Individual Practice

Week 3

People & Place

How do we become ethical photojournalists/documentary photographers?

Photography & the representation of people

Photography has played a part in formulating our perception of other cultures and places.

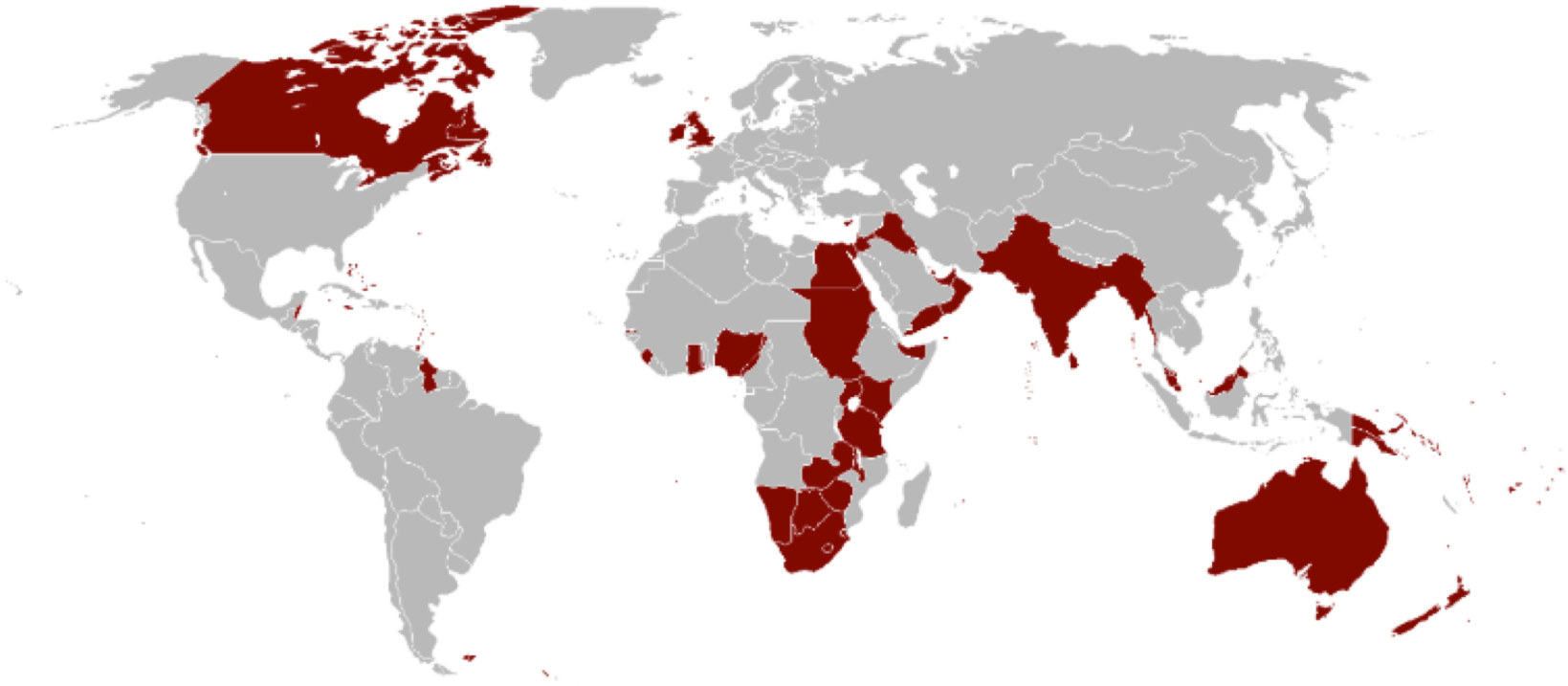
The technological development of photography coincided with its functional implementation in bureaucratic systems and the medium was exploited to perpetuate power structures and social hierarchies.

- The conceptual structure of Anthropology emerged in the context of colonialism and expansion of empire
- There was a connection between knowledge of the ‘other’ and domination, industrialization, the rise of bureaucracy and notions of progress further reinforced oppositions between civilized and savage/primitive, subject and object, present and past.
- These oppositions formed relations of difference and, crucially, of distance.
- It is this spatio-temporal remoteness which was a necessary ‘conceptual category in the constitution of the other’

Cultural Encounters: Representing Otherness
edited by Elizabeth Hallam, Brian Street

By 1913 the British Empire was the largest empire every to have existed.

