have also been incorporated. These case studies should be seen as the author's own narrative representation of the accounts of Gulmiti women. In other words, they are the emergent product of narrator, audience and interpreter; they are, to use Ricouer's phrase, an attempt to attribute "a meaning to a meaning" (1970:13).

Interpretation of Gulmit women's life stories depends on an appreciation of the cultural meanings, values and aesthetic sensibilities that have been outlined in earlier chapters.
Analysis of life stories reveals that, in Gulmit at least, fertility decision-making is not always as fixed and finite as some demographers suggest. Rather, it seems that, in Gulmit, 'fertility decisions' can be contextually-dependent, ongoing and processual. One implication of this finding is that women may continue to have "unmet needs" even after they choose to avail themselves of contraception or contraceptive surgery.

It becomes apparent, too, that some of the processes of fertility decision-making are more comprehensible when situated within the broader, encompassing narrative of the self. These narratives, which are constituted from a repertoire of cultural themes and historically-specific discourses, can shape the choices that are actually perceived, as well as, the decisions that are made. By attuning ourselves to the embodied rhythms, cycles, cultural metaphors and scenarios, we begin to perceive, however, that some choices, some decisions may just 'feel' right. Conversely, some decisions, at the level of aesthetic sensibilities, may 'feel' wrong, or at least problematic - and it may be the body, the spirits, as well as the mind, that tells one so.

Furthermore, it becomes apparent that these same embodied aesthetics can profoundly shape how the experience of contraceptive use and contraceptive surgery is ultimately perceived, interpreted and sometimes expressed.

While analysis of personal narratives yields some very concrete policy recommendations that will be outlined in the final, concluding chapter, it also points to gaps in current understanding and the need for further research:

Contemporary international debates about human rights (which increasingly includes reproductive rights) are frequently informed by assertions about the specificity of cultural constructions of personhood and self. It is frequently
suggested that the bounded, egocentric self is a product of 'Western', modern, capitalist, or 'post-transition' societies, and it is from these societies that the concept of inalienable, individual rights emerges. Such concepts, it is claimed, are inappropriate in 'Eastern', traditional, pre-capitalist and 'pre-transition' societies where the sociocentric self abounds (see Morris 1994). Yet, from the small sample of self-narratives collected in 'Eastern' Gulmit, it appears that individuals rarely represent themselves as exclusively sociocentric, or indeed, as exclusively egocentric or autonomous. It seems, then, that further research based on close attention to personal narratives is required to produce a more systematic analysis of how different modes or dimensions of the self—material, bodily and spiritual, as well as, egocentric and sociocentric—can operate within a single culture, and indeed a single individual, and how these may be transformed by historical change and socio-economic development.

From listening to Gulmiti life stories, we learned something of how other selves, other stories, touch upon and become integrated within, the story of self told to the self. It was apparent that, in Gulmit, fertility decisions can be shaped and influenced, not only by a spouse and health professionals, but also by male and female kin, friends and neighbours. We have established that women have their own networks of information and opinion-sharing, and their own preferred pathways and spaces within village neighbourhoods. It may be helpful for further research to systematically plot these gendered networks and pathways within specific village neighbourhoods in order to determine how information and services could best be disseminated.

In this chapter, we touched on some of the perspectives of Gulmiti men regarding family planning. Their responses drew upon the more contextual themes of ethnic and sectarian identity and religious values, as well as, the more personalised themes of sexual pleasure and personal honour.
What was very clear, however, is that issues of reproductive health and fertility decision-making are matters for men, as well as for women. There is, therefore, a need for more in-depth study of male perspectives, and male narratives of self, so that reproductive health and 'population problems' do not continue to be the province of women alone.

To conclude, I suggest that it is through attending to narratives of the self, to stories of life, that we begin to learn how the discursive layers and multiple meanings of fertility (and its management) become woven together, and made sense of, in actual human relationships. In the current shift to policies that focus on reproductive health rather than population control, on participation rather than imposition, it may be that narratives, as well as numbers, are required for policies that are 'meaning-full' and relevant. Indeed, it could just be that such an approach points the way to a more complementary partnership between the disciplines of demography and anthropology.
CHAPTER 10

OF MOTHS AND CANDLE FLAMES:

CONCLUSION

As the dawn of the third Christian millennium approaches, doomsday prophecies and apocalyptic scenarios flourish, particularly among those individuals and groups who seek deliverance from a world they find inimical (Thompson 1996). Prophets of doom, be they religious leaders or scientists, frequently see the long-expected 'explosion' of global population to be a major factor contributing to the catastrophe of environmental degradation, widespread poverty, violence and crime that threatens to overwhelm us. We have been warned.

The epicentre of the potential population explosion is generally considered to be in that 'other' place which conceptually coheres to become the 'Third World', or 'less developed countries'. Whilst 'post-transition' high-consumption countries have their own problems of demographic distortion, accompanied by the moral dilemmas of issues associated with abortion and new reproductive technologies, nonetheless, it is the reproductive activities of 'others' that are said to threaten the sustainability of our planet.

Since the 1950s, demographers have been actively deployed to help construct policies to contain the population 'problem'. Demography's more macro-level, quantitative approach was well-suited to the post-war vogue for planning, model-building and targeting. Yet, the multiple discursive shifts that paralleled (even produced) the end of the Cold War have resulted in criticism of this 'demographically-driven' approach on the grounds that it fails to give due weight to the perspectives of targeted women (and men) and the wider context of their lives. Indeed, this was the principal theme of the Cairo Conference on Population and Development in 1994. It appears, then, that the demographic approach to
population control is now being seen in terms of a particular narrative construction, and there is growing recognition that there may be other narratives to be heard.

At this particular historical juncture, it seems that existing approaches to the study of fertility may be effectively complemented by a more contextualized analysis that takes account of historical change, relations of differential power, cultural meanings and practices, and the lived reproductive experiences of subjects themselves. Producing such an analysis has been the principal aim of this study.

In this study, the 'other' narratives attended to have been those of the Wakhi of Gulmit, a village in the Karakoram Mountains of northern Pakistan where socioeconomic 'transition' has been rapid, but 'demographic transition' relatively slow. It seems, however, that the meanings and values the Gulmitique bring to their accounts of fertility and childbearing are not easily reduced to demographic terminology.

