HUNZA
IN TREBLE VISION
1930s and 1990s

Overview
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Overview of Hunza Valley

Central Hunza of more than half a dozen villages is on the right. Nagir, a different polity, lies across the river chasm on the left.

Rakaposhi massif, 25,500’ above sea level

On route to a high mountain pasture

Bubulimuting Peak, dubbed ‘lady finger’
Background

In the 1930s Hunza was situated in the State of Jammu and Kashmir of British India. It was located in the marked area of the map, verging on the People’s Republic of China, Tibet, the USSR, and Afghanistan.

The 1990s, sixty years later, Hunza was part of the Northern Areas, a Protectorate of Pakistan, a political status conferred by the United Nations in 1949, soon after Partition (1947) when Pakistan and India became independent nations.
Hunza was a petty-state, one of several small polities administered under the colonial guise of a Frontier Post (an insecure region). Though the Agency lay within the Maharaja’s State, his government could not collect taxes, establish a judicial system, or station troops there.

[The capital of Hunza was Baltit]

On the heels of Partition (1947) Scouts of the Gilgit Agency led a coup and seceded from the State of Jammu and Kashmir. The United Nations made the area a Protectorate of Pakistan, and established a cease fire line (1949). In the mid-1970s Pakistan reconstituted the Protectorate as its unofficial fifth province. Hunza became a sub-district of Gilgit, one of five such districts of the Northern Areas.

[Hunza does not appear as a location on this new map, and Baltit, which appears on it, was already known as Karimabad in the 1990s]
Time and photography

For fifteen months in the colonial period, Lorimer resided as a civilian in central Hunza (1934-35) in order to advance his study of Burushaski, an unwritten mystery language of Central Asia. Aided by his wife, Emily, Lorimer used photography to document a cycle of activity over a single year that reflected social practices of Burushaski. Photography was not a supplement but a parallel construction to his written work, the results of which he never published in his lifetime.

Sixty years later I went to central Hunza with 175 contact prints from Lorimer’s catalog of glass lantern slides. I estimated that roughly 85% of the materials he recorded were yet visible on the landscape in the 1990s. But there were also a lot of other things visible that were unknown in the 1930s. I asked, if landscape is changing, does that mean the way people understand themselves is also changing? I used my camera to explore how people understood changing constructions on the landscape.

Combining materials from the 1930s and 1990s was fortuitous, providing rich detail of highly contrasting periods. From a local point of view, however, there was nothing inherently remarkable about either of these times.
Focus

Two differences separating the 1930s and 1990s that caught my attention were:
1) political rule and 2) economy

In the 1930s political rule was a confederation of clans headed by a hereditary ruler under patronage to a colonial overlord. Residents depended on local, land-based agricultural resources to support themselves in this scheme.

In the 1990s political rule shifted to elected and appointed leaders under the Protectorate of Pakistan. In place of farming, residents incorporated diverse livelihoods associated with the rising nation-state.

Photographs documenting political and economic shifts are arranged by examples called:

- **Single Vision**: Selected thematic photographs made by Lorimer in the 1930s
- **Double Vision**: Paired versions of the early photographs that I made in 1990s
- **Treble Vision**: Thematic prospects I recorded at the close of the 20th century

While viewing this presentation, focus on how activities and places of Single Vision fall to background in Double Vision then rise thematically under altered political and economic conditions in Treble Vision.
Presentation
Themes:

1-Political Access
2-Political Rule
3-Architecture of Rule
4-Hallowed Spaces
5-Education
6-Economy
7-Master Craftsmen
8-Bazaar
9-Community Activi
10-Portrait Gallery

[Image of four men looking at a document]
1-Route of Access

**Treble Vision:**
International Karakoram Highway (KKH)

**Single Vision**
Gilgit Transport Road (GTR)

**Shift**
The GTR, a colonial construction, restricted access to official personnel only. The KKH, a Pak-China venture, constructed an open thoroughfare. There is no Double Vision here.
2-Political Rule

*Single Vision:* Mir hosted village leaders on roof of his residence at Baltit Fort