It covered around 25% of the world's land surface, including large swathes of North America, Australia, Africa and Asia, while other areas - especially in South America - were closely linked to the empire by trade





A friendly power in Egypt, painting by W.C. Horsley.
The 41st Welsh regiment marching through the Metwali gate in Cairo, Egypt in the 19th century.
From The Century Edition of Cassell's History of England, published c. 1900

- **Colonialism** is the practice by which a powerful country directlycontrols less powerful countries and uses their resources to increase its own power and wealth.

England’s first colony?

Wales: England’s oldest colony

Subjugated and marginalised, the Welsh have refused to be dominated.



Long before white supremacists ever reached the shores of what we now call the United States, they constructed images of blackness and black people ***to uphold and affirm*** *their notions of* ***racial superiority, their political imperialism, their will to dominate and enslave.***

From slavery on, white supremacists have recognized that ***control over images is central to the maintenance*** *of any system of* ***racial domination****.*

bell hooks



bell hooks

bell hooks is an American intellectual, feminist theorist, cultural critic, artist, and writer.

Gloria Jean Watkins

The name "bell hooks" is borrowed from her maternal great-grandmother, Bell Blair Hooks.

- Intersectionality
- Race
- Capitalism
- Gender

Perpetuating systems of oppression and class domination

Definition of *intersectionality*:

the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups

'Intersectional feminism'. What the hell is it? (And why you should care)

Today's feminist movement is said to be in danger of losing momentum unless it recognises that not every feminist is white, middle class, cis-gendered and able bodied. Cue intersectionality, writes Ava Vidal, who unpicks the latest f-buzzword that's causing controversy



Intersectional feminism recognises that certain groups of people have multi-layered facets in life that they have to deal with, such as racism and sexism - as this photography project from Kiyun showed last year Photo: Jezebel

- The development of feminist theory has also provided the analyses for the ‘other’, coded as female and constructed in the context of hierarchical relations of power.

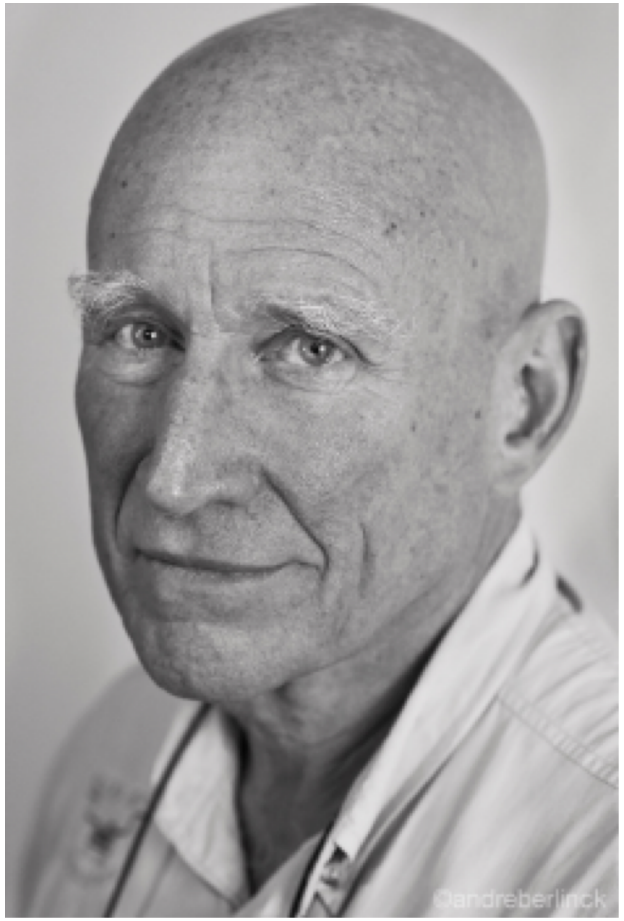
Decolonising Photojournalism & Documentary photography

Decolonization ... continues to be an act of confrontation with a hegemonic system of thought; it is hence a process of considerable historical and cultural liberation.

As such, decolonization becomes the contestation of all dominant forms and structures, whether they be linguistic, discursive, or ideological. Moreover, decolonization comes to be understood as an act of exorcism for both the colonized and the colonizer.