For the Gulmitique, it is necessary to actively labour to bring fecundity to the arid soils of the Karakorams. The opposition between the fertile and the barren is carved upon the landscape and is actively embodied through the periodicity, rhythms and seasonality of life itself. The mountain landscape, with its agrarian cycles, is also integral to an embodied ethnic identity. It is a land won after centuries of persecution and oppression, a land the Gulmitique are anxious should be inherited by sons of the Wakhi.

Yet, in Gulmit, reproduction is not only about continuity and descent, it is also very significantly about securing networks of alliances, about the reproduction of lateral relations. In a society that has historically been characterised by insecurity and subsistence production, these
networks are important sources of labour and informal support. Women are key actors in informally making and maintaining these lateral relations, and milk, or products of milk—the substance which symbolises the active, nurturing reproductive role of women—becomes a principal medium of prestation and exchange.

The meta narrative of Islam is particularly significant in shaping Gulmiti constructions of the sexed body. As Ismaili Muslims, the Gulmitique consider that the mortal mind and body have continuity with the realm of the spiritual and divine through the immortal soul. Mismanagement of the potentially polluting sexed body can preclude contact with the Divine, and this in turn has implications for an individual's eternal well-being. So, for the Gulmitique, appropriate management of the sexed body is a matter of the soul, a matter of eternity. But, it may also be a matter of things observed and witnessed by others. As a religious minority occupying disputed territory, the Ismailis of Gulmit are concerned to be seen and accepted as 'good Muslims' by the other sects of Islamic Pakistan. Such issues become part of the particular social environment in which decisions, such those relating to family planning, are made.

In Gulmit, gender identity itself is rooted in the management of the sexed flesh and fluids of the body. From the day of birth, the Gulmiti body is shaped and moulded for adult life. For the male child this means being made 'open'—in Strathern's (1993) terms, 'incomplete'—through the initiatory rite of circumcision. For the female child, it means mastering the codes of female sharem, and, subsequently, discrete management of polluting menstrual blood; these codes and practices effectively make the female body more socially 'closed', inwardly turned and socially 'incomplete'. For the Gulmitique, the season of 'ripeness' and maturity within the human life course is characterised by marriage and reproduction; it is a season when 'incompleted' male and female find their complementarity and become
'complete', a season when male seed finds female soil.

The cultural construction of the sexed body has continuities with, and implications for, the organisation of social life in Gulmit. In particular, it informs the gendered division of labour and space. But, this is not to say that local gender relations are 'biologically' determined and fixed, for in Gulmit, contemporary gender relations are also shaped by factors such as rapid socioeconomic change, educational opportunities, the influence of a highly charismatic religious leader and the development institutions established under his authority. They are relations that are constantly negotiated, either explicitly or symbolically -especially through manipulation of the symbols of sharem and parda.

Transformations in gender relations can become manifest in qualitative changes in marital relations, and sometimes find expression in changes in the spatial organisation of the house. However, the ability to work both in the house and in the fields remains a key constituent of female gender identity. What is more, anything that compromises this ability to work effectively undermines a Gulmiti woman's social value and, ultimately, her security. An understanding of this theme becomes particularly significant when interpreting women's fears about the perceived side-effects of hormonal contraception.

In Gulmit, the gender relations within which fertility and childbearing are situated are also characterised by the appropriate construction and management of emotion. While the emotion of sharem is more highly elaborated with respect to women, the emotion of gherat is highly elaborated with respect to men. These emotional constructs, in turn, mediate the gendering of other emotions such as anger (qar), happiness (khushi), sadness/grief (gham), anxiety (perishon), and love (ishq). While, the gender relations that these emotions articulate may, of course, be interpreted in terms of the negotiation of differential power, study of Gulmiti cultural texts and stories reveals that these relations, and
relations with the children that arise from them, are also about something more. For the Gulmitique, these relations support relationships, relationships which are the stuff of that which gives life its emotional texture, its narrative richness, its sources of meaning. Such relationships mean, for example, that a mother's love for her son may be experienced as the joyous dance of a moth around a candle flame, a rhapsodic dance tinged with the peril of possible pain as it weaves amidst the shadows of the unknown.

Gulmiti networks of relationships move and unfold within a local social world of rapid change, a world which has ever-increasing global connections. Fertility decision-making, too, must be situated and understood within the ebbs, flows and manoeuvrings of these relationships. As everywhere, meaningful social interaction depends on shared processes of interpretation, of 'making sense'. Careful attention to stories, songs and other narrative modes used by the Gulmitique reveals that these representations emerge from the repeated re-working and re-configuration of (embodied) cultural metaphors, leitmotifs and scenarios in processes that frequently allude to the ongoing story of self told to the self in interaction with others. I tentatively suggest that careful analysis of such processes of 'narrative synthesis' could ultimately reveal a great deal about how 'fertility decisions' are actually arrived at and made, and may effectively complement existing demographic models of rational decision making.

In Gulmit, family planning services and contraceptive use may be seen as innovations that are in the process of being interpreted and integrated into Gulmiti lives. In other words, family planning and contraceptive use are actively being incorporated (or resisted) within the dynamic schema of shared aesthetic values. Accordingly, responses to these innovations may sometimes be expressed in ways that relate to

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214 Here I refer to corporeal, as well as, cognitive processes.
aesthetic sensibilities. So, for example, side-effects to contraceptive interventions may sometimes manifest themselves as heart worry, tars, painful eyes, menstrual irregularity, fatigue or religious concerns.

With regards to family planning services, there is perhaps more research to be done on the precise nature of the social construction of the self in the context of historical change and innovation, on networks of information-sharing and on the perspectives of men in Gulmit. Nevertheless, on the basis of the research completed, there are some recommendations to be made regarding the development of family planning services in the Northern Areas of Pakistan. Although these recommendations are directed towards a specific locality, they may, nevertheless, have implications for the development of family planning services elsewhere.

