

BURKE TO NORFOLK: ANALYSIS OF BRITISH COLONIAL GAZE IN PHOTOGRAPHY

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Nineteenth century British Colonial Photography

- British colonial rule in the Indian subcontinent marks the very beginning of a period that was considered a formative period for photography as an art form, and considered by historians as a 'golden age' for experimentation and for the mass production and dissemination of photographs. The First studio was built in Kolkata in 1840s
- Photography was taught to cadets at British military school in India.
- Various photographers visited India in the search of *picturesque*
- Despite the high costs involved, photography's ability to capture details that might be missed by illustrators was preferred for its use by Archaeological Survey of India.
- Samuel Bourne, Charles Shepherd or military officers as Thomas Bigg, Linnaeus Tripe, and the less well-known Captain Robert Hickey, to name just a few.



British Colonial gaze

- In photography context, representation of colonized culture by colonizers
- Tools of representation focuses on certain visual aspects such as camera angles, distance from the subject, point of view, and framing.
- The term is often used by Arjun Appadurai, Christopher Pinney, John Folconer, Edward Said, John Tagg etc.
- Tagg, *Burden of Representation* 1988

Contemporary Gaze

- Post colonial context
- Indigenous looking at and representation of their own culture

Burke, Peter, “Stereotypes of Others” in *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence* 2001

Carole B. Appadurai & van der Veer (edit) 1993

Context

- British colonial gaze shaped in the nineteenth century photography was not futile with the end of colonial rule, rather it paved the way for continues idiom of representation that are, still in parts, active, used, employed and understood.
- This paper compares the work of two British photographers, John Burke and Simon Norfolk's on Afghanistan

John Burke 1843-1900

- British colonial photographer well known for his outstanding photographs of landscape, portraits, architecture, and Afghan war of 1878-80.
- He left army to pursue his passion for photography
- Worked with William Henry Baker in 1870s, later on established his own studio initially in Peshawar, then in Rawalpindi and finally in Lahore.

Simon Norfolk(b. 1963-)

- British landscape and travel photographer
- He is interested in “conflict, memory, and reshaping the truth.”
- *“a radical intellectual with a camera,” Ute Ballay*
- Visited Afghanistan in 2001 & 2010

Burke + Norfolk Photographs from the war in Afghanistan 2011

- Traces the footsteps of John Burke British colonial photographer
- Photographs juxtaposed with the work of John Burke
- Video documentary narrating his own experience
- Dislike for war
- World Press Photo Award
- Sony World Photography Award

Subject matter

John Burke 1878-80

- British soldiers
- Afghans soldiers
- Groups
- Afghan Amir
- Ordinary People
- Architecture
- Landscape

Simon Norfolk 2001&2010

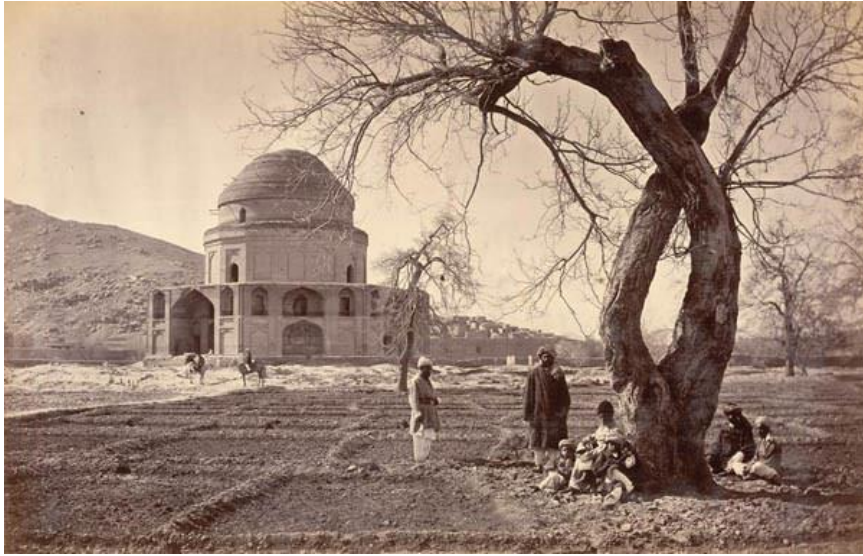
- American soldiers
- Afghan soldiers
- Groups
- Ordinary people
- Architecture
- Landscape