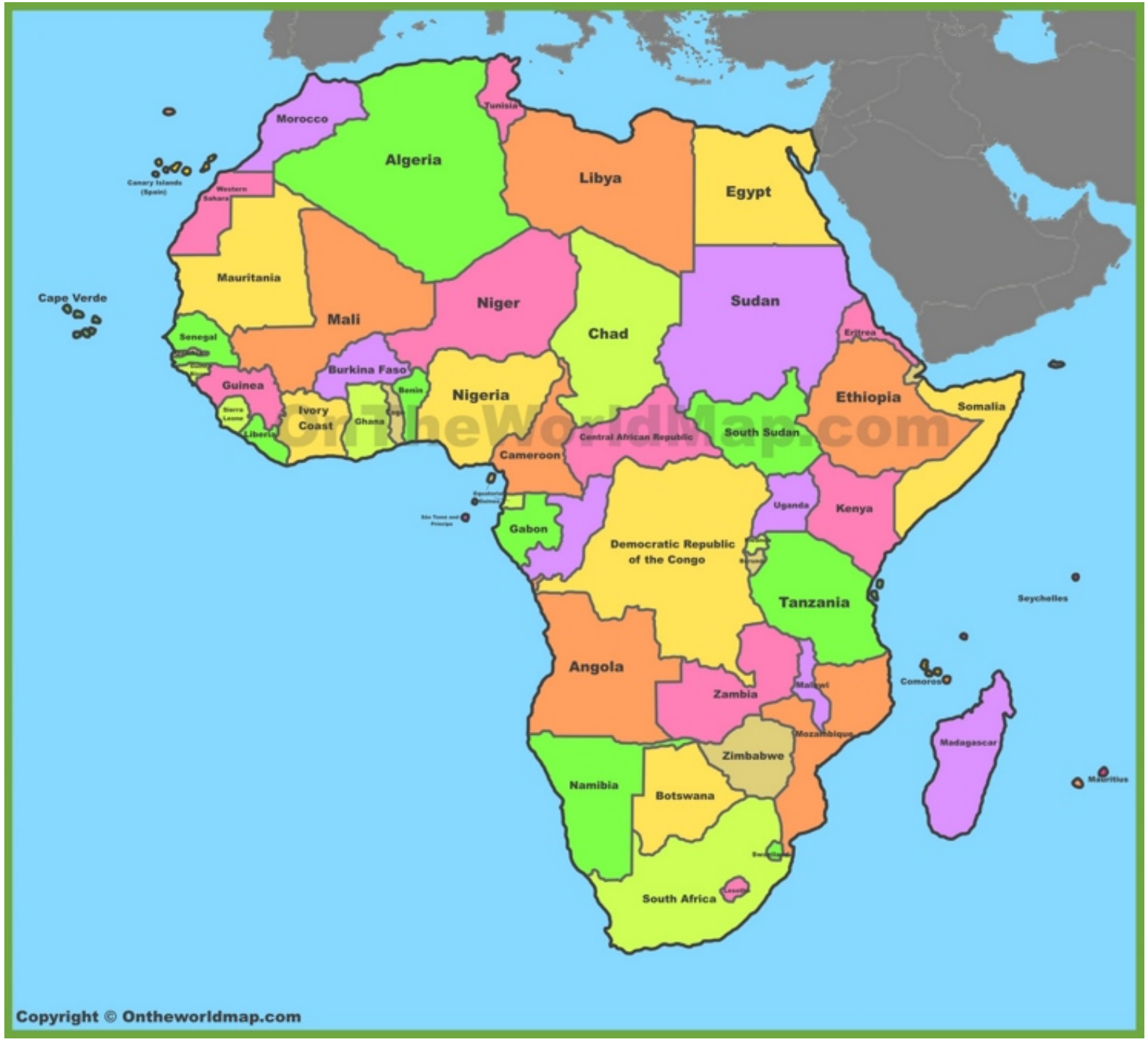
For both parties it must be a process of liberation from dependency, in the case of the colonized, and from imperialist, racist perceptions, representations, and institutions which, unfortunately, remain with us to this very day, in the case of the colonizer ... Decolonization can only be complete when it is understood as a complex process that involves both the colonizer and the colonized.

