

# BOLD Ideas, ESSENTIAL Reading

## Intimate Connections

### Love and Marriage in Pakistan's High Mountains

ANNA-MARIA WALTER

"*Intimate Connections* is an elegant and nuanced ethnographic account of gendered intimacy as experienced by women in Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan. Eschewing simplistic formulations such as 'love vs. arranged marriages' and 'agency vs. gendered subordination,' Anna-Maria Walter instead pushes us to consider emotions anew, in particular 'love,' as sites of embodied, ethical formation of the self, and as significant to gendered norms that shape marriage and emergent forms of conjugality."  
—Attiya Ahmad, author of *Everyday Conversions: Islam, Domestic Work and South Asian Migrant Women in Kuwait*

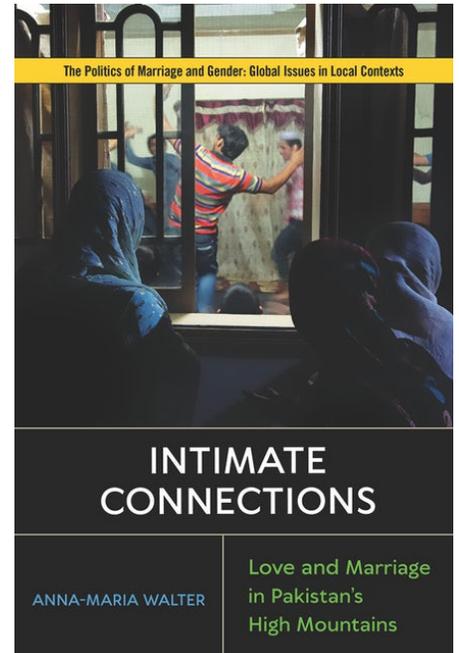
*Intimate Connections* dissects ideas, feelings, and practices around love, marriage, and respectability in the remote high mountains of Gilgit-Baltistan in northern Pakistan. It offers insightful perspectives from the emotional lives of Shia women and their active engagement with their husbands. These gender relations are shaped by countless factors, including embodied values of modesty and honor, vernacular fairy tales and Bollywood movies, Islamic revivalism and development initiatives. In particular, the advent of media and communication technologies has left a mark on (pre)marital relations in both South Asia and the wider Muslim world. Juxtaposing different understandings of 'love' reveals rich and manifold worlds of courtship, elopements, family dynamics, and more or less affectionate matches that are nowadays often initiated through SMS. Deep ethnographic accounts trace the relationships between young couples to show how Muslim women in a globalized world dynamically frame and negotiate circumstances in their lives.

ANNA-MARIA WALTER is a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Oulu in Finland and is part of an interdisciplinary team working on conservation, tourism, and remoteness in Europe. She lives in Munich, Germany.

*Politics of Marriage and Gender: Global Issues in Local Contexts*

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