Visual analysis framework

- Signposting
- Semiotics
- Comparative analysis

Representation

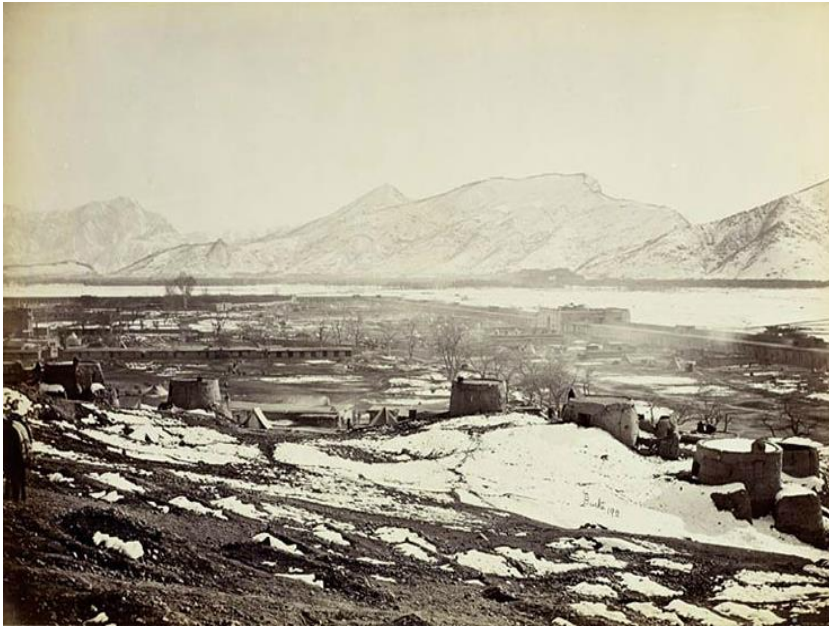
- Framing
- Point of view
- Distance
- Staged ?
- Knowledge
- Propaganda?



John Burke, Timur Shah's Mosque,
Screenshot.1887-88.



**Simon Norfolk, *Shah i Do Shamshir Mosque, Kabul*,
Screenshot.2010.**



John Burke, *Cabul. West End Sherpur. Winter.* Screenshot.1887-88.



Simon Norfolk, *Kabul, Afghanistan.* Screenshot.2010.



Landholders and Labourers. (John Burke,
1880)

(Courtesy of the Wilson Centre for
Photography, London)



Soldiers of the 72nd (Duke of Albany's Own Highlanders) Regiment. (John Burke, 1879)
(Courtesy of the Council of the National Army Museum, London)



Some of the Media Operations team including a
Combat Camera unit, Camp Bastion,
Helmand.



Fardin Waezi, 2010.



Simon Norfolk, A de-mining team from the Mine Detection Centre in Kabul with a member of the German Police who is monitoring them. Screenshot. 2010.



Muhammad Ibraheem Waheed, Afghanistan,
Screenshot.2008.



Abdullah Shayagan, Screenshot. 2007.



Nautch Girls. (John Burke, 1880)
(Courtesy of the Wilson Centre for
Photography, London)



Young women in the indoor skatepark of the
NGO 'Skateistan,' set up by American
volunteers to help young Afghans improve
their skateboarding and
indoor rock-climbing skills.



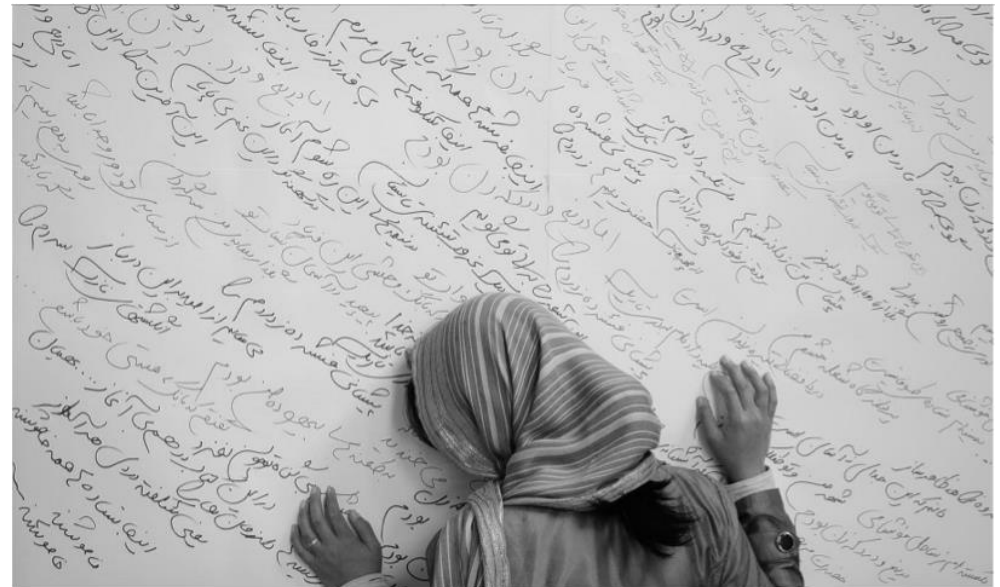
Fardin Waezi 2010.



Fardin Waezi 2010.



Hanifa Alizada, Silence of Women in Muslim Society, Screenshot. 2010



Hanfia Alizada, Silence of Women in Muslim Society, Screenshot. 2010.



Hanifa Alizada, Silence of Women in Muslim Society, Screenshot. 2010.



Hanifa Alizada, *Silence of Women in Muslim Society*, Screenshot. 2010.



Thank you

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