Samia Mehrez

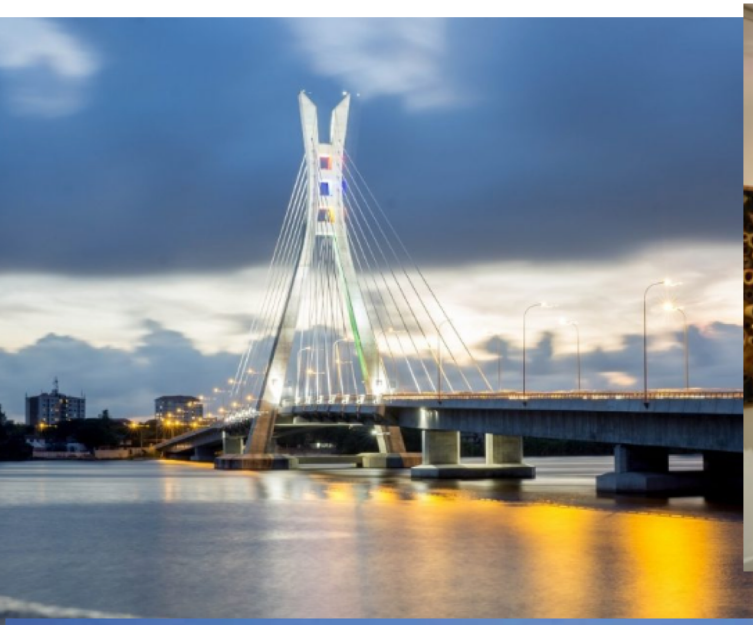


Sebastiao Salgado




Morocco
Algeria
Tunisia
Libya
Egypt
Canary Islands (Spain)
Western Sahara
Mauritania
Cape Verde
Mali
Niger
Chad
Sudan
Eritrea
Senegal
Burkina Faso
Guinea
Nigeria
Benin
Ethiopia
Somalia
Ivory Coast
Ghana
Liberia
Central African Republic
South Sudan
Cameroon
Uganda
Kenya
Gabon
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Tanzania
Seychelles
Angola
Zambia
Malawi
Comoros
Mozambique
Madagascar
Zimbabwe
Namibia
Botswana
Mauritius
South Africa
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Lagos, Nigeria.
Population 21+million