*Double Vision:* Roof of the Baltit Fort was a Museum

*Mir Tham Sir Mohammad Nazim Khan* (c 1866-1938), KCIE (Knight Commander of the Indian Empire)
Shift:
In the 1970s Pakistan dismantled the former colonial state and introduced public elections. In the process, the Nation State conferred a new political identity on the people of Hunza-- an inheritable privilege of generations to come ... though lacking full entitlements.
3-Architecture of Rule

**Single Vision**
Baltit Fort, The Mir Tham’s residence, above Baltit village

**Double Vision**
Baltit Museum Fort, above Karimabad village with full amenities of electricity, running water, sidewalks, and stairs
Single Vision:
This *Rest House*, an official British shelter, was begun in 1894 for a Political Assistant (PA) and enlarged over time. It was used as the Lorimers’ residence.

Double Vision:
The *Rest House* became the Pakistan Deputy Commissioner’s office and residence, as photographed in 1992 from a field.

Double Double Vision:
This was the same structure, as photographed in 1999 from a school roof.
Shift
Center of rule moved from Baltit to New Delhi and London in the colonial period; then it moved from London to Islamabad under the Protectorate of Pakistan. Conversion to Pakistan embodied people’s daily routines and dependency on state services.

Treble Vision
Each village had its own Post Office.

Treble Vision
This was the main police station of two such bases in Central Hunza.

Treble Vision
Hospitals, schools, clinics, and government offices produced new pathways and networks.
4-Hallowed Spaces

Single Vision
Kharum Bat (split rock), a place of local history

Double Vision
Kharum Bat broken

Double Vision
Specialists blasted it with dynamite
Single Vision
At the time this carved wooden Shiah Masjid (mosque) was constructed, religion was secular, that is, it was practiced under the ruler’s tutelage. Mosques like this one, which were common throughout the villages, spread from the late 17th century with the rise of Ithna Asharism, Shi’ism.

Double Vision
This was the fate of many of these old masjids.
Treble Vision 

**Jamat Khana**, a community house of the prevailing *Ismaili* sect of Islam in Central Hunza

**Shiah Masjid**, a mosque of a smaller sect of adherents in Central Hunza

**Sunni Mosque**, the leading Islamic faith in Pakistan

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**Shift**

Religion was no longer secular, but manifested Islamic constructions.
5-Education

Single Vision
Young girls imitated woman embroidering

Double Vision
Young boys imitated their male kin by setting up shop outside a school
Children were taught in three languages—Burushaski, Urdu, and English—and were trained according to Eastern and Western syllabi. Students wore uniforms, learned to drill, sang prayers, recited a national anthem, and learned a regimen of behavior unlike anything known to the majority of their parents.
Treble Vision

‘Follow-up Family Planning’ was a new lesson. Large families were part of the earlier agricultural economy, not the prospects of an industrialized society.

Shift:

Children were no longer solely educated by family, groomed by special tutors, or apprenticed to masters. Under the new scheme they learned to behave as a social class.
6-Mixed Economy

The first three slides feature Single/Double Vision--of agriculture, tree cultivation, and herding--followed by Treble Vision

Agriculture

Single Vision
A family winnowing grain over days, as winds permitted

Double Vision
A family winnowing grain over days, as winds permitted
Tree Cultivation

Single Vision
Apricots were dried on roofs

Double Vision
Apricots were dried on roofs
Herding

**Single Vision**
Boys herded their family’s goats on *toq*-s (high grazing grounds) above villages

**Double Vision**
Most boys attended school. Fewer lads combined and minded sheep of several families. They grazed them on grounds nearby villages
Men threshed with machines, leaving them time to work other jobs for money.

Potatoes became a cash crop, but local flour had no place on the market.
Shift

Fields became real estate for houses and shops; trees were cut, and herds culled. People changed from land-based resources to bazaar-based dependencies.

Treble Vision

Packages of apricots and nuts, store made baked-goods and global products occupied this shop window.

Treble Vision

Herds were diminished and meat consumption increased as marketers fed on other regions.
7-Master Craftsmen

**Single Vision**
Blacksmiths making and mending household equipment

**Double Vision**
Blacksmiths making and mending household equipment
Treble Vision
Architects, designers, plumbers, electricians, and skilled laborers of reinforced concrete constructed another landscape.