Due to poor clinic attendance, FPAP are planning to close down the family planning clinic in Gulmit, and the village will be served by a mobile clinic instead. In my view, this would be unfortunate as young women, in particular, are showing signs of giving greater consideration to contraceptive use. However, it may be time for a re-evaluation of the 'service' offered, and to take seriously the recent Cairo injunction that women (and men) themselves participate and be listened to. Yet, what must be attended to are not just answers to preconceived, conceptually-discrete questions (questions that tend to arise from the researcher's own narrative construction of the world). Rather, there is a need to begin listening to whole stories, stories constructed from multiple themes and images that may have different aesthetic values from our own, stories that are ongoing, unfolding. The role of both researchers and service providers must therefore include an ongoing engagement with the individual and collective narratives of both women and men so that, in consultation with them, consideration can be given to ways their perceived reproductive health needs can be addressed. It is simply not
good enough to administer injections, pills and IUDs, and consider the targets have been satisfactorily met. As we have seen, contraceptives can have a profound effect on the way women experience and interpret both their bodies and their lives. Consideration should at least be given to how users (men, as well as, women) might deal with that.

Consider, for example, the contraceptive side-effect of fatigue that is commonly reported (and feared) by Gulmiti women. So often, there is a tendency for this side-effect to be discounted by family planning practitioners I have spoken to. They argue that, in the long-term, contraceptive use can reduce the fatigue of women by reducing their number of pregnancies, thereby improving their health and reducing their domestic workload. Moreover, the side-effect of fatigue is generally seen in terms of a bounded biomedical problem, a temporary "adjustment" problem of the body, or even the mind.

Yet, to understand what Gulmiti women mean by fatigue from contraceptive use, it is necessary to listen more carefully, and register the distress with which some of them describe it. Furthermore, to comprehend the nature of such distress, it is necessary to remain attuned to the shared schema of cultural values and the kinaesthetics of village life. In Gulmit, the fatigue of pregnancy, childbirth and having many children, of motherhood, is familiar and expected; it is socially witnessed and, largely, socially valued. However, the fatigue of artificially interrupted fertility, of irregular menstrual flow, of retained shak wukhen, is something different; it is something that has a different social and 'aesthetic' value and is, therefore, something that may be regarded with much more ambivalence. I suggest, it is such differences in meaning that contributes to the 'missed communication' that surrounds so much family planning advice (and even research).

It has been established, then, that reproduction is not just a biological event, for its meaning and value are mediated by its specific social, economic, cultural and aesthetic
context, a context which is invariably characterised by increasing points of contact with the global environment. A narrow focus on reproduction as a biological event can mean that this context, with all its interconnections, is ignored. Moreover, as Betsy Hartmann (1987) argues, the imperatives of population control must never become an excuse for ignoring the inequities and iniquities of the wider context, a context which rich, as well as poor nations, play a role in creating.

The aim of this thesis was to produce a contextualized analysis of fertility and childbearing in Gulmit, an account which incorporated processes of historical change, relations of differential power, cultural meanings and practices, and the lived experience of social actors themselves. Of course, meanings and experiences are by very nature transient and elusive, no more so than when they relate to sex and reproduction. The meanings and experiential accounts described in this thesis are undoubtedly filtered through my own (cultural) perceptions and preoccupations. Nevertheless, I trust this account, this story, contributes to a conversation, for like Robert Desjarlais (1992:253) I acknowledge that it may be through "the doubts, awkward greetings, and frail truths owned by any conversation" that we may begin to know each other most.

As the millennium approaches, and fears of survival and population growth threaten to overwhelm us, it is perhaps time to pause, take stock, and reflect. In a world full of people, it may be time to take the first faltering steps towards really talking, towards asking different kinds of questions, and listening to different kinds of stories. And, as we begin to imagine things differently, it is just possible that those formidable population statistics could start to reconfigure, shaping themselves less as a 'problem', less as an impending disaster, and more as an opportunity -an opportunity to construct something different, perhaps even something better.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX I

Local Calendars

The Wakhi recognize, and indeed use, three separate calendars: the Gregorian calendar, the Islamic calendar and a local Wakhi calendar. The Gregorian calendar, with the new year beginning on January 1st (and celebrated by young men, in particular), organizes much economic and administrative activity, ranging from school terms to bus timetables. The Islamic calendar is determined by the cycles of the moon and consists of 12 months each of 29 or 30 days. The 12 months constitute a year of 354 or 355 days which is located within a longer calendrical cycle of 33 years. Being tied to lunar cycles, Islamic holidays move relative to the solar year and are celebrated approximately ten days earlier each year. As Delaney (1991:291) observes, this contrapuntal rhythm effectively emphasizes the separation between things of the earth and things of the spirit. Meanwhile, the more local Wakhi calendar consists of 12 (roughly) lunar months set within a solar cycle. It appears, however, that this calendar is less the product of sophisticated astronomical calculation, and more a gauging of temperature and sunlight (falling on the mountain peaks) in order to organize agricultural labour. The Wakhi year begins in winter around mid-December with the month of Thasi tor khush. The next month begins around mid-January and so on. The winter and spring months are named by ascribing them a diminishing odd number, giving a sense of countdown. Thus, mid-January to

215 Delaney (1991: 291) suggests that the Islamic calendar reinforces the Muslim sense of living in this world, yet not being entirely of it. Sabbah (1984: 83) too argues that Muslims see time in terms of a divine monopoly over which human beings have no control. This supposedly reinforces their feeling of dependence on God and causes them to believe that they cannot plan, make an impact on their environment, or make their own history since all these things are in God's hands. Although recourse is sometimes made to this discursive theme by Ismailis -particularly in defending the non-use of family planning- a counter discourse is also available to them. As we shall see in forthcoming case studies, Ismailis may also draw upon the farmans and teachings of successive Imams to justify engagement with life in this world, and may even take pride in being relatively progressive.

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mid-February is referred to as the ninth month (*Nau tor khush*) and the month mid-May to mid-June is referred to as the first month (*Yi tor khush*). The summer months are then named using words referring to growth, revealing and ripeness so, for example, the month mid-July to mid-August is called *Tor Mush* alluding to the "hidden" swelling fruit, while mid-August to mid-September is called *Hum Patz*, suggesting that which is unripe "becomes ripe". Finally, the autumn months are named by reference to the falling temperature, thus, mid-October to mid-November is called *Shunder Potch*, that is, "the end of warmth".