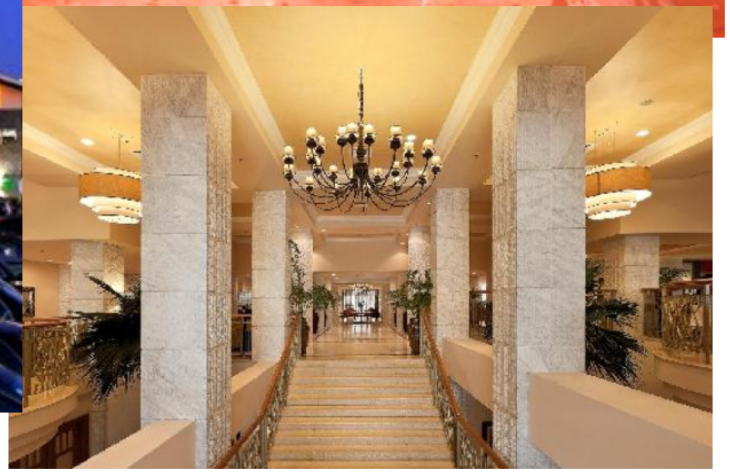












Cameroon



Abidjan, economic capital of Cote D’Ivoire



Cairo, Egypt



Stacey Dooley Comic Relief documentary pics spark 'white saviour' row

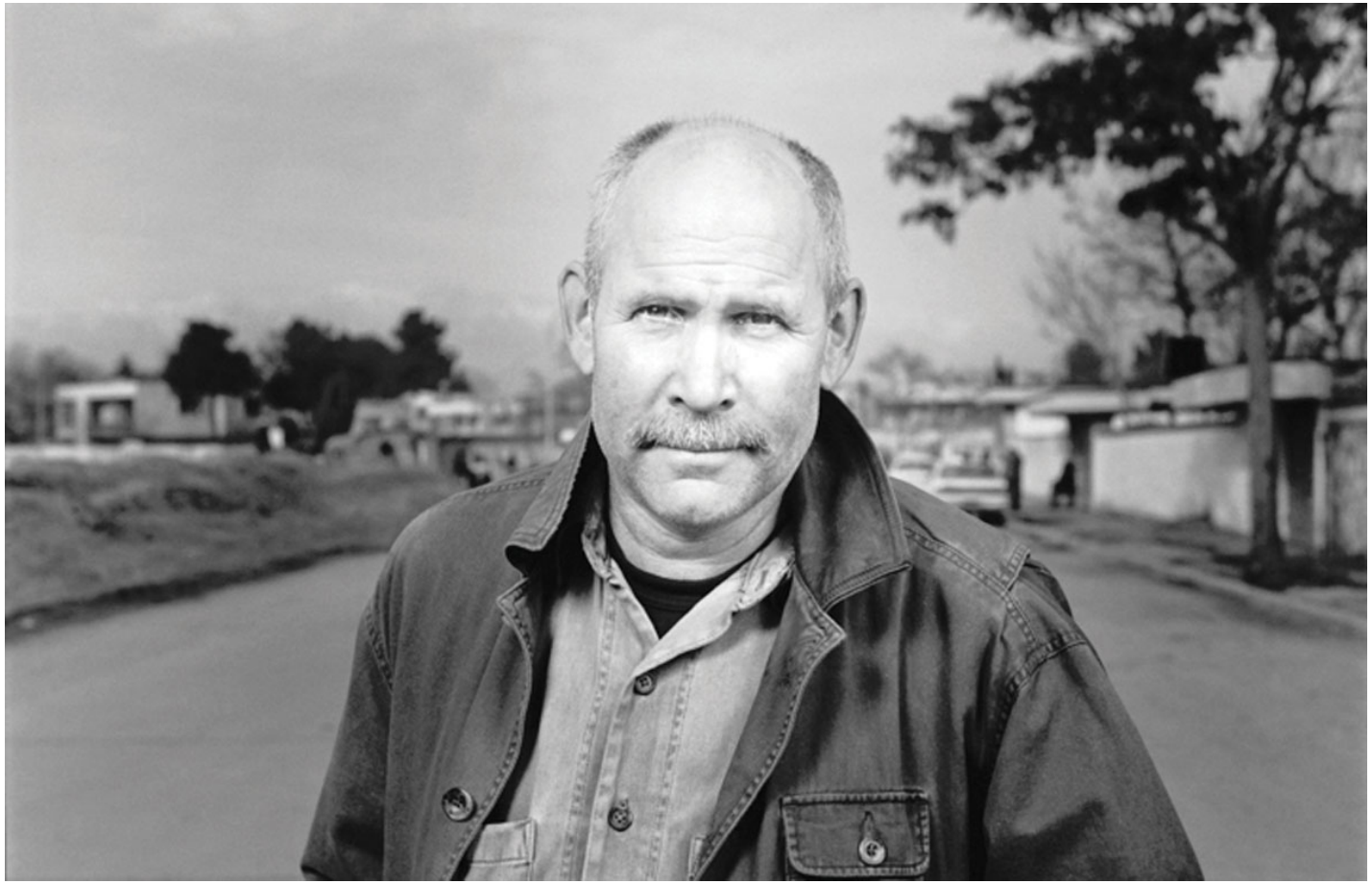


"Comic Relief is a 20-year-old formula that asks comedians to perform and sends celebrities – most often white – out to Africa, and that image evokes for lots of ethnic minorities in Britain, a colonial image of a white beautiful heroine holding a black child, with no agency, no parents in sight. The charity is doing very little to educate the public,"

White Saviour debate
- Stacey Dooley/David Lammy

- https://twitter.com/kelechnekoff/status/1101069304194322433

- https://twitter.com/VictoriaLIVE/status/1101071333448769537



Steve McCurry

India

His most recent volume of photographs, “India,” is a compendium of the pictures he took in that country between 1978 and 2014, and it also gives us the essential McCurry.

There are Hindu festivals, men in turbans, women in saris, red-robed monks, long moustaches, large beards, preternaturally soulful children and people in rudimentary canoes against dramatic landscapes.

Teju Cole

https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/03/magazine/a-too-perfect-picture.html

The photographs in “India,” all taken in the last 40 years, are popular in part because they evoke an earlier time in Indian history, as well as old ideas of what photographs of Indians should look like, **what the accoutrements of their lives should be: umbrellas, looms, sewing machines; not laptops, wireless printers, escalators.**



A defender of McCurry's work might suggest that he is interested in exploring vanishing cultures. After all, even in the 21st century, not all Indians go to malls or fly in planes.

Should he not be celebrated for seeking out the picturesque and using it to show us quintessential India?

What is wrong with showing a culture in its most authentic form?

The problem is that the uniqueness of any given country is a mixture not only of its indigenous practices and borrowed customs but also of its past and its present.

Any given photograph encloses only a section of the world within its borders.

