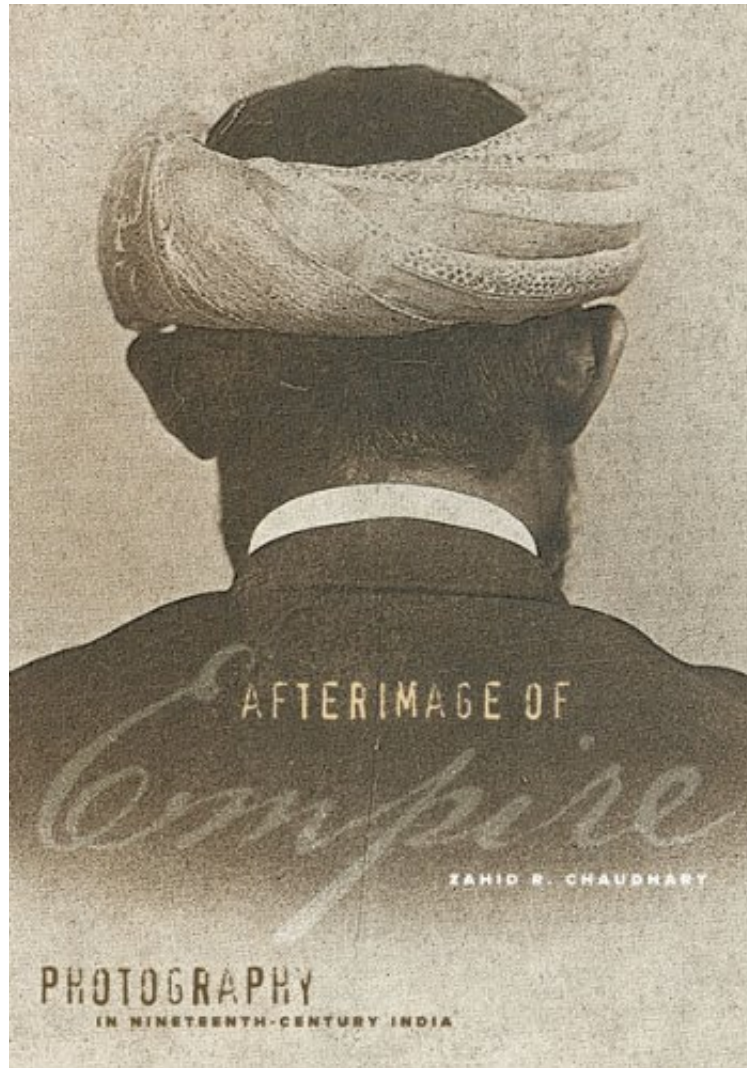


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Afterimage of Empire: Photography in Nineteenth-Century India

Zahid R. Chaudhary

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Zahid R. Chaudhary : Afterimage of Empire: Photography in Nineteenth-Century India before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Afterimage of Empire: Photography in Nineteenth-Century India:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Dense, but worth the read. By C. Dunbar A bit dense, very academic, but the historical overview is fantastic, the images are evocative, and when it's telling a story, its effectively on point. It's biggest drawback are the points when it delves into conceptual and theoretical discussions: they are extremely well argued and meticulously researched, just hard to process, requiring multiple read throughs to successfully grasp. When the book explains historical developments and socio-political actions revolving around the use of photography, you will find yourself taking notes for further reference into this fascinating period of Indian history. 8 of 8 people found

the following review helpful. Highly recommendBy OsmoThis is the kind of smart and savvy book about colonial photography that some of us have been waiting for! There have been a lot of good historical studies that lacked theoretical innovation, and lots of theorizing about photography without a sense of its historical grounding. This book manages to do both, and while it's based in empirical research it doesn't just present new evidence but it shows how the photographic "evidence" contributes to our understandings of sense perception, truth, and imperialism. For an academic study, this book is actually a pleasure to read, and yet Chaudhary doesn't sacrifice any of the complexities of his theoretical argument about photography and colonialism. What I found so helpful here was the author's discussion of phenomenology in the context of colonial history, but this book also manages to cover a lot of related ground: photographic meaning as a kind of rhetoric, war photography's aesthetic effects, the differential meanings of aesthetic and technological forms as they travel around the globe, the complexities of sympathy in photographs of human suffering. If you're looking for a basic history of photography in India, this book won't be your cup of tea (check out James Ryan's and Christopher Pinney's books), but if you're looking for something more original, I highly recommend this book.

Afterimage of Empire provides a philosophical and historical account of early photography in India that focuses on how aesthetic experiments in colonial photography changed the nature of perception. Considering photographs from the Sepoy Revolt of 1857 along with landscape, portraiture, and famine photography, Zahid R. Chaudhary explores larger issues of truth, memory, and embodiment. Chaudhary scrutinizes the colonial context to understand the production of sense itself, proposing a new theory of interpreting the historical difference of aesthetic forms. In rereading colonial photographic images, he shows how the histories of colonialism became aesthetically, mimetically, and perceptually generative. He suggests that photography arrived in India not only as a technology of the colonial state but also as an instrument that eventually extended and transformed sight for photographers and the body politic, both British and Indian. Ultimately, *Afterimage of Empire* uncovers what the colonial history of the medium of photography can teach us about the making of the modern perceptual apparatus, the transformation of aesthetic experience, and the linkages between perception and meaning.

"Chaudhary's expert scholarship, while embedded in his own interest in colonial India, offers new avenues for the analysis of Western colonial archives far beyond the Subcontinent; indeed, his study posits novel modes of interpretation for the broader concept of photography's entanglement with colonialism." --Carla Manfredi, *s in History* "An ambitious and theoretically challenging study of how photography shapes a new sensory and governmental apparatus of modernity in the colonial context, *Afterimage of Empire* succeeds in transforming the ways we think about the histories of photography and of colonialism." —David Lloyd, University of Southern California