The three calendars become fully integrated in the course of daily life. The Wakhi calendar provides a reference point for the organization of daily agricultural labour, while cycles of fertility of the land are celebrated with culturally-specific festivals and rituals. In keeping with the Wakhi calendar, late autumn is the time for *dawat* (the time when individual households host all-night vigils in which prayers of thanksgiving are offered for the harvest and other blessings, and requests are made for the coming year). Similarly, the winter months are regarded as a period of rest from agricultural labour and a time for weddings, the latter being accompanied by feasting and dancing. National holidays, such as Independence Day (August 14th), are celebrated by reference to the Gregorian calendar. Although Ismaili festivals -such as those which mark the Aga Khan's birthday (13th December) and his pastoral visits to the area- also refer to the Gregorian calendar, weekly prayers at the *jamat kaana* and "new moon" prayers (*Chandarat*) refer to the Islamic calendar. Moreover, Islamic festivals such as the Islamic New Year (*Noroz*), *Eid-ul-Fitar* (celebrating the end of the annual fast of *Ramadam*) and *Bukhra Eid* (festival of sacrifice) are observed as holidays with special services at the *jamat kaana*. The annual religious ritual of *vul* commemorates the final passing of the souls of those who have died during the preceding year. Although this ritual is rooted in Islamic belief, the precise content of the ritual -which uses a special bread (*sharik*) and aromatic herbs (*spandr*)- appears to be of more local origin.
Figure 11: TIME LINE REPRESENTING THE LOCAL CALENDAR
APPENDIX II

Village Institutions (See Figs. 12 a. b. c.)

(These diagrams were constructed by a group of 4 village leaders, and are based on their perceptions).

Ismaili institutions are dominated by the Local Ismaili Council which is linked to the regional and national council, and ultimately, to the Aga Khan (Hazir Imam) himself. The local Ismaili Council is responsible for an area which extends from the villages of Passu in the north to Ayeenabad in the south and members are elected from each of these villages every 5 years. Although two places are reserved for women, during the research period these remained vacant, the reason given was that educated and more capable women already have too many other responsibilities including their domestic duties. It will be observed that a number of village-based institutions liaise with the Ismaili Council. Each is fairly active although the Girl Guides and Lady Volunteers tend to be less active than their male equivalent. The Tariko Board is responsible for the network of village-based religious schools in the area and, through regional and national institutions liaises with the Ismaili Educational Centre in London. The Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) is responsible for the redistribution of religious tithes that are collected from Ismailis the world over and takes a particular concern in the promotion of social and economic development among less advantaged Ismailis. At the village level, AKF is represented in Diamond Jubilee Girl's School, the Aga Khan Health Centre and area office and AKRSP male and female village organisations (tanzims). Of these only the health service has direct representation on the Local Ismaili Council so that it might facilitate mobilisation of the village should a health emergency break out.

Secular social and welfare groups include the Education and Social Welfare Association (ESWA) which is principally responsible for supporting Al-Amyn School. Since this is a self-help project, senior members of ESWA are gaining
considerable experience in fund raising among NGOs including those operating at the international level. Some of these members are beginning to adopt gender sensitive language and perspectives as a result of these interactions. Indeed, there is a certain receptivity to these themes (at least intellectually) because they resonate with those raised by the Aga Khan himself. Members are, therefore, keen to encourage female representation within ESWA but, once again, the women they identify as having the necessary confidence and experience are already bound by other commitments.

It rapidly becomes apparent, then, that women are repeatedly excluded from participation in village institutions by the practical demands of their existing responsibilities. Not least of these are their domestic duties, for, as becomes clear in a number of contexts, if a woman compromises these she loses respect and credibility. Domestic duties, as we have seen in Chapter 6 play an integral part in the construction of a woman's role and identity. Thus, to compromise these is to compromise, if not transgress, the very category "woman". This, combined with the fact that credible women are restricted in their mobility and when leaving the village must be escorted by a male relative, means that effective representation of and by women on such committees is likely to be a difficult and slow process, and one that will require delicate manoeuvring and negotiation.

The principal members of the regional Wakhi Tajik Cultural Association (WTCA) are based in Gulmit, although there is also a local committee. The WTCA was founded around 1990 and aims to establish links with the Wakhi who are spread across Central Asia and into China. In practice this tends to mean an annual culture festival and a small number of exchanges and visits. WTCA has emerged partly because of improved infrastructure and communications across the region. However, the process whereby the Wakhi are beginning to objectify their own culture is influenced, I suggest, by a number of other interweaving processes which include, exposure to the values of formal education, the experience of living in ethnic communities when studying or working in
urban centres, tourism, and finally exposure to discourses of ethnic discrimination and oppression which resonate collectively and historically with Wakhi experience, particularly within the context of their relationship with the Burusho of Central Hunza.

The three Women's Integrated Development Groups (WIDG) operating in Goz, central Gulmit, and Kamaris were established by Unicef as part of a village-based project around 1986. Like the AKRSP women's tanzims, WIDG operate a savings and loans scheme but they tend to support women in income generation through the provision of sewing and knitting facilities (including sewing machines, spinning wheels and knitting machines) while the tanzims tend to focus more on agricultural activities. Although women do make items for their own local needs, the marketing side of these schemes remains undeveloped. Moreover, active participation in both WIDG and tanzims, tends to be predominantly limited to older women and younger unmarried women who have less domestic responsibilities. Nevertheless, the success of these groups depends partly on the fact that there is considerable flexibility in meeting times and women are not obliged to attend every week.

The Negran Committee is an elected but rather low profile body which is responsible for co-ordinating the control of livestock to prevent crop damage.