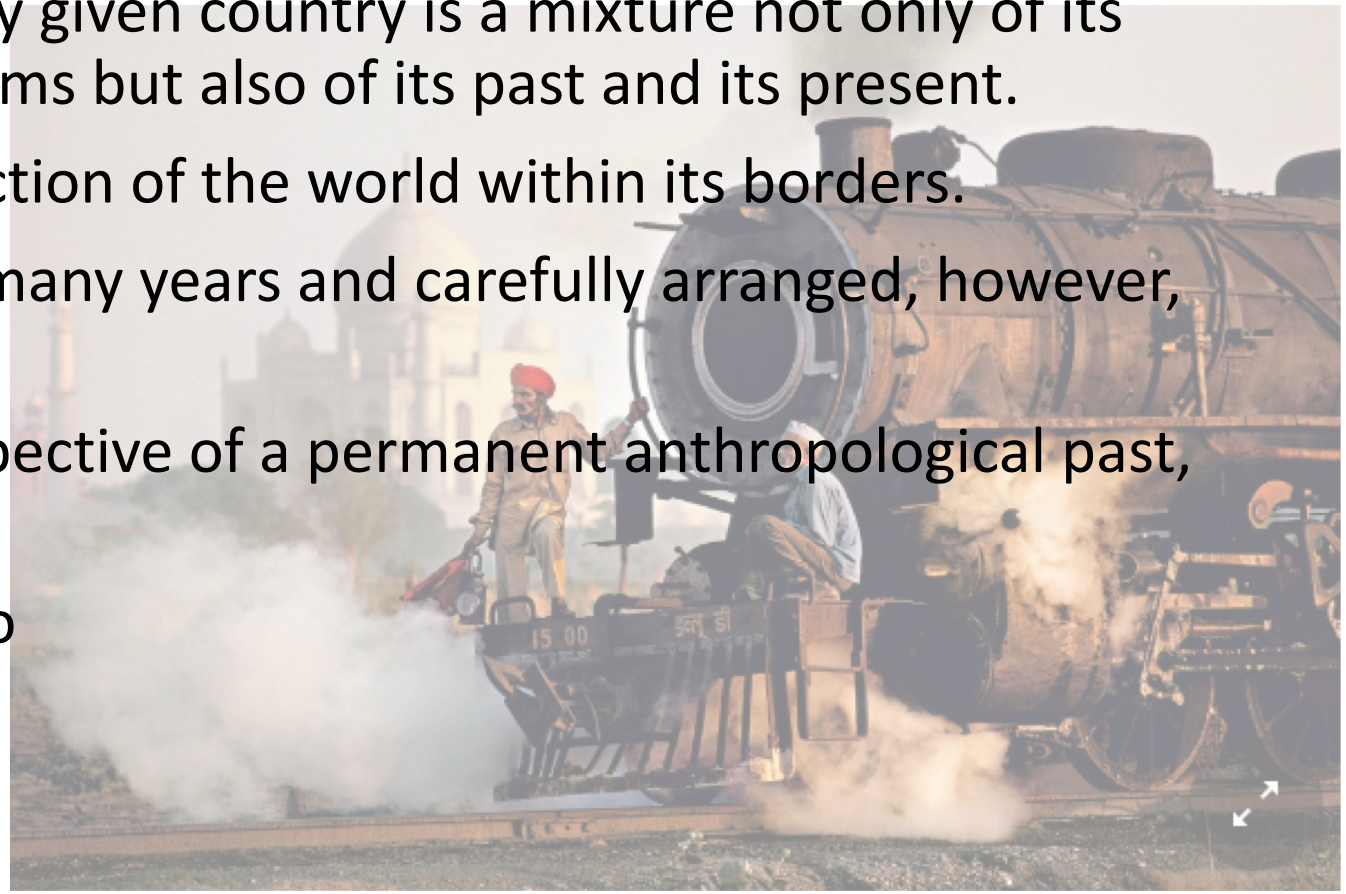
A sequence of photographs, taken over many years and carefully arranged, however, reveals a worldview.

To consider a place largely from the perspective of a permanent anthropological past, to settle on a notion of authenticity that

edits out the present day, is not simply to

present an alternative truth:

It is to indulge in fantasy.



How do we know when a photographer caters to life and not to some previous prejudice?

One clue is when the picture evades compositional cliché.

But there is also the question of what the photograph is for, what role it plays within the economic circulation of images.

Hymn for the Weekend - Coldplay

Filmed in India, with a cameo by Beyoncé, the video is a kind of exotification bingo, and almost like a live-action version of Steve McCurry's vision: peacocks, holy men, painted children, incense.

Almost nothing in the video allows true contemporaneity to Indians. They seem to have been placed there as a colourful backdrop to the fantasies of Western visitors.