Treble Vision
Some hotels received ratings based on international standards for their more privileged clientele.
Shift
Building was the center post of the new economy, including roads, an updated trans-communication system, tourism, and an infrastructure of the nation-state
8-Bazaar

Single Vision
This serai (caravan rest house) was the official bazaar (market)

Double Vision
In the 1960s the serai was torn down and this Jamat Khana was raised in its place
Single Vision
With few exceptions, houses were prohibited in land reserved for crops

Double Vision
Shops and houses grew as fields diminished
Treble Vision
Shops captured goods from local, national, and global markets and channeled them to every household.
Treble Vision
A shop window fitted with shoes and socks from China reflected a *brickage* of hotel flags and electric lines

Treble Vision
Shops internalized goods from other Pakistani regions in a framework of international credit cards
Fields could not bear what markets produced …. People worked for the bazaar--buying things that made their lives complete to make them happy and selling things they learned that made others happy
9-Communal Activities

**Single Vision**
Community activities were centered by family activities of the ruling house

**Double Vision**
Community activities diversified through elected positions, community divisions, and special interests

This occasion opened the Hasegawa School
Single Vision
Formerly people in all villages celebrated their weddings on the same day of a year

Double Vision
Marriages occurred privately throughout the year
Single Vision
Festivities at Bopfau (the first barley planting of the year) were celebrated over an eight day week.

Double Vision
Village elders performed a fifteen minute traditional dance for a school’s Parents’ Day program.
Single Vision
Competitive polo matches were played between villages and other factions.

Double Vision
After a lapse of more than twenty years, polo was played in honor of the International Conference on Tourism.
Single Vision
A bitan (shaman) went into trance at a Ginani Festival (harvest of barley) to communicate with the fairies (1923)

Double Vision
A bitan (shaman) performed to a school audience at a Parents’ Day event
The center of communal activities changed from the ruling family to the nation-state, from secular to religious identification, from education by masters to class-bred schools. In spite of these changes, people were stateless.
• The portrait gallery is ordered by time

• Three photos of youngsters from the 1930s are featured and these are followed by elders of the 1990s--thus tracing the generational cycle of young people in the 1930s becoming elders in the 1990s

• Portraits thereafter descend by age … from elders to youngsters in a contemporary population--thus focusing on the diversity and complexity of a ‘collective’ population in transition
Conclusion
Things happening around us happen through us, making memory/knowledge consequential to our changing political and economic conditions.

Single Vision
Father holding a child of a new generation

Double/Treble Vision
Mother holding a child of a new generation
Citations

Maps:
British Colonial India, and
The Gilgit Agency
Sources unknown. Presently in the Lorimer Collection, SOAS, University of London


Photographs
Lorimer as a young Army Officer. By courtesy of the Lorimer family ©

1930s Images: Taken from glass lantern slides in the Lorimer’s Hunza Collection held in copyright and by courtesy of SOAS, University of London, Lorimer ©

1990s images. Taken from SLR camera work by Julie Flowerday, Flowerday ©

Grateful acknowledgement is given to the people of Hunza who allowed themselves to be viewed, to the School of Oriental Studies (SOAS) and the Lorimer family for permission to use their photographs, and to the Wm. Fulbright Scholar Program, the American Institute of Pakistan Studies (AIPS), the Mary Duke Biddle Association, and the Aga Khan Cultural Service Pakistan (AKCSP) for funding. Please continue to next page

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Contact information for Julie Flowerday: juflower@sewanee.edu
flowerda@email.unc.edu

For further information on the Lorimer Collection, please contact

- **Special Collections Reading Room**
- **The Library**
- **School of Oriental and African Studies**
- **Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square**
- **London WC1H 0XG**
  - Telephone: +44 (0)20 7898 4180
  - Fax: +44 (0)20 7898 4189
  - E-mail: docenquiry@soas.ac.uk
  - Web: www.soas.ac.uk/library

Below is a list of the old photographs used in this presentation. They are listed in the order of their appearance. Those images taken from the SOAS Library’s Lorimer Collection of glass lantern slides include the identification number and the caption created by Lorimer.

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