The Village Council is another essentially male institution. This was established by UNICEF in 1985 and was the body through which UNICEF worked with the community to establish a water and sanitation scheme which involved the piping of water from a spring at the base of Shtuber Glacier and, in the second phase, (1989) the laying of pit latrines. While the Village Council also liaises with the male youth organisation to mobilise labour for technical projects, its meetings tend to be highly episodic and are generally prompted by the need for extension or maintenance of the water and sanitation scheme or the visit of a UNICEF or UNDP representative.
Other community-based technical projects, such as maintenance of irrigation channels, footpaths, jeep tracks and the wooden suspension bridge tend to be co-ordinated by the numbedar. The position of numbedar originates from the days of the Mir's rule when the Mir had a number of key representatives in each village. The most senior and powerful of these representatives was the numbedar, and while the position always had to be approved by the Mir, it was a position that was generally inherited by being passed from father to son. One lineage in particular is associated with the numbedar's line and this family is still considered to be of relatively high status. With the end of Mir rule in 1974, the position of numbedar was retained and, indeed, a second numbedar was elected for Kamaris. As will be observed from the Fig. 12c which illustrates government institutions within the village, the numbedars not only organise work parties but they also liaise with the local Union Council and the tahsil.

The Union Council is the extension of local government that represents the villages of Gulmit, Ghulkin and Hussaini. While there is theoretically a linkage though the Northern Areas Council to the Minister for the Northern Areas and Kashmiri Affairs, in practice, villagers report that the Union Council is not very active and there is limited access to and control of government allocated funds. The Union Council liaises with the tahsil and through this, with the local police station. The tahsil is the local government administration centre and magistrate's office. During my period of fieldwork, however, the magistrate unofficially moved his office to Sost (a major trading post with China) claiming this to be a more convenient location for his secondary business activities.

As will be observed from Fig. 12c, other government institutions in the village (but also covering surrounding villages) include the Boy's High School, a small branch of the National Bank, the Post Office and telephone exchange (public call office), the "hospital" (clinic) and the veterinary dispensary. It is perhaps notable that the Family Planning Association of Pakistan (FPAP) clinic is in fact a
national NGO but village informants perceive it as "semi-government".

While there are some individuals who are elected to the leadership of several local institutions, particularly non-governmental institutions, these men tend to be those who have earned the respect of villagers rather than those who have wealth or power/force at their disposal. The characteristic that tends to link them, however, is that they are all relatively well educated (generally to (national) degree or masters level), and in Gulmit this is a principal factor in gaining respect.

It is clear from Fig. 12c that there are a number of government institutions in the village. These have been located in Gulmit partly because of the concentration of population and partly because of the presence of the road. These government institutions are generally staffed by men from outside the village. These men are of a different ethnic group and frequently non-Ismaili.
Figure 12: PRA-GENERATED DIAGRAMS SHOWING VILLAGE INSTITUTIONS
(Original made from paper discs)

Figure 12 (a): Ismaili Institutions

KEY
1. Conciliation & Arbitration Board
2. Study Centre
3. Jamat Kaana Committee
4. Lady Volunteers
5. Male Volunteers
6. Boy Scouts
7. Girl Guides
8. Silver Jubilee Band
9. Regional Council Hunza
10. Tariko Religious Education Board
11. D.J. Girls School
12. Health Centre
13. AKRSP Tanzims
14. Hunza Area AKRSP
15. National AKHS Karachi
16. Regional AKES Gilgit
17. Regional Tariko Organisation, Gilgit
18. National Ismaili Council, Karachi
19. Hazir Imam
20. National Tariko Organisation, Karachi
21. National AKES, Karachi
22. National AKHS, Karachi
23. Regional AKHRSP office, Gilgit
24. AKF, Switzerland

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Figure 12 (b): Social & Welfare Groups

KEY
1. Al-Amyn School
2. Education & Welfare Association
3. Negran Committee
4. Youth Organisation
5. Village Council
6. Women's Integrated Development Groups
7. Local Committee of Wakhi-Tajik Culture Association (WTCA)
8. Regional Committee WTCA
9. UNICEF
Figure 12 (c): Government Institutions

KEY
1. Numbesar x2
2. Union Council
3. District Council
4. Northern Areas Council
5. Deputy Chief Executive
6. Chief Executive Northern Areas
7. Tahsil
8. Asst. Commissioner, Hunza
9. Deputy Commissioner, Gilgit
10. Chief Commissioner
11. Police Station
12. District Superintendent of Police, Hunza
13. Superintendent of Police, Gilgit
14. FPAP
15. FPAP Regional Office, Gilgit
16. FPAP National Office, Lahore
17. Hospital clinic
18. District Health Officer
19. Directorate of Health Northern Areas
20. Chief Commissioner
21. Chief Executive
22. Ministry of Health
23. Veterinary Dispensary
24. Veterinary Directorate, Gilgit
25. Chief Commissioner
26. Chief Executive
27. Ministry of Agriculture
28. Post Office
29. Regional Post Office, Gilgit
30. National Post Office, Rawalpindi
31. National Bank, Village Branch
32. National Bank, Area Branch
33. National Bank, Regional Office
34. National Bank, National Office
35. Boys’ High School
36. Directorate of Education, Gilgit
37. Chief Commissioner
38. Chief Executive
39. Ministry of Education
APPENDIX III

Household Composition

The following descriptions of households in Gulmit have been selected to give an indication of the range and configuration of households in the village over time. Each is identified according to the official head of household216.

SULTAN AYUB (aged 38 years): Although Sultan Ayub's parents are still alive and living in his household, Sultan's father, Yusuf, is very frail and suffering from chronic illness, so Sultan, as the eldest son, is now the principal authority in the house. (Many attribute Yusuf's chronic illness to the observation that in his youth he misused his skill as a religious healer to make women fall in love with him). Yusuf's grandfather was a relatively wealthy man because he had been the first shopkeeper in Gulmit and had been on good terms with the Mir with whom he travelled extensively in Kashgar (now China). As a result of this good relationship with the Mir, Yusuf's grandfather was awarded substantial tracts of land. Yusuf had one brother so they divided their father's inheritance between them. Yusuf thus inherited a relatively large amount of land and 3 houses, two of which he later sold. Yusuf chose to establish his household in the then new house in Lakhash and he later built a second house beside this. Yusuf has 5 sons and 1 living daughter. Some years ago, Yusuf's eldest daughter died suddenly of a "heart problem" and because Yusuf's wife then required help in the house urgently, Sultan married his first cousin (FBD) at the relatively young age of 18 years. Sultan and his wife now have 2 sons (2 sons and 2 daughters having died in infancy). Having completed his education in Karachi and Lahore, Sultan now works as the headmaster of an Aga Khan School in the neighbouring village Ghulkin, to where he walks everyday. Sultan's 2 married brothers and their wives and children, his 2 unmarried brothers and his unmarried sister (17 years) are

216All names in these texts have been substituted to preserve confidentiality.
also part of his household, although his married brothers and their wives and children are regarded as separate kozbud. One married brother (a shopkeeper) lives for much of the time at his father-in-law's house because his father-in-law (who has no sons) works in Islamabad and help is needed in managing his household and land. This unusual arrangement where a man lives in his wife's house is known as khun domod. Yusuf's wife is very disapproving of this arrangement. One of Sultan's unmarried bothers is currently away studying in Karachi. The other works as a teacher in Gulmit and at 24 years feels he should soon think about marriage. Sultan's household (with a total of 16 members) is among the largest in Gulmit. They currently occupy two adjoining houses to which Sultan and his brothers have added 5 rooms, so that each of them has access to his own room. The brothers have recently built a large cement block house (with one extra bedroom) in Chimungul, to which the entire household now moves for the summer. The brothers also plan to build 2 more houses in anticipation that, at some point in the future, the household will divide and each son will inherit a house and some land. For the time being, however, since all sons are employed elsewhere, they prefer to cooperate in managing the house and the land.

BASHIR ZAMAN (aged 40 years) is married to Nushad (35 years). Both Bashir's parents are now dead and, as is usual for the youngest son, Bashir has inherited the original family house. Both Bashir and Nushad have been married before. Bashir has one daughter, Samina, by his first wife whom he subsequently accused of having an extramarital affair and divorced. Bashir and Nushad have 7 sons and 1 daughter and Bashir's daughter Samina (now 17 years) also lives with them. Bashir is in the army and is, therefore, absent from home for much of the time. Although, Nushad and Samina manage many agricultural tasks between them, they depend on a good deal of help from nearby relatives. It is said that Nushad and Samina argue frequently. Bashir is due to retire from the army towards the end of 1995 and is expected to be given a job as a physical instructor in the local Government Boy's School. It is expected that he will then become available
for agricultural tasks. Samina (who like many step-daughters has remained uneducated) has recently received offers of marriage from the distant villages of Shimshal and Chipursan. Bashir is reluctant to accept either but Nushad says that one should be accepted since, these days, an uneducated girl may not receive many proposals.

AYUB AYAZ (aged 38 years) is the eldest son of Ayaz Muhammad and is married to Sabrina, the headmistress of the Girl's School. Sabrina's work away from the home and Ayub's reluctance to work on the land brought about a falling out with Ayub's parents who have now gone to live with their younger son in Chimungul, leaving the original family house to Ayub. Ayub and Sabrina have 3 daughters and 2 living sons, one other son having died of pneumonia at 6 years old. Their eldest daughter is currently attending the Aga Khan Girl's Academy in Karimabad where she boards during term time. Since Sabrina is working for a large part of the day, Sabrina's mother (a widow with no sons) now lives with them to help care for the children.

SHAUKAT ALI (aged 67 years) is married to Merab and they have 3 sons and 5 daughters. Since Shaukat's predecessors had many sons, Shaukat inherited very little land from his father. Shaukat spent his youth working as a shepherd for the Mir in Chipursan. He was treated harshly by those in authority and Shaukat considers the Mir's rule to have been cruel and oppressive. At the earliest opportunity, Shaukat joined the army and he recalls vividly the struggles that lead to Partition. With his marriage to Merab, Shaukat gained access to extra land. Merab's father had no sons so his land was inherited by his brother's sons who gave a portion of the land to Merab. With the income from this moderate amount of land and his army pension, Shaukat has supported the education of his sons, and more recently his youngest daughters. Shaukat's eldest son, Nyaz, now has a job with a good income in Gilgit. Nyaz has a house in Gilgit and is married with one daughter, nevertheless, he does contribute to his father's household income, particularly with respect to school fees. Shaukat's second son, Malik,
did poorly at school but became a tour guide and quickly learnt English from tourists. Malik and his father built a modern extension to the traditional house which now serves as a small guest house during the tourist season. Malik currently has a job in Holland and sends money at intervals. He is married and his wife and young son live in Shaukat's house. Shaukat's youngest son is studying in Gilgit where he stays with his elder brother. Shaukat's 3 eldest daughters, who are 33, 28 and 26 years respectively, were not educated and were married between the ages of 11 and 13 years. One of these daughters is married to a man who is working in Kuwait. This daughter lives alone in a large modern house with her 3 young children, so members of Shaukat's household frequently go to stay with her to keep her company and assist her with her domestic and agricultural tasks. Shaukat's youngest daughters (who are now 15 and 17 years) are currently in education but participate extensively in domestic duties; it is anticipated that they will marry between 18 and 20 years. Shaukat talks proudly of how, in the course of his life, he has gone from being a poor man to one who is relatively prosperous.

NAJIMA (aged 45 years) is a widow whose husband died 2 years ago. This female headed household is generally considered to be one of the poorest in the village. Najima's husband was considerably older than herself since the marriage was his second, there having been no children by the first. Najima has three children (one son and two daughters) all of whom are mentally subnormal and unable to speak. One explanation given by Najima herself is that when she was younger she rarely bathed. Najima continues to work her husband's small amount of land but she depends greatly on the assistance of close relatives.

RAJA B. KHAN (aged 62 years): As a first cousin of the Mir, the Raja owns large tracts of land both in Gulmit and elsewhere. The Raja is considered to be one of the wealthiest men in the village, although some villagers suggest that he has considerable debts. Nevertheless, he continues to have considerable authority and influence in certain circles. The
Raja also owns one of the largest, more successful hotels in Gulmit. He is married to Nuzhat, a woman from Khudabad who is also related to the Mir. The Raja and Nuzhat have 2 sons and 2 daughters. Both sons (aged 26 and 23 years respectively) are unmarried and live in the Raja's large house. One son manages the hotel and the other manages a prosperous import-export business, trading principally with China. Both the Raja's daughters (aged 28 and 20 years) have a college education. The eldest is married to the District Health Officer in Gilgit and the youngest, who is unmarried, is currently teaching at the local English medium school. The Raja is constantly receiving guests and visitors but among the permanent members of his household are 2 servants who receive board and keep in return for work. One is an elderly woman who has never married and began working as a housekeeper for the Raja about 25 years ago when her parents died. The other is a young man, a relative of Nuzhat, who works as a handyman and assists in the hotel.
APPENDIX IV

Representations of Pregnancy

In keeping with the notion that pregnancy is associated with sharem, there appears to be little explicit cultural discourse around pregnancy and the female anatomy and physiology that might be entailed. When asked about the inside of their bodies, some women vaguely referred places inside the belly that did different things, for example a place for eating and a place for the child, but they could not say what these places looked like or how they were connected. 3 women agreed to make drawings for me. It is notable that in each case, the entire abdomen was left as a blank space around the zaman jael (literally, 'place of the child') or the foetus. Although, the 3 women did not feel entirely comfortable with this mode of representation, their drawings and commentary were, nonetheless, revealing (see Fig. 13 a. b. c.):

Commentary on drawing (a):
This drawing was made by a 22 year old woman who had completed primary education. She has two sons. She comments:

"This is the dohr (belly). [Pointing to the knot of lines at the base]. This is the baby coming down with the head down. If the mother is weak then the baby is weak and if the mother is healthy then the baby is healthy. My children are both healthy. [Pointing to the area (x) above the baby which she colours red] This is the zaman jaei. During the birth some blood comes from here...It is very painful." Malika

Malika is uncertain whether the baby grows inside the zaman jael or is just attached to it, however, she does say that there is blood in the zaman jaei to help the baby to grow. She sometimes uses the word for placenta khas, but like other women, remains rather vague about its purpose, seeing it as just part of the zaman jaei.
Commentary on drawing (b):
This drawing was made by Malika's friend Shadia. Shadia is 22 years old and has had one miscarriage when she was about 6 months pregnant. Shadia chooses a red pen to make her drawing and comments,

"This is the dohr. Here is the baby [y]. This [z] is water. When the water moves, it feels like the baby. If there is too much water - it happens when the woman is weak - the woman gets pain in her back and can't walk properly. If there is too much water in the dohr the baby becomes weak and the baby can die around 4-6 months, and then it comes out between 5 and 7 months...I have used red because this is very dangerous". Shadia

Thus, while the water in the dohr helps the baby to grow, Shadia also suggests that if there is too much it can press down on the baby and cause it harm. Perhaps significantly, both Malika and Shadia represent the foetus as being within the mother but not bounded off from her, and they emphasize that the baby's health is dependent on the mother's health and well-being.

Commentary on drawing (c):
This drawing was completed by a 36 year old illiterate woman, who had had 7 pregnancies. Pointing to the oval/elliptical shape at the base of the drawing, she comments,

"This is the zaman jaei. The man's seed grows in this place. If there is something wrong with the zaman jaei then a woman can't have children. When the baby is growing, the zaman jaei gets bigger and bigger upwards and to here [the left] and here [to the right]. Afterwards it becomes small again. At the birth, there is a hole at the bottom that opens like a mouth and then closes again". Husseni Pari.

The village health guards and TBAs who have been trained by FPAP have access to a book of diagrams which illustrate female anatomical changes in the course of pregnancy. Several TBAs asked me to photograph them holding the open book of diagrams for these images become associated with education and status. Although Lady Health Visitors (LHVs) report that some women find such pictures quite frightening,
it may be that Husseni Pari's representation emerges from a gradual diffusion of ideas that provide women with concepts and language to begin to imagine the interior of their bodies.
Figure 13 (a): Representations of Pregnancy by Local Women

(a)

(b)

(c)
Local Celebrations: The Audience and Dance

Festival celebrations tend to be held at the polo ground which is situated at the centre of the village beside the main jamat kaana. The polo ground is generally decorated with banners and bunting which, depending on the nature of the celebration, sport the colours of the national flag or the orange and green of Ismaili emblems. Young men who have received training in electronics down-country generally demonstrate their skills by setting up a public address system. One male villager who worked for some years in Saudi Arabia and obtained a video camera, now records most public events. Indeed, these days, a common sequel to such events is the gathering in the man's house to watch the video replay on a Japanese television -which stands rather incongruously against the mud-plastered wall. Here, then, we find evidence of the active and ongoing deployment of modern technology in the presentation and preservation of local narrative forms (see Appadurai et al. 1991:17-18).

During celebrations, men sit separately from women and children in tiers that both reflect and denote status. Senior men and visiting dignitaries sit on chairs nearest to the stage. Behind them, older men sit on rows of benches, and behind them sit younger men -usually donning their most fashionable clothes for the occasion. Young boys usually sit on mats at the very front or to one side. Women and children stand or sit (sometimes on mats) on the raised ground above and behind the young men, a walkway being left between the two. Like the men, the women -both young and old- take the opportunity of public gatherings to wear their best clothes. Generally, women keep their heads covered by a dupatta, but younger educated women with experience of urban life sometimes take opportunities to casually drape their

Footnote 217: Fashionable clothes among young men usually include Western-style trousers and jackets. Recently, however, there is a tendency to combine these with items of local 'ethnic' clothing such as the embroidered bett (woollen winter coat) and skith (flat regional cap).
dupatta between the shoulders and across the chest, when out of the view of strangers. Many young women darken their eyes with kak-shak (kohl) on such occasions. Kak-shak is also applied to the eyes and cheeks of children to protect them from chezhum kak (the evil eye) when among so many people. There is, then, an awareness that public events are a time when a furtive glance is possible. The walkway between the men and women is particularly charged with such possibilities. Here, discrete glances are indeed exchanged and young men can often be observed fooling around in this space, effectively drawing attention to themselves. Awareness of this potential for gaze across the 'gender boundary' becomes heightened, however, when the festivities include dancing.

Dancing is an exclusively male activity performed at collective celebrations such as festivals and weddings. The dance effectively encodes and integrates themes of the (male) individual and the social (Ali 1982). The order of dancing is determined by age and status, with those of higher status being invited to dance first. The men stand in a line as the leader begins dancing in a stylized manner -hips fixed, back straight, arms outstretched, as the knees bend and extend and the feet lift, fall and turn. The dance alternates between fast and slow rhythms, sometimes led by the musician, sometimes led by the lead dancer. The men in the line all mimic the movements of the lead dancer, thereby creating a flow of unified movement. Each man takes it in turn to lead the line, so that eventually the last man becomes the first and the first man becomes the last. Although the dance should be characterised by grace and elegance, it is noticeable that when young men come to dance they are often rather lacking in co-ordination. Discussion with young men reveals that on such occasions they are generally rather drunk, having consumed considerable quantities of cheap Chinese alcohol. The young men justify their condition, however, by explaining that they feel shy and self-conscious knowing that the audience of women will be watching them critically. They perceive that an optimum level of alcohol makes them less inhibited and potentially more graceful.
before the young women they want to impress, and before older women who are liable to tease them.

Sexual segregation can, of course, be interpreted in terms of differential power and the exclusion of women. Nevertheless, in this case, close scrutiny of the sexually-segregated audience reveals that the resulting interaction across the gender boundary can also be a source of fun, a delighting in sexuality that is charged with the frisson of anxiety, and which may even create the possibility of a temporary inversion of power relations. Moreover, as we shall see shortly, despite rather restrictive circumstances, love and attraction played out in these contexts can also be the cause of heartfelt pain and despair for men as well as women. Thus, while contact between the sexes may seem rigidly prescribed in this Islamic society, this does not mean that such contact is divested of passion and emotional range.

\[218\] Goodwin Raheja and Grodzins Gold (1994) make a similar observation in their study of women's narrative forms in India. They suggest that many feminist and 'orientalist' texts describing South Asian women remain constrained by essentialist analyses, and fail to acknowledge the contexts in which women subversively delight in their sexuality and the gaze of men.
APPENDIX VI

Fig. 14: Supplementary PRA-Generated Diagrams

a) Time Line of Key Historical Events.

(Constructed by 3 elderly men)

1790s- Mir's rule - many raiding parties.
1800s- Gojal ruled by Wakhi Mir Qutlog. British arrive.

1922- Religious Teacher, Aga Samas Shah visits.
1924- Religious teacher, Sabz Ali visits area.

1940- Shimshal flood.
1946- First DJ School for Boys est. in homes.
1948- Battle of people of Gilgit against Maharaja of Kashmir.

1954- Government dispensary est.
1956- First school building in Gulmit.

1960- Building of jeep road started (finished 1964).
1962- President Ayub Khan visits Hunza.

1969- First girl's school est. in homes.
1970- Original DJ school handed over to government (closed 1974).
1971- KKH completed in Gulmit.
1974- Government Boy's School built on polo ground.
1975- Shishkat flood.
1982- KKH formally opened.
1983- Imam visits Gulmit.

AKRSP activities commenced in area.
1985- FAO/Jaffer brothers introduce seed potatoes to area.
UNICEF water and sanitation project.
1986- New Government Boy's School in Gulmit (school on polo ground becomes DJ school for girls).
President Zia ul-Haq visits Gojal.
1987- Imam visits Passu, Sost & Khyber.
1989- Government doctor posted to Gulmit, clinic opened.
1991- Al-Amyn School opened.
1992- The 'Big Rain' (September floods).
b) Changes in Land Use Over Time

(Constructed with 2 middle-aged male informants)
c) Seasonal Charts
(Constructed with a group of 4 villagers of mixed sex)
d) Selected Time Charts

**Winter**

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<td></td>
<td>CHILD</td>
<td>VISITING</td>
<td>BASKET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CARE</td>
<td>SHOPPING</td>
<td>MAKING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>VISITING</td>
<td>WOOD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>LEADING</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>RISES</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>RISES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Married female, middle income, 25 yrs
b) Unmarried male, teacher, 24 yrs

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**SELECTED GLOSSARY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bett</td>
<td>embroidered woollen coat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bitan</td>
<td>shaman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chador</td>
<td>thick veil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chezhum kakevil</td>
<td>eye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chinir</td>
<td>harvest festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chipan</td>
<td>wedding coat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>churg</td>
<td>furrow/line of descent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dawat</td>
<td>autumn vigil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dildung</td>
<td>hearth/home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diuw</td>
<td>giant male nature spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fahrman</td>
<td>edict of the Imam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gherat</td>
<td>honour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gora</td>
<td>cradle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hithoyie</td>
<td>religious sacrifice/God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>huk</td>
<td>soil/water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ishq</td>
<td>love, passion, devotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kak-shak</td>
<td>protective kohl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kardang</td>
<td>spring festival of swinging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>khalifa</td>
<td>religious healer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>khandon</td>
<td>household</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>khun</td>
<td>house/communal room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kith-thit</td>
<td>first festival of spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ktor</td>
<td>lineage/family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lus</td>
<td>eulogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mahalla</td>
<td>neighbourhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mitti</td>
<td>medicinal paste of ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>apricot kernels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mukhi</td>
<td>religious leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nikah</td>
<td>marriage ceremony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parda</td>
<td>veiling, covering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pari</td>
<td>female nature spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parwana</td>
<td>to circle like a pilgrim or a moth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perk vandak</td>
<td>betrothal ceremony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pir</td>
<td>saint, holy man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pitek</td>
<td>transluscent veil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pituk dikht</td>
<td>ceremony of throwing flour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>on house pillars</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
rhum
shak wukhen
shalwar kamiz
shapik
sharem
sitrin
sperzhuvun
taagem
tabez
thahsil
tanzim
tat-kash
timor
truk tel
tukhem
ungas tui
vertuteeg
vull
wushuk
zaman jaei
zhazh nanwet
zodbud
clan
menstrual blood
pyjama suit
food/bread
shame
barren
eve of wedding
seed/spring festival
wise person, healer
government administration
office
village organisation
groom's companion
amulet
bitter apricot oil
procreation
summer festival of birds
agnates of the lineage
annual festival of the dead
illness ascribed to nature
spirits
womb (place of the child)
nurse
